



Gay Holidays

Gay men and lesbians stay close rather than go home for the holidays.

Page 15

Police patrols beefed up in Montrose

Police pledge increased attention in Montrose area to stem assaults on gay men

By JOSEF MOLNAR

Houston police will increase patrols in the Montrose area in response to a rash of recent reports of assaults on gay men.

At a Dec. 17 meeting that included representatives of the Houston Police Department and city and state officials, gays and lesbians also in attendance walked away with some assurances that police are responding to their concerns.

HPD Capt. Glenn Yorek, who heads up the central patrol division, said he has assigned the 20-member Tactical Unit to the area to boost the police presence there. Since the Central Division has only one tactical unit, however, it will be moved to other areas when its presence is needed elsewhere, leaving the usual officers assigned



Police Capt. Glenn Yorek (standing) urges victims of assault file police reports, while (from left) meeting organizer John Szewczyk, Officer James Sobota, and Capt. Dave Cutler listen. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

to the area to continue their duties.

"We can't stay in the Montrose area indefinitely," Yorek said. "But I think that, getting past the immediate problem, we could perhaps work on some long-term solutions."

Reports of a vicious assault on a New York dancer in Houston over the Thanksgiving

weekend for a performance prompted John Szewczyk to organize the meeting.

Eight Houston Police Department representatives attended the meeting with gay and lesbian community members including Chris Arasin, who heads up the Q Patrol, and Randall Ellis, the executive director of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby, which is based in Austin.

Elected officials at the meeting included District D City Council Member Ada Edwards, Texas House Rep. Garnet Coleman and newly elected At-large Position 4 City Council Member Ronald Green.

Councilwoman Edwards said the Thanksgiving attack on Allan Koren Tibbetts, who was chased down, beaten repeatedly with a metal pipe and robbed, was not the only assault that weekend.

However, Sandra Aponte, a public information officer with HPD, said the Tibbetts case is the only one officially filed with the

police at this time.

Yorek said HPD has been hesitant to officially label the attack on Tibbetts as a hate crime because of the common nature of the attack, and also because that report and other unofficial reports don't include homophobic slurs.

"I wish that we could have had reports on those crimes, but they weren't reported officially to the police department," he said. "If they were reported, then that would have been a red flag immediately to me that next morning that we did have four or five of those instances that happened in one night, and we would have been alerted a little faster."

Edwards, whose office has been taking unofficial reports from victims who don't want to go to the police, said continued reporting by victims and their friends will help police to remain aware of the situation.

Long-time political activist Ray Hill told members of the gay and lesbian community that although police have their jobs to do, so does the community.

Please see ASSAULTS on Page 9

Bush to back marriage amendment 'if necessary'

President criticizes 'activist' Mass. court, but leaves room for states to act

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

WASHINGTON — President Bush took another step closer to endorsing a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage on Tuesday when he said a Massachusetts court "overreached its bounds" by ruling in favor of same-sex marriage.

"If necessary, I will support a constitutional amendment which would honor marriage between a man and a woman — codify that," Bush said in a Dec. 16 White House interview with ABC News corre-

spondent Diane Sawyer.

"The position of this administration is that whatever legal arrangements people want to make, they're allowed to make, so long as it's embraced by the state," Bush said.

But he added, "Except and unless judicial rulings undermine the sanctity of marriage, in which case we may need a constitutional amendment."

In remarks over the past year, the president has said marriage should be defined as a union only between a man and a woman and that he and his legal advisers were studying whether a constitutional amendment is needed to "codify" that definition. In the ABC News interview this week, Bush criticized the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court for ruling that denying marriage rights to gays violates that state's constitution.

Some gay rights advocates said the president's criticism of the court suggests he may be siding with social conservatives and anti-gay groups, which have denounced the Massachusetts high court for essentially legalizing same-sex marriage. The court ordered the state legislature to rewrite the state's marriage law to bring it into compliance with what the court says is a provision in the Massachusetts Constitution that grants gay couples equal access to the institution of marriage and marriage benefits.

"The court has said that same-sex couples in Massachusetts should have the same right to marry," said Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. "And now the presi-

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"The position of this administration is that whatever legal arrangements people want to make, they're allowed to make, so long as it's embraced by the state," said President Bush.

MARRIAGE DEBATE: Local gay men and lesbians weigh in on gay marriage. Page 3

GINGERBREAD & MUSIC: Community events are chronicled in photos. Page 4



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local news

Houston weighs in on gay marriage debate

Local activists agree: it's all about marriage equality, and it's just a matter of time

By BINNIE FISHER

Whenever the topic turns to gay marriage, Houston attorney Jerry W. Simoneaux, Jr. said his thoughts drift to an early morning in 1958 in Caroline County, Virginia.

That's when law enforcement officers stormed into the bedroom of Mildred and Richard Loving and arrested them for the crime they had committed.

Their crime? Marriage. In 1958, in a number of states, it was against the law for whites to marry outside their race. The Lovings (he was white, and she was African-American) had been legally married in Washington, D.C., and in 1958 were living in Virginia, where their union was against the law.

Almost a decade later, the U.S. Supreme Court responded to a legal challenge filed by the Lovings and in 1967 declared the antimiscegenation law that made the marriage of Richard and Mildred Loving a crime in Virginia to be unconstitutional. The 16 other states with such laws still on their books were forced to erase them.

"In 1958, interracial marriage was a hot-button issue," Simoneaux said. "In 2003, gay marriage is a hot-button issue."

Simoneaux, whose practice centers on helping gay and lesbian couples with many of the legal issues related to being coupled, said he believes that in time, the idea of same-sex marriage will go the way of interracial marriage. It will eventually be sanctioned by the courts and be accepted by society.

The issue resurfaced earlier this year when the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that it is unconstitutional for the state to exclude gay couples from civil marriage. But instead of ordering clerks across the state to begin issuing marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples, the court threw the matter into the hands of the state legislature to "take such action as it may deem appropriate in light of this opinion."

In Vermont, gay civil unions have gained legal acceptance, and in California, a domestic partner law is being adopted. Meanwhile, across Europe, a number of countries have either sanctioned gay marriage or provided some sort of legal protection for gay unions.

Simoneaux said like interracial marriage in the 1950s and '60s, gay marriage won't go away as a hot-button issue. He said he believes it will continue to be challenged in the courts and in society until it is not



In 1940, when Lucille Ball married Desi Arnaz, it would have been illegal in 37 states, says Houston attorney Jerry W. Simoneaux, Jr.

only legal, but accepted.

"It's really about marriage equality," Simoneaux said. "Marriage equality is hard to argue against. Same-sex marriage is just a component of all that great big, wonderful thing we call 'marriage,' and we want to participate."

Although there are some gays and lesbians who say they would be happy with the same rights that are enjoyed by married couples, and that the idea of marriage really isn't that important, attorney Mitchell Katine said, gays and lesbians must demand more.

"If we accept equal rights without marriage, we're still less than equal," he said. "It says that gay and lesbian relationships are not as worthy as heterosexual relationships. Gays and lesbians should not settle for less."

Katine, who was among the attorneys whose argument in *Lawrence versus Texas* earlier this year prompted the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down the state's sodomy law, said with full marriage comes something that the courts cannot bestow.

"I want respect," he said. "I want dignity. My family and my children are just as valuable as the married couple living next door."

When gays and lesbians talk about settling for less than marriage, Katine said, he wonders what the nation would be like today if African Americans had been willing to settle for less than full civil rights.

Just as those who opposed civil rights

were operating out of fear, he said, the backlash to gay marriage is fear of the unknown.

"It's all a matter of ignorance and fear," he said. "I can't understand what people are afraid of. Giving gays and lesbians the right to marry doesn't weaken marriage."

To Sue Lovell, a lesbian activist who ran unsuccessfully for city council this year, Simoneaux's idea of "marriage equality" rings true.

"It's about having equal rights in decision making and in decisions affecting our partners," she said.

Coy Tow, executive director of the Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Chamber of Commerce said he believes marriage equality is inevitable.

"I really don't believe that a country that believes in freedom and equality can continue to alienate any group of people and justify it under the law," he said.

As for the defense of marriage measure being discussed in Congress, Tow said, "There is no justification for it other than bigotry and hatred. We may have some short-term loss, but as far as marriage is concerned, what do we have to lose? We have nothing to lose and everything to gain."

And, as Simoneaux pointed out, in 1940, when a redheaded Irish-American starlet named Lucille Ball married a Cuban bandleader named Desi Arnaz, "That would have been illegal in 37 states."

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BOOTS 'N BOOGIE: The New Year's Eve celebration hosted by the Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce may be the best bargain in the state on Jan. 31. Page 4



WHAT GIVES?: David Benkof, formerly known as David Bianco, left his life as a gay media guru, and guess what he's telling Ricki Lake. Page 6



LOGS AND SINNERS: Bush talks about gays as sinners and logs in his eye, and Rosie utters the word "wife" in the same sentence with "partner." Page 13

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local news

A very Chamber New Year's Eve

Gay and lesbian
Chamber of Commerce
kicks up its heels on
New Year's Eve

By BINNIE FISHER

A tradition of several years now, the New Year's Eve Gala hosted by the Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Chamber of Commerce is selling quickly this year.

Chamber Executive Director Coy Tow said this year's event at the Warwick Hotel is being called Boots, Black Tie and Boogie, and he maintains that it is the best New Year's party value in Houston.

The evening begins with cocktails at 7 p.m., and Tow said, there are several ways to participate this year.

"We have two dinner options this year, a VIP dinner on the 12th floor with a beautiful view of the city and with all the courses, and a buffet downstairs in the main ballroom."

Another option is to attend the New Year's party sans dinner. Tow

said those who attend the party will find entertainment throughout the evening with casino games, dancing and a cabaret lounge where Marsha Carlton, Glynda McGinnis and Kelly Lauren will play 45-minute sets.

"They sing popular songs and Broadway tunes," Tow said. "People gather around the piano and sing along."

He said those who play casino games will find that their winnings can be used to bid on items in a silent auction later in the evening.

For almost a decade, the Warwick has been the venue for a gay New Year's celebration, Tow said.

"The Chamber has been doing it for several years," he said.

Money raised from the event goes directly into Chamber coffers and is used for programs to benefit the gay and lesbian community.

"It is the Chamber's major fundraising event," Tow said. "It helps us get our year going."

In 2004, Tow said, the New Year's gala will provide funding for the Chamber to start a new program that will be announced after the first of the year.

In addition next year, he said, the Chamber will coordinate with the Houston Area Teen Coalition of

Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) to establish an internship program.

"We're looking to do a lot more community outreach," he said. "We really want to make Houston more high profile."

Although money raised during the evening benefits Houston, Tow said, the gala attracts gays and lesbians from other cities in the state, including Dallas, Austin and San Antonio.

Although other cities may have New Year's events for gays and lesbians, he said, he doesn't know of another event in the state on the scale of Boots, Black Tie and Boogie.

The Warwick is a first-class venue with excellent cuisine, and it offers just the right space for the Chamber's gala, Tow said.

"I don't think anything compares," he said.

Prices for the evening start at \$69 per person for those who want to attend the party, dance, lounge around the piano and play casino games.

Add the buffet, and Tow said, the price is \$89 per person. The formal dinner with wine and cocktails on the 12th floor that includes the additional events is priced at \$169 per person.

For \$500 per couple, Tow said two people can enjoy the VIP dinner, the New Year's party and an



Champagne flowed and couples kissed as the clock struck midnight at last year's New Year's Eve Gala hosted by the Houston gay and lesbian chamber. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

overnight stay at the Warwick.

