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Gay actor Jim J. Bullock hosted Saturday's Human Rights Campaign dinner in Houston, which hundreds attended.

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A trio of AIDS vaccine rides raised some \$19 million last year, but only \$4 million went to the three benefiting agencies.

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'The Philadelphia Story' takes The Country Playhouse's stage in Houston starting next week.

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Anti-gay ads cause GOP rift

Days from the primary election, TX Republicans clash in denouncing conservative fliers

by PENNY WEAVER

Less than a week before voters go to the polls and choose their political party's candidates for fall elections, anti-gay mailings from a conservative group have caused public discord among the state's top Republicans.

Texas Lt. Gov. Bill Ratliff was among those targeted in the fliers mailed out by Free Enterprise PAC, a right-wing political group that "defend[s] the conservative principles of limited government, free enterprise and traditional Judeo/Christian values of the founders of the United States and Texas," according to the group's Web site.

One of the fliers shows photos of men

Local District 25 race a crowded field of gay-friendly candidates.

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Texas Lt. Gov. Bill Ratliff, along with 20 or more legislators, denounced other Republicans for not taking a stronger stand against anti-gay mailings by the conservative FreePAC.

kissing and says Ratliff supports "the homosexual agenda." Similar pieces target other Republicans facing primary challenges.

The state's primary elections are Tuesday. On Wednesday, Ratliff called the attacks "political pornography" and compared them to Nazi and terrorist propaganda. Ratliff and more than 20 legislators from the House and Senate denounced the mailings.



Richard Ford (above), chairman of the conservative group FreePAC, this week defended his organization's anti-gay political mailings. The literature spawned bickering among top Texas GOP lawmakers.

"This type of hate mongering is reminiscent of the Nazis; this type of hate mongering is reminiscent of the Ku Klux Klan; this type of hate mongering is typical of the skinheads; this type of hate mongering is now being practiced by the Al Qaeda and the Taliban," Ratliff said.

He also criticized GOP Gov. Rick Perry for not doing more to distance himself from the attack ads. The day before, Perry called the literature "divisive and unacceptable."

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Vatican blames gays for pedophile problem

Catholics to consider ban on gay ordinations, drawing charges that the church is shirking responsibility for abuse

by RHONDA SMITH

The spokesperson for Pope John Paul II said last week that in the wake of a growing scandal in the priesthood over child sexual abuse, the Roman Catholic Church may ban the ordination of even sexually non-active gays. The comments drew immediate fire from some Catholic scholars, religious leaders and gay activists.

"People with these inclinations just cannot be ordained," Joaquin Navarro-Valls told the New York Times in an interview from Rome. "That does not imply a final judgment on people with homosexuality. But you cannot be in this field."

Navarro-Valls aligned himself and the

Vatican with conservatives in the church who have concluded that most of the reported sexual abuse cases involve gay men molesting teenage boys, not pedophiles assaulting young children.

Mary Louise Cervone, president of Dignity/USA, a national group for gay Catholics, described Navarro-Valls' comments as "a vicious and transparent attempt to shift the blame, in an effort to deny institutional culpability" related to the sexual abuse allegations.

"This is about violence against children and abuse of power," she said. "It has nothing to do with sexual orientation."

The most recent scandal, involving priests from Massachusetts to California, follows earlier high-profile reports of child sexual abuse by a priest in Dallas, Texas, and dozens of priests in and around St. Louis, Mo.

Up to 12 Roman Catholic priests in Southern California have been ordered to retire recently in the wake of the scandal, which has dioceses nationwide under pressure to address what many say is a problem that has plagued the Church for decades.

In February, the Archdiocese of Boston removed 10 priests from the pulpit following allegations that they sexually abused children.

Father George Spagnolia, an openly gay priest formerly at St. Patrick's Church in Lowell, Mass., has been the only accused clergy member there to publicly declare his innocence. He is accused of sexually assaulting a 14-year-old male twice in 1971 while serving as parochial vicar of St. Francis de Sales Church in Roxbury, Mass.

After Cardinal Bernard F. Law ordered Spagnolia to leave the rectory last month, the 64-year-old priest initially vowed to remain in place. He changed his mind March 2, a day after admitting he lied when he told the Boston Globe he had always been celibate.

Spagnolia said he had two gay relationships during a 20-year leave from the priesthood that began in 1973. He did not return a call for comment.

During a press conference last week, Spagnolia said he has never molested a child and that "being gay doesn't mean you're a pedophile," the Boston Globe reported.

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ELECT CHRIS BELL TO CONGRESS

On City Council, Chris Bell stood up
for the LGBT community...

In Congress, he'll continue the fight.

We ask you to vote for Chris Bell for Congress

Paid for by Friends of Chris Bell



Since entering public service, Chris has always been there for our community. He has earned the reputation for standing up for the average person and has continually fought to make government more responsive to our needs.

Chris has:

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- worked hard to defeat the recent anti-gay City Proposition 2
- chaired the City Council Ethics Committee and passed campaign finance reforms
- agreed to co-sponsor Employment Non-discrimination Act (ENDA), in Congress
- pledged to increase federal funding for AIDS research
- promised to work for a Patient's Bill of Rights and HMO reform

The Honorable Lee P. Brown
The Honorable Annise Parker
The Honorable Garnet Coleman
Bret Baccus
Terry Baggott
Javier Barrera
Richard Bauer
Kenneth E. Broughton
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Tim Cagle
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Because I promised myself
 when this all started that I'd never
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Plan Your Future With VIRACEPT®.

Because it's strong and effective. Keep your viral load down with the #1 prescribed HIV medication of its kind.* VIRACEPT works with you to keep your life on track.

Because it's easy to live with. VIRACEPT's easy dosing schedule and manageable side effects have been helping all kinds of people continue to lead their lives on their own terms.

Because it saves future options. When choosing a treatment plan, it's important to consider what options you will have in the future. Studies show taking VIRACEPT early on leaves you with choices in treatment for later. Ask your doctor about your future with VIRACEPT.

VIRACEPT®
nelfinavir mesylate

VIRACEPT is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral agents for the treatment of HIV infection. The most common side effect of VIRACEPT is diarrhea, which can usually be controlled with over-the-counter treatments. Some prescription and non-prescription drugs and supplements should not be taken with VIRACEPT, so talk to your doctor first. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, changes in body fat, and increased bleeding in hemophiliacs. **HIV drugs do not cure HIV infection or prevent you from spreading the virus.**

Refer to the important information on the next page. For more information, call toll free 1-888-VIRACEPT or visit www.viracept.com.



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VIRACEPT®

(nelfinavir mesylate)
Tablets and Oral Powder

Information for Patients about VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)

Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human
Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

Alert: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with VIRACEPT. Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH VIRACEPT".

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. Although VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, VIRACEPT can help reduce your risk for death and illness associated with HIV. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in the number of CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT should be taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Efavir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the face, legs and arms may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Medicines you should not take with VIRACEPT:

Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex®, and others
Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)
Halcion® (triazolam)
Versed® (midazolam)
Mevacor® (lovastatin, for cholesterol lowering)
Zocor® (simvastatin, for cholesterol lowering)

Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.

Rifampin® (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®

This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with: Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:

Phenobarbital
Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.

Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

Special considerations

Before you take Viagra® (sildenafil) with VIRACEPT, talk to your doctor about possible drug interactions and side effects. If you take Viagra and VIRACEPT together, you may be at increased risk of side effects of Viagra such as low blood pressure, visual changes, and penile erection lasting more than 4 hours. If an erection lasts longer than 4 hours, you should seek immediate medical assistance to avoid permanent damage to your penis. Your doctor can explain these symptoms to you.

It is not recommended to take VIRACEPT with the cholesterol-lowering drugs Mevacor® (lovastatin) or Zocor® (simvastatin) because of possible drug interactions. There is also an increased risk of drug interactions between VIRACEPT and Lipitor® (atorvastatin) and Baycol® (cerivastatin); talk to your doctor before you take either of these cholesterol reducing drugs with VIRACEPT.

Taking St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort with VIRACEPT is not recommended. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or are planning to take St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease VIRACEPT levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to VIRACEPT or cross resistance to other antiretroviral drugs.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:

Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
Zerit (stavudine, d4T)
Videx® (didanosine, ddl)

If you are taking both Videx (ddl) and VIRACEPT:

Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

Viramune® (nevirapine)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood is unchanged. A dose adjustment is not needed when VIRACEPT is used with Viramune.

Sustiva™ (efavirenz)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. A dose adjustment is not needed when VIRACEPT is used with Sustiva.

Other NNRTIs

VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

Crixivan® (indinavir)

The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

Norvir™ (ritonavir)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

Invirase® (saquinavir)

The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 15-20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily or 1250 mg (five tablets) two times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include nausea, gas and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. Your doctor may prescribe the light blue VIRACEPT Tablets either as 1250 mg (five tablets) taken two times a day or as 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. VIRACEPT tablets are film-coated to help make the tablets easier to swallow.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 1250 mg (five tablets) taken two times a day or 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 to 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily				
Body Weight		Number of	Number of	Number of
Kg	Lb	Level Scoops*	Level Teaspoons†	Tablets
7 to <8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	—
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1 1/4	—
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1 1/2	—
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1 3/4	—
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	—
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2 1/4	—
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2 1/2	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3 3/4	3

in measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do not mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. **Do not heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.**

Do not add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

Call 1.888.VIRACEPT

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Q-Patrol takes to the streets again

Pledge of financial support helps keep non-profit group afloat, but volunteers still needed

by PENNY WEAVER

Stalled last month by financial worries, Houston's Q-Patrol has been jump-started by one businessman's pledge to fund the group for a year.

Organizers said the non-profit organization now needs volunteers to fill its ranks

and keep Montrose-area streets safer.

"We're back to where we were two months ago — where we need the people to put that money to use," said Chris Arasin, chairman of Q-Patrol Inc., a watchdog against hate crimes. "We need to get the people out there and be that visible deterrent."

Charles Armstrong, president and CEO of Charles Armstrong Investments Inc., announced this week that he will underwrite the monthly costs of Q-Patrol for an entire year.

"The service that the volunteers of Q-Patrol unselfishly provide to the gay, les-

bian, bisexual, transgendered and heterosexual community of Montrose is invaluable," Armstrong said. "My company pledges its full support for fund-raising and to educate our customers to volunteer to help keep the streets of Montrose safe for residents and visitors alike."

Armstrong's firm operates clubs at 800 Pacific: South Beach, Montrose Mining Co. and JR's.

According to a press release from Q-Patrol, "Due to an article in the Houston Voice, [Armstrong] has stepped forward with a generous financial contribution that has enabled the patrol to restart operations."

Although patrols were suspended temporarily in February, they began again on March 1.

Arasin said a weekend fund-raiser also helped the group's financial outlook. The emphasis now is on encouraging people to volunteer to walk, ride or even bike with the organization.

"If they want to [patrol via] pogo stick, we'll find people to pogo stick with them," Arasin said. "We never send anybody out alone."

No special training is required for Q-Patrol volunteers; the only requirement is that they be 18 years of age or older,

he noted. He said the group is not confrontational.

"If we come across trouble, we contact the authorities and have them come in and deal with the situation," Arasin said.

For more than a decade, Q-Patrol volunteers have walked Montrose-area streets on Friday and Saturday nights to help look out for the safety of gays. Q-Patrol began as a response to the July 4, 1991, murder of Paul Broussard, Arasin noted.

A group of teenagers attacked Broussard and beat him to death. They allegedly picked Broussard specifically because they thought he was gay. In response, community leaders and activists formed Q-Patrol to assist the Houston Police Department in deterring hate crimes in the Montrose area.

The organization's total monthly expenses — for radios, phone service and rent at the Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center — are about \$450, Arasin said.

Houston hosts HRC gala

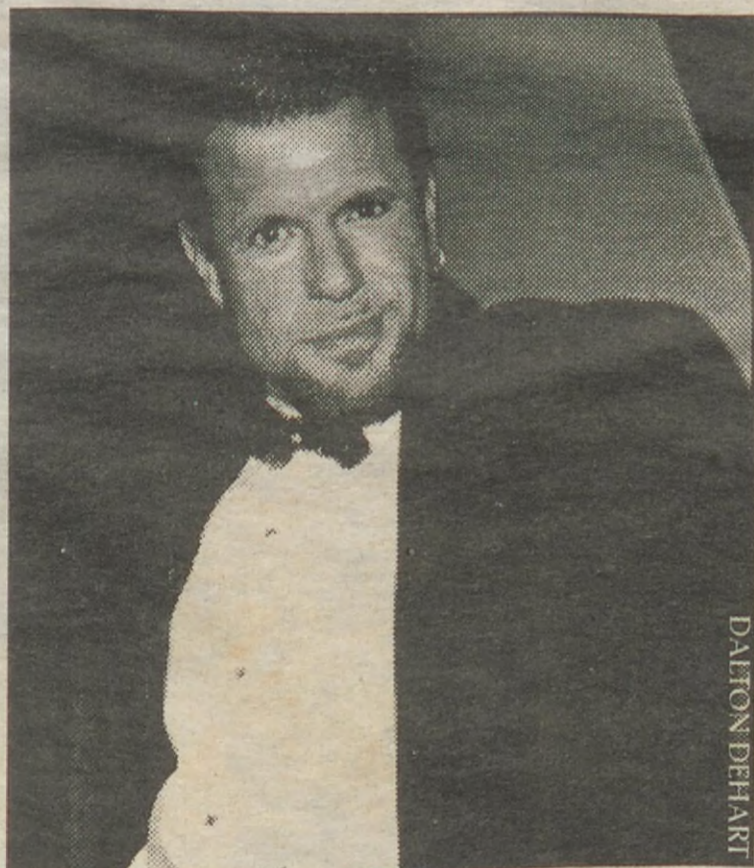
Hundreds of gay Houstonians and supporters turned out Saturday for the Human Rights Campaign 2002 Gala at the Westin Galleria. The festivities celebrated the accomplishments of the group, which lobbies for gay rights. A reception and silent auction accompanied the night's dinner and program. Speakers included HRC Executive Director Elizabeth Birch. During the evening, awards were presented, such as the Community Service Award to the group AssistHers, which helps lesbians with health crises; and the Political Equality Award, given to gay political consultant Grant Martin will be presented the Political Equality Award.



Vermont Gov. Howard Dean was the keynote speaker for the dinner, and he discussed his state's struggle with its law providing civil unions for gay couples.



Local HRC dinner co-chairs Tim Kollatschny and Jani Lopez helped coordinate the event, which serves as a fund-raiser for the group.



Emcee for the night was gay actor Jim J. Bullock, well known for his role on the television sitcom 'Too Close for Comfort' and his current voice work as 'Queer Duck.'



Actress Cloris Leachman, seen most recently on 'The Ellen Show,' surprised the HRC dinner crowd when she tickled the ivories during her time on stage.

Fun for a good cause



This year's annual Night In Black Leather (NIBL) was dubbed a success after raising more than \$9,000 Saturday for a local HIV/AIDS group, according to organizers. The event included performances by local entertainers — such as Jim Sorgini (above) — who each volunteered their talents for the cause. Helping organize and lead NIBL was activist Don Gill (left) via his Don Gill Productions. The evening included a silent auction and attracted hundreds of audience members to host club Rich's. This year's beneficiary is the PWA Holiday Charities.

INFO

Q Patrol

713-528-SAFE

E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com

Net return plunges for AIDS vaccine rides

Figures show 79 percent of money raised went to overhead and Pallotta Teamworks, the event's controversial for-profit organizer

by LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON — Three highly publicized AIDS Vaccine Rides organized last year by the for-profit fund-raising firm of Pallotta Teamworks pulled in more than \$19 million in contributions from riders and corporate sponsors, but incurred millions in overhead expenses and production fees, according to a finance statement released Feb. 26.

That left only \$4 million for the three vaccine research institutions designated as recipients for the rides, according to the financial statement.

The designated beneficiaries for the three rides received only 21.37 cents for every dollar raised, while 78.63 cents on the dollar went to expenses. Roughly 5 cents of every dollar raised went directly to Pallotta Teamworks, as a "production fee."

