

houston VOICE

Derek Henkle claims negligence on the part of high school administrators cost him his high school diploma and the chance to be a teenager. Page 5



Comedian Margaret Cho came through a difficult time and learned to love herself; now she's spreading the story with laughs in her one-woman show that started its national tour in Houston. Page 17



ISSUE 1006

ALL THE NEWS FOR YOUR LIFE. AND YOUR STYLE.

FEBRUARY 4, 2000

Oral sex poses 'significant' risk for HIV

CDC study released Tuesday shows 7.8 percent of participants infected through oral sex

by LAURA BROWN

Oral sex "contributes significantly" to the spread of HIV, although the practice is "too often regarded as posing little or no risk," according to a study presented Tuesday at the seventh Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, held in San Francisco.

Almost eight percent of newly infected gay men in a recent study contracted HIV through oral sex, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, while 85 percent said they had oral sex without a condom because they believe it has little risk of transmitting HIV.

"For some, oral sex is equated with safe sex. However for the individuals in this study, and for countless others, this false assumption has led to tragic lifelong consequences," said Dr. Helene Gayle, director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, STD & TB Prevention.

The study brought mixed reactions from those on the frontlines of public discussion of HIV—vindication from some, fear and frustration from others.

Andrew Sullivan, the former New Republic editor and

author who has written about his belief that he became HIV-positive through oral sex, said he isn't surprised by the new statistics.

"When I told people that's how I got infected, I was treated with at best mild disdain and at worst with mocking disbelief," Sullivan told Houston Voice.

"But I honestly never had unprotected anal intercourse before my infection, and the most I ever did was unprotected oral sex, and then not even to ejaculation. People don't want to hear this, but that doesn't mean it isn't true.

"I think it's still a very small risk, but over time, small risks become bigger risks. The odds mount. I just hope people will believe some of us now," Sullivan said.

While everyone should be aware of the risks they are taking, a new focus on the dangers of oral sex could have an unintended backlash on gay men weary of constantly having to struggle with safer sex issues, warned Jeff Graham, executive director of AIDS Survival Project.

"It is important to point out to people that they do need to take [the new oral sex study] into account when they are considering how much risk they are willing to [take] for contracting HIV, but the bottom line is that it is unprotected anal sex and injection drug use that are fueling the epidemic," Graham said.

Oral sex may be the cause of infection for 7.8 percent of the studies participants, Graham noted, but that means that the vast majority, more than 90 percent, contracted HIV from other modes.

"My fear is that if people point their fingers at oral sex, some



"People don't want to hear this, but that doesn't mean it isn't true. ... I just hope people will believe some of us now." — Writer Andrew Sullivan, who says he was infected with HIV through oral sex.

people will take that as an excuse to engage in high risk behavior all the way around" because of a fatalistic attitude that everything is dangerous and AIDS is therefore somehow unavoidable, Graham said.

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Rallying for Equality



Some 70 people gathered in downtown Houston Jan. 28 to rally against Exxon Mobil for the company's refusal to add sexual orientation to its non-discrimination policy and for ending domestic partner benefits for gay employees. "Today is the start of a long fight. This battle will not be done overnight," said Sean Carter, president of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus. After the rally, protesters marched several blocks to Exxon Mobil's headquarters, which company officials closed early and ringed with police for the event. Organizers plan another protest Feb. 29 to launch a boycott of the company. (More pictures, Page 14)

KKRW apologizes over 'inappropriate remarks'

by MATTHEW A. HENNIE

A Houston radio station issued a terse on-air apology to City Councilwoman Annise Parker Tuesday, though station officials have yet to talk with Parker directly about the derogatory comments a radio jock directed towards her late last month.

And station officials took no action against Keven Dorsey, producer of "The Dean and Rog Show" on KKRW 93.7, for calling Parker a "dyke" and "carpet muncher" during a Jan. 21 broadcast.

Parker, the City Council's only openly gay member, has called Dorsey's comments "hate speech."

The comments came during a discussion about Parker's involvement with the Westheimer Street Festival. Dorsey has taken

part in the festival for several years; last month city officials denied a permit for the annual gathering, which draws some 300,000 people to a 10-block strip of Westheimer.

The two-term city councilwoman has said the festival has grown too large and must address public safety concerns if it continues at its current location, which is in a mostly residential area.

In Dorsey's apology, ordered by station management, he said the possibility of the festival not taking place "is a matter very close to me."

"I apologize for any remarks that may have offended her or any member of the gay community," Dorsey said in the taped apology, which aired at 6:15 a.m.