The party includes party favors, champagne toasts at midnight and a New Year's breakfast.

Tow stressed that the party is not just for couples. "This year, we're doing something we've never done before. We're going to have a singles mixer at the cabaret from 9:30 to 10:30," he said.

He added that persons who want to stay at the hotel but don't want to invest in the VIP package will be offered a special Chamber rate of \$89.

"On any night, \$89 for a room at the Warwick is an amazing

price," he said.

Tow said the Chamber has already sold out one of the VIP dinner rooms and is now spilling over into a second seating area.

Reservations must be made in advance by calling the Chamber at 713-523-7576.

i MORE INFO

Boots, Black Tie and Boogie
7 p.m.-2 a.m. New Year's Eve
Warwick Hotel
5701 Main St.
713-523-7576



Sandy Mock (left) and his partner, Chuck Robinson, put the finishing touches on a gingerbread house as Chuck's daughter, Stacy, supervises during the annual Gingerbread House Party hosted by Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents.

Houston Holidays

(All photos by Dalton DeHart)



Wes Travis breaks into song as Josue Casillas provides the accordion accompaniment during the annual holiday party of Gay Men's Chorus of Houston.



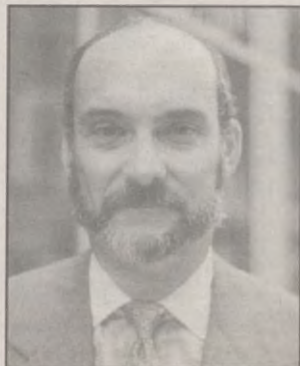
Michael Anderson is ready to roll on a donated bicycle during the Bayou City Boys Club's toy drive and Christmas Party.



national news

Same-sex divorce fuels debate over Iowa marriage law

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A judge's divorce decree for two women sparked a legal challenge that could help decide whether some states can bar same-sex unions while others permit it. Gay rights activists say the divorce between Kimberly J. Brown, 31, and Jennifer S. Perez, 26,



Matt Coles, director of the ACLU's Lesbian & Gay Rights and AIDS projects, said an Iowa judge's divorce decree for two women does not threaten that state's laws against same-sex unions.

does not open the door to recognition of same-sex relationships, but a conservative group said it will ask the Iowa Supreme Court to overturn the decree. "We believe the judge exceeded his authority," said Chuck Hurley, president of the Iowa Family Policy Center, a family advocacy group. Hurley and other conservatives fear the judge's decree, which refers to the union as a marriage, is the first step in legitimizing unions not permitted under an Iowa law passed in 1997. Brown and Perez, both of Sioux City, went to Vermont in March 2002 to take advantage of that state's civil union laws. Their divorce was granted Nov. 14 in Woodbury County District Court. Gay rights advocates said the divorce doesn't threaten Iowa's laws. "I don't think this case sets the basis up for a challenge to Iowa's refusal to marry same-sex couples," said Matt Coles, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian & Gay Rights and AIDS projects. "What the judge did here was he effectively said for the purposes of sorting this out and letting people go their ways, we'll recognize the relationship and end it in an orderly way."

Lafayette school board won't apologize to gay mom

LAFAYETTE, La. (AP) — After a marathon meeting, the Lafayette Parish School Board refused to apologize last week to a mother whose 7-year-old boy was punished for telling another child she is gay. The incident attracted national attention after the mother, Sharon Huff, complained to the American Civil Liberties Union. The school's superintendent, James Easton, maintained that the boy's teacher was not at fault, insisting the boy wasn't disciplined for saying "gay." But that's the reason spelled out on a form Marcus McLaurin brought home to his surprised mother last month. The ACLU demanded an apology, saying the child's free-speech rights had been violated, and asked that the incident be removed from record. But the school board wouldn't back down, insisting again by a vote of 5-3 that it was "never the intent or purpose" to discipline the child for having used the word "gay." An ACLU lawyer from New York who attended the meeting, Ken Choe, expressed disappointment and suggested a lawsuit could be in the works.

Ohio House votes to refuse recognition of gay marriage

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Democrats called a bill prohibiting the recognition of gay marriage in Ohio unnecessary government intrusion. Republicans said the bill was needed to avoid courts dictating state policy. Gay marriages would not be recognized in Ohio under a bill the Ohio House passed Dec. 11. The Republican-controlled House voted 69-23 along largely partisan lines to declare that same-sex marriage is against "the strong public policy of the state." Republicans said the bill was necessary to prevent gay couples legally married elsewhere from having those marriages recognized in Ohio. House Speaker Larry Householder said he was opposed to having "outside influences dictate public policy in the state of Ohio."

Group launches national program to educate vets about gays in military

ATLANTA (AP) — A national project began Dec. 11 to educate veterans about gays in the military, a decade after Congress passed the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. The Military Education Initiative plans to reach out to veterans groups around the country, providing speakers to chapter meetings and conventions to open the dialogue about the military's policy on gays. "As a veteran, I appreciate that the 27 million of my fellow vets are well regarded on Capitol Hill," said former Army Maj. Jeff Cleghorn, director of the Atlanta-based initiative. "Veterans' opinions on the DADT policy are very important." The non-profit initiative, a project of the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military at the University of California, Santa Barbara, will begin reaching out to veterans groups in Atlanta, Seattle, San Diego and San Francisco, Cleghorn said.

Lawsuit defends GSA at Colorado Springs high school

DENVER (AP) — The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against Palmer High School of Colorado Springs on Dec. 12 for refusing to recognize a club that includes gays. The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court, said the school has repeatedly refused to recognize the Palmer High Gay-Straight Alliance. Mark Silverstein, legal director of the Colorado ACLU, said similar clubs are operating at 50 high schools in Colorado. The federal Equal Access Act requires schools to grant equal access to all student clubs on a nondiscriminatory basis. Any schools that allow clubs that are not class-related must follow the statute, Silverstein said. Palmer principal Karin Reynolds said it was the school district's decision not to recognize the group.

From staff and wire reports

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national news

Gay Jewish writer gives up sex with men

Benkof's newfound faith in Orthodox Judaism won't allow same-sex relationships

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

As David Bianco, he created a syndication service that provides articles to dozens of gay media outlets, including this newspaper.

As David Benkof, he will soon appear on national television to oppose gay marriage.

When a gay person comes out of the closet, rainbow flags wave and a celebration ensues. But when a gay person opts to pursue opposite-sex relationships, that support turns to silence or even attacks, according to Benkof, whose legal name change will be final next year.

"Nobody gets a parade for leaving the gay community, and I'm one of the more high-profile people to have gone through this transition and been public about it," Benkof said.

Benkof was formerly well known in gay media circles as journalist-entrepreneur David Bianco, who in 1995 founded Q Syndicate, a media service that provides columns, cartoons, crossword puzzles and horoscopes to the gay press.

Now Benkof has come out in opposition to gay marriage, calling it unholy in "J," a weekly northern California Jewish publication.



David Benkof's view of gay sex is 'at odds with how most American Jewstink,' according to Wayne Besen, who is gay, Jewish and author of Besen, 'Anything but Straight: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies Behind the Ex-Gay Myth,' released this year. (Photo courtesy Wayne Besen)

"Some love relationships can be holy and some — such as those between members of the same sex — cannot," Benkof said in the Nov. 28 edition.

Later this month, he will defend his stance during an appearance on "Ricki Lake" dedicated to the gay marriage debate, he said.

"I believe that marriage is a fundamental bedrock of society that comes from God, that has a specific definition that God gave us, which is a man and a woman," Benkof told Houston Voice.

Benkof's new political views, rooted in his religious convictions, leave gay activists divided over whether Benkof is now an enemy to the gay rights movement he once supported.

"The bottom line is that his religious views themselves are despicable and detestable because they are saying that gay is bad," said Wayne Besen, author of a recent book criticizing "ex-gay" ministries. "Anyone who would say that is not a friend of the gay movement."

But despite Benkof's new beliefs, he is not anti-gay, according to Paula Martinac, editor at Q Syndicate and a former co-worker of Benkof.

"In my opinion, David is neither actively working to 'convert' gay people to heterosexuality nor trying to harm the gay movement," Martinac said. "Although our political views are pretty far apart, 'anti-gay' is not a term I would use for him."

Gays and Judaism

Earlier this year, Benkof began the process of changing his name from Bianco in honor of the 30-year anniversary of the death of his grandfather, Julius Benkof, and "secondarily to reflect that I've changed sexual identity," he said.

In 2001, Benkof sold Q Syndicate to Rivendell Media, another agency closely tied with the gay press that distributes syndicates and works with advertisers that want to reach the gay market.

In September 2003, Benkof severed his ties with the company completely, no longer writing his column, "Over the Rainbow."

"It was increasingly odd to be supervising content for the gay media on a day-to-day basis when in my own life I was moving away from gay identity," Benkof said.

Politically, Benkof said he still supports allowing gays to serve openly in the military and banning employment discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Benkof also supports allowing



David Benkof, formerly known as David Bianco, left behind his life as a gay author and media entrepreneur because it didn't fit with his religious views. (Photo courtesy of Q Syndicate)

gays to adopt children, but believes that straight couples should be given priority over gay couples, he said.

"I have tremendous respect for the relationship choices and integrity of my gay friends, but I also have to say that I think opposite-sex relationships are in some way better than same-sex relationships, especially when it comes to raising of children," he said.

"I don't hate the sin, and I don't hate who I was 10 years ago."

Benkof said. "Gay sex is just inconsistent with traditional religious life."

But others disagree with Benkof's interpretation of the requirements of Jewish faith.

"I find his version of Judaism to be backwards and at odds with how most American Jews think," Besen said. "Maybe he and Dr. Laura can powwow, but the majority of Jews think it is a slap in the face and an affront to Judaism."

Besen, who is Jewish, authored "Anything but Straight: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies Behind the Ex-Gay Myth," released this year.

Modern knowledge of psychology, sociology and history has changed the role of women in mainstream Judaism and should be considered when examining gays, according to Rabbi Joshua Lesser, leader of Congregation Bet Haverim, a predominately gay Reconstructionist synagogue in Atlanta.

"Judaism has never been an island — it has always shifted and changed in relationship to the knowledge of the day," said Lesser, who is gay. "We have a completely

different understanding of what it means to be gay than when the Bible was written."

Human error also played a part in the writing of the Bible, Lesser said.

"I feel sad for people who have a fundamentalist understanding of the Bible," he said. "It is so limiting because that view of God is often, in my opinion, masqueraded feelings of hatred of human beings. There is a lot of hatred that gets masqueraded as God when it is really human hatred and ignorance in the Bible."

Not just about sex?

During a trip to Israel in 2002, Benkof realized that he was "falling short of the things traditional Jews do," he told Houston Voice.

"I was not keeping Shabbat, I was having sex with men, and I was not living in Israel," Benkof said.

The realization came after years of "having all kinds of Internet hook-ups and doing the urban gay male lifestyle thing," he said.

Benkof, now 33, came out of the closet at age 19, and had gay sex for years even though he felt unhappy doing it.

"Between 1995 and 2001, I was having gay sex a lot, feeling like it was wrong but I had no choice," he said.

After his trip to Israel, Benkof slowly started living within the parameters of Orthodox Judaism and gradually cut out gay sex altogether.

"There was a long time where I believed that gay identity and gay lifestyle was ultimately going to be consistent with a traditional Jewish observance because I bought into the notion that God had made me gay," Benkof said. "And if God had made me gay, I thought of course he would expect me to express that sexuality."