The results from the three AIDS Vaccine Rides in 2001 represents a decline from the 50.42 percent that went to beneficiaries for the single vaccine ride held the previous year.

The 2000 AIDS Vaccine Ride, which took place in Alaska and attracted 1,494 riders, raised \$8,558,000 in income, and generated \$4,163,000 in net proceeds for the vaccine research institutions. In a development that will likely raise concern among AIDS activists, the three 2001 vaccine rides combined raised \$151,000 less in net proceeds than the single vaccine ride in 2000, even though the three rides in 2001 attracted 3,972 riders, who raised nearly \$18.8 million in contributions.

Gustavo Suarez, a spokesperson for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, called the recently released Pallotta finance statement for the vaccine rides "stomach turning."

"It's not fair for the riders, who worked so hard to raise all that money," Suarez said. "You have less than 25 cents to the dollar going to the charities."

Steve Bennett, president of Pallotta Teamworks, said that while the overhead expenses for the 2001 vaccine rides were higher than the firm had expected, the low return from the rides was due almost entirely to a lower than anticipated income.

According to Bennett, the Pallotta firm budgeted for 8,600 riders, which the firm anticipated would generate a net return of \$12.2 million. Although almost 8,000 registered to participate in the vaccine rides, to the dismay of the Pallotta organizers, only 3,972 riders showed up for the three events. Most of those who failed to show up also failed to do any fund-raising, Bennett said.

"We spent about \$150,000 more on logistics for each ride than we had planned, even after significant cost-cutting," the Pallotta firm said in a February 2002 letter to riders who requested information about the results of the 2001 vaccine rides.

"Still, it was the income, not the logistics costs, that put us so far behind where we hoped to be," according to the letter.

Despite the poor showing for the three AIDS vaccine rides last year, the Pallotta firm extracted virtually the same "production fee" from each of the three 2001 rides as it did from the single, more successful ride from the previous year.

In 2001, the three rides yielded more than \$1 million in production fees to Pallotta Teamworks, about one-quarter the combined total that went toward AIDS vaccine research.

Bennett said the low return prompted the firm to discontinue two of the three vaccine rides — the Montana ride, from Missoula to Billings; and the Alaska ride, from Fairbanks to Anchorage. The third ride, known as the Canada to USA AIDS Vaccine Ride, from Montreal to Portland, Maine, "carried its own" and will be held again in 2002, Bennett said.

The three institutions designated as recipients for the \$4 million raised by the 2001 vaccine rides are the Emory Vaccine Center in Atlanta; the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in New York City; and the UCLA AIDS Institute in Los Angeles, Calif.

But Pallotta plans to replace the poorly performing domestic vaccine rides with more exotic rides in 2002. One is set to take place in Europe, where riders are expected to travel 575 miles from Amsterdam to Paris.

A 75-mile "Africa AIDS Trek," or walk, is scheduled to take place in a wilderness park in South Africa, the literature says. In addition, the firm will produce a three-day AIDS Vaccine Walk from West Point, N.Y., to New York City.

High overhead

The Pallotta Teamworks finance statement comes at a time when some AIDS activists have criticized the firm for incurring high overhead costs for many of its events. The firm has acknowledged that its overhead expenses are higher than that of other charitable fund-raising groups, but has said the size of the cash donations it helps to raise for various charities far exceeds that of other groups.

The finance statement shows that since it began organizing AIDS bike rides in 1994, the company's events have netted more than \$222.5 million for AIDS and breast cancer charities. The statement says the overall net return for all of these events over this seven-year period comes to 57.25 percent.

Even that total falls below the standard established by one outside fund-raising watchdog. The Wise Giving Alliance, set up by the Better Business Bureau, advises that at least 65 percent of proceeds from fund-raising events should make it to the actual beneficiary.

In promotional literature, the Pallotta firm also points out that the fund-raising events generate press coverage, and the firm also promotes various events through newspaper, radio, and television advertisements, improving AIDS awareness generally.

"In 2001, an estimated 96,000 people turned



To some, Dan Pallotta, the charismatic man behind AIDS rides held throughout the country, is a hero who has raised millions to battle the epidemic. To others, he is a profiteer who has made millions in 'production fees' while turning over only a small percentage of funds raised to AIDS beneficiaries.

out to cheer on our walkers and riders," according to a message accompanying the 2001 finance statement. "In addition, media coverage of our events reached roughly 1 billion people. That's an amazing number of great opportunities to raise awareness for these important causes."

The firm also advertises the events as an opportunity for riders to challenge their own potential, often using a "self-help" language and focus that some riders have criticized as reminiscent of EST, a controversial program popular in the 1970s and '80s.

Critics take aim

Some AIDS activists have argued that the high overhead costs for many of the events raise questions about the ethics of asking donors to give money to events that result in more money going to overhead costs and the Pallotta firm than to the designated charity.

Concerns about high overhead expenses prompted the Los Angeles Lesbian & Gay Center and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation to break away from the Pallotta group and to establish its own San Francisco to Los Angeles AIDS bicycle ride. The new ride is set to take place less than a month before the Pallotta firm's annual California AIDS Ride

begins it run between the same two cities.

Organizers for both events predict the individual rides will draw far fewer riders and donors than the single California ride held last year. Animosity between the two competing parties recently reached a high point.

The Pallotta firm has said the L.A. and San Francisco groups will likely ruin the California AIDS Ride for both parties. The two AIDS groups in turn accuse Pallotta Teamworks of refusing to agree to a compromise contract for the ride that would have protected the groups from cost-overruns that the groups say approached \$400,000 for the 2001 ride in California.

Bennett of Pallotta Teamworks disputes that assertion, saying that the firm offered to cover all cost overruns. He said the two groups apparently wanted to create a separate ride and are using the cost overruns as an excuse to breach a contract with Pallotta that prohibits them from conducting a competing ride.

A California court voided the contract, saying it violates state antitrust laws.

Expanding the franchise

Pallotta Teamworks began its fund-raising bike rides in 1994, when it produced the California AIDS Ride. Since then it has produced AIDS rides in several other cities, including New York, Washington, D.C., Boston, Minneapolis, and Chicago. Several rides were dropped, including one held in Philadelphia, after returns dropped as low as 30 percent.

In a 22-page document posted on its Web site, which includes the finance statement for all of its 2001 events, Pallotta Teamworks says it netted more than \$69 million for AIDS and breast cancer charities in 2001.

The finance statement shows the combined net proceeds for four 2001 AIDS rides — which raised money for non-profit groups that provide services to people with HIV and AIDS — came to \$13.55 million. Beneficiaries received a total of 46.71 cents of every dollar raised, the statement says.

The finance statement shows the 2001 return represented a decline from a combined return of 52.72 cents on the dollar for the 2000 AIDS rides.

— Jennifer J. Smith contributed to this report



Some \$19 million was raised through three AIDS vaccine rides last year, including a seven-day ride in Montana. But only \$4 million was distributed to the three benefiting agencies, including the Emory Vaccine Center, a return that has led to criticism of Pallotta Teamworks, which stages the rides.

INFO

Pallotta TeamWorks

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Calif. gay man dies after being set on fire

Santa Barbara man doused in gasoline; serial arsonist arrested and charged with murder, hate crime

by KARA FOX

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — A serial arsonist has been arrested and charged with murder, arson and a hate crime for allegedly setting a man on fire because he was gay. Clint Scott Risetter died Feb. 24 as a result of burns he sustained to his body after being doused with gasoline and set on fire.

Martin Thomas Hartman, 38, confessed to the crime Tuesday, Feb. 26, after surrendering himself to the Santa Barbara County Police. He walked into the Police Department and admitted pouring gasoline on Risetter and igniting it as he slept. Risetter, 37, awoke in flames and died on his apartment patio before firefighters arrived.

Police said Hartman told them he had known Risetter for about six months, but only learned recently that he was gay.

"[Hartman] first said he did it because the victim was unhappy and depressed so he didn't need to be around in the world," said police Sgt. Mike McGrew, the lead investigator in the case. "He also said he killed him because he was gay, and he has a lot of hatred toward gay people."

McGrew also said that Hartman "thought it was the right thing to do" and felt that Risetter "deserved to die" for being gay.

Police said Hartman is a mentally troubled Santa Barbara resident who may be connected to at least a dozen arsons in the Santa Barbara area that date back five years. Hartman was never arrested in those crimes because there was not enough evidence against him. Hartman has been convicted of several crimes, including cases of indecent exposure, battery and disturbing the peace, police said.

Hartman is currently being charged with murder, arson and a hate crime. If convicted, he could receive the death penalty or life in prison without parole. Senior Deputy District Attorney Joyce Dudley said a decision on whether to seek the death penalty would come later.

Hartman was to be arraigned Thursday, Feb. 28, but the proceeding was delayed at

the request of Santa Barbara County Public Defender James Egar, who asked for more time to review the evidence before advising his client on how to plea.

The gay community in Santa Barbara has banded together in response to the recent homicide.

"People have gone from absolute fear to absolute anger," Janet Stanley, executive director of the Pacific Pride Foundation, an umbrella organization for the Gay & Lesbian Resource Center and AIDS Project Central Coast, told Santa Barbara News-Press. "The fear is based on the fact that when this type of crime is perpetuated against any member of our community, the message is really targeting the entire community. But then there is that part of us that gets angry and says we will not succumb to this and respond in a fearful manner, but from a place of strength and determination."

Blanche Risetter, Risetter's mother, has said she did not know her son was gay.

"Clint said he wasn't gay, ... and as far as I know, he wasn't. Of course, maybe he didn't want to admit it to me," the 76-year-old Risetter told the News-Press. "He would still be the same person to me [if I

had known he was gay.] I would have never said anything against it to him."

Mrs. Risetter had lost a daughter in a car wreck decades ago and a son in a 1988 hunting accident, and her husband died from a stroke in October. She has one surviving son.

An impromptu candlelight vigil was held outside Risetter's apartment Feb. 28, drawing more than 75 people from all segments from the community, according to the News-Press. Another vigil, organized by Pacific Pride Foundation, was held Monday at Santa Barbara's Trinity Episcopal Church, and was attended by about 500 people.

The son of a farmer and a stay-at-home mom, Clint Risetter grew up in Wolsey, S.D., a prairie town of about 600 east of the Black Hills. After graduating from the University of South Dakota in 1986, Risetter worked in Wolsey for a couple of years before moving to California with the dream of becoming an actor or model. He modeled part-time and landed bit parts in various movies, including 1991's Michael J. Fox comedy "Doc Hollywood," according to the Times. By the mid-1990s, Risetter started selling real estate to pay his bills. By March 2000, he dropped out of the business after the office closed.

Partner of 9/11 victim commits suicide

by KARA FOX

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — Mike Lyons, whose partner of 17 years was killed in the World Trade Center attack, committed suicide Friday, March 1, after struggling with his partner's death, according to those who helped Lyons after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack. This is the first suicide by a gay partner of a Sept. 11 victim, according to gay activists.

"He was very spiritual. He truly believed he was taking a step to be with his partner," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national gay political organization. HRC was one of several organizations that helped Lyons apply for benefits through relief funds and gave him support.

John "Jack" Keohane, 41, worked at One Liberty Plaza near the World Trade Center.

After the two planes hit the Trade Center towers, Keohane met Lyons, his partner of 17 years, on the street, and helped Lyons call his mother.

"They were in the street like everybody else," Keohane's sister, Darlene Keohane, told the San Francisco Chronicle at the time. "As he was talking, he had thought a third plane crashed into the building."

What Keohane thought was a third crash was actually the collapse of the South Tower of the World Trade Center. He was killed by falling debris.

"They were running together, but because of [Lyons' multiple sclerosis], he said, 'Go ahead and I'll catch up,'" said Matt Foreman, former executive director of the Empire State Pride Agenda, a New York gay rights organization that formed a relief fund

for partners of gay victims.

Foreman said that although Lyons suffered from MS and depended on Keohane for support, he was employed as a certified New York City social worker. Lyons and Keohane lived together in Jersey City, N.J.

A precarious place

Lyons had a difficult time coping with Keohane's death and did not have a strong support system, according to several people who knew him.

"Mike's psyche was severely damaged because of the drama of seeing John die and being in the proximity of his death and being separated by him," Birch said. "When he called me, literally just a minute after speaking with him, I understood that he was in a very delicate and precarious place."

Joe Tarver, communications director for ESPA, agreed.

"Mike at that time was very emotional and fragile — even more so than the other people we dealt with," Tarver said. "It was apparent that John Keohane was the rudder in his life. John was everything to him."

Tarver said Lyons went to Europe to "get away" and when he came back, he began the process of applying for relief funds. Out of the 22 partners of gay victims that ESPA dealt with, Lyons was the last to go through the process, Tarver said. Tarver added that Lyons had indicated that he was going to be run short of funds by the end of March.

"I worked with him on a day-to-day basis," Tarver said. "Red Cross did tell me three weeks ago that he had been approved. I



John Keohane, who died in the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center, was 'everything' to his partner Mike Lyons. Lyons committed suicide on March 1.

checked on his status last Friday and I was emailing him. He would disappear and reappear, and I thought it was one of those times when he was disappearing emotionally."

Lyons took his life on March 1, on his 41st birthday and just days before he was to receive a check from the American Red Cross for relief, Tarver said. An exact cause of death could not be confirmed through the Newark, N.J., medical examiner's office or other New Jersey authorities.

Tarver said when the Red Cross called the funeral home that handled Keohane to verify some information, the funeral home told the relief organization that Lyons had also died.

Birch said she had seen Lyons recently and thought he was doing much better.

"Clearly, I was wrong," Birch said. "The people who were trying to help him didn't know or understand that this was coming. ... He needed so much help and I'm so sad that we couldn't do more to save this life."

Families at risk

Birch said that this situation has "revealed more starkly how at-risk our families are" and implored gay couples to get a will in place.

"He was a wonderful, sweet man," Foreman agreed. "Like so many of those gay and lesbian partners of those who died, they had their lives devastated."

Tarver added that the tragedy of Sept. 11 "has not ended for the families."

"Life is very short and it's obvious Mike didn't think it was worth living anymore without John," Tarver said. "This is a situation where he didn't have the support network that many married couples had. It was obvious that he was trying to go searching got support. ... He didn't have the support like some of the other [gay partners]."

A funeral service was held Wednesday, March 6, at Lyon's childhood parish, Immaculate Conception, in Philadelphia.

Gay activists say this is the first post-Sept. 11 suicide committed by a gay partner. The Washington Post reported Dec. 19 that Pat Flounders, whose husband died in the collapse of the second Trade Center tower, also committed suicide. Flounders was a breast cancer survivor who had recently had a pacemaker implanted.

Church shirking responsibility, gay critics say

➤ Continued from Page 1

Gay ban slammed

Eugene Kennedy, a former priest and author of a new book titled "The Unhealed Wound: The Church & Human Sexuality" told Southern Voice he disagrees with Navarro-Valls' comment about gay priests.

"That is an ill-considered trial balloon that has no substance," he said. "It's got more hot air than helium."

Kennedy, who is married and lives in Chicago, said the comments are an insult to gays.

"Plenty of homosexual priests have served with great integrity, never violated their vows, and have served their people generously," he said. "To say homosexual ordinations are invalid would be an easy way of making scapegoats of these people. But it would not solve the problem."

Dr. Jack Drescher, a psychiatrist in New York City and chair of the American Psychiatric Association's Committee on Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Issues, said it is common for "uneducated people" to link adult homosexuality with pedophilia.

Navarro-Valls, the pope's spokesperson, is a Spanish-born psychiatrist and not a member of the Catholic clergy.

"It is unfortunate that the Catholic Church compounds its pedophile priest problem by linking it to the unrelated issues of whether or not the church should accept gay priests," he said, "and whether gay priests can maintain vows of celibacy."