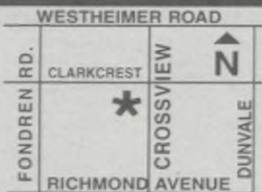
The apology, which lasted less than 30 seconds, was sandwiched between the end of a

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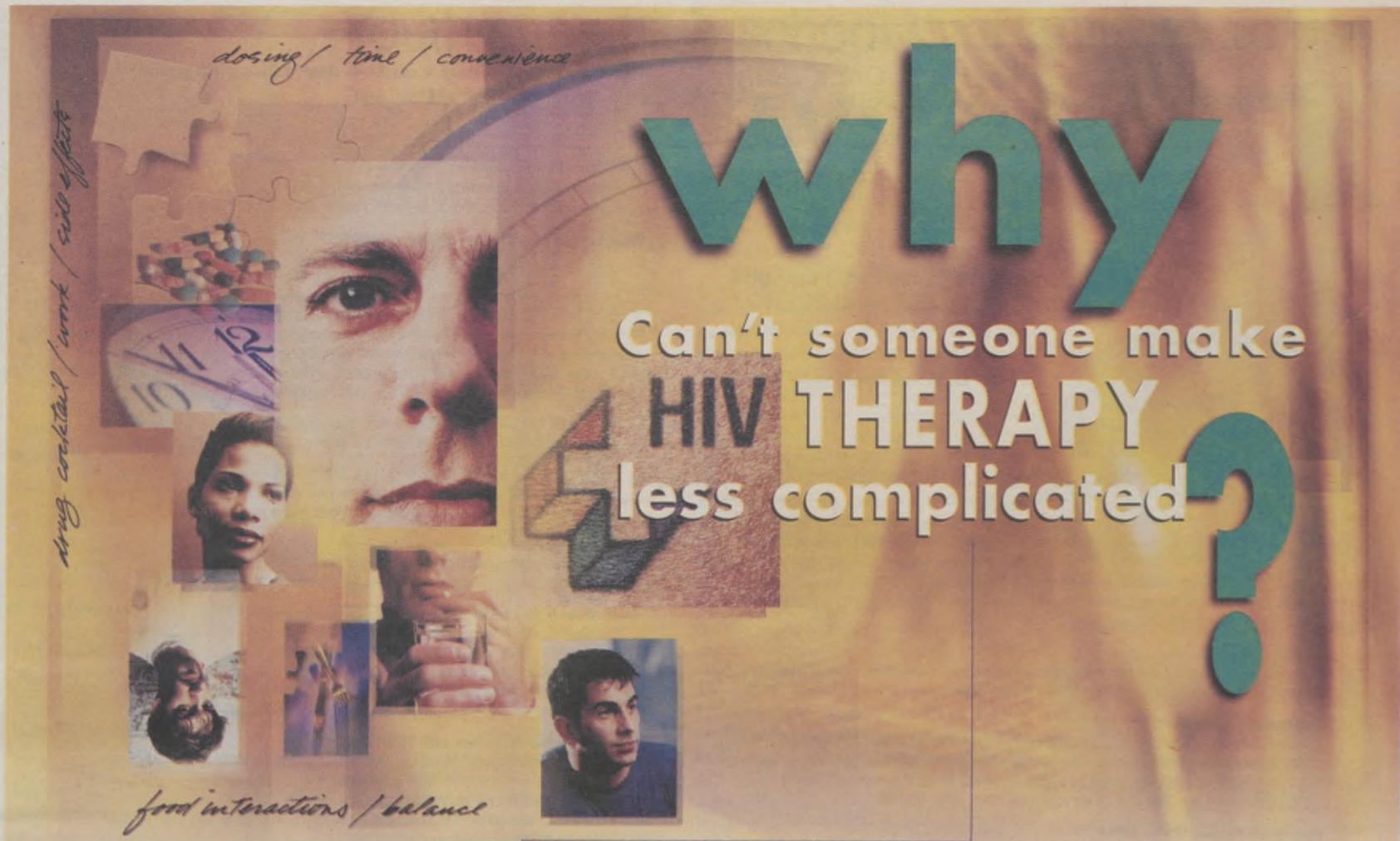
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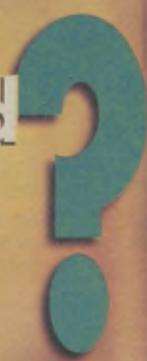
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SUSTIVA has manageable side effects. Most side effects are mild to moderate and can be managed. The most significant side effects associated with SUSTIVA therapy have been nervous system symptoms (dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating and/or abnormal dreams) and rash. These usually subside within the first two to four weeks of treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. Taking SUSTIVA at bedtime may help make nervous system symptoms less noticeable.