But Benkof concluded that being gay is a social construct not intended by God, thus ruling out his justification for man-on-man sex.

"Historians all agree that there is no evidence of a gay minority," he said. "If that's true, it means that God doesn't make people gay. That doesn't mean it is a choice, but a social construct."

Benkof is now celibate, and said he hopes to meet a "woman with whom I can bring pleasure and joy, and with whom I can have a nice-if-not-spectacular bedroom life and create a beautiful Jewish family."

But he identifies as a bisexual who refrains from his desire for men.

"I think the 'story' here is more about my ideas than arousal and attractions, but it is true that if I go to the beach and a handsome man walks by I'm still going to turn my head," he said.

Benkof also reserves the right to be gay again.

"Everybody should be able to have whatever lifestyle feels right for them at any point in their life," he said.

international news

German lawmakers approve memorial for gay victims of Nazis

BERLIN (AP) — Germany will build a national memorial to gays persecuted or killed under the Nazis, complementing the planned German memorial to the 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust, parliament decided last week. Nazi Germany declared homosexuality an aberration that threatened the German race and convicted some 50,000 gays as criminals. An estimated 10,000 to 15,000 gay men were deported to concentration camps, where few survived. "Homosexual victims of the Nazi regime were mostly shut out of Germany's culture of remembrance in the past. That is now over," Greens lawmaker Volker Beck said. Architects will be asked to submit design proposals for the memorial, to be built on the edge of the Tiergarten park in central Berlin near the Brandenburg Gate and the planned Holocaust memorial. The German government will contribute \$610,000. Few gays convicted by the Nazis came forward after World War II because of the continuing stigma — and because the law used against them remained on the books in West Germany until 1969. The German parliament last year issued a formal pardon for gays convicted under the Nazis.



German lawmaker Volker Beck, a Greens Party member, said gay victims of the Nazis now will be included in Germany's remembrance of Holocaust atrocities through a new national memorial.

Trans performer wins fans in South Korea

A transgendered woman is taking South Korea by storm, winning prominent singing and acting jobs and legions of fans of all ages, according to a report in the Washington Post. In a widely publicized move, the government allowed Lee Kyong Eun, a 28-year-old entertainer known by the stage name Ha Ri Su, to change her gender from male to female on official state documents. Since then, she has starred in TV shows and commercials and been featured regularly in fashion magazines. "South Korea entered the new millennium as a different, more open nation," Lee told the Post. "Gay rights, transgender rights and women's rights — things we would never have dealt with before — are now open for debate. We are living in a changing society. I am proof of that." South Koreans are experiencing newfound freedoms 15 years after the end of authoritarian rule, and the nation is in the midst of a renaissance of progressive thought, according to the Post report.

Chileans indicted for recording judge saying he visited gay parlor

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Six people, including five TV journalists, were indicted Dec. 11 for using a hidden camera to capture footage of a judge saying he visited a gay massage parlor. Judge Gabriela Perez charged a director, producer and three journalists at the private television station Chilevision, as well as the manager of the gay business, with illegally recording Judge Daniel Calvo without his consent. Chilevision said it provided a camera to Sebastian Rodriguez, manager of the parlor, who carried it hidden into Calvo's office to record the conversation. The program aired Nov. 5. As a result of the program, Calvo was removed from a case he was investigating on an alleged sexual child abuse network and now faces expulsion from the judiciary. If found guilty, the men can be fined and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 51 days to nearly a year and a half.

Gay Canadian lawmaker changes parties, gets promoted

OTTAWA, Canada — Canadian representative Scott Brison, formerly a Conservative MP from Nova Scotia, is the first openly gay man appointed to a Canadian cabinet, according to media reports. New Prime Minister Paul Martin named Brison his Parliamentary Secretary. His responsibilities will include work to improve relations between Canada and the United States; he will have an unofficial role as the government's liaison to gay Canadians, according to media reports. Brison's promotion comes a week after he changed parties to join the Liberals, the Canadian Press reported. Brison was said to be unsettled by the recent merger of the Alliance party with the Conservatives, according to news reports. The businessman and investment banker voted for the merger but told the Canadian Press he did so with serious reservations.

Gay couple in Taiwan awaits legalization of union

TAIWAN — Unprecedented legislation being finalized by government officials in Taiwan would complete the marriage process for the nation's first gay couple, Agence France-Presse reported. Shu Yu-Shen, a gay writer, had hundreds of guests and international media attention for his wedding seven years ago to Gray Harriman, a Uruguay citizen, according to media reports. The ceremony was Taiwan's first — and so far, only — public gay wedding. Agence France-Presse reported. Shu, now 42, is ready to add a marriage license to his union as the government works on legislation that would allow gay marriages or civil unions. "I am really looking forward to the day when it becomes a reality," Yu-Shen told Agence France-Presse. He said positive media coverage of his union with Harriman helped reduce social bias toward gays in Taiwan. A human rights bill now being drafted by the nation's cabinet would allow gay marriages and allow gay couples to adopt children, according to media reports. Taiwan would be the first Asian country to legally recognize same-sex unions.

From staff and wire reports


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7 p.m. & 10 p.m.

New Year's Eve
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national news

Salvation Army still target of holiday protests

Voucher campaign highlights charity's stands on gay issues

By RYAN LEE

Gay rights groups continue to target the Salvation Army's red kettles, hoping to persuade the Christian charity organization to end its anti-gay policies.

For the third consecutive holiday season, gay rights supporters can drop a note of protest into the red kettles in lieu of spare change traditionally intended for the buckets.

"This holiday season I am supporting organizations that do not discriminate in any way against people based on sexual orientation, gender identity or any other reason," reads a voucher created by Souforce, a national gay rights interfaith group.

"I will not donate to the Salvation Army, and will instead give to other charities, until the Salvation Army stops discriminating against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in hiring, firing, promotion and in the provision of benefits," continues the voucher, which can be downloaded from www.souforce.org.

But officials with the Salvation Army said the vouchers haven't registered with the group.

The charity hasn't noticed the three-year protest, according to Maj. George Hood, the

Salvation Army's national community relations and development secretary.

"This is the first I've heard anything about it, so the folks in the field either aren't seeing it, or are not reporting it," said Hood, who is quoted on the Souforce voucher as saying that hiring gay employees "really begins to chew away at the theological fabric of who we are."

The purpose of the kettle protest is to let gay men and lesbians who want to contribute to charity know that they can do so without funding discrimination against themselves, said Laura Montgomery Rutt, director of communications for Souforce.

"The Salvation Army has come out in past years and said, in essence, that homosexuality is a sin to them," Rutt said. "They are certainly free to believe what they believe, but it's so important that gay people know that when they drop money into a Salvation Army kettle, they're funding their own oppression."

Protest launched after White House lobbying

Souforce and other gay rights groups ramped up protests against the nation's oldest charity in 2001, after the Salvation Army's national body officially adopted two gay-related positions.

That year, the Salvation Army announced it would allow its four regional



Instead of dropping money into Salvation Army kettles during the holiday season, gay religious group Souforce wants supporters to give vouchers protesting the group's anti-gay policies. (Photo by R.O. Youngblood)

territories to make their own decisions about offering domestic partner benefits to employees. On Nov. 1, 2001, the Western territory announced it would offer domestic partner benefits in compliance with a San Francisco law requiring all city contractors to provide domestic partner benefits.

Less than two weeks later, the Salvation Army's national Commissioner's Conference revoked the domestic partner policy, saying it was intended to provide benefits to an employee's spouse and chil-

dren — not unmarried partners.

That same year, the Washington Post leaked a 79-page internal memo from the Salvation Army that claimed President Bush made a "firm commitment" to honor the organization's request to be exempt under Bush's "faith-based" initiative from state and local laws banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The Genesee County Michigan chapter of Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays became the first group to launch a voucher protest in 2001, soon followed by PFLAG chapters throughout the country.

This year, instead of organizing a national kettle voucher protest, PFLAG allows each chapter to decide whether to continue dropping the vouchers in Salvation Army buckets.

"In a lot of places, it was a really great way for people to express their frustration with the Salvation Army and its anti-gay policies," said Ron Schlittler, director of the field and policy department at PFLAG.

"But in some places — particularly smaller towns where the Salvation Army were the only [charity] in town — it kind of backfired, and our chapters were criticized for picking on this so-called 'good' organization," he said.

Schlittler praised Souforce's effort to continue the protest on a national level.

"In the context of movement politics, none of us can really own these strategies," Schlittler said.

Bush: Massachusetts court 'overreached its bounds'

BUSH, continued from Page 1

dent is saying if we win somewhere the freedom to marry, it's necessary to amend the Constitution. That's the necessity that he's talking about. That's unconscionable. That's outrageous."

NGLTF has characterized the president's remarks as a "declaration of war on gay America."

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay political group, called on the president not to "join attacks on American families by supporting a discriminatory, anti-gay amendment to the U.S. Constitution."

"It's never necessary, in fact it would be shameful, to insert prejudice and discrimination into the U.S. Constitution," said Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's political director.

But some observers contend that the president's words were deliberately vague and leave the door open for the Bush administration to possibly endorse a plan for state-sponsored civil unions or domestic partnerships.

Log Cabin urges caution for activists

Patrick Guerriero, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans, a gay GOP group, said the organization agrees with Bush's comment that marriage issues should be

governed by the states. But Guerriero expressed concern over what he called the president's "possible support" for an anti-gay constitutional amendment.

"Log Cabin has consistently and clearly opposed any effort to write discrimination into the United States Constitution," Guerriero said. "Log Cabin urges the president to avoid a divisive culture war that will only divide the American family."

When asked about Foreman's statement that Bush's remarks are "unconscionable" and confirm his backing of a constitutional amendment, Guerriero urged caution from gay leaders.

"I would advise us to do the nitty-gritty, non-sexy work of educating the American people," he said, rather than reacting each time the president "restates his position against gay marriage — something everyone has known" and "which is not that different from some of the leading Democratic presidential candidates."

Guerriero said his White House contacts inform him that the administration is divided over the issue of a constitutional amendment. "There are strong opinions on both sides," he said. "I think you see the entire nation, including the president, is struggling with this brand new issue."

Although Bush's remarks on gay marriage left room for debate and interpretation, he was clear in his opinion of the



Patrick Guerriero, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans, urged President Bush to avoid a 'divisive culture war.'

Massachusetts court.

"Let me tell you, the court, I thought, overreached its bounds as a court," Bush said. "It did the job of the legislature. It was a very activist court in making the decision it made."

When Sawyer asked Bush if he believes the Defense of Marriage Act is enough to protect the institution of marriage, Bush said, "It may be undermined at this point."

The Defense of Marriage Act, or

DOMA, defines marriage under federal law as a union between a man and a woman. Congress passed the act and President Clinton signed it in 1996.

"I also think it's very important, on this subject, that the country be tolerant of people and understand people," Bush said. "But tolerance and the belief in marriage aren't mutually exclusive points of view."

Mixed reaction from FMA supporters

Although Guerriero has said Log Cabin would likely not endorse Bush's re-election if the president supports the Federal Marriage Amendment, Log Cabin spokesperson Mark Mead said it's far too early for the group to reach a decision on a Bush endorsement. Mead said Log Cabin remains hopeful that the president will not endorse a constitutional amendment.