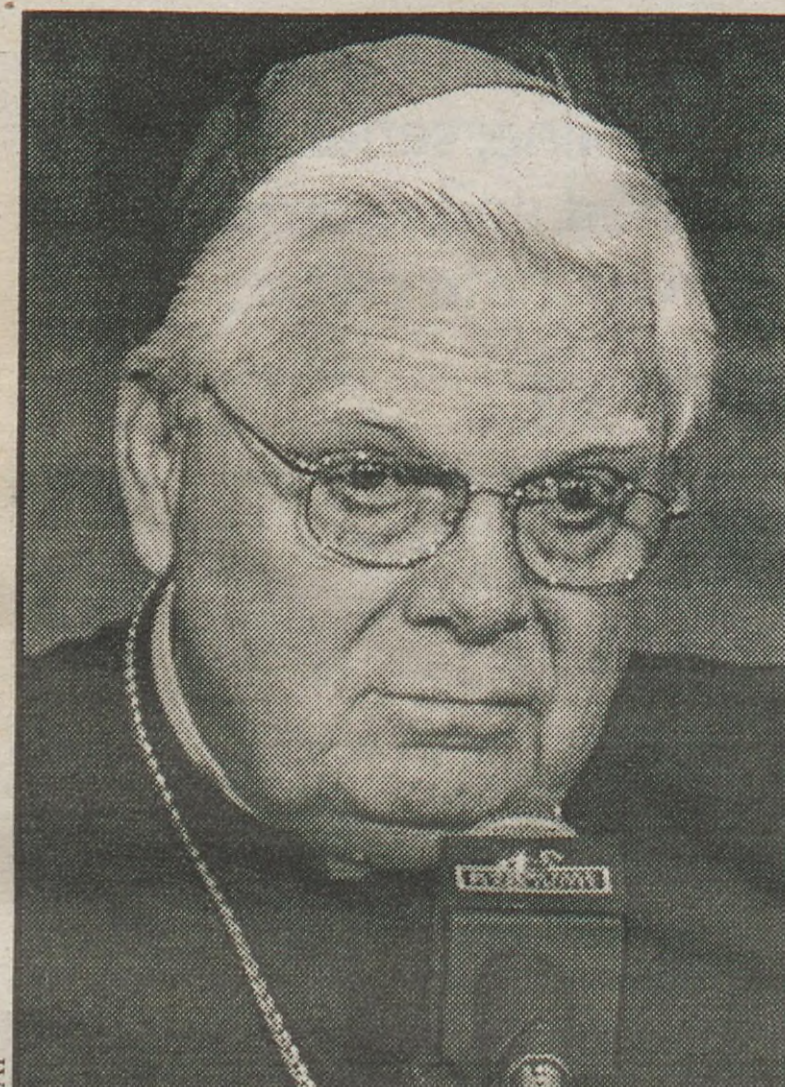
Earlier research by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops suggested that most priests who abuse target young males.

Dr. Frederick S. Berlin, a psychiatry professor at Johns Hopkins University and founder of the school's Sexual Disorders Clinic, discussed sexual abuse in the church during a 1997 interview with the bishops' conference. At the time, Berlin concluded that victims of priest abusers can be boys, girls or both, but "a majority of cases that have come to light, it has been boys rather than girls."

"I don't know of any actual evidence that abusers are attracted to the priesthood," Berlin said at the time. "There's been speculation that perhaps some people who are having a difficult time in dealing with sexual feelings deceive themselves into thinking that it will become a non-issue if they take vows of celibacy and become priests."

Drescher said he does not believe banning gay men from becoming Catholic priests would solve the Church's sexual abuse problem.

"What a ban on sexuality tends to do is encourage people to hide their true sexual



Cardinal Bernard F. Law ordered a gay priest accused of sexual abuse, Rev. George Spagnolia, to leave the rectory last month in a growing scandal over alleged pedophile priests.

identities," he said. "Currently, there's a ban on sexuality in the priesthood, and that's not working. So simply banning sexuality doesn't make sexuality go away."

"Where sexuality is maintained in a

➤ Continued on Page 9

Pedophile or gay?

Many Catholics are debating whether the growing scandal of sexual abuse in the priesthood implicates gay priests, and the discussion is focusing in part on whether the abusers are pedophiles of undetermined sexual orientation, or adults acting on a homosexual orientation.

The APA's Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders defines pedophilia as sexual activity by an adult with a prepubescent child, generally age 13 or younger. The condition is almost always seen in males and seldom diagnosed in females. Pedophiles can be sexually attracted to children of a particular gender, or they can be attracted to both genders.

"For people attracted to children, many pedophiles tend not to be gay-identified at all," said Dr. Jack Drescher, chair of the American Psychiatric Association's Committee on Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Issues. "Often, they are married men."

Ephhebophilia is a condition that involves an adult being attracted to children or teens around the time of puberty.

The Catholic Church teaches generally that even consensual adult "homogenital" behavior is "objectively immoral," but a homosexual orientation is "not immoral in itself."

— The Associated Press contributed to this report

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Church avoids gay issue

> Continued from Page 8
secret and shameful way, there's an increased likelihood for abuse rather than in a place where it would be OK to talk about sexual difficulties," he said. "People who are able to talk about their sexual difficulties are less likely to act on their sexual problems."

Sister Mary Ann Walsh, a spokesperson for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that the Washington, D.C.-based organization is "checking out" Navarro-Valls' recent comments but does not plan to issue a response.

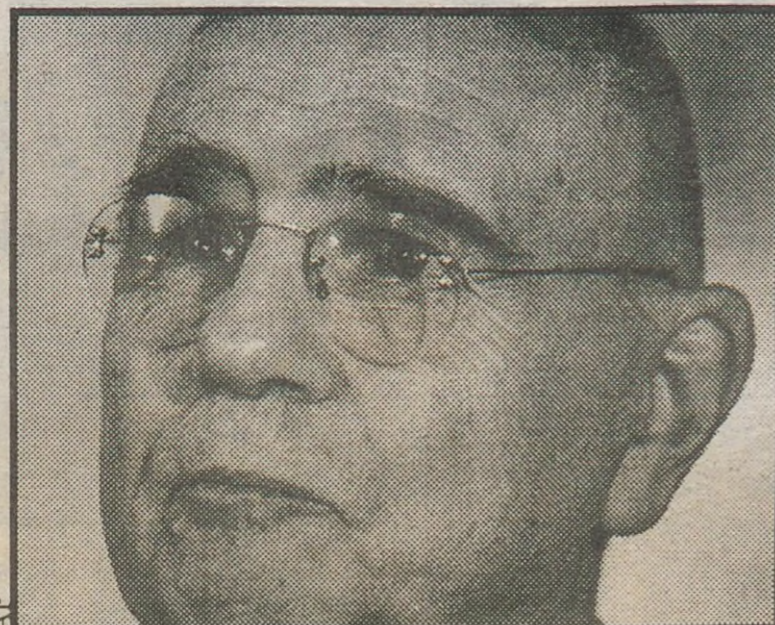
Avoiding the issue

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1997 released "Always Our Children," a pastoral message aimed at helping parents trying to accept that their child might be gay. The statement included comments drawn from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, a universal document, and the teachings of Pope John Paul II, among other sources.

Walsh noted that "Always Our Children" made it clear that there should not be discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation.

"It is not sufficient only to avoid unjust discrimination. Homosexual persons 'must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity,'" the bishops concluded.

Kevin Ivers, a spokesperson for the Log Cabin Republicans and a practicing Catholic,



Rev. George Spagnolia, a gay priest, has been accused of molesting a teen boy in 1971. Spagnolia has been forced from his post in Massachusetts.

said Navarro-Valls' comments are inconsistent with church teaching on homosexuality.

"This seems to be something the church is struggling with but not something it's actually going to do," he said. "It conflicts completely with the stated doctrine about the difference between homosexual behavior and orientation."

David Smith, a spokesperson from the Human Rights Campaign, said Navarro-Valls' comment is "reflective of the church's myopic view on this issue."

At the same time, Smith said, "Adults in positions of extreme influence, such as clergy, who take advantage of that influence and use it to engage in inappropriate behavior should be condemned in the strongest possible terms."

Sean Cahill, director of the Policy Institute of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, said Navarro-Valls' statement was "mean-spirited and ill-considered."

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Gay vote may split on District 25

Most Democrat candidates in primary have shown gay-friendly stances, observers say

by PENNY WEAVER

The Democratic primary race to fill the Texas' District 25 seat in the U.S. Congress is crowded with four candidates who each may arguably be a positive pick for gay Houstonians.

The district encompasses a large portion of the city and Harris County. Vying to represent Democrats in the fall election are Chris Bell, former Houston City Council member; former State Rep. Paul Colbert; attorney Stephen King; and City Councilman Carroll Robinson.

The winner of the Democrat election — and the subsequent runoff that many political observers expect — will face insurance company executive Tom Reiser, unopposed in the Republican primary, in November elections.

Incumbent Democrat Ken Bentsen is vacating the District 25 seat to run for U.S. Senate this year. He hopes to win the post being vacated by well-known conservative Phil Gramm, who will retire.

At least one gay activist said the District 25 field of candidates for the Democratic



DALTON DEHART

Among the four Democratic candidates vying for that party's nomination for the 25th U.S. Congressional District are former State Rep. Paul Colbert (right) and Chris Bell (left), former Houston City Council member. Also vying for the District 25 seat are attorney Stephen King and current Council member Carroll Robinson (not pictured).

ballot slot is a win-win choice for gays.

Clarence Bagby, Houston's board member for the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, a political group, also is a member of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus. That group endorsed Colbert, a move that surprised some political observers due to Bell's well-known pro-gay record.

Most recently, Bell opposed the anti-gay City Prop. 2, which was narrowly approved by Houston voters in November.

"While the caucus PAC has endorsed Paul Colbert, it's important for all of us to

remember that Houston's GLBT community is in a fantastic position in this race, where we have multiple candidates who have good track records of working for GLBT equality," Bagby said.

Robinson was endorsed by the Caucus in other political races, Bagby noted. Caucus members said Bell also screened well with HGLPC in this race, even though Colbert earned the group's official backing.

According to gay political activists who support Colbert, he "has been a leader for equal rights for LGBT people both in the Texas Legislature and in the private sector."

Gay supporters point out that Colbert wrote the original language for the state's hate crimes act, which later became the James Byrd Jr. bill made law last year and including sexual orientation as a protected category.

Bell is known for several pro-gay stances in his two terms on the Houston City Council. He supported the city's anti-bias bill, approved last year, which prohibits discrimination based on factors including sexual orientation.

As a candidate for mayor last fall, Bell was pushed out of the race in the initial election, failing to garner enough votes to proceed to the runoff, in which Mayor Lee Brown won re-election.

Bell's supporters include gay-friendly Brown, former Mayor Bob Lanier and pro-gay state Rep. Garnet Coleman, D-Houston.

Along with Brown, Bell and others, Lanier opposed the anti-gay City Prop. 2, which prevents the City of Houston from offering health insurance and other benefits to same-sex domestic partners of city employees.

King is a newcomer to politics, and less is known about his stances on gay issues than the records of his opponents. Representatives for King's campaign could not be reached for comment by press time.

Robinson, like Bell, supported Houston's anti-discrimination law, which included sexual orientation as a protected category, and also opposed the anti-gay City Prop. 2. In previous interviews with the Voice, he has cited his "record of fairness and inclusion" on the Council as setting him apart.

"My willingness to reach out to and involve the gay and lesbian community" also sets him apart, Robinson said.

According to Richard Murray, political science professor at the University of Houston, any of the four Democrats has a solid chance to win the primary.

District 25 has one of the most diverse cross-section of voters in the state, according to Murray. In addition to being home to the state's largest population of Jewish voters, the district includes sizable populations of whites, blacks and, to a lesser degree, Hispanics, Murray said.

He expects District 25 voters to elect a Democrat in the fall, depending on which competitor wins the party's slot.

Group claims Ratliff supports 'homosexual agenda'

➤ Continued from Page 1

"I disagree with the lieutenant governor that I did not go far enough and strong enough," Perry said Wednesday. "I think sometimes we get a little carried away with political rhetoric."

Groups including Young Conservatives of Texas condemned Ratliff's "outrageously hateful remarks," according to a YCT press release.

"It is ironic that he would, in the course of alleging FreePAC's mailings are hateful, make such grotesquely vile statements of his own," said Marc Levin, YCT state vice chairman. "These mailings are trivial compared to the great evils in human history and the war against terrorism."

Levin, whose group states that it is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, said Ratliff should "apologize for his inexcusable and unconscionable statements."

Clarence Bagby, Houston board member for the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, said the real "enemy" is FreePAC.

"A new day has dawned in Texas when our state's top Republican leaders condemn anti-gay political ads," Bagby said. "Instead of arguing over rhetoric, we should appreciate the strong stands taken by the governor, lieutenant governor and others and move on to target the real enemy: groups like Free PAC."

Still, Bagby hinted that top GOP leaders like Perry can do better in representing gay constituents.

"While being grateful for Gov. Perry's comments, we must remember that we have a candidate in [Democrat] Tony Sanchez who has publicly committed to support legislation like an Employment Non-Discrimination Act for Texas, and that's truly valuable to GOP Texans," Bagby said.

Perry is unopposed for governor in the GOP primary. Among Democrat candidates for governor are wealthy oilman Sanchez and former Texas Attorney General Dan Morales. Sanchez has been endorsed for the post by the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus.

Ratliff seeks re-election to his Senate seat, which he vacated when he replaced Perry as lieutenant governor when former Gov. George W. Bush became president.

FreePAC officials say the group is nonpartisan. Chairman Richard Ford stood by the anti-gay mailings and questioned whether Ratliff was attempting to stifle free speech.

"Judging from the legislators' reactions, we have told the truth," Ford said. "Every record vote was documented."

In addition to Perry, the group of legislators and Ratliff also criticized Land

Commissioner David Dewhurst, who is competing to replace Ratliff as lieutenant governor, for not taking a stronger stand against the anti-gay literature.

Dewhurst contributed \$85,000 to FreePAC in 1994-1999. He spoke out against the ads Tuesday, but Ratliff said he should have gone farther.

"Lieutenant Governor Ratliff is understandably upset about being the target of negative mudslinging," Dewhurst said Wednesday.

Ratliff also distributed a list of FreePAC donors, who include conservative anti-gay Pat Buchanan, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

One FreePAC flier that shows two men kissing is accompanied by text saying the Republican lawmakers targeted in the mailings supported hate-crime legislation protecting gays, according to the American-Statesman.

Texas Democrats also joined the fray, calling on Perry and other state GOP leaders to sever all ties with FreePAC.

"The Texas GOP should denounce this extremist outfit and quit doing business with it," said Democrat Party Chairwoman Molly Beth Malcolm.

— The Associated Press contributed to this story.



Although Texas Gov. Rick Perry denounced recent anti-gay mailings by the conservative group FreePAC, Perry's campaign received a \$25,000 donation from the organization in 1998, the Austin American-Statesman reported this week.

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Issue 1115

EDITORIAL

The pope's scapegoat

by CHRIS CRAIN

For weeks now, the Vatican has kept its silence as more reports surface about sexual abuse of young parishioners by Catholic priests. In the ensuing media frenzy, church leaders of the highest rank in this country have acknowledged hushing up accusations of sexual molestation and reassigning priests even where such charges had been substantiated.

Then finally, last week, the spokesperson for Pope John Paul II discussed the problem publicly, in an interview with the *New York Times*. But rather than acknowledge the culpability of church leadership, for not doing more to ferret out abusers and for not turning wrongdoers over to law enforcement, the Vatican spokesperson took the easy way out. He blamed the gays.

"People with these inclinations just cannot be ordained," Joaquin Navarro-Valls said in the interview. "That does not imply a final judgment on people with homosexuality. But you cannot be in this field."

This is an institution that has just acknowledged, though not near fully enough, that its leadership has conspired to cover-up a shocking number of cases involving sexual molestation, engaged in by the very men to whom its members' children are entrusted.

In almost any other setting, the leaders of an institution like that, having shown itself to be so irresponsible and so incompetent at dealing with issues of sexuality and trust, would have felt somewhat covered by the whole experience, and would take extra care in the steps taken to repair the damage and their diminished credibility.

Perhaps the church might even engage in some much-needed soul searching about how its outdated insistence of priestly celibacy (and maintaining a single-sex clergy) might attract at least some candidates running away from their sexuality, and might even inhibit the proper and normal sexual development of others.