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Pregnancy should be avoided in women receiving SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in primates dosed with SUSTIVA. Barrier contraception should always be used in combination with other methods of contraception.

Talk to your doctor when you start taking SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Always tell your doctor if you are taking, starting or changing any prescription or non-prescription medicine when taking SUSTIVA. Your doctor may change your medicines or change their dose. You should discuss your prior medical conditions (such as mental illness, substance abuse, hepatitis, etc.) with your doctor before taking SUSTIVA.

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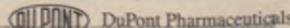
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1. Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV Infection, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), December 1998.
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Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA (efavirenz)
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. Rarely, patients have more serious side effects that may affect mood or ability to think clearly. These side effects occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness or substance abuse. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
 - Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.
- Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA:**

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA:**

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at <http://www.sustiva.com>.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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Youth sues high school over anti-gay abuse

Derek Henkle claims negligence on the part of high school administrators cost him his high school diploma and the chance to be a teenager

by PAIGE PARVIN

A gay Atlanta youth is suing the principals at three high schools he attended, and five other school officials, for failing to protect him from anti-gay harassment and violence and its interference with his civil right to an education.

Derek Henkle, now 19, filed a lawsuit Friday against Ross Gregory, principal at Galena High School in Washoe County, Nev., for ignoring his repeated complaints of "anti-gay harassment, assaults, intimidation and discrimination" suffered while he was a student at the school.

Other plaintiffs in the suit include the vice principal at Galena, a teacher, the county director of students services, principals at two other high schools, and two school police officers.

School for Henkle was a "daily nightmare," he told reporters during a teleconference Friday, with attorneys Jon Davidson and Doni Gewirtzman of Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund.

"School on a daily basis was an unknown. I would turn corners and not be sure what to expect," Henkle said. "It was something I was forced to attend every day, yet I was not given any avenue to be safe. The ignoring by school officials of my daily complaints only made it so much worse."

School officials not only ignored Henkle's complaints, added Davidson, they treated him as the problem and violated his First Amendment rights by telling him to change his behavior to protect himself.

The First Amendment violations break new ground, said Davidson, who compared the response from Henkle's school administrators to the controversial "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on gays in the military.

"We are trying to establish that under the Constitution, in schools it is a violation of the First Amendment to have a 'Don't Tell' policy," Davidson said. "If other students try to harass or abuse those students who are 'out,' the solution is not to tell students to go back in the closet."

School officials had no immediate comment on the case, the Associated Press reported.

"We haven't been served with anything yet and until we do, obviously we can't comment on specifics," said district spokesman Steve Mulvenon.

School leaders blind to abuse?

Between 1994 and 1996, Henkle, who was openly gay while in high school, spent his school days being harassed, threatened and sometimes physically attacked, and was bounced from school to school "for his own protection," he said.

The intimidation and violence had such a severe impact on Henkle that he was unable to finish high school, according to the complaint filed by his attorneys in U.S. District Court in Nevada.

"What we have here is a school district's

complete abdication of its responsibility to protect all young people in its care," said Davidson.

Henkle described a particularly harrowing incident that he says took place in fall 1995, soon after he appeared on a local public access TV show and spoke openly about being gay in school.

Henkle, then a sophomore at Galena High School in Reno, was walking through the school parking lot one afternoon when some half-dozen students surrounded him, taunting him with anti-gay slurs like "fag," "fairy" and "butt pirate," Henkle recalled.

Then, in a chilling scenario reminiscent of a high-profile 1998 hate crime in which a Texas black man was dragged to death behind a truck, one of the students produced a rope and urged his comrades to help him "lasso the fag," tie him behind a truck and drag him down a nearby highway, Henkle said.

The students threw the rope around Henkle's neck three different times, but he was able to pull it off, he said. Terrified, Henkle ran to the office of his English instructor, where he called assistant principal Denise Hausauer, requesting that she come immediately.

But Hausauer didn't arrive until almost two hours later, and when Henkle, still frightened, began to stammer out his story, she laughed, according to Henkle.

After this incident, Henkle said, he and his parents were told the attack would be dealt with under the school's sexual harassment policy. Eventually it was decided the offending students would receive a letter, written by Henkle himself.

"Basically, Ross Gregory decided to ignore it," Henkle said.

After a semester at Galena, Henkle asked to be transferred and was sent to Washoe High School, an alternative school for problem students, despite a highly promising academic record.