Fearing that legalizing same-sex marriage in Massachusetts could lead to further court rulings requiring the other states to recognize such marriages, anti-gay groups have aggressively lobbied the White House to endorse the Federal Marriage Amendment. The amendment, drafted by a coalition of fundamentalist Christian groups, would amend the U.S. Constitution to ban same-sex marriage as well as civil unions and domestic partnership laws, according to gay rights attorneys.

local news

Gays and lesbians feeling some relief

ASSAULTS, continued from Page 1

"It is not those people's job to prevent panic in our community, it is our community's job to control panic in our community," he said. "Panic doesn't help."

Hill said unofficial reports in the area, which is already one of the highest crime areas in the city, speak of as many as a dozen attacks.

"The investigation of any of these anonymous assaults is an enormously difficult thing to do," Hill said. "There's no bread crumb trail. All you have is 'he said,' 'they said,' 'they thought.'"

He encouraged those in attendance to rely on the police to protect the neighborhood while community members educate themselves on safety issues.

The meeting highlighted a stronger

need for the neighborhoods and homeowners to remove overgrown bushes, clear out cluttered lawns and replace missing or burned out bulbs on lights, making it more difficult for attackers to surprise their victims, attack them and get away.

Since HPD can't provide increased police presence indefinitely, groups like Q Patrol will have to fill in the gaps. Q Patrol provides a team of volunteers to patrol the area on weekends. Q Patrol members report suspicious or criminal activity like robberies and assaults to the police.

While not in serious need of funding, the organization has been suffering from a lack of volunteers to join the patrols. The group has six active volunteers who have committed to walking once a month.

"The problem is that even though I say we've got six, I'm not saying we've got six showing up every week," Arasin said. "As far as people who are active, it's a very small number, and they're not there every week. That's the situation we run into. There's only so much we can do."

While some in the community are concerned that police have not yet labeled any of the attacks as hate crimes, the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby's Ellis said it doesn't matter why people are targeting the area, only that it's happening at all.

Safety tips

- Avoid displaying large amounts of cash.
- Try not to carry a bag.
- Walk with an attitude
- Avoid street solicitors and keep at least five feet between you and strangers on the street.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- Have your car keys ready before you get to your car.
- Check front and back seats before getting into your car.
- Avoid walking alone. You can ask a bar security guard to walk you to your car.
- Always lock your doors as soon as you get into your car.
- Avoid shortcuts such as parking lots, alleyways or wooded areas.



Meeting organizer John Szewczyk explains why some members of the gay and lesbian community are reluctant to file official police reports. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

"I think the important thing to remember is, they're targeting our community," he said. "Whether it's because we're gay and some stereotypes they think are more susceptible, or it's because clubs are closer together, people are targeting that area."

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Q Patrol
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QPatrolHouston@yahoo.com
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national news

Mass. Senate asks court to clarify ruling

Legislators want to know if civil unions will suffice

By JOE CREA

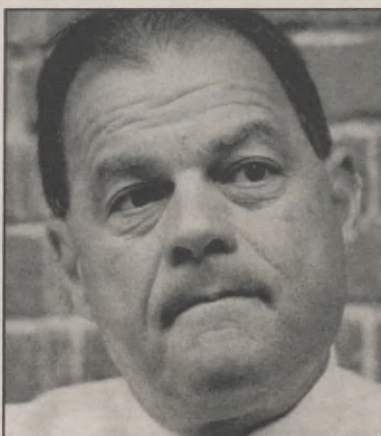
BOSTON — The Massachusetts Senate voted unanimously last week to ask the state's Supreme Judicial Court if civil union legislation, complete with all the legal benefits of marriage, would satisfy the court's ruling in November that denying marriage rights to gays is unconstitutional.

Senate President Robert Travaglini said the legislature is seeking "clarification" on the ruling in which the court said it is wrong for the state to deny marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples.

"There are a number of legal experts whose opinions differ on the interpretation [of the ruling]," Travaglini told the Associated Press. "Our intention was not to alter or modify the decision of the court, it was just to seek clarification."

Travaglini and members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary attached to the advisory opinion request a civil union bill that they say confers all the protections and benefits of civil marriage that the high court requested.

Joan Kenney, public information officer for the SJC, confirmed receipt of the



Mass. Senate President Robert Travaglini said the legislature wants the state Supreme Judicial Court to clarify its November ruling that denying marriage rights to gays violates the state's Constitution.

Senate's request and said that the court is soliciting briefs from interested parties, which must be received by 5 p.m. on Jan. 12. She said the justices could rule "anytime" after the January brief deadline.

Gay Massachusetts State Sen. Jarrett T. Barrios (D-Middlesex) said that by seeking clarification from the SJC, the Senate is not moving toward a civil union bill.

"We are just seeking counsel," Barrios

said. "I'm confident that asking for clarification is a politically sound approach at this point. I'm optimistic that it will help us gain clarity that this decision won't tolerate a civil union type of legislation."

The SJC issued its landmark ruling in mid-November and gave the legislature 180 days to act as it "deems appropriate" before the decision takes effect.

The Massachusetts House, the more conservative of the two legislative bodies, has delayed plans to file its own civil union bill in light of the Senate's request to the SJC.

Gay activists and other supporters of same-sex marriage argue that the high court's ruling makes clear that nothing short of marriage will suffice.

"Based on the ruling, it's hard to imagine that the court will accept civil unions," said Gary Buseck, executive director of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders. "The opinion is filled with all kinds of marriage references. ... all of it would suggest that they are not open to an equal but separate system."

Decision expected by Feb. 11

Some legal experts, including Harvard Law School professor Laurence H. Tribe, suggested recently that civil union legislation might pass muster with the SJC.

"Civil unions with rights and duties

fully equivalent to marriage except for the vital label of 'marriage' itself could conceivably eliminate the one-vote margin by which the SJC last month held that the state's Constitution forbids limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples, not as a matter of principle but as a matter of compromise with what the justices might assume to be politically realistic," Tribe wrote in a letter to the editor of the Boston Herald.

Tribe, a recognized constitutional law expert, argued unsuccessfully in 1986 to have the Georgia sodomy law overturned in the case of Bowers vs. Hardwick.

Lawmakers say they hope to get a decision from the court before Feb. 11, when the House and Senate convene as a 200-member constitutional convention. At that time, they will also begin debate on a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, Barrios said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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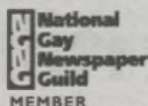
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Issue 1208

Forum

editorial

Lying our way to equal rights

The gay marriage train is moving way too fast for many of our advocates, so some have chosen to pretend otherwise in an effort to trick our opponents.

By CHRIS CRAIN

POLITICIANS AND LAWYERS often fib. That won't come as earth-shattering news to anyone familiar with either species, but it is nonetheless troubling when they do.

It is even more troubling when they are truth-challenged in the cause of our equal rights. If we really believe our cause is just and we have faith in the American system, then our advocates should not be forced to tell whoppers on our behalf.

For one thing, we lose our moral high ground, which has won us victory after victory in recent court battles and in the hearts and minds of many fair-minded Americans. For another, playing fast and loose with the truth is almost always short sighted and ultimately counter-productive. Your mom was right about that; just ask Bill Clinton.

So who exactly is lying on our behalf?

ADAM EBBIN, FOR ONE. EBBIN MADE history last month when he became the first openly gay candidate to be elected to the Virginia General Assembly.

He hasn't even been sworn in yet, but as a longtime operative and gay activist, Ebbin is no stranger to how the truth can be shaded in tough political battles. So he was quick to respond when word came down this week that a Republican delegate, Robert Marshall of Manassas, plans to introduce legislation that would prohibit the state from recognizing Vermont-style civil unions from other states.

Activists are worried that something similar might be proposed by the Georgia General Assembly, especially since Ron Crews, the ex-preacher turned Republican who led the passage of Georgia's Defense of Marriage Act, is now the point person on gay marriage nationally as head of the Massachusetts Family Institute.

Back in Virginia, Ebbin criticized the proposal as mean-spirited and meaningless, since Virginia doesn't currently recognize civil unions and already has a

Defense Of Marriage Act on the books that would prevent the state from recognizing gay marriages.

Mean-spirited? Yes. Meaningless? By no means. Vermont-style civil unions offer very real protections to gay couples, and the "Full Faith & Credit Clause" of the U.S. Constitution requires Virginia to recognize Vermont civil unions, as if they were issued by Virginia itself.

So if Virginia passes legislation to block that from happening, then gay couples in the state will have an even tougher time getting their civil unions recognized, since the courts would first have to find the state's anti-civil union law unconstitutional. That's no easy task in a state whose judicial system is historically unfriendly to gays and other non-traditional couplings.

Ebbin's lie was intended, of course, to calm the anti-gay momentum, but at what cost? If we don't point out that real lives will be affected, what's to stop the "mushy middle" of the Virginia legislature from taking the easy path and passing the legislation.

IF YOU BELIEVE DALE CARPENTER, then Adam Ebbin is lying. But then again, so is Dale Carpenter.

A longtime Log Cabin Republican now teaching law at the University of Minnesota, Carpenter testified at a Congressional hearing in September that the federal Defense of Marriage Act already prevents states from recognizing gay marriages recognized in other states, making unnecessary a proposed constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

But gay activists have said for a long time that DOMA is unconstitutional, due to our old friend the Full Faith & Credit Clause, which can only be trumped by another constitutional amendment. The pro-gay forces working on the September congressional hearing didn't really believe Carpenter's testimony, but they wanted to calm the momentum behind the anti-gay amendment.

To be fair, Carpenter himself may not

be lying. As a gay Republican, he is used to living with self-contradictions. As a supporter of states' rights, Carpenter may well believe that a state should be free not to recognize a gay marriage from another state. But does he feel the same way about interracial marriages?

The Supreme Court never reached the issue directly, but the justices did decide in the 1967 case of Loving vs. Virginia (there's that state again) that it was a violation of equal protection for states to prohibit interracial couples from marrying.

Does Carpenter honestly believe that the court still would have allowed a state to refuse recognition of another state's interracial marriage? Or does Carpenter believe that same-sex couples do not share with interracial couples a constitutional freedom to marry?

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS LIKE

Carpenter have no monopoly, to be sure, on dissembling as a civil rights strategy. Ruth Harlow, one of the heroes from the Texas sodomy win from earlier this year, did her share of fibbing.

During oral arguments on the case in March, about the only valid point made by Texas prosecutor Charles Rosenthal was that the court might be treading a slippery slope to gay marriage, and gay activists would surely take a sodomy decision in their favor and run to the proverbial altar.

Hogwash said Harlow, after the argument. Bringing up marriage was a needless "distraction," she said then, because "this court knows the difference between a criminal law that invades people's lives and the privacy of their homes, and one that offers them legal recognition."

Of course Harlow knew then that her cohorts at Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund would do exactly as Rosenthal said they would, and take a constitutional win on sodomy laws and argue that the same justifications are behind depriving gay couples of marriage. Even Antonin Scalia, the arch-conservative, acknowledged as much.

IN ALL THREE SITUATIONS, THE LIE was seen as expedient, intended to calm the opposition so that they might not marshal their forces too soon, when we're not yet prepared. For many gay activists, the marriage train is moving much too fast, and the more we can delay the better.

But is that any way to win our civil rights? Are we really no better than our opposition, lying and misleading in a naked grab for as much power as we can get?

If we really believe in our cause, and we believe in our country, then we should fight the good fight, not play rope-a-dope. After all, we have a lot more than our credibility at stake.

@ Chris Crain is executive editor of the Southern Voice and can be reached at ccrain@washblade.com.



viewpoint WAYNE BESEN

Flirting with the Democrats

FOR A DECADE I HAVE WORKED TO get gay Americans active in politics. The problem is most Americans, including gay men and lesbians, hate politics. They find policy debates boring and politicians bores.