But the arrogance of the conservatives now in control of the Vatican knows no such bound-

aries. In breathtaking fashion, the pope's spokesperson has made gays the scapegoat here, not the church and its nefarious policy of coddling abusers and paying off their victims.

Navarro-Valls has claimed that he is not raising the tired and discredited stereotype that gays are pedophiles. The Spanish-born psychiatrist, who has acted for years as the voice of aging Pope John Paul II, has concluded that the victims in these molestation cases are old enough that the priests responsible for the abuse cannot be considered pedophiles.

Instead, Navarro has decided, along with apparently a number of other Catholic conservatives, these are gay priests who act out their sexual interest in post-pubescent teenage boys. Gay pederast priests, not pedophiles.

The Vatican is in something of a unique position to make this judgment, since it has access to information about many more

And the evidence may well bear out that many, if not all, of the guilty priests are in fact gay. Father George Spagnolia is but one example. This Massachusetts priest was among the few to publicly dispute sex abuse allegations lodged against him, only to later admit he had lied to the press about his own sexual past. He had claimed to be celibate, but later admitted engaging in sexual relationships with two different men during a 20-year leave from the priesthood. Even if most of the guilty priests are not gay, there is a challenge for the gay community generally in the pain wrought by those gay priests who did take advantage of teenage male parishioners.

The gay community, from its leadership down to its own lay members, has often been unwilling to acknowledge, much less address, the longstanding menace of older gay men who seek out inappropriate, and often abu-

The Vatican should be condemned for blaming gays for its priest sex abuse scandal, but let's not forget to address inappropriate sexual involvement with gay and questioning youth.

cases than have been reported in the media. (The church says it does not keep cumulative records on such cases, a claim that is either laughable or criminal, depending upon whether you believe it.) But the public evidence of reported cases involve a number boys under the age of 13, the onset of puberty for most males.

Still, accepting Navarro-Valls' proposition that these are gay priests molesting teenage boys — and the vast majority of victims do appear to be male — his conclusion that the church should ban ordination of gays remains indefensible and horribly prejudiced.

Even if he is not saying that gay priests, and therefore gay men generally, are pedophiles. He is still saying, on behalf of the pope, that gay priests, and therefore gay men generally, are pederasts, or are sufficiently incapable of restraining themselves around teenage boys that they should be removed from the priesthood.

The uncomfortable facts

If this is, in fact, the Vatican's (tentative) position on sex abuse in the priesthood — and Navarro-Valls' authority to speak on this subject is a bit murky — the church's stance is particularly outrageous for what it does not say: that the Catholic hierarchy is itself complicit in these crimes, and that the vast majority of gay priests (and bishops and cardinals) serve with distinction and honor.

But for gays, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, the Vatican's response ought to be even more challenging for the charge that does seem to fit the discomfiting facts. It is true that almost all of the victims sexually assaulted by these priests are male. It is also true that many of these youths were around the age of puberty, and some were clearly post-pubescent.

sive, relationships with teen-age males.

Many gay men, including some respected gay conservatives, act as if pederasty is a respected tradition, dating back to the ancient Greece, deserving of celebration, not condemnation. They fail to recognize how many youths in such relationships are confused about their own sexuality and cannot be equals or make sound judgments about when or whether to engage in sexual relations. Many more gays, men and women alike and including most gay rights leaders, turn a blind eye toward the problem, using the pedophile stereotype as a shield in a manner that is every bit as wrongheaded as when conservatives use it as a sword against us.

Conservative Catholics suggest all gays are pedophiles so that they don't have to wrestle with the church's complicity in these sexual crimes. Meanwhile, gay leaders suggest that all gay pederasts are pedophiles so that they don't have to answer for gay priests who abuse their positions of authority in utterly inexcusable fashion.

The same political sides played out in similarly depressing fashion after the murder in September 1999 of Jesse Dirkhising, a 13-year-old Arkansas teen who died of asphyxiation while engaging in rough sexual play with an older gay couple that had befriended him.

So as we join together in condemning the vicious scapegoating of gays by the Vatican, let us not forget our own unfinished work — including an open and honest discussion as a community about how we can better protect gay and questioning youth from inappropriate sexual relationships with older gay adults, whatever type of collar they wear.

Chris Crain is executive editor of the *Houston Voice* and can be reached at ccrain@window-media.com.

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LETTERS

Voice editorial, trans groups miss the point of ENDA

To the Editor:

Thank you for at least acknowledging that gender identity and sexual orientation are different. Having made that point, however, your editorial ("All-or-nothing on trans rights," Feb. 22) and the trans community miss it.

Kantaras vs. Kantaras, among other recent court actions, proves that the legal remedy for discrimination against the transgendered will not be found through ENDA or recognition of same-sex marriages. It will be found in replacing the patchwork of legal rulings and statutes across the country

with uniform legal recognition of post-transition gender.

This is the basic argument put forward in the Kantaras case: The marriage was legal because he is a man: albeit with XX chromosomal structure, but nonetheless of legal male gender. If such legal recognition were to be put in place, then the full weight of existing sex-discrimination laws comes into practice.

This, of course, does nothing for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals who do not wish to be another gender but want to merely be afforded the human dignity and recognition which is our birthright.

ENDA is about protecting people from employment discrimination based on their sexual orientation. It is a spe-

cific remedy for a specific harm.

Instead of trying to scuttle ENDA, why not add another legislative initiative to redress the real legal problems of the transgendered: uniform legal acceptance and recognition of their assigned sex?

Michael Craig
Houston

Trans person believes in inclusion for all

To the Editor:

You are right. ("All-or-nothing on trans rights," editorial, Feb. 22). As a

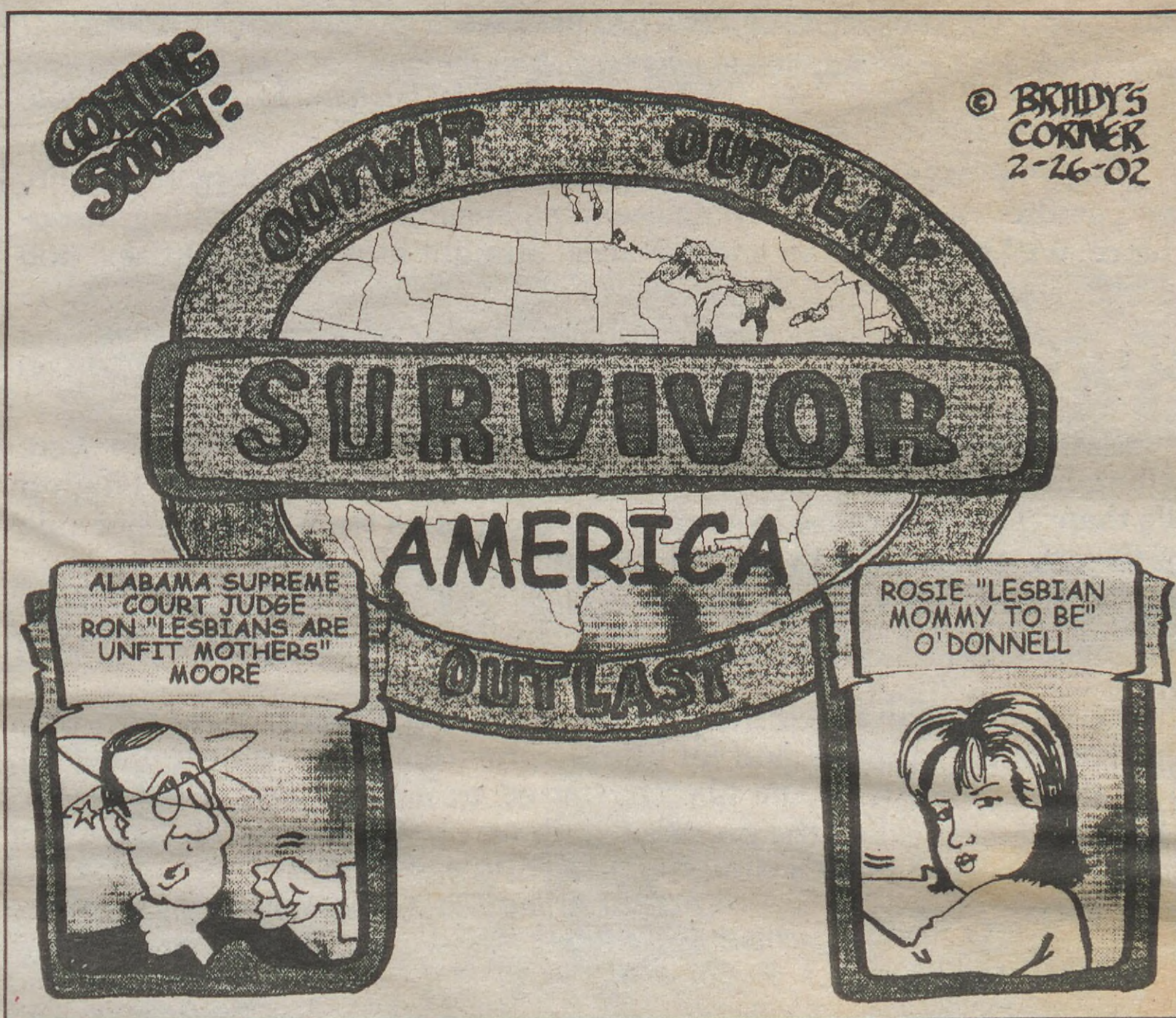
male-to-female post-op and a lesbian, I still feel the exclusion.

Inclusion of everyone is the only way, and I have been saying it for decades. We have fought long and hard here in Hawaii for trans rights, but with no success and with one or two people at the legislative level killing our bills for inclusion.

I mourn with you regarding the latest death in Houston of a "T" person. We are still regarded as threats and social lepers.

What is it going to take to get all the outcasts in society included — a transgender jihad?

Vanessa Walker
Honolulu, Hawaii



Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel





City of Houston Community Enhancement Meetings



Each year, the City updates its long-range plans for installing new sewer-lines, streets, police and fire stations, libraries and other projects in the community. Please help identify projects and City service needs in your area for the City's next Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the five year schedule for constructing and financing projects.

Council members are holding a series of meetings on the annual operating budget and the (CIP). Come learn about City programs and funding, and tell us *your* ideas for improving *your* community.

District A - Bruce Tatro
February 21, 7-9 p.m.
Northbrook Middle School
3030 Rosefield

District F - Mark Ellis
February 19, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Sharpstown Recreation Center
6600 Harbor Town

District B - Carol M. Galloway
March 5, 7-9 p.m.
Kashmere Gardens Multi-Service Center
4802 Lockwood

District G - Bert Keller
March 6, 7-9 p.m.
Frostwood Elementary School Cafetorium
12214 Memorial Drive

District C - Mark Goldberg
February 13, 7-9 p.m.
Sheltering Arms
3838 Aberdeen Way

District H - Gabriel Vasquez
February 25, 7-9 p.m.
Browning Elementary School
607 Northwood

District D - Ada Edwards
March 12, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
TSU Law School Auditorium
3100 Cleburne
March 14, 6 - 8 p.m.
Power Center: Southwest Wing
12401 S. Post Oak

District I - Carol Alvarado
March 13, 6 - 8 p.m.
Magnolia Multi-Service Center
7037 Capitol

District E - Addie Wiseman
February 18, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Dobie High School Cafeteria
11111 Beamer Rd.
March 4, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Creekwood Middle School Amphitheater
3603 W. Lake Houston Parkway

Comment forms will be available at all meetings, the Mayor's Citizens Assistance Office, Council offices and the Planning & Development Department. To request a form by mail, call 713-837-7831. Bilingual, Sign language, and/or captioning services are available on request. Please call 713-837-7831, one week before the meeting you plan to attend.
(TTY 713-837-7702)



on the record

"This is not the evil axis."

Barbara Walters, explaining that she and fellow ABC interview hound Diane Sawyer were not in a spat after Walters' "leaked" that Rosie O'Donnell is gay on the day that Sawyer taped an interview with O'Donnell to air on "Dateline" (Associated Press)



Barbara Walters & Diane Sawyer

"Barbara and I talked about that, and I am now completely relaxed about it."

Diane Sawyer, agreeing that "now" relations have improved between Sawyer and Barbara Walters, who previously crossed hairs over who would conduct Rosie O'Donnell's coming out interview (Associated Press)

"The big interview right then, just before Sept. 11, was the Friday before on '20/20' — Anne Heche. Do any of you remember Anne Heche? She thought that she was from outer space and that she was another person? Huge, hugely rated. And then Sept. 11 happened. Everything changed in this country, and everything changed in news."

Barbara Walters, in response to a question about the impact of Sept. 11 on the media (NBC interview by Andrea Mitchell)

"Gay humor is deeply nuanced, a formidable weapon forged in pain, tempered by societal disenfranchisement, sheathed in a charming insouciance, wielded with elan and panache. Straight humor is about sex, poo or golf. Much funnier."

Writer Gene Weingarten, explaining the difference between gay humor and straight humor (Washington Post, Feb. 24)

"Gay men gravitate toward dumb sex jokes that straight boys were telling in sixth grade. We still look up 'ass' in the dictionary and laugh if it's there. This is because in sixth grade most of us were on the other side of the cafeteria talking to the girls. We missed out."

Writer Hank Stuever, explaining the difference between gay humor and straight humor (Washington Post, Feb. 24)

"Sylvia Rivera grabbed the petition-laden clipboard, marched up to the front of the meeting, and hit [the Greenwich Village council member] over the head with it. The liberals started to listen up. ... GAA leader Marty Robinson called the process 'climbing up the liberals.' Today there are other issues. Now it's climbing up the progressives."

Activist Arthur Evans, recalling how gay and trans activist Sylvia Rivera, who died last month, helped convince the New York City Council to adopt a non-discrimination law (Bay Area Reporter, Feb. 28)



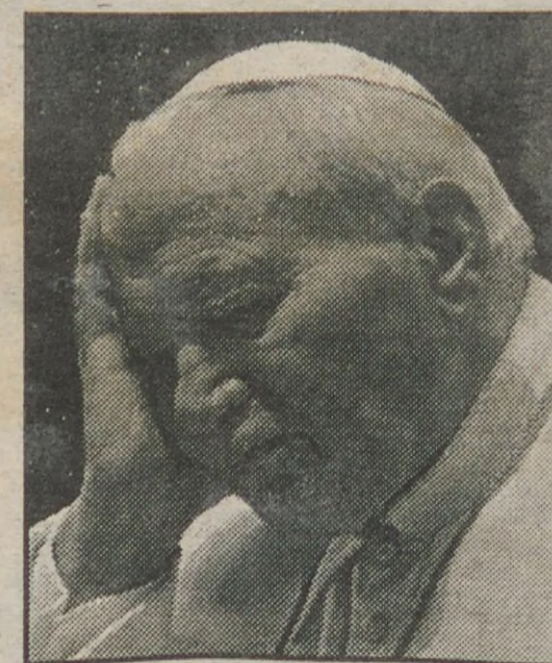
Dame Edna Everage

"I must say, it's been quite a while since I've been invited into a young man's hole!"

Dame Edna Everage on last week's "Ally McBeal," upon entering a secret office wall hideaway called "The Hole" by its young male occupant (ABC TV)

"I have a better solution. Let's rip it up."

Tipper Gore, wife of former Vice President Al Gore, on the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on gays in the military, adopted by the Clinton/Gore White House; Gore was speaking at a Human Rights Campaign fund-raising dinner (Raleigh N.C. News & Observer, Feb. 24)



Pope John Paul II

"People with these inclinations just cannot be ordained. That does not imply a final judgment on people with homosexuality. But you cannot be in this field."