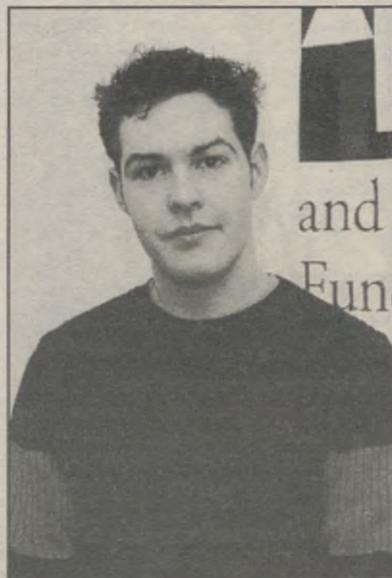
Defendants Joe Anastasio, county director of student services, and Washoe principal Bob Floyd ordered Henkle to hide his sexual orientation at the new school, Henkle said. As a condition of the transfer, he was told not to discuss his sexuality with fellow students and to remove pro-gay buttons from his school backpack.

In a meeting, Floyd told Henkle to "stop acting like a fag," the young man recalled.

When Henkle asked for another transfer because of the poor academic program at Washoe, he was initially told by Floyd that a "traditional" high school would not be appropriate for him because he was openly gay, Henkle claimed.

But eventually he was transferred to Wooster High School for the fall 1996 school year, again after being warned not to disclose his sexual orientation to other students, he said. Former classmates knew he was gay, though, and he fared no better at Wooster.

Midway through the school year, Henkle alleged, he was attacked and beaten by a group of students at Wooster, while two



JON DAVIDSON, LAMBDA

Now 19, Derek Henkle hopes his lawsuit will send a message that taunts, threats and violence against gay kids in school is not okay.

school police officers looked on. The officers, defendants Arnel Ramilo and Glen Selby, later discouraged Henkle from calling the local police and refused to arrest the youth who assaulted him.

"I was surrounded by students, all encouraging [the attacker], and all I could see was about a hundred yards away, two school police officials standing there," Henkle said of the incident. "All I can remember thinking was, 'Why aren't they doing something about this?'"

In February 1997, at age 16, Henkle was finally put into an adult education program, where he was eligible to earn a GED but not a high school diploma, he said.

At 17, Henkle sued to become emancipated from his parents and began living on his own, working in television broadcasting. In 1998 he moved to Atlanta, where he works for Turner Broadcasting's Cartoon Network as an operations coordinator. He also volunteers as communications director for Project Freedom, a fledgling gay rights group.

Missing out on high school has placed a continuing burden on Henkle, he said.

"I have a ton of education stuff that is lacking, and I am doing the best I can with what I have," Henkle said. "I think the strength for that really has derived from the passion I have around these issues, and what personally happened to me."

During high school, Henkle said, his mother was aware of what was happening to him, but school officials told her they were dealing with the problem by transferring him for his own safety.

Since his troubled high school days, relations with his parents have become stronger, Henkle said. He proudly reports that his mother and stepfather met at a meeting of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

Henkle described his current relationship with both of them as "very supportive," and says his father is "coming around."

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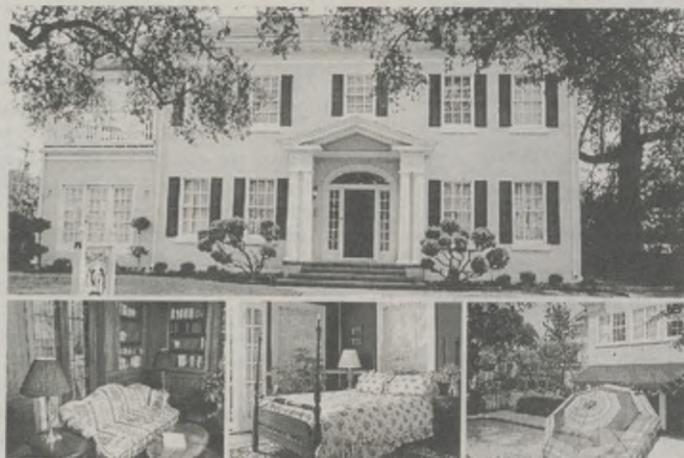
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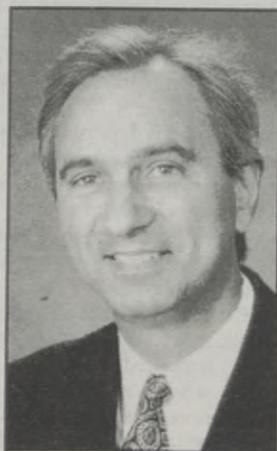
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Gay man, another who claimed 'gay panic,' executed in Texas

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (AP)—Glen Alan McGinnis, 27, was executed Jan. 25 for gunning down laundromat clerk Leta Ann Wilkerson in 1990. McGinnis admitted shooting Wilkerson and leaving for dead the 30-year-old mother of two. Defense attorney William Hall described McGinnis as a deeply troubled teen whose race and homosexual orientation doomed him in the eyes of the jury. "He was polite, respectful, legitimately sorry about what he'd done," Hall said. "But he was also a black man who killed a white woman. And he was very, very gay, and that didn't help." The Vatican, the European Union, the American Bar Association and a collection of anti-death penalty groups pleaded for the life of McGinnis because he was a juvenile when he killed Wilkerson. The execution came just five days after another gay man, Rickey Lee Bryant, 31, was put to death in Texas for killing his lover and four neighbors in 1982.