I've watched C-SPAN 2 reruns at midnight, and thought, "Maybe the apathetic majority is right, this stuff is verbal Nyquil. I need to get a life and watch Comedy Central." Then I see Sen. Trent Lott speak and realize I am watching Comedy Central.

It's political season once again, and we must get interested in politics or bad men in bad suits will pass terrible laws that hurt our families. Perhaps we should look for unconventional ways to reach the, "I don't know who Howard Dean is, but I can tell you what color panties Madonna wears" crowd. One way might be to describe these presidential wannabes as if they were potential dates.

Gen. Wesley Clark: The mysterious military stud at the bar. He's Mr. Right to everyone, but no one really knows him. So they stand and ogle from across the dance floor while projecting on to Clark who they want him to be. But everyone is petrified to talk to the hottest guy in the bar, because they are afraid the moment he opens his mouth he will sound more like Richard Simmons than Rambo and the whole fantasy will be kaput.

Gov. Howard Dean: A sexy former high school wrestler with a lot of good qualities, including passion, inspiration and smarts. He's also a wealthy doctor! But there is a monkey wrench in the Mr. Perfect scenario: He says really stupid things at stupid times and then habitually apologizes for the faux pas.

You want to take him home to meet Mom on Thanksgiving, but your scared he'll blurt out that she looks too fat in her new dress to eat that last slice of pecan pie. And then, of course, he will say how sorry he is as he drives away in his pickup truck adorned with a Confederate flag.

Sen. John Kerry: On paper the guy looks flawless. He's got the best online profile. And if he's your boyfriend, you get to sip mimosas with big shots on Martha's Vineyard! You really, *really* want it to work with Kerry and you hope it clicks. But alas, there is no chemistry and you have to call it quits.

As you try to leave his house, you have to get in line because his maid, gardener and chef are in front of you at the exit. Even his dog is trying to escape. The poor guy's life is just disintegrating.

Rep. Richard Gephardt: He's the old ex-boyfriend you won't marry, but you respect enough to keep him in your life. He's once

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THE LORD OF THE WEDDING RINGS

again trying to convince you to give him one more shot and promises "this time you'll fall in love." You agree out of loyalty, but on the way to meeting him at the big dance, you run into someone more attractive and stand him up — this time for good.

Sen. Joe Lieberman: You go on a dinner date with him to a Chinese restaurant and like what he has to say. But he is so sonorous that you nod off and your face falls into the twice-cooked pork. If you thought Al Gore was wooden, this guy is a totem pole. He's the nice guy that finished last.

Sen. John Edwards: He's the cute guy with potential, but he smiles too much and looks like your little brother. He's more of a one-night stand, and in the morning you roll out of bed and tell him you'll see him in four years.

Rev. Al Sharpton: He's the guy with no money who insists he can take you on a

date at the finest restaurant in town. Once at the posh bistro he has a lot of good things to say, but you are distracted by his bizarre hairdo.

The Rest: You might go on dates with them if you could just remember their names or where you put their phone numbers.

Yes, I know the bleak options I presented aren't pretty. But we must vote because the alternative is marriage with a faux-macho cowboy from Maine who wears a bogus "Top Gun" flight suit, runs up his American Express bill and boasts how "big" he is. Despite his insistence, we know the mass weapon he claims doesn't exist.

@ Wayne Besen is a former spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign and is author of "Anything But Straight: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies Behind the 'Ex-Gay' Myth." He can be reached at wbesen@aol.com.

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel



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| <p>Friday December 19th Morning Prayer 10am</p> <p>Monday December 22nd Advent Series 6:30pm John the Baptist Eucharist 7:30pm</p> | <p>Thursday December 25th MERRY CHRISTMAS</p> <p>Friday December 26th Movie Night 7pm George of the Jungle 2</p> |
|--|---|

The project will be closed the week of December 29th - January 2nd

action! alert

No 'eHarmony' for gays

Saying gay could 'turn off' site's users, director says

By CHRISTOPHER SEELY

GAY INTERNET SURFERS SHOULD spare themselves the 30 to 40 minutes it takes to complete a personality profile for eHarmony.com, an online dating service.

The matchmaking site doesn't allow same-sex couplings because some members could be "turned off" by references to "MSM [men seeking men]" or "WSW" on the site, according to Dr. Steve Carter, director of research and product development.

"We are trying to be sensitive, but you get to the dilemma of trying to make everybody happy," Carter said. "A lot of the core audience for the service are the Christian religious conservatives who would be turned off."

Some visitors to the site complain that eHarmony.com doesn't warn gay hopefuls up front that same-sex matchmaking isn't included — before they fill out the site's personality profile designed by psychologists.

The site's developers considered implementing pop-up messages on the first page to forewarn gay surfers of the site's policy, but site officials didn't want to scare away their target audience on the first page, Carter said.

Instead, an explanation of the site's policy excluding gays was added in the Frequently Asked Questions sub-page, after gay users wrote in.

"We're sorry if the placement of recent advertising led you to believe that we offer this service," the explanation states. "eHarmony's matching system is designed to match highly compatible men and women."

The "phenomenon" of gay singles who want to find long-lasting relationships through the site is "relatively recent" since the site's inception in 2000, Carter said.

"We don't provide matchmaking for homosexual relationships," Carter said. "What we are doing is trying to help solve a problem, and gay relationships just aren't our agenda."

THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLE FOR eHarmony.com is to "mitigate and prevent divorce" in heterosexual marriages by using more than 35 years of research into what makes marriage work compiled by Dr. Neil Clark Warren.

In contrast, the driving force for gay-only matching site Edwina.com

is "to get people interacting with each other as soon as possible," according to Carl Pritzkat, one of the site's founders.

Edwina.com offers services for people to meet for long-term relationships, friendships and sex.

Targeting gay couples exclusively was a "marketing decision," Pritzkat said.

"We thought it would be a lot easier to have an impact on the LGBT market than to go out to the straight market as a whole," he said.

Edwina.com uses algorithmic equations based on a questionnaire — not

psychological data — to assist clients in meeting a mate, Pritzkat said. The questionnaire and matching advice is based on what the site's founders "have been through," he said.

GAY RELATIONSHIP

seekers rejected by the "values based" psychological evaluations trumpeted by eHarmony.com can also turn to Match.com, a service that employs profile-matching questionnaires designed by

doctors. The site includes same-sex and opposite-sex matchmaking as part of the questionnaires.

"We use what we believe is the most scientifically valid test in this area on the Internet today to assess a member's personality and allow them to get their matches using the results of this assessment," said Trish McDermott, "vice president of romance" at Match.com.

"We have a very thriving gay and lesbian community that we are very proud of," McDermott said.



ACTION! INFO

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www.edwina.com

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www.eharmony.com

Match
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McAllen, TX 78502
800-926-2824
www.match.com

on the record

"I think we're all sinners. One of my favorite Bible verses says, 'Why would I take a speck out of your eye when I have a log in my own?' ... and having said that, however, I do believe in the sanctity of marriage. ... But I don't see that as conflict with being a tolerant person or an understanding person."

President Bush, when asked by Diane Sawyer if gays are sinners and if their sin is any different from the sins of heterosexuals (ABC's "Primetime Live," Dec. 16)

"If the situation in Iraq stabilizes and the economy continues to improve, the debate over marriage could become one of the defining issues of the 2004 election."

Tony Perkins, executive director of the anti-gay Family Research Council, on how Saddam Hussein's capture could affect 2004 campaign issues (FRC press release, Dec. 15)

"Personally, I favor [Gene Robinson's ordination]. But this diocese, and the whole American church, was not ready for that, and a lot of damage has been done."

Episcopal Bishop Jerry Winterrowd, on why he now regrets voting in favor of the ordination of the denomination's first openly gay bishop (Associated Press, Dec. 12)



"I don't support gay marriages being given the same legal and community status as a traditional marriage. I believe traditional marriage is one of the benchmark institutions of our society, and I hold that view very strongly. Even if you produced an opinion poll tomorrow that showed me 80 percent of the Australian community disagreed with me, I would still hold that view."

Australian Prime Minister John Howard (West Australian, Dec. 8)

"I thought that [a Seattle contemporary arts center] proposing it to them was better than the druggie homosexual newspaper calling up and saying, 'Hey, can we borrow your kids for the weekend?'"

David Schmader, columnist for the Stranger alternative weekly newspaper in Seattle, on why he encouraged a local arts center to approach a high school about providing a venue for a school production of "The Breakfast Club" banned by administrators (Associated Press, Dec. 12)

"I think I'm much more in touch with the average working people because that's actually what I am: a working person of the district and independent business owner, and father, and husband and property owner."

Chuck Morse, a first-time candidate announcing his plan to challenge Massachusetts Democrat Barney Frank, who is gay, for his congressional seat next year (Providence Journal, Dec. 1)



"I have a partner, a wife, which is a strange word for me to use. I never really used it until I got sued. And you want to know why? If you are a heterosexual talk show host and you're sued by a major corporation, anything you have said to your husband is privileged information. But if you are a homosexual talk show host and you're sued by a corporation, anything you have ever said and/or written to your spouse, partner or wife is allowed to be entered into the record. It is totally unfair. And never in my wildest dreams, if you said to me you're going to become an advocate for gay marriage, I'd say you're on crack."

Lesbian comedian Rosie O'Donnell, who ended a lawsuit last month filed by the Gruner + Jahr publishing firm responsible for the now-defunct Rosie magazine. A judge ruled neither side was entitled to damages. (Sirius OutQ satellite radio, Dec. 11)



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Out on the Bayou

Home for the Holidays



Holidays with the family don't always work out for gay and lesbian couples

Newly elected Houston City Controller **Annise Parker** (left) and her partner, **Kathy Hubbard**, are planning a quiet holiday with friends and daughters, **Daniella** and **Marquitta Parker**. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

When she was partnered with a woman, Judy Reeves said, they chose not to spend holidays with her parents, who lived in Houston at the time and are now deceased. "I liked to spend the time with people I liked or who liked me," Judy said. "I wasn't really estranged from them. They just didn't always quite get it - me being gay."

She is now married to a gay man, admittedly a marriage of convenience. Reeves and her husband, Bruce, tried spending Christmas apart the first year they were married in 1988.

Bruce drove to Mississippi to spend Christmas with his parents but didn't stay through the holiday. He returned to Houston to spend the remainder of the time with his new wife.

Founders of the Gay and Lesbian Museum, the two now choose to spend the holiday together and go their separate ways afterward. This year, Judy said, "The day after Christmas, Bruce is leaving for Mexico to see his latest squeeze."

Judy and Bruce married because she had nowhere to live at the time and needed

health insurance. As a single woman with health problems in 1988, Judy didn't have access to health insurance. As a married woman, she could be added to the insurance that Bruce had.

"Although our marriage is strictly for convenience, we are real good friends and I can't see that changing," Judy said.

Being gay and from different traditions can create its own holiday madness, as Barry Mandel learned the first time he went home for the holidays with his partner of 11 years, Scott Sawyer.

The two arrived by plane in Sawyer's hometown, Little Rock, Ark., on Christmas Eve, just in time to meet the folks at the Baptist church.

Please see **FAMILIES** on **Page 19**

Mandel,

By KAY DAYUS



THE SONGS THAT WHIRL around in almost every store these days advise that it's the season to be jolly and that there's "no place like home for the holidays."

Visions of families gathered together, fireplaces ablaze and trees laden with gifts dance in our heads as the music plays.