Dr. Joaquin Navarro-Valls, spokesperson for Pope John Paul II, blaming gay priests for the growing scandal of pedophilia in the Roman Catholic priesthood (New York Times, March 3)

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CALENDAR

- | | |
|---|--|
| Friday • March 8
Morning Prayer 10am
Movie Night 7pm
"Captain Corelli's Mandolin" | Friday • March 15
Morning Prayer 10am |
| Saturday • March 9
Breakfast 9:30am | Monday • March 18
Eucharist 7:30pm |
| Monday • March 11
Eucharist 7:30pm | Friday • March 22
Morning Prayer 10am
Movie Night 7pm
"Curse of the Jade Scorpion" |
| Thursday • March 14
"Surviving Grief" Workshop 7pm | |

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—Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus PAC President Ken Jones



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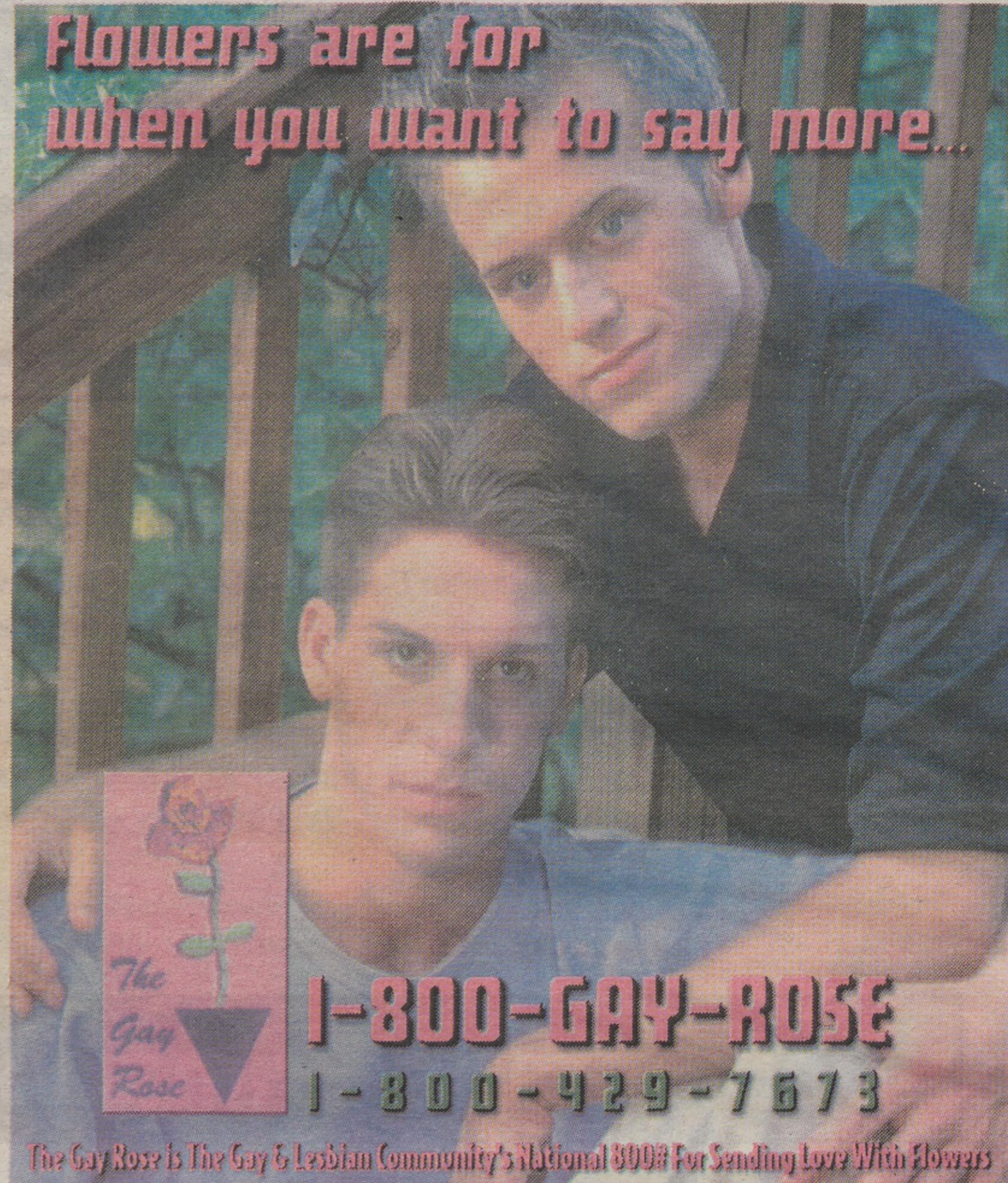
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Out on the Bayou

Houston Voice • March 8, 2002



Queen of commentary

From the Chanel-sporting superstar in *'Without You I'm Nothing'* to top-hatted author, Sandra Bernhard wears many hats.

She can sing, she can dance, but Sandra Bernhard brings the house down by calling it as she sees it

by BRIAN MOYLAN

Sandra Bernhard — self-mocking yet righteous, sexually ambiguous, crass and kind — is a genre unto herself. From playing gay on *"Roseanne,"* palling around with Madonna, and guest appearances on *"Will & Grace,"* Bernhard has kept herself in the forefront of queer culture. Her personal life, however, she keeps relatively private. She is a mom (since 1998); she's had girlfriends.

Conversely, Bernhard holds nothing back when it comes to her political opinions. She has gained notoriety as an actor, singer, songwriter, comic and author. But it may well be Bernhard's sheer force of personality, combined with a shameless frankness, that has secured her stature. She refreshingly pulls no punches. When the rest of America was adoring Barbara Bush, Bernhard took to American stages and called her a bitch, offering to help move the then-First Lady from the White House.

Roughly a decade later, the next generation of Bushes occupy the White House, and Bernhard is again on tour. This time around, the show is called *"Hero Worship,"* Bernhard's response to the Sept. 11 attacks. Don't expect any Yankee Doodle boosterism.

Houston Voice: Tell me about the new show.

Sandra Bernhard: It's called *"Hero Worship"* and it was developed post-

Sept. 11. It's my commentary on where we stand as Americans and people who want to do good, but don't always do the right thing. And just the general paranoia and general flag-waving-obsessive behavior that we have shown after that.

Voice: When was the first time, post 9-11, that you heard about the "Death of irony"? What did you think about it?

Bernhard: Right after 9-11, everyone was like, you can't be ironic anymore, but I think that people meant you can't be cynical. I've never been a cynical person. To be ironic takes thinking and takes intelligence and introspection. So I hope that people can tell the difference between the two.

'[George Bush] would be too busy playing Game Boy and taking naps and choking on pretzels to listen to me anyway.'

Voice: Just so you don't pull an Alanis Morissette on us, how do you define irony?

Bernhard: Irony is finding the double entendre in cultural and social issues and finding a unique and witty way to present it to the public.

Voice: Can you give an example of a post 9-11 ironic situation?

Bernhard: I don't think it's totally ironic, but the fact all this money was raised for the victims and no one got the money. Now the policemen's wives are going and kicking Guilianni's ass. And he's trying to make this into a 30-year investment or something like that, for whom, I don't know, but he got busted. I'm glad.

Voice: How much of the show was written post 9-11?

Bernhard: A good 90 percent of it.

Voice: Did the time constraints limit the amount of material you came up with?

Bernhard: I kind of did it on the road, I did it here and there. There was just so much to talk about, and I had written a bunch of new music, so it just all came together seamlessly.

Voice: Do you think that as we learn more about events that it will change the show?

Bernhard: It will definitely change as the news evolves, but the news is the same as it was two or three months ago. It's all the same and it's all horrible.

Voice: What do you think about the term "the war against evil"?

Bernhard: I think they should all look inward over at the White House.

There are a lot of evil eyes roaming around that building.

Voice: You weren't a fan of the old Bush regime; how do you think they compare to the new Bushes?

Bernhard: The new Bushes make the old Bushes look like great thinkers and intellectuals and societal improvers. The progeny has shockingly fallen below them. It's shocking.

Voice: If you could yell a message to George the younger down Pennsylvania Avenue, what would you say?

Bernhard: I think that I would save my breath and keep my eye peeked on the next four years and what's going to happen after he's gone. He would be too busy playing Game Boy and taking naps and choking on pretzels to listen to me anyway.

➤ Continued on Page 18

appts

sunday, march 10

The 13th annual AIDS Walk Houston, presented by AIDS Foundation Houston, steps off early. The 3.5-mile event is held to increase awareness and education regarding HIV/AIDS. Groups to benefit from proceeds from the walk are AIDS Foundation Houston and five local HIV/AIDS service organizations. The day-long event includes a banner for participants to write messages of hope; a kids' corner that features a moonwalk, clowns and face painters; and a post-walk party by Ann Mundy Entertainment, with food and refreshments. 8 a.m. registration. 8:30 a.m. warm-up activities. 9 a.m. start time. Sam Houston Park, 1000 Bagby St. AIDS Foundation Houston, 713-623-6796. www.aids-help.org.

thursday, march 14

The Pride Committee of Houston will announce grand marshals for the June 29, 2002, Houston GLBT Pride Parade. The public is invited to the announcement reception. Pride Parade grand marshal positions are among the highest honors bestowed each year by Houston's GLBT community. A public vote by mail-in ballot and one day of poll voting took place in February to determine this year's grand marshals. 7 p.m. Sycamore Heights Bed & Breakfast, 245 West 18th St. PrideLine: 713-529-6979.

friday, march 15

Montrose Counseling Center hosts its 14th annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration "Bringin' in the Green" as a fund-raiser. Jerry Atwood and Kim Yvette will provide entertainment. Refreshments will be served, and a silent auction will be held. The event also includes complementary valet parking. 5:30-8 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center, 502 Hawthorne. 713-529-0037.

upcoming

The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston presents an AIDS services benefit performance of its "Sophistication." The piece features "Naked Man" by Robert Seeley and Philip Littell. James B. Knapp is artistic director of the chorus. Proceeds benefit Bering Omega Community Services, The Montrose Clinic and Montrose Counseling Center. 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 19. Reserved tickets: \$35, including pre-show reception at 7 p.m. General seating: \$15 advance sales, \$18 at door, if available. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold St. For tickets: 1-800-494-TIXS or www.gmch.org. Regular upcoming performances of "Sophistication" are March 22 and 23.



The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston will perform 'Sophistication' on March 19, 22 and 23.

From 'Superstar Summer' to one Saturday in March, Bernhard is back

► Continued from Page 17

Voice: Do you think your show is of a more political nature now?

Bernhard: Absolutely. I think that it's a worthy cause and it's a worthy time, with everything going on here and internationally, and I think that's a critical junction and intelligent people need to think about it and speak out.

Voice: Is this a result of Sept. 11?

Bernhard: I was already on the bandwagon when the election was so corrupted.

Voice: Have events in your private life added to the political nature of the show?

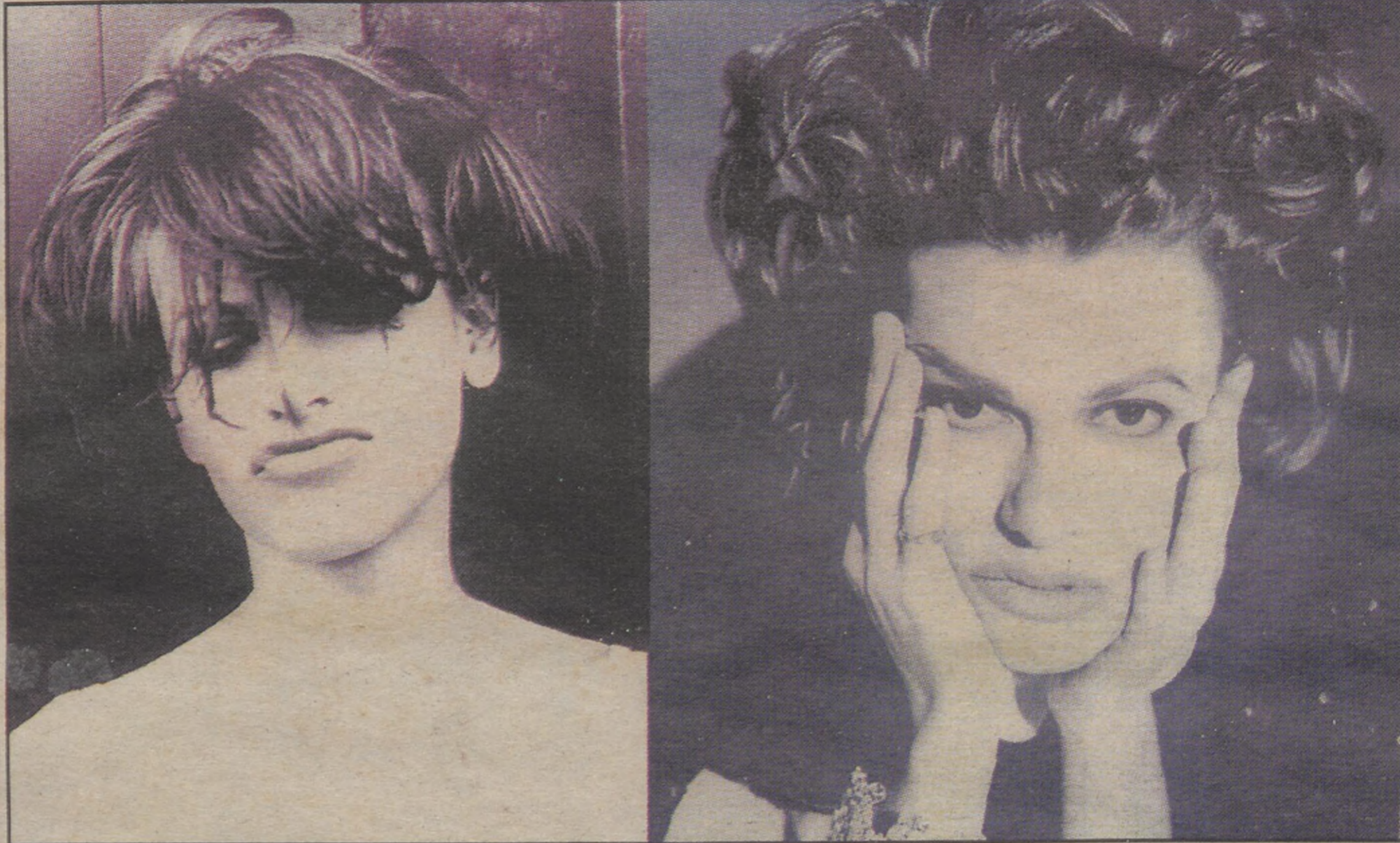
Bernhard: To a certain extent. My concerns are certainly more than things that pertain to me personally. We're all affected when people are suffering around us. There are human rights violations and issues of privacy are being threatened.

Voice: Did the birth of your daughter add to this altruism?

Bernhard: I think that it has increased the velocity of the concern, but I've always tried to think outside of my circle. But, yeah, definitely, that added to it.

Voice: I was wondering about your television show [the "Sandra Bernhard Experience," which aired for a week on A&E]. You said you might do more of them in the future?

Bernhard: Ironically enough, they did pick it up a week before 9-11 and they ordered 13 more shows. When Sept. 11 happened, everything at A&E imploded along



Bernhard says her new show, 'Hero Worship,' now on stages across the country, includes more political topics but also concerns such as human rights. She notes she is more personally attuned to certain topics since the 1998 birth of her daughter.

with the Twin Towers. That really happened everywhere, and we were left in the lurch. So now we're trying to regroup and find a new home for it. It depends on who decides they want it, and I'm sure it would've evolved over on A&E anyway, but we'll see.

Voice: What's the difference in your creative process

music can we expect in the new show?

Bernhard: They're kinda rock-and-roll ballads and ditties and throw-aways and emotional sexy ballads that I love to do. And there are some covers, my interpretation. I'll never tell what they are because that's no fun for the audience.

when coming up with things for television and putting together a show like this one?

Bernhard: First of all, you're in one place and it's under much more controlled circumstances. But you only reach a thousand people rather than a million or 10 million. A live performance is a piece; it's something you can do over and over again. Once you do it on television, you have to go back to the drawing board immediately, so it burns through material pretty quickly.

Voice: Do you ever get sick of doing the show night after night?

Bernhard: I never do it night after night, so I don't get tired of it. But, yeah, after doing a show for a while, I do get a bit sick of it. That's why I improvise so much.

Voice: What sort of

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homefront

Seasons dictate pruning

Spring not the right time of year to prune all plants in the garden and yard

by ELLA TYLER

My favorite gardening work is planning, but of the physical gardening projects, my favorite is pruning. Results are immediately visible and it is not something that everyone does well. Witness the common hedge — top heavy and bare-legged. Not a pretty sight.