The scene painted by the words of holiday songs is one thing, but reality is something else. Psychotherapist Jamey Collins said whether his clients celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza or Ramadan, the holiday season can be stressful for anyone-but that the tension is often "significantly higher" for gay men and lesbians.

Home for the holidays is a nice thought, but it doesn't always work for gays and lesbians.



A garland-adorned fireplace with a Menorah on the mantle says that when **Scott Sawyer** (left) and **Barry Mandel** got together 11 years ago, they learned to mix holiday traditions. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

out on the bayou

Video 'gamers' list top picks for gay-inclusive gifts

Sexual orientation 'non-issue' in new role-play offerings

By VAN COWER

WITH THE GIFT-GIVING SEASON UPON us, a growing number of gay "gamers" — or video game enthusiasts — will look into their stockings for new games or "add ons" to their existing collections.

Several role-playing games on store shelves boast gay content or make sexual orientation a "non-issue," says Chris Vizzini, a gay "gamer" who founded www.gaymer.org, an Atlanta-based online community for gay video game enthusiasts.

"How [characters] behave is the focus and the bulk of the game, not their sexuality," Vizzini says.

One of the most popular gay-inclusive games is the "Sims" role-playing series, which allows players to create characters, give them identities and shepherd them through a wide variety of lifelike situations. Characters can build homes, explore romantic relationships and start families.

What makes the "Sims" games unique is that male characters can choose male dates or partners, and female characters can choose female ones.

Add-on modules allow original "Sims" games to be expanded into new areas with different themes. "Sims: Hot Date," is a popu-

lar add-on with gay players because it allows them to put characters through an all-inclusive, non-discriminating dating scene.

"All of the 'Sims' games allow same-sex relationships exactly equivalent to the opposite-sex ones," said Lorelei Feldman, a member of Outworlders, an Atlanta-based group of gay science fiction, fantasy and gaming buffs.

The "Sims" series even enables "hugs, kisses and — if you have the right downloads — sex," she says.

There are even opportunities in "Sims" games to play the home-wrecker, Vizzini says.

"In the original 'Sims,' a straight couple could be married, and you could even end up swiping her husband," he says.

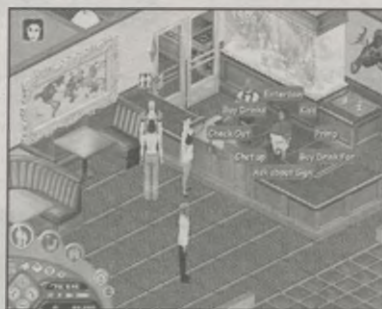
ANOTHER GAME WITH GAY APPEAL IS the Japanese inspired "Dance Dance Revolution." Players buy modules for their systems, and dance pads that plug into the systems are laid on the floor.

Onscreen animated characters dance to a playlist of some 27 dance tracks and club remixes. Players follow onscreen prompts and follow the music and steps to make their characters dance.

"A lot of the guys who have gotten it so far have been completely raving about it," Vizzini says.

Some games with less gay-centric themes also have a following with gay players.

"Amped 2" approximates the high-flying thrills of extreme snowboarding. Players can't designate their characters' sexual orientation,



'The Sims: Hot Date' video game lets players put their virtual counterparts through straight or gay dating situations. (Photo courtesy Electronic Arts, Inc.)

but they can orchestrate how they look.

"You can have them take off their shirts," Vizzini says. "All our characters are practically naked and big huge muscle guys."

The most popular game among the members of Gaymer.org is Tom Clancy's "Rainbow Six 3," according to Vizzini. Other movie-like games — whether they have specific gay content or not — are popular with gay gamers because they feature first-person perspectives that "get you in on the action," said Byron Erwin, a Gaymer.org member.

"It's better than watching movies, because you're in the movies," Erwin says.

BUT GAY-POSITIVE GAMES ARE ON the shelves among others that draw criti-

cism for anti-gay content. Violent first-person games like "Postal 2" and "Grand Theft Auto 3" include gay characters — complete with pink shirts and other stereotypical signifiers — as targets for shooting or mutilation. The games' creators argue that they aren't anti-gay because gay targets are among other, non-gay targets.

In 1994, the industry's top sellers established the Entertainment Software Ratings Board, a self-regulatory body that applies and enforces ratings guidelines. To date, the ESRB rates more than 8,000 titles from "E" for everyone and "A" for adults.

Patricia Vance, president of ESRB, would not consent to an interview about gay content in video games. She released a prepared statement about how ratings are reached.

"The raters watch actual footage from the game and study its most extreme content, context and storyline," the statement reads. "After reviewing the game footage, they assign a rating category based on the most appropriate age audience."

All of the games with gay content mentioned in this article are rated "A" for adults or "M" for mature.

But outmoded stereotypes or game scenarios that feature gay targets don't offend most members of Gaymer.org, Vizzini says.

"Most of us don't really care about that sort of stuff," he says. "It is just a video game."

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Tribute CDs and compilations
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New twists on old songs

SOME SONGS ARE UNFORGETTABLE. And in 2003, which might very well be remembered as the Year of the Tribute Album, listeners had more than one chance to appreciate various groundbreaking divas in the rock, pop and country music genres.

Remembering Patsy Cline

MCA Nashville made a nice gesture with "Remembering Patsy Cline," an all-star tribute album released to coincide with what would have been the musical icon's 71st birthday (on Sept. 8) and the 30th anniversary of her induction in the Country Music Hall of Fame.

That makes it even sadder, then, that the transcendent works of this country crossover legend are generally watered down in this tribute.

The diverse lineup includes established artists such as Amy Grant, singing "Back in Baby's Arms," k.d. lang ("Leavin' on Your Mind"), Natalie Cole ("I Fall to Pieces"), Lee Ann Womack ("She's Got You"), as well as newcomers Norah Jones ("Why Can't He Be You"), Michelle Branch ("Strange") and Diana Krall ("Crazy").

Despite the CD's shortcomings, it is still interesting to hear Natalie Cole's jazzy version of "I Fall to Pieces," the first track on the CD, and Martina McBride's a capella version of "Sweet Dreams."

Just Because I'm a Woman: Songs of Dolly Parton

Say "Dolly Parton Tribute Album," and a flock of female performers come running.

This CD highlights only a few of Dolly's most famous hits, such as "I Will Always Love You" and "9 to 5." But despite the wealth of B-side beauties, this understated collection sizzles.

Alison Krauss offers a mellow version of "9 to 5," and lesbian icon Melissa Etheridge sings a beautiful, throaty rendition of "I Will Always Love You."

Shania Twain's take on "Coat of Many Colors" seems as highfalutin' as a mink stole, while Sinéad O'Connor delivers a twangy, appealing rendition of "Dagger Through the Heart."

There are a few low points on this CD, but Parton doesn't disappoint when she makes a contribution with a bonus track of "Just Because I'm A Woman," a nice end to a worthwhile tribute album.

Bette Midler Sings the Rosemary Clooney Songbook

Like Bette Midler, this album is short and sassy. Perhaps the best of the bunch, the Divine Miss M joins Barry Manilow, everyone's favorite gay icon and her original



piano player and musical director, to pay tribute to one of the first divas of cabaret in "Bette Midler Sings the Rosemary Clooney Songbook." Clooney died in June 2002.

Columbia Records' quality compilation starts slow and steady, with Clooney's "You'll Never Know," and "This Ole House." The set picks up when Midler croons "On a Slow Boat to China" with her trademark harmonies. And it positively sizzles mid-album, when she belts out very urban renditions of "Come On-A My House," and "Mambo Italiano."

In addition to her duet with Manilow on "On a Slow Boat to China," Midler teams up with Linda Ronstadt on "Sisters."

The album ends on a sweet, though not syrupy, note with "White Christmas," which Clooney originally recorded in 1954.

Cher Live: The Farewell Tour

Cher is back, again, for her final tour and album. In "Cher: Live — The Farewell Tour," the ageless first lady of rock opens "The Cher-est Show on Earth" with a cover of U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For."

To Cher's credit, the CD, produced by Warner Brothers Records, does not disappoint. Her "Song for the Lonely" is heartrending in its ability to evoke every dance floor breakup scene in one's lifetime, while her comeback hit, "I Found Someone" is reminiscent of a first crush.

MORE INFO

'Remembering Patsy Cline'
MCA Nashville
www.rememberingpatsycline.com

'Just Because I'm a Woman: Songs of Dolly Parton'
Sugar Hill Records
www.sugarhillrecords.com

'Bette Midler Sings the Rosemary Clooney Songbook'
Columbia Records
www.columbiarecords.com

'Cher Live: The Farewell Tour'
Warner Brothers Music
www.warnerbrosrecords.com

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television BRIAN MOYLAN



A gay actor outs his character on 'CSI' only to learn producers plan to keep Bobby Dawson in the closet, for the time being.

A false start on 'CSI'

ONE OF THE JOYS OF CBS's forensic drama "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" is that the messiness on the show always has to do with dead bodies rather than the characters' personal lives.

Like the long-running "Law & Order" show on NBC, "CSI" is almost completely plot-driven. Viewers can watch any episode of either show and not feel like they're out of step with a character's personal dramas.

So imagine the shock when gay actor Gerald McCullouch recently announced that his recurring character on "CSI," ballistics expert Bobby Dawson, was going to come out on the show and acknowledge he is in a committed relationship with another man and that the couple has an adopted daughter.

A press release from his public relations team said that the big moment would happen on the episode that aired Dec. 11 and McCullouch himself confirmed the story in an interview on Sirius Satellite Radio's gay news channel, Out Q.

McCullouch, 36, has been on the show for four seasons, portraying one of the experts in the lab, and they don't usually get lives. They're there to inform the investigators, the series' main characters, about various crimes and evidence, but certainly not to talk about their personal lives.

After watching last week's episode, Bobby Dawson does appear in one scene to explain something about special bullets used by U.S. air marshals on planes. But he didn't talk about his personal life at all.

"WE SHOT [THE SCENE WHERE Bobby comes out], and it was very true to life," McCullouch told the Blade from his home in Los Angeles. "It wasn't until I got phone calls when the show aired on the East Coast that it wasn't on the show. I thought, 'What? I've been doing two days of press on this.'"

A rep from CBS confirmed that the scene was shot, but that producers always film more material than it takes to create an episode. The cut could have been made for either time consideration or content.

The network rep said there are still plans for the character to come out on the show, but that decision could change at any time.

"Our personal lives never come into the story, so it stuck out like a sore thumb.



Gay actor Gerald McCullouch's issued press releases announcing the outing of his character on the CBS series "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," but the storyline was ultimately cut.

Because of that they decided to nix it," McCullouch said, adding that producers of the show called to apologize that his big scene got cut.

Regardless, McCullouch said it wasn't a part that he'd lobbied for.

"My job as an actor is to pretend to be other people, for me to guide where it's going isn't as much fun," he said.

He also said the producers decided to give the character a daughter, and that he supported this decision. And when they told him that the character is raising the child with a gay partner he supported that decision, too.

"It was very natural and very healthy, I thought," he says.

DOES IT MATTER WHY CBS CUT THE storyline? Not really.

The network is no stranger to positive portrayals of gay characters, and probably wasn't concerned with possible backlash against a gay character on television's highest-rated drama. While this is the network responsible for gay actor Nathan Lane's ill-fated sitcom, "Charlie Lawrence," a show about a gay senator, CBS also has allowed gay characters to appear on "The Guardian," "Two and a Half Men," "Without a Trace," "The Amazing Race," and "Survivor."

Does it matter that McCullouch jumped the gun with his announcement? Not really.