To keep a hedge evenly full, trim the top slightly narrower than the bottom. This lets the sun reach the lower branches. If a plant is bare at the bottom, sometimes it is possible to prune it so it will fill out.

Growth hormones are concentrated at the last bud on a branch, so when the terminal bud is removed, the buds below it are encouraged to leaf out. The cut should be made far enough down the branch that the new growth will be low.

This process also works for plants like begonias and pansies that have gotten too leggy. Snip the tops out. On a plant that sends up a cane — nandina for example — remove lanky growth at the base. Junipers, cedars and other conifers do not fill out. Once a branch is bare, it will remain bare.

Spring is not the right time to prune everything. I used to prune my viburnums in February and wondered why they didn't bloom. Then I read that they bloom in April. I had been cutting the blooms off. Prune spring-flowering plants like azalea and bridal wreath after they bloom.

Spring is not the right time to prune everything. I used to prune my viburnums in February and wondered why they didn't bloom. Then I read that they bloom in April. I had been cutting the blooms off.

Summer-flowering plants, like crape myrtle, can be pruned now. The trend is to prune your crape myrtles just enough to remove the old seed heads.

Most plants bloom only one time a year, so if you prune them at the wrong time, you've lost your flower and fruit crop for the year. This is good, though, if you are allergic to certain kinds of pollen — ligustrum, for example — or are afraid of bees around the house.

Fertilize the bushes when you prune, but wait for warmer weather to do the lawn. I use rose food for everything. There are a lot of specialty formulations for specific plants, but these are created for connoisseurs.



Pruning of any plant is a skill that gardeners must learn with a few tips and plenty of practice.

There generally is very little difference between types. Get whatever is formulated for the plant you have most of, or use a 13-13-13, with micro nutrients. I will not use a product with a high middle number, representing phosphorus. Most plants don't need that much phosphorus, and some, like hibiscus, don't like it. It builds up rapidly in our soil.

There are all kinds of fertilizers. Inorganics, produced at the chemical plant, are more concentrated and work faster. Organics (compost, manure) are produced in nature, are less concentrated, last longer and improve soil health. I use both, since I doubt the plant cares where its chemicals come from.

Read the label and follow the directions. Water a plant several hours before you fertilize. When a plant is fertilized, water will be drawn from the roots to equalize the concentration of chemicals around the root. If the plant is dry, too much water will be drawn out and the plant will dehydrate. This is a fertilizer burn. Always water a plant before you do anything to it.

I use Felco hand pruners, but that is rose society peer pressure. Other, less expensive brands are fine. I prefer bypass pruners rather than anvil, but the most important ingredient is a sharp blade. Keep the sharp edge next to the part that is remaining on the plant. I use loppers for branches that are too large for the hand pruners.

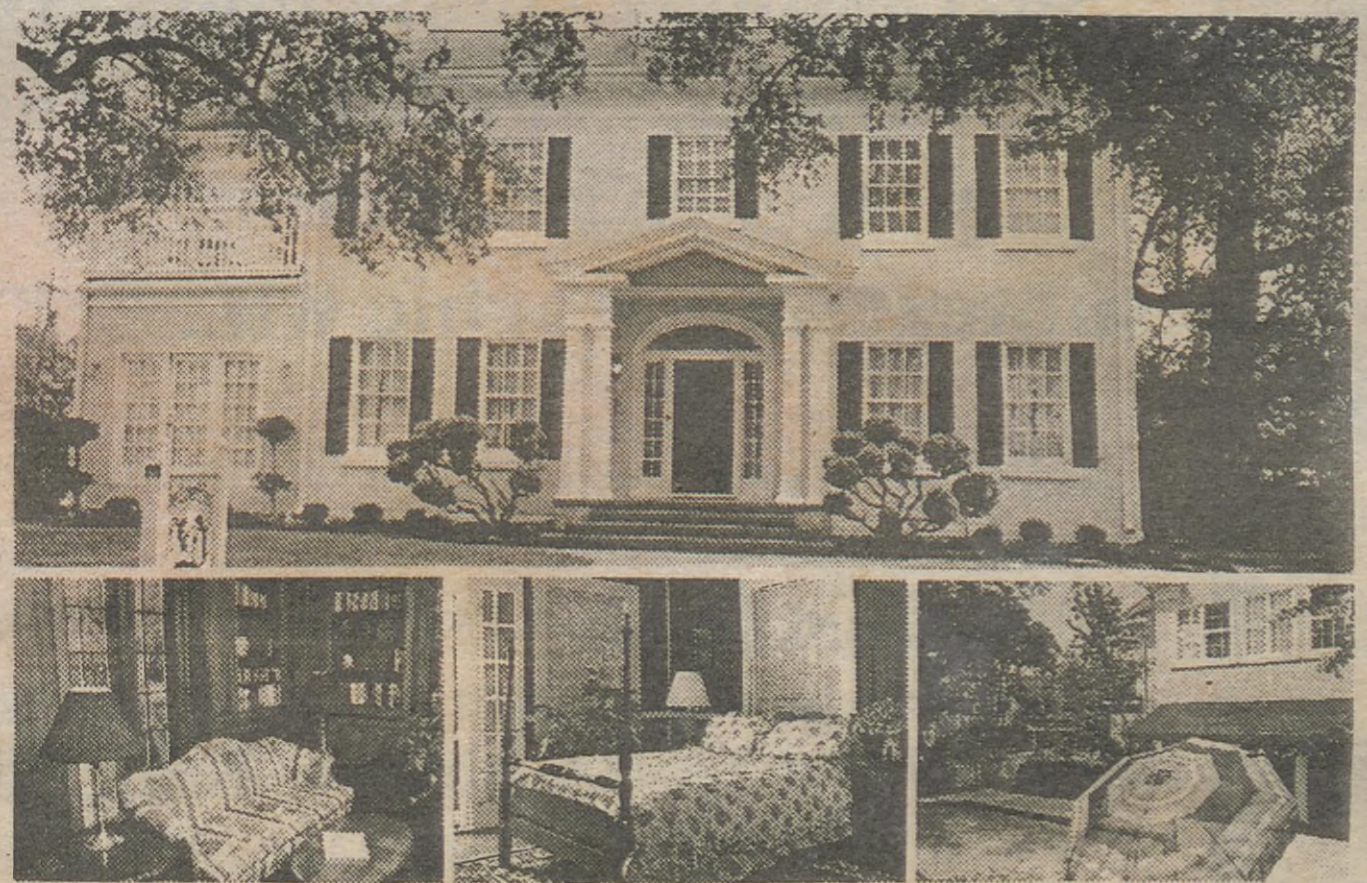
Before you prune, study the plant. Look for its natural shape. Cut out all the dead wood, cut anything that is going in the wrong direction, and cut anything that is rubbing against another branch. I begin at the bottom and work up. As a general rule, don't remove more than a third of a plant unless, of course, it is dead wood. Tropicals that have frozen to the ground will probably come back.

After all that, replenish the mulch. Don't forget that mulching has lots of benefits, including weed prevention.

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The critics praise UNHINGED PRODUCTIONS' The Man in the Trunk

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"Deborah Hope (top, left) gives the surest performance with her Cozy, a frayed, type-A suburban witch with a heart that has been crushed by grief and guilt. * "Paul Locklear (second from top)... moves beyond innocuous earnestness to unleash a quiet power...Yvonne Aguirre (third) turns in a confident and funny performance as the effusive and ebullient Annie...Kelly Williams (fourth) brings relaxed good humor to Randy, stretching to make him more than just the easygoing, ever-loyal gay friend."** Susan Oltmanns-Koozin (fifth) delivers "her anger and resentment at just the right time and just the right spot -- below the belt."***

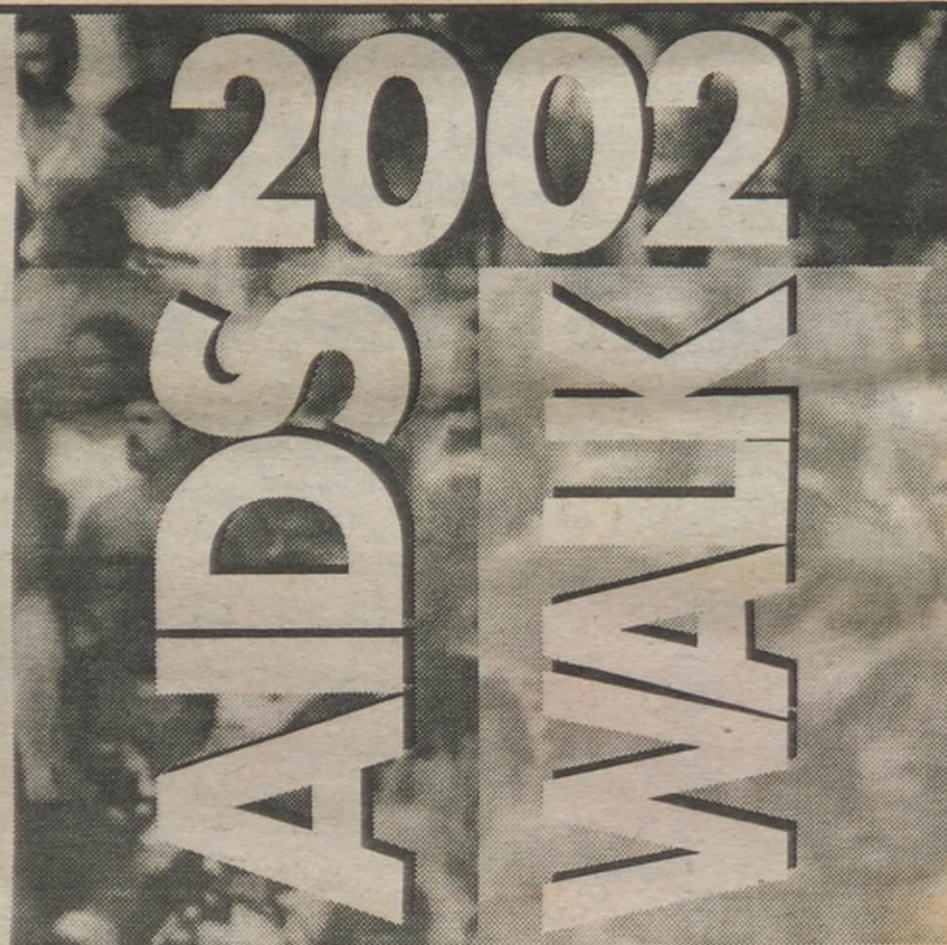
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*Lee Williams Houston Press; **Everett Evans, Houston Chronicle; ***George Jonte, Houston Voice



In a sweet flashback, a teen-age Frank (Paul Locklear) consoles his gay pal Randy (Kelly Williams) after an adolescent disclosure.



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THEATER LISTINGS

Emotions abound on stage

Theater offerings include work by local comedy troupe, sex and violence, and traditional tales

by PENNY WEAVER

ubertoast

The Houston comedy troupe ubertoast returns to Theatre New West with its bizarre and satirical stylings this weekend and next weekend as well. The group was the brainchild of Houston native Franz Hill, who pooled the talents of several actors from the University of St. Thomas and created the group. The unique styles of writing and performing from the six 20-something members of the troupe contribute to their ever-changing and eclectic blend of material. The troupe already is known for funny and sometimes shocking sketches including "My Father the Bear," "Amputee Dance Party" and "Jesus' Blind Date."

on stage

ubertoast

8 p.m. March 8-9 and 15-16
Tickets: \$10 adults, \$8 students
Theatre New West
1415 California St.
713-528-4325

'Stomp'

The international percussion sensation and award-winning production "Stomp" makes its debut at The Grand 1894 Opera House in Galveston this weekend. The piece began as a street performance in Britain and has grown into an international phenomenon over the past decade, with five international touring companies playing in more than 200 cities around the world. The production includes young performers who make a rhythm out of everything from stiff-bristle brooms to Zippo lighters, trash cans, boots and hubcaps.

on stage

'Stomp'

8 p.m. Friday, 5 and 9 p.m. Saturday
Tickets: \$16.50-\$65
The Grand 1894 Opera House
2020 Postoffice
Galveston Island, TX 77550
800-821-1894
www.thegrand.com

'The Killing Power of Love'

Dos chicas theater commune offers "The Killing Power of Love" in continuing performances this month. Directed by Ann Candler Harlan, the evening on stage explores the violent side of love and passion intermixed in two one-act plays. "Salome" by Oscar Wilde details the seduction of the title character as she reduces men to insanity in this infamous rendition of possibly the oldest and most famous "femme fatale" story in the Western hemisphere. A melodrama by George F. Walker, "Zastrozzi, the Master of Discipline," is full of characters who live in a state of heightened reality, and



James Wagnone plays Sandy Lord and Connie Embesi Bennicoff plays Liz Imbrie in 'The Philadelphia Story,' starting next week in Houston.

blood flows freely through a series of violent encounters throughout the act.

on stage

'The Killing Power of Love'

7:30 p.m. March 8, 9, 11, 14, 15,
16, 21, 22, 23
6:30 p.m. March 10
Tickets: \$8
Heliotrope
411 Westheimer
713-201-0193

'The Philadelphia Story'

Philip Barry's intelligent, classic romantic comedy of love and marriage, human growth and class distinctions, comes to the Houston stage later this month. "The Philadelphia Story" includes fast-paced scenes that lead the audience through the trials and tribulations of a family preparing for a wedding under less than ideal conditions. Directed by Bob Maddox, the performance is brought to life by The Country Playhouse, a nonprofit regional theater.

on stage

'The Philadelphia Story'

8 p.m. March 15-April 6, on weekends
2 p.m. March 24
Tickets: \$15 or \$13 for seniors and students
The Country Playhouse
12802 Queensbury
713-467-4497
www.countryplayhouse.org

'Full Gallop'

Originally presented in fall 1999, "Full Gallop" stars Sally Edmundson as the legendary fashion icon Diana Vreeland, former editor-in-chief of Vogue. Directed by Rob Bundy, the wildly popular production portrays the audacity and tenacity of the self-made Vreeland, who became the arbiter of fashion in the United States and possibly the Western world.

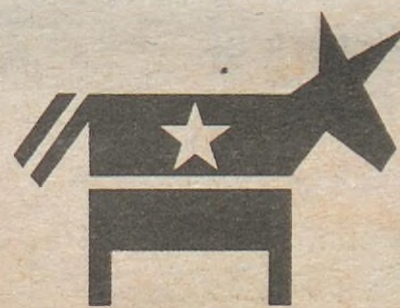
on stage

'Full Gallop'

March 13-28
Tickets: \$35-\$75
Stages Repertory Theatre
3201 Allen Parkway, Suite 101
713-527-0123
www.stagestheatre.com

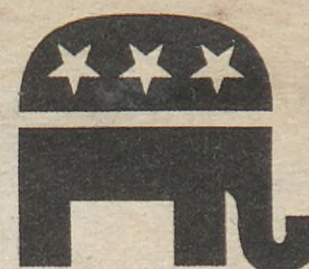
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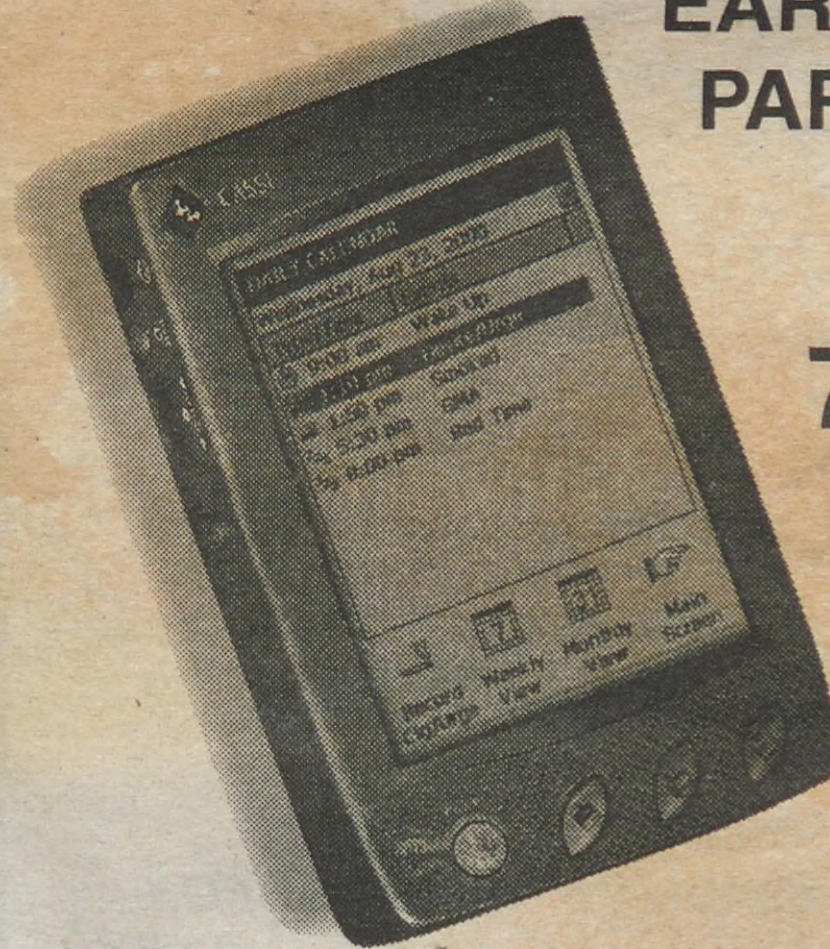
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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Lost River Café serves up delights

Café at Spellbinders provides creative atmosphere, tasty menu from brunch to dinner

by TRAYCE DISKIN

Imagine yourself in a world where winged lions sleep on flowing jade hills, giant mushrooms glow under magenta butterfly lights, and water falls down a wall of burnished copper.

Add a handful of nymphs, Egyptian felines and swirling peacock feathers, and suddenly you're part of the surreal landscape of Lost River Bar & Grille, the lavish restaurant portion of Spellbinders comedy club.

Equal parts Art Deco, Art Nouveau and Las Vegas spectacle, Lost River strives to create a fantastical world that doesn't take itself, and its flamboyance, too seriously. The staff is efficient, and their casual and friendly demeanor reminds guests that this is only for show, folks. The menu itself is innovative, yet unpretentious, and the prices reasonable.

The Sunday Jazz Brunch may seem the most unlikely way to enjoy the magical flourishes of Lost River. The décor seems to invite a late-night Baroque symphony, or maybe the cloyingly ethereal tunes of Yanni. But surprisingly, the two-piece Southern jazz band smoothly complements a pitcher of Bottomless Mimosas (\$10.95), and sets the right tone for a laid-back brunch in a room that is anything but.

Lost River doesn't fall prey to "style over substance" when it comes to food, although there's plenty of style to go along with the mostly well-executed dishes. Crawfish Crepes (\$8.95) feature plump seafood drowning in a tangy rich sauce of Boursin, tomato, and cream. A confetti of herbs decorate the plate, while stiff wavy ribbons of potatoes stand straight up from the dish. A tasty hybrid of the potato chip and fried noodle, these accessories are best when dunked in the pooling crepe sauce.

Specialty items such as the Seafood Chimichanga (\$8.95) boast presentations that rival the décor. The fried tortillas, stuffed with sautéed shrimp, crawfish, peppers and jack and cheddar cheese, lean on their sides like abstract sculptures. While the seafood is well cooked and seasoned in a delicious blend of herbs, peppers, and garlic, the cheese is excessive and oily, and makes it nearly impossible to enjoy the piquant flavors of the dish.

More standard fare, such as Omelets (\$7.95), is good enough, although I wondered why my tomato and onion omelet was served with all the tomatoes on one side, and onions on the other. My taste buds, however, didn't seem to mind and enjoyed the fresh, fragrant vegetables and the greaseless, moist egg. The small side of Breakfast Potatoes were hearty and well-browned, and the fresh fruit side was a delight with its golden pineapple slices, and juicy honeydew melon.

The brunch menu also offers several lunch items, such as a succulent Grilled Portobello Mushroom (\$7.95) served over spinach and caramelized onions with crumbled gorgonzola. The Baked Brie (\$8.95) features mild French cheese cooked in pastry dough, finished with naturally raspberry sauce and fresh fruit. The Brie works best as an appetizer, especially when followed with a salad like the Fruited Spinach Salad (\$7.95). The baby spinach combined with fresh strawberries, mandarin oranges and green onions, is tossed with a fat-free black currant vinaigrette, which makes up for the decadent brie.

Exclusive to the lunch menu, the gourmet pizzas are anything but pedestrian mozzarella and tomato sauce concoctions. The Potato & Sundried Tomato Pizza (\$9.95) is a hit with its caramelized onions, fresh herbs, chopped sundried tomatoes and crumbled feta cheese. The Roasted Duck Pizza (\$9.95) is elegant as an entrée with its tomato coulis and duck confit. The caramelized onions lend an extra kick to the tender, smoky meat.

Lost River also offers an ambitious dinner menu with similar pizzazz and substance. Although many other area restaurants offer an equal or superior menu and ambience, Lost River allows diners to indulge in the garish and overblown setting without sacrificing the quality of cuisine.

If your ideal Sunday brunch has a bustling, low-key, neighborhood vibe, then avoid Lost River at all costs. But if you're in the mood to partake of a little Las Vegas and a little bit Bourbon Street (or will be passing by, like us, on a Sunday excursion to that other I-10 palace right next door - Ikea) the Sunday Jazz Brunch will leave you satiated and blissful among the golden fronds and all their welcoming glitz.



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FOOD FILE

Food: ●●●●●●●●

Service: ●●●●●●●●

Value: ●●●●●●●●

Scene: ●●●●●●●●

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(rez'ō-lōō'shən)

res·o·lu·tion

The meaning according to Webster: n. 1. The act of resolving or reducing to a simpler form. 2. The purpose or course resolved upon. *Law:* A judgement or decision of a court.

(sat'is-fak'shən)

sat·is·fac·tion

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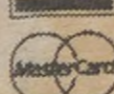
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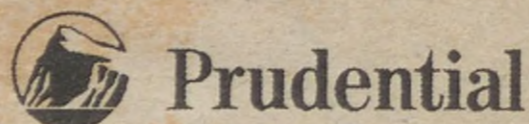
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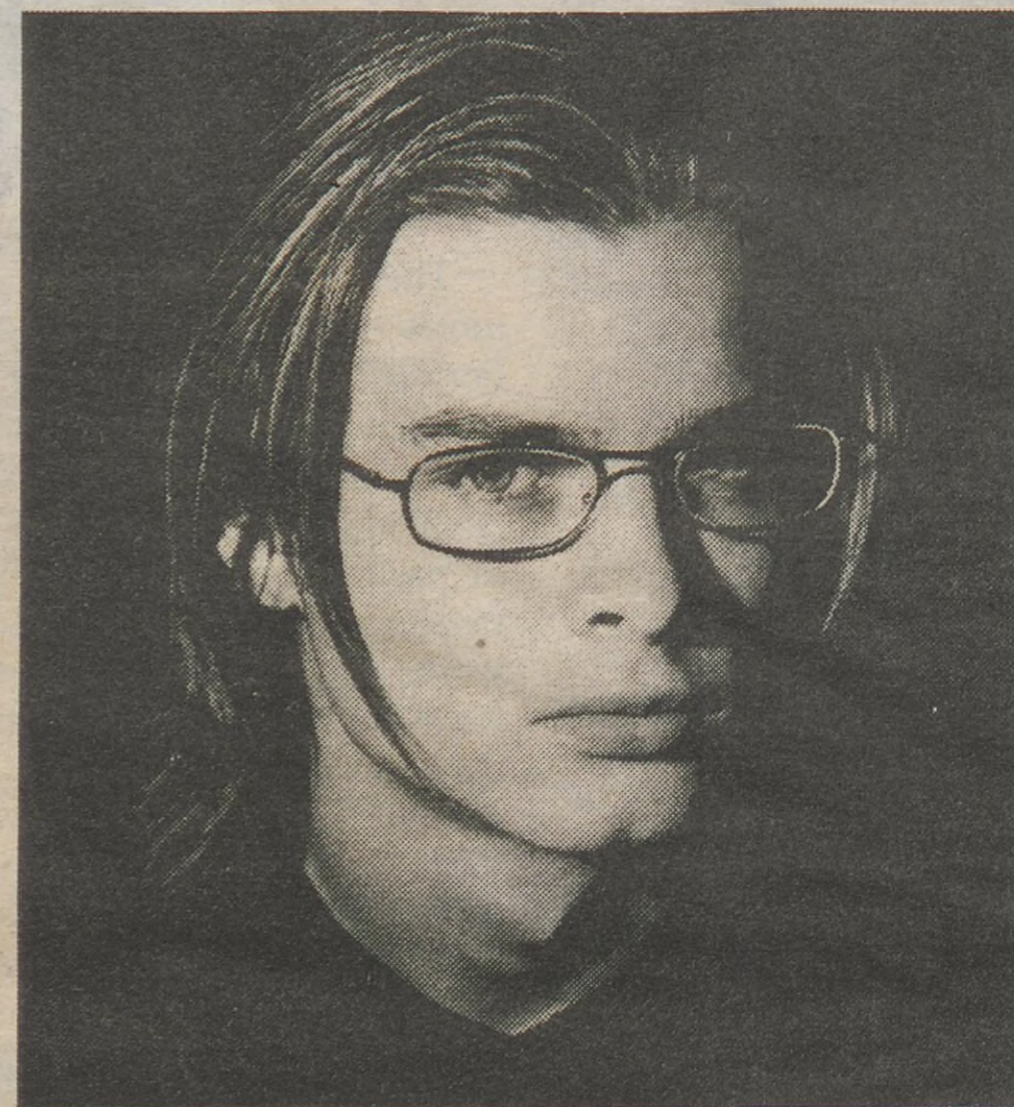
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Quacked cartoon

Showtime viewers wowed by gay duck and his ensemble of friends

While this animated "quacker" may not be daffy, he is certainly gay: Queer Duck, the star of his self-named cartoon playing on Showtime and SHO.com.

The cartoon series precedes the cable network's popular "Queer as Folk" at 9 p.m. on Sundays and follows the show's rerun on Tuesday nights.

Each episode starts with a blue duck flouncing around in a rainbow-striped shirt while RuPaul sings the theme song: "Queer Duck; he's intellectual. Queer Duck; he's homosexual. Please don't think that he's perverse; he's a patient's favorite male nurse."

"To edit the cartoon down to the five-minute time frame means we have to cut out a lot of material," explains Jim J. Bullock, who supplies the voice of Queer Duck.

The actor is probably best known for his role on ABC's "Too Close For Comfort," as talk show co-host on "The Jim J. & Tammy Faye Show" and as game show celebrity.

Created and written by three-time Emmy winner Mike Reiss ("The Simpsons," "The Critic"), "Queer Duck" premiered on Icebox.com in October 2000. It's overwhelming success enabled the cartoon to move to Showtime at the end of January.

Maintaining its Web roots, each new episode premieres on SHO.com and then airs on the cable network attached to its highly popular American version of "Queer As Folk," in its second season.

"It's a cute little show. I hope 'Queer Duck' does really well," Bullock says. "I have very high hopes for it, because I'm in it."

"People really liked it when it was on Icebox, so it should do well because it's funny. The writing is funny. Showtime and the creators hope this moves on into a cartoon series like 'South Park,' a 30-minute show once a week. Of course there is material. It's a slice of gay life. We can definitely fill 30 minutes," he adds.

The cartoons are light, humorous and edgy, featuring the antics of the star, his Harvey Fierstien-esque boyfriend, Openly Gator, and their friends Bi Polar Bear and Oscar Wildcat.

In one of the first episodes, Queer Duck and Openly Gator wake in bed hung over from the wild party they threw the night before. Openly Gator can't believe he doesn't remember much of the party, realizing they are not alone in bed.

"Christ, how did I forget a hippo?" he says.

The doorbell rings, and suddenly Queer Duck is babysitting his pre-teen nephew, Little Lucky. He starts asking questions about the Pokemon ("Poke-A-Man") video



Queer Duck is becoming Showtime's newest gay character — an 'intellectual and a homosexual,' according to the cartoon's theme song.

he has chosen to watch, and Queer Duck responds, "They're inflating each other."

Openly Gator quickly slips him a roofie. The kid falls asleep for the entire afternoon. Awakening in the car as his father drives him home, Little Lucky excitedly shows his dad the "Rocky & Bullwinkle" video he's borrowed from his uncle, actual title: "Rock Hard & Bull Sprinkle."

Queer Duck squawks, "Gay Pride," ending this and other episodes of the computer-animated short.

In one cartoon, Queer Duck's mom commits suicide by roasting herself after he comes out. In another, Dr. Laura chases Queer Duck around town while trying to blast him with a shotgun. In the end, a penis pokes through a glory hole to give her a black eye.

"Thank God for Showtime. Incredibly, there are shows like this out there, and they are willing to air it" Bullock says. "'Queer As Folk' and 'Queer Duck' are not just for gay people. There is a lot of crossover. Hello, look at 'Will & Grace.' The lines are getting blurry."

How similar are Queer Duck and Jim J. Bullock?

"I'm more serious than Queer Duck, but I'm comparing myself to a cartoon," Bullock says. "If Queer Duck was in my living room, he'd be having a cocktail — not me — and talking about what he's doing this weekend. Me, I'm singing at church Sunday morning."

INFO

'Queer Duck'

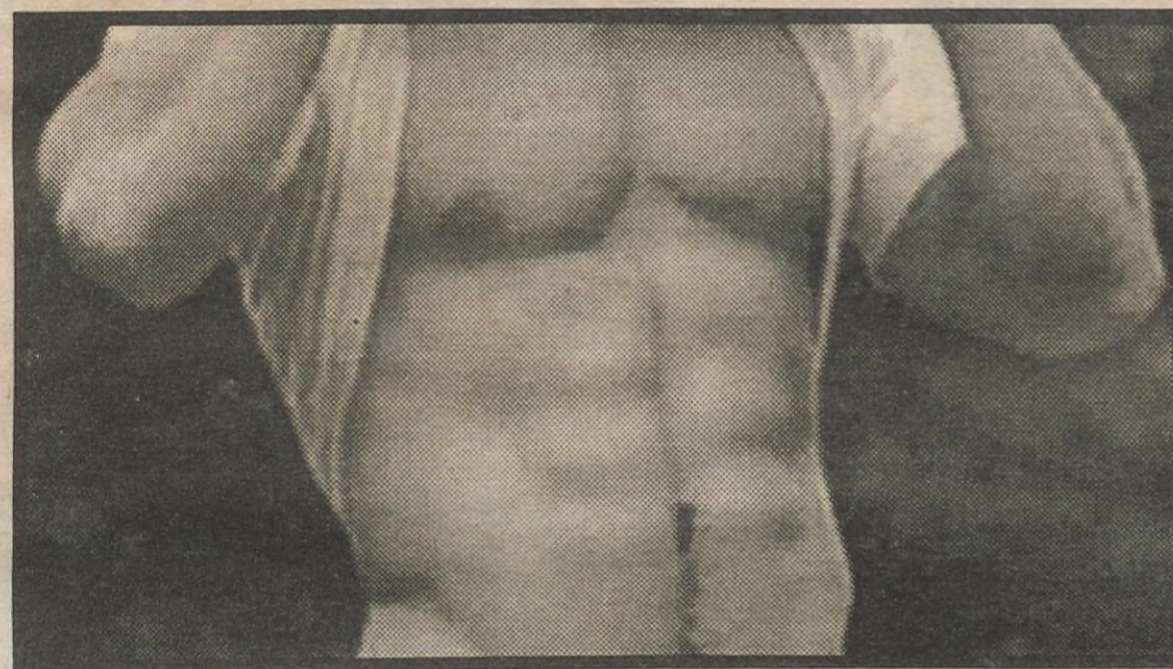
Follows 'Queer As Folk' on Tuesdays
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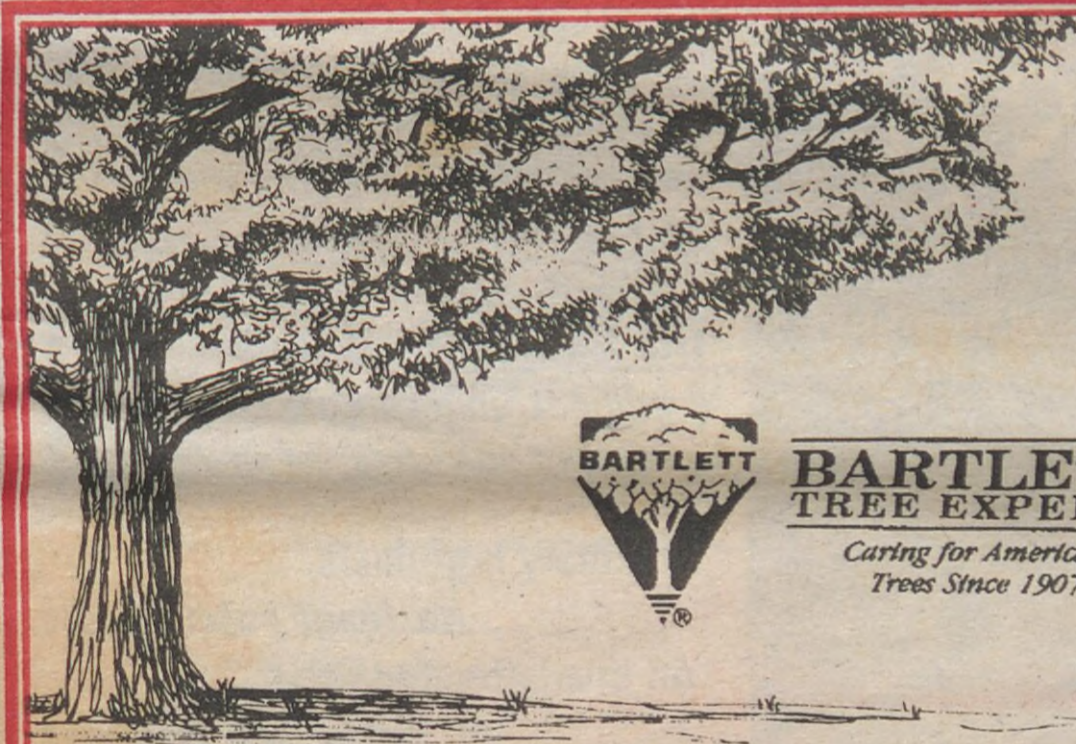