While it did get a lot of gay viewers' hopes up, TV is gay enough these days without a recurring character on "CSI." Next time, however, he should confirm the event is going to take place before his team whips up a press release.

Sure, it would have been nice to have a gay presence on "CSI." After all, it reaches a larger audience than almost every show on the air, and an accurate portrayal of a gay professional (a gun expert, no less) certainly wouldn't hurt.

We can only hope that this false start will help producers reconsider airing something about Dawson's private life the next time they have room in the story.

MORE INFO

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Gays spend holidays with 'families' of choice

FAMILIES, continued from Page 15

President and CEO of the Houston Downtown Alliance, recalled, "For this Jewish boy, it was a little different."

Arriving at the house, Mandel learned the surprises had only begun.

"This was the first time I had ever celebrated Christmas with a family," he said. "Not only did they have one of those silver trees, but underneath it were no packages, only envelopes."

Well, when a family resides in the town where Dillard's Department Stores are headquartered, what else are they to do?

Eleven Christmases later, Mandel has come to love and appreciate his in-laws and their traditions, although he has convinced them to give gifts and not certificates. He admits, he'll partake of his mother-in-law's southern Christmas dinner anytime. Although lately she's been suggesting the family eat out on Christmas, Mandel said, "I've been able to squeeze out one more year."

This year, he and Sawyer, an ophthalmologist, will celebrate Hanukkah with the Mandels in Houston on Dec. 20 and travel to Little Rock on Christmas Eve for Christmas at the Sawyer's.

Perry Jackson and Richard Hudson, who mark their 23rd anniversary in January, choose to spend the holidays with friends rather than family for a variety of reasons.

Hudson, an account executive with the Yellow Pages, said his mother died 22 years ago. "After my mother died, there was nothing left of the relationship."

His parents seemed to accept the fact that he was gay, but these days, Hudson said, he has no desire to spend the holidays with remaining family. "My father was an atheist and one of my brother's a religious zealot. It wouldn't be peaceful," he said.

Jackson, a graphic designer, is on good terms and out with his family. "But, we try not to spend the holidays with them," he said. He is from a large family with lots of children and grandchildren who all congregate in Lubbock. "It's too loud for us, too noisy and not real pleasant." But they usually visit his family after the holidays.

Instead of spending the holiday with Jackson's family of origin, they choose to spend it with a "family" of friends. This year, Christmas will be celebrated with a dinner club they have been involved with



Perry Jackson and Richard Hudson, who will celebrate their 23rd anniversary in January, will spend Christmas with a group of close friends. (Photo by Dalton DeHart)

for quite a few years.

Although other gays are in the group, Hudson says it is a "real diverse and accepting group of heterosexuals, women and African Americans."

Jackson has worked for his company for several years, and he always takes Hudson to the office Christmas party.

The couple spent Thanksgiving Day at a friend's home in their near-town neighborhood of East Montrose. "That's our neighborhood family," Hudson said.

NEWLY ELECTED HOUSTON CITY Controller Annise Parker, her partner, Kathy Hubbard, and their daughters, eight-year-old Marquitta and 14-year-old Daniella, will spend their holidays with their "created family," but not because they don't feel comfortable spending it with their biological families. Distance is the biggest factor in determining where they'll dine on turkey. Parker's mother lives in Charleston, South Carolina, and Hubbard's parents live in Buffalo, New York. Parker's mother will join the family in Houston after the holiday.

"We spend Christmas Eve and Christmas morning at home with the kids," Parker said. "In the afternoon, we get together with a circle of dear friends, have a potluck lunch and spend the afternoon together."

The couple spent their first Christmas together with Hubbard's family in Buffalo. "She (Parker) had never seen snow - she's a native Texan. A huge blizzard rolled in while we were there." They do Buffalo in the summer now.

Mary Ann McBee, owner of Fitness Exchange, and her partner Susan Sosnowy, a flower importer, have been together for almost eight years, and they usually spend Christmas with McBee's family in Arlington, Texas.

"She (Sosnowy) is very close to my family and they know we're gay," McBee said. That doesn't mean that holidays don't have their moments. One year, McBee said, her 4-year-old niece blurted out, "Why are you both wearing the same rings?"

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

'Will & Grace' creators sue NBC,
the royal family in another gay scandal,
and gay comic book makeovers

Will & disgrace

IT LOOKS LIKE THE EMMY-WINNING show about a gay lawyer and a straight interior designer is going to need a lawyer of its own.

MAX MUTCHNICK and DAVID KOHAN (gay and straight, respectively), co-creators and executive producers of NBC's hit comedy "Will & Grace," filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles Tuesday, Dec. 9, for breach of contract against NBC, the network that airs the series, and NBC Studios, its production arm.

The Associated Press reported that the plaintiffs contend that the net-

work, in part, failed to find a production company that would offer the duo the most money for the series and, instead, forced NBC Studios to make the show for less money. They also accused the network and NBC Studios of colluding to keep profits within the NBC family.

A spokesperson for NBC entertainment had no comment pending a review of the lawsuit.

Kohan and Mutchnick said the lawsuit stems from the industry-wide trend of media conglomerates buying up independent production studios.

All the queen's men

FIRST THERE WAS A SCANDAL when a reporter posed as a royal footman in QUEEN ELIZABETH's court and exposed her horrible decorating sensibility. Then there were the "unspeakable" allegations about PRINCE CHARLES's sexual orientation. Now, it appears that another footman is a gay porn star.

London's the Sunday People reports that 25-year-old STEVE KAYE approached the paper about selling his secrets about drug use and orgies in the palace. The wrongdoing was not among the royals, thankfully, but among the staff.

Kaye claims that palace staff members regularly use drugs, even under the queen's nose (though they don't put drugs under the queen's nose) and have wild sex parties "as often as they can." Kaye was planning to charge close to \$40,000 to talk to the paper anonymously.

No longer employed at the palace, Kaye is currently working retail (how typical), and only works at the palace for special events, including serving the queen for this upcoming Christmas and Boxing Day.

It also came out that Kaye had acted in a gay porn movie where he was in an orgy of his own.

Now Kaye's dirty laundry has been aired, and he didn't receive a dime. Looks like he'll have to keep working retail.



'Will & Grace' creators and executive producers David Kohan (left) and Max Mutchnick are suing NBC. (Photo courtesy of NBC)

By the book

JOINING IN ON THE "QUEER EYE" craze, Wizard magazine, the official source for comic book lovers, decided to throw its hat — or magic tiara, if

you will — into the ring and had gay comic artists redesign some of comic-dom's more fashionably challenged heroes and villains.

Artists Phil Jimenez ("Wonder Woman," "New X-Men"), José Villarrua ("Promethea"), and Robert Rodi ("Elektra") went after the likes of the Justice League's MARTIAN MANHUNTER (he's not as gay as he sounds) and AQUAMAN and the X-Men's ANGEL, to give them fabulous redesigns.

"What Aquaman needs is a costume that doesn't make folks instantly think of the guy sitting in Wonder Woman's invisible jet on the 'Super Friends' [cartoon], waiting for something to do," Jimenez said before giving Aquaman a sexy, Roman Centurion-esque makeover.

The most shocking recreation, however, involved the "devourer of worlds" GALACTUS, from the "Fantastic Four" comic. The trio changed him from a magenta and purple thug with a huge headdress into a hot leather daddy right out of Tom of Finland. Devour, indeed!



Galactus

Send comments, suggestions to Dish@sovo.com.

community calendar

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stardust
an event for women and their friends

december 31st 2003

Renaissance Hotel

6 Greenway Plaza East (Edloe and Richmond)

8:30 pm - 1:30 am

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dress: semi-formal to formal

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To list an event, call 713-529-8490, fax at 713-529-9531, or e-mail editor@houstonvoice.com. Deadline is Friday at 5 p.m., one week before the issue in which the item would appear.

SATURDAY DEC. 20

All-Spanish Worship Service/Noche Espiritual 7 p.m. Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2026 W. 11th. 713-861-9149.

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 1-4 a.m.

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

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 11 p.m.-2 a.m. at Viviana's. 713-830-3000.

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 11:30 a.m. Eye Opener Group, 8 p.m. Saturday Night Live, 9:30 p.m. Willing Ones Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

Montrose Soccer Club. 10 a.m. practice. Woodrow Wilson School, Fairview and Yupon. New players welcome, but beginners not currently being admitted. 713-862-9491. <http://geocities.com/montrosesoccer>. E-mail: montrosesoccer@yahoo.com.

Q-Patrol. Volunteers walk the streets to help prevent hate crimes. 9:30 p.m. Convene at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com

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

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, noon-5 p.m. • CATS (Community Awareness for Transgender Support) board meeting. 2 p.m. 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

SUNDAY DEC. 21

Front Runners Houston. Runners meet at Memorial Park at 8 a.m. for a three-mile run. <http://home.swbell.net/lorathon/houfr.htm>. E-mail: lorathon@swbell.net. 713 522-0899.

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

Center for Spiritual Living. Services at 11 a.m., for children at 10:50 a.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808. The center also has commitment ceremonies, metaphysical bookstore and classes.

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

Community of Kindred Spirits in Beaumont. Worship at 6 p.m. 1575 Spindletop Ave., Beaumont, Texas. 409-813-2055. E-mail: ckrev3@netzero.net

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

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

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

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

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 9 p.m.-midnight at Club Inergy. 713-830-3000.

Gay Bowling Leagues. 7 p.m. Palace Lanes, 4191 Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

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

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

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

H.A.T.C.H. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets 6-9 p.m. For meeting information, call 713-529-3590. www.hatchyouth.org.

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 9:30 a.m. Came to Believe Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

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

Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:45 & 11:15 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 281-298-2780.

Resurrection MCC. Services, 9 and 11 a.m. Children and Youth Sunday School, 10 a.m. Children's service, 11 a.m. 713-861-9149.

St. Patrick's Reformed Catholic Mission. Sunday Mass at noon. Holy Unions available. Group meets at the Hair Express, 3310 Delaware, Beaumont, Texas 77703. 409-781-8152. E-mail: bwatson1@gt.rr.com.

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

Sunday Brunch. For HIV-positive men. 11 a.m. Riva's, 1117 Missouri St. Paul. 713-880-0690. e-mail: PoznBuff@aol.com.

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

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Adult discussion, 9 a.m. Service, 11:15 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.

Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service, 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, 2-6 p.m. • New Covenant Christian Church, 10 a.m.-noon • Lesbians Over Age Fifty (LOAF) 2-3 p.m. • S.I.S.T.E.R.S. 3:30-6:30 p.m. • GLOBAL meeting, 6 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

MONDAY DEC. 22

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 1-7 p.m. at the clinic, 215 Westheimer and 3311 Richmond, Suite 100; 4-8 p.m. at Bricks, 617 Fairview; and 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. at O, 710 Pacific. 713-830-3070.

Free HIV Testing. 4-8 p.m. at All Star News, 3415 Katy Freeway. Health clinic with free testing for HIV and syphilis. 713-869-7878.

Gay Bowling Leagues. Women's league. 6:45 p.m. Dynamic Lanes, 6121 Tarnef Drive. 713-861-1187.

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

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

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

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

Lambda Center. Alcoholics Anonymous. 8 p.m. Beginners' Group. 1201 W. Clay. 713-521-1243 or 713-528-9772. www.lambdahouston.org.

Montrose Clinic. Offers weekly peer support groups for gay and bisexual men with HIV. Spanish speaking group meets, 6:30 p.m. 215 Westheimer. 713-830-3050. Grupo de Apoyo para Latinos gay y bisexuales VIH positivos. Lunes 6:30. Para mas informacion llama al 713-830-3025.