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maranatha@ev1.net

**Maranatha
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"Building Community Through Compassion"



community calendar

saturday, march 9

Gulf Coast Transgender Committee. Meeting. 713-780-4282.

Houston Area Bears. Dineout at Potato Patch, noon. 713-867-9123. www.houstonareabears.com.

Houston Outdoor Group. Monthly breakfast at LePeep, Shepherd Plaza, 3810 Farnham. 9 a.m. 713-520-5201. For more information, call David M. at 713-868-7991.

Kolbe Project. Monthly breakfast. 9:30 a.m. 1030 Heights Blvd. 713-861-1800. www.kolbeproject.org.

every saturday

All-Spanish Worship Service/Culto en espanol. 6 p.m. Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2026 W. 11th. 713-303-9403 or 713-861-9149.

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.

Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.

Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 a.m. 281-437-0636.

Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.

Houston Outdoor Group. Memorial Park walk. 9:30 a.m., meet in front of tennis center. Jimmy, 713-864-7299.

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

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.

Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center. Drop-in noon-4 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

sunday, march 10

Maria Montessori. St. Stephen's Episcopal church explores the idea of hope as seen through the work of Maria Montessori and the words of children from around the world. Special worship service, 6 p.m. St. Stephen's, 1805 West Alabama.

every sunday

Anarchist Black Cross Federation/Anarchist Reading Group. 1 p.m. www.houstonabc.org. 713-595-2103

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.

Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.

Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.

Emerson Unitarian Church. Adult education, 10 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. Lunch available at noon. www.emersonhou.org.

First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m. Christian Education, 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.

First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available, 10:30 a.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.

Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930.

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

Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. to noon. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. 10 a.m. service. 3333 Fannin, Suite 106. 713-528-6756.

Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.

Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School, 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School, 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal, 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Eucharist, Rite I, 7:45 a.m.; Holy Eucharist, Rite II, 8:55 a.m.; Education hour, 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist, 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.

The Women's Group. Meeting and discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Adult discussion, 9:45 a.m. Service, 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.

Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service, 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.

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

Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center. Drop-in 2-5 p.m. • STAG (Some Transgenders Are Guys) meeting, 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

monday, march 11

Classic Chassis Car Club. Houston board meeting. 713-797-8615. www.ClassicChassisCarClub.org.

every monday

AIDS mastery. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

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

gayDAR. Wellness Community. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8-9:30 p.m. Grace Lutheran Church. Tom, 713-726-8736.

www.geocities.com/gaydadshouston/
Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsals, 7 p.m. 713-521-7464.

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

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

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

Lesbian & Gay Voices Radio Show. 8-10 p.m. KPFT 90.1. 713-529-1223.

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

tuesday, march 12

PFLAG-Houston. Parents & Friends of Lesbians And Gays. Meeting. 713-867-9020.

every tuesday

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

CPR Classes. 3 p.m. 713-607-7700.

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For Mature Audiences Only. Support group. 7 p.m. Bering Memorial UMC. 713-526-1017.

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.

Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.

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

Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support group. 7 p.m. 713-524-0439.

Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.

HTGA. Support group. 7 p.m. 713-520-0439.

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

Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. Two-hour free dance workshops. No partner needed.

Beginner. 2 Step, Waltz, Shuffle & Swing. Drop in anytime. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

wednesday, march 13

Houston Area Bears. Dineout and meeting at Biba's on West Gray. 6:30. 713-867-9123. www.houstonareabears.com.

every wednesday

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner, 6:30 p.m. Various support groups, 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.

Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665.

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-713-4157.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-524-0218.

Houston Tennis Club. 7:30-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. Meets every other Wednesday. 713-383-6738.

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

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • Free HIV testing, counseling, 6-9 p.m. • Houston Committee for People's Radio, 6:30 p.m. • Bi-Net Houston, 7:30 p.m. • 713-524-3818.

thursday, march 14

Bi-Net Houston. Women's mixer. 7 p.m. 713-467-4380.

Lesbian & Gay Immigrations Rights Task Force-Houston. 8 p.m. meeting. Chris, 713-426-3128. lgirtf-houston@egroups.com.

every thursday

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

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

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

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

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

HIV Art Therapy Program. 1-4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-523-9530.

Houston Women's Rugby Team. No experience necessary. Practice, 6:30-8:30. Westland YMCA. Kay, 713-208-1529.

Lambda Skating Club. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. www.lambdaroll.org. 713-410-7215.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food

Pantry. 10 a.m. -6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. Two hours free line dance instruction. No partner required. Drop in anytime. Brazos River Bottom. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

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

Spanish Charla Conversation Group. Empire Cafe, 7 p.m. Email charlahouston@msn.com. 713-416-7203.

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop in 6-9 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

friday, march 15

Houston Outdoor Group Rainbow Ranch Campout. First campout of the season near Groesbeck. Pre-camp meeting at Café Express on Kirby Drive at 7 p.m. March 12. For reservations, call Jon or John at 713-290-0220.

every friday

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-713-4157.

Freelance Art Classes. By Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Light breakfast provided. 713-523-9530.

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

Govinda Yoga Club. Free yoga classes at 3115 West Loop South, No. 21. 713-439-0455.

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

Houston Tennis Club. 7:30-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub@aol.com

Kolbe Project. Morning prayer, 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.

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

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Drop-in 6-9 p.m. • Card Players Club meets every fourth Friday of the month, 7 p.m. Call Jimmy: 713-864-7299 or 281-437-0636 • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

volunteer/self-help

Gay & Lesbian Help Line. For gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. Staffed by volunteers of all ages. 6-11 p.m. Monday-Friday, 5-10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. 888-340-GLBT.

Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston. Volunteers offer a friendly ear to callers in need of information, nonjudgmental support, crisis intervention and referral services, emergency shelter and advocacy services to crime survivors who may need someone to accompany them to a hospital for medical attention or assistance in filing a police report. 713-529-3211

Montrose Counseling Center Permanent Endowment, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is looking for an attorney who wants to give back to the community by providing pro bono legal counsel to its Board of Directors. Attorneys with estate planning or real estate experience are encouraged to respond. Please send a letter of inquiry with your resume/CV to: Montrose Counseling Center Endowment — LC, Attn: Executive Director, 701 Richmond Avenue, Houston, TX 77006, or fax to 713.526.4367. No phone calls.

Peer Listening Line. Youth only. Staffed by GLBT youth for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. 5-10 p.m. Monday-Friday. 800-399-PEER.

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

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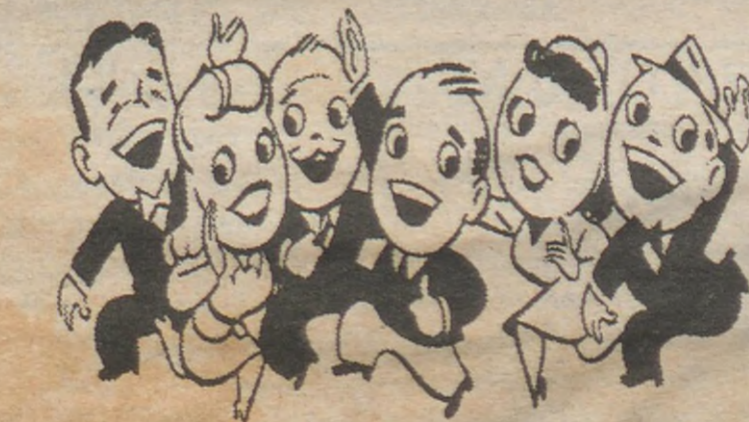
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ing health disparities are essen-
tial. Applicants should also have
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Applicants must be committed to
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Q Puzzle

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65						66					67			

"IAN AS WE SPEAK"

Across

- Spiritual by the Indigo Girls?
- Her "wife" was Anna
- Bottomless
- Joe of "JFK"
- ___ the end of my rope!
- Bishop's "Creep ___ Thy Narrow Bed"
- Minnesota state senator Spear
- Porgy and bass
- Gay Jodie's sitcom
- Short title for a 2001 Ian flick
- Roseanne's pair
- "We're ___ Gonna Take It"
- Dave Pallone, once
- Word with Mary
- Judy Chicago's hrs.
- Enjoy Capote
- Type of sex you have with 49-Down
- Bible bk. prohibiting homosexuality
- 1998 Ian flick
- Cont. of one of the Disney sites
- Hymn to Apollo
- Ian's "Tune into My ___"
- Cross-dresser Jeanne d'Arc, for one
- A Brit soldier may shoot it off
- Uranus, for one
- Contemporary of Philip Johnson
- Zadora of "Hairspray"
- 1993 TV miniseries of Ian
- Ruck of "Spin City"
- Peter by the piano
- Oral performances
- Sally portrayer of "Cabaret"
- ___ angle (not straight)
- Gets cheeky with
- Boat bottom
- Gay, to young children
- Artist Hernandez

Down

- Jodie's concern at Yale
- Clive Barker's prefix for raiser?
- 1952 Olympics site where Dick Button won gold
- Fey feline film felon
- Box opening?
- Guitar motifs from Etheridge
- Cut out
- Martin badge locale for the "morally straight"
- Socrates, for one
- Vidal's "___ to a Small Planet"
- At once, to queens of old
- Deer, or without a dear
- Like "The Best Little Boy in the World"
- Queen's "Another ___ Bites the Dust"
- Vehicle for Elton John
- First indications of orientation
- "Let ___ of here!" (closet cry?)
- Father, to Gloria Anzaldua
- Puts the finger on, in a lineup
- Vannicola's "Love and ___ Remains"
- Middle name of "Jailhouse Rock" singer
- Exhaust one's funds, with "out"
- Hit first, to Navratilova
- Where to see "Queer as Folk"
- "Zip- ___ Doo-Dah"
- Recesses for Rev. Perry
- N of NGLTF
- Purchase of American (abbr.)
- Often fruity dessert
- "___ aux Folles"
- Like a penile institution?
- Sex toy, for some
- Use your tongue
- What Washington wouldn't tell
- Veg out, with "around"
- Salty, white stuff from the Greeks
- Amsterdam transport
- Broadway lyricist Gershwin and others
- Pinball wizard foul
- Larry Kramer's alma mater
- Georgia once, but not O'Keeffe

Answers on Page 30

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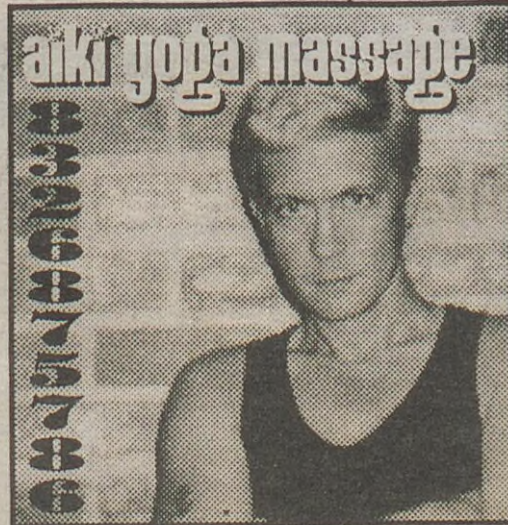
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Supreme Ct., Place 4	Xavier Rodriguez	Judicial Dist. Ct. 309	Frank Rynd
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St. Senate, Dist. 17	Kyle Janek	County Ct. at Law 3	Kit Clark
St. House, Dist. 134	Martha Wong	County Crim. Ct. 5	Margaret S. Harris
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Answers to
Q puzzle
on page 28

My Stars!

by JILL DEARMAN

YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



March 8-14



ARIES (March 21 to April 20)

Take advantage of Jupiter in your home sector. You can make your surroundings a virtual palace with very little money. It's all in the intentions, dearest. A Pisces wants to come over and romp around your lair.



TAURUS (April 21 to May 20)

This is a great time for you to get more sociable with the folks you work with. Intense one-on-ones are fine, but that's so 2001. You need to expand your horizons and enjoy some raucous times with a wild group. A Virgo will be your cruising director.



GEMINI (May 21 to June 21)

Saturn is transiting your sign and reminding you to follow through on your well-laid plans. You are so full of advice for other people. It's about time you started practicing what you preach, you righteous soul. A Taurus wants to tell you what to do for a change.



CANCER (June 22 to July 22)

Mercury squares Saturn during mid-March and could stir up some nervous energy for you. Do something to make yourself feel more physically centered. I don't want you creating any neurotic symptoms for yourself. An Aries wants to work out with you.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22)

The new moon lands in your house of serious partnerships on March 13. This suggests that it's time for you to get more real about a relationship you've been ambivalent about. A Pisces wants to commit or break it off altogether. Enough nebulousness!



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)

This is a very sexy time in your life, darling, but it's a little out of control, too. The new moon on March 13 lands in your house of love and could make you feel wilder than you've felt in months. You are ready to act out, but better to let someone act out all over your naked body. Another Virgo loves the sexual tension between the two of you.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)

The Sun and Mercury are both transiting your health sector this week. Think about a new way to take care of your body. Don't make working out such a chore. Find joy in the physical world. A Scorpio wants to enjoy all things physical with you.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)

This is a highly dramatic time for you, darling. You may want to channel some of that obsessive love energy back into your art. You have a vision to share with the world, sweetie. A Gemini wants to share in your vision.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)

Venus in your creative sector could bring you some inspiration of the artistic persuasion. Delve into a new way to express yourself. A Cancer wants to be your muse.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)

This is a highly social time in your life, darling. Get out and speak in tongues with people from exotic places. A Taurus wants to take you to a foreign land, in bed.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)

Mars in your home sector is demanding your attention, sweetie. You really need to focus on making your crib more stable and calm. Take some time to create a peaceful place to come home to. Then bring a Leo home to try it out.



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20)

It's an exciting week to be you, honey, as the new moon lands in your sign on March 13. Do your best to do some wooing. A Sag demands that you make the first move for once.

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

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