Queer Voices Radio Show. 8-10 p.m. KPFT 90.1.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. • HRC PAC, 7-9 p.m. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

TUESDAY DEC. 23

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

Free HIV Testing. Montrose Clinic. 1-3 p.m. at the clinic, 215 Westheimer and 3311 Richmond, Suite 100. 713-830-3070.

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

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

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

Introduction to Buddhism. All welcome at 634 W. Temple in the Heights. 7 p.m. Carlton, 713-862-8129.

Rainbow Ranglers. Free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. No partner needed. Beginner 2 Step, Waltz, Shuffle & Swing. 8:30 p.m. 713-528-9192.

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

WEDNESDAY DEC. 24

Center for Spiritual Living. Meditation (drop-in), 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; SOM Discussion & Exploration, 7 p.m. 6610 Harwin. 713-339-1808.

OutSkate. This roller Rink skate club hosts Gay Skate Night at Zenith Roller Rink, 8075 Cook Road every Wednesday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. \$5 entry plus skate rental. 281-933-5818. Dobie367@aol.com.

Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA). 8:15 p.m. meeting. Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond Ave., Room 15.

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

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

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.

Gay Bowling Leagues. 6:30 p.m. Palace Lanes, 4191 Bellaire Blvd. 713-861-1187.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal, 7:30-9:30 p.m. 1307 Yale. 713-862-1488.

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

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in, 2-9 p.m. • Free HIV testing, counseling, 7-9 p.m. • Houston Pride Band rehearsal, 7:30 p.m. • 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

FRIDAY DEC. 26

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 2015 Thomas St. OraSure method. Call for appointment. Sharon, 713-873-4157.

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

H.A.T.C.H. Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets 7-10 p.m. For meeting information, call 713-529-3590. www.hatchyouth.org.

Houston Tennis Club. 7-9 p.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. houstontennisclub.org

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

Q-Patrol. Volunteers walk the streets to help prevent hate crimes. 9:30 p.m. Convene at community center. 713-528-SAFE. E-mail: qpatrolinc@aol.com

Houston GLBT Community Center. Drop-in 2-9 p.m. • Women's Game Night 7:30-9:30 p.m. • In Our Own Write (Poetry Night) 8-10 p.m.; 3400 Montrose, Suite 207. 713-524-3818. www.houstonglbtcenter.org.

VOLUNTEER/SELF-HELP

ECHOS. This non-profit ministry of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany is dedicated to helping people access health and social service systems. Free medical services include HIV, STD and hepatitis testing. Call for dates and times of services. 9610 S. Gessner. 713-270-0369. E-mail: echos-houston@swbell.net.

Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston. Volunteers offer a friendly ear to callers in need of information, nonjudgmental support and anonymous counseling to the GLBT community. 713-529-3211. www.gayswitchboardhouston.org.

HoP-ON. Anyone can join this non-profit moderated e-mail announcement list that helps facilitate advocacy work and organizing efforts for gay Houstonians. Quantity of postings is strictly limited. Postings include press releases and action alerts from national, state and local gay and allied organizations. For info or to join, access www.groups.yahoo.com/group/HoP-ON/.

Houston GLBT Community Center. Volunteers perform a variety of critical tasks which include staffing the information desk during drop-in hours; helping with center programming and events; working on community outreach efforts, fund-raising and publicity. Card players, writers and artists in particular are needed. 713-524-3818.

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@houstonvoice.com. Deadline is Monday at 5 p.m.

appts.

SATURDAY, DEC. 20

Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church will celebrate Christmas in Spanish at 7 p.m. with a Noche Espiritual Christmas Service and at 8 p.m. with a Noche Espiritual Posada celebration. 713-861-9149.



It's been 16 years since KPFT, 90.1 FM, has done a live broadcast, but that changes beginning at midnight, when the station takes it's 'After Hours' show on the road. The first stop on the 'Face For Radio Tour' will be at 'O' Houston, 719 Pacific St., in the heart of Montrose. The station's Michael Williams said the goal is to attract new listeners and to reach out to gay youth. AIDS Foundation Houston will provide HIV/AIDS and safe sex literature. Future tour dates and venues will be announced later.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 24

If holidays are getting you down, forget your problems and volunteer to help others. The City Wide Club of America needs helping hands when it hosts the 25th Annual Christmas Eve Big Feast of Sharing at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Volunteers are needed as early as 7:30 a.m., and the doors open at 10 a.m. The club expects to provide holiday meals, food baskets and toys for more than 15,000 families. 713-523-1640.



Don't get run over by a reindeer on the way home Christmas Eve. Instead, hop on a free METRO bus. METRO is offering free rides on all local, commuter and METROLift buses beginning at 6 p.m. and ending with the last bus run of the day. Free rides will be offered again by metro on Dec. 31, New Year's Eve. 713-635-4000.

Christmas Eve services are planned at many gay and gay-inclusive churches in Houston, including: 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 W. 11th St, 713-861-9149; 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold St.; and 9 p.m. at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, 4505 Highway 6 North, Suite 200, 832-372-6300.

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This is the week for you to escape
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and let worries wait until 2004

Don't brood, Virgo!

♈ Aries (March 21 to April 20):
The moon, Venus, and Neptune will all be in your house of friends on Christmas Day, so get in the spirit and make every effort to reconnect with lost pals. Forgiveness happens naturally; don't worry about what to say or how to say it. Just call a Virgo, will ya?

♉ Taurus (April 21 to May 20):
Saturn retrograde in your social third house could make planning get-togethers a little challenging. Why must everyone's schedule be so complex? Be the persistent bull that you are and keep calling and e-mailing folks. If anyone can bring an isolated Aries out for some holiday cheer, it's you.

♊ Gemini (May 21 to June 21):
You don't need every last bit of information in order to make a major decision, darling. You know enough. Now a leap of faith is necessary. You can do it! Consult with a Leo who is always a bastion of strength and wisdom for you.

♋ Cancer (June 22 to July 22):
Some people are more into playing games than you think. It's up to you to use your judgment when hooking up with new friends and paramours. When in doubt, err on the side of caution with a Virgo. Saying "No" to the wrong person leads to saying "Yes" to the right one.

♌ Leo (July 23 to August 22): Let an old grudge die and make room in your heart for a breakthrough in a relationship. An Aquarius really does understand you. You just speak different languages. Get a translator! All problems have solutions this week.

♍ Virgo (August 23 to September 22): This is the perfect week for you to escape the drudgery of your day-to-day life and take a few side trips to cool places with a cool new friend. A Leo, perhaps? Light fun is called for. Don't brood over anything till well into 2004. Worries can wait.

♎ Libra (September 23 to October 22): This is the right

time for you to change your look and show the world the wilder side of your nature. You are fabulous to begin with, so a make-better (not a makeover) is in order. Indulge yourself this holiday season, and a Taurus will indulge you even more.

♏ Scorpio (October 23 to November 21): You have a strong draw to discover more about your past, Scorpio, and now is the time to do it. Go directly to the source to find out what you need to know. A Libra is full of insights. Stop leering and start listening. OK, now you can leer again.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21): Mars in your sexy and fun-loving fifth house makes this a holiday week to remember. Don't be shy with a Pisces. You need to rub right up against him or her and make your presence known.

♑ Capricorn (December 22 to January 19): Humor gets you further than surliness this week, so keep it light with a Pisces. Don't freeze anyone out either. Better to invite more people into your heart and your life. Your Scrooge days are ending, sweetie.

♒ Aquarius (January 20 to February 18): You have a great way of expressing yourself, Aquarius. A Gemini is starting to fall in love with your mind. That could lead to love for some of your other, even more enticing, body parts.

♓ Pisces (February 19 to March 20): You are in a wonderful frame of mind to move forward in life. If you ever wanted to put the past behind you, now is the time. Make plans for a very romantic future with a Taurus. Be specific about what you want and you will be much more likely to get it.

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

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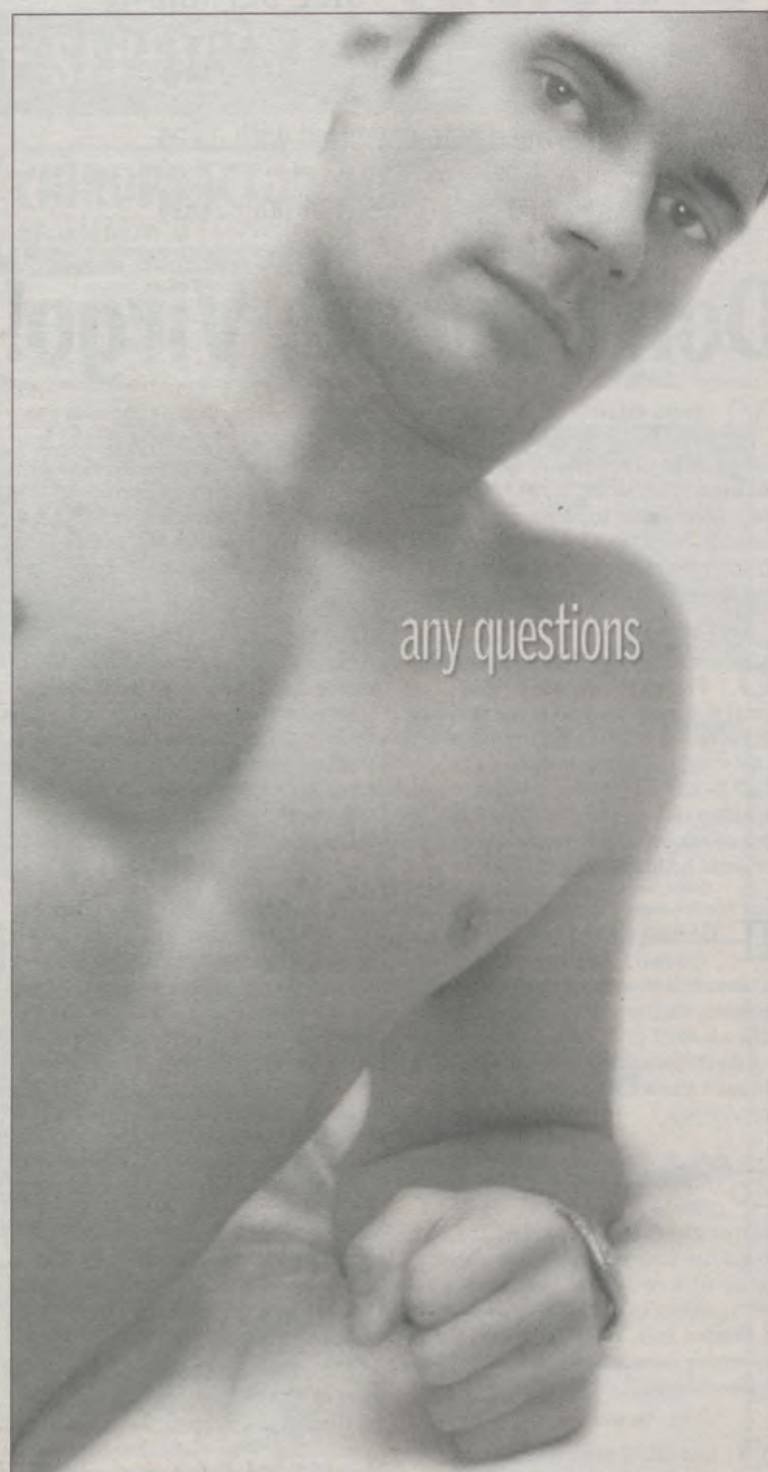
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