Meanwhile, James Walter Moreland, 39, condemned for a knife attack that left two East Texas men dead more than 17 years ago, was executed Jan. 27. The 39-year-old Indiana native repeatedly stabbed Clinton Corbet Abbott and John Royce Cravey in the back, robbed them, and left them to die in a Eustace, Texas trailer home after a day of beer drinking in 1982. Moreland maintained he acted out of fear after Cravey, a 41-year-old iron worker, allegedly made sexual advances toward him. Relatives of Moreland's victims rankle at the suggestion. "My brother was by no means a homosexual. I know this for a fact," said Robert Cravey. "Neither was Clint. He'd have fought you if you even mentioned it to him."



James Walter Moreland, 39, was executed last week in Texas, years after a 'gay panic' defense failed to clear him of two murders.

Southwest Airlines adds anti-discrimination provisions for gays

DALLAS—Southwest Airlines, the nation's fifth largest airline, has instituted anti-harassment, anti-discrimination and EEOC policies that include sexual orientation as a protected category, the *Dallas Voice* reported. The Dallas-based airline announced the new protections in a letter sent to employees by Herb Kellaher, the airline's chairman, president and CEO. The protections may be the result of an ongoing controversy between the airline and the flight attendants' union over domestic partner benefits for unmarried employees, as well as longstanding charges of homophobia at Southwest. The issue came to a head in December when Southwest pilot Gary S. Ward claimed in a pilots' newsletter that "the homosexual community alone is a high-risk group medically." Ward also wrote that if Southwest adopted DP benefits, it would be "a stab in the back of the American family." Flight attendant Marty Nelson of San Francisco said many pilots will not speak to male flight attendants, and some will not let men serve cabin crews.

Ft. Worth rights commission accused of pro-gay 'litmus test'

FORT WORTH, Tex.—A man who was rejected for a seat on Fort Worth's Human Relations Commission has charged officials with using nominees' positions on a possible gay rights ordinance as a "litmus test" for appointment to the body, the *Dallas Voice* reported. Nominees opposed to the proposed ordinance were automatically rejected, Larry Stevens alleged. Stevens, who previously ran a failed bid for a city council seat, was one of six nominees interviewed for possible appointment to the commission. "They asked me, 'How do you feel about special protections based on sexual preference?'" Stevens said. "This question was not about matters of justice or about my history of working against discrimination. It was just about how I felt about someone who practices a certain behavior that is against the law in this state," Stevens said. Council member Becky Haskin, who chaired the selection committee, said candidates for the commission all were asked several questions. "I think he had some issues ahead of time... that's why I think he wasn't selected," she said.

Human Rights Watch set to monitor 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' in S.C.

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—The military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is getting a review by Human Rights Watch. The group, best known for investigating international torture and child abuse, has sent a delegate to Fort Jackson, the Army's largest training base, to collect information about how the policy is working. The New York-based organization monitors human rights issues in about 70 countries, reporting on topics that include prisons, freedom of speech and land mines. "I guess the simple goal is to look at this policy and the treatment of gays and lesbians in terms of the context of international human rights standards," said senior researcher Allison Collins. She visited the fort with permission of Army officials. The group also will compare the lives of gay U.S. service members with those in the military of other countries. The United States and Turkey are the only NATO countries that ban gays from military service, according to the Service Members Legal Defense Network.

—Front staff and wire reports

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EDITORIAL

AIDS, the priesthood and Catholic hypocrisy

"Non quam duo, semper tres."

That's the prevailing rule at St. Stanislaus and other Roman Catholic seminaries across the country.

In days and evenings filled with prayer, meditation and discussion, a strict commandment is issued to the young novices, as those wishing to enter the priesthood are called.

"Not in twos, always threes."

And try to avoid "particular friendships" with classmates.

The rules are designed to undermine the sexual currency that even church officials acknowledge emerges from an all-male environment of those sharing so much in common.

With little or no teaching at seminary about human sexuality—much less homosexuality—the results are chilling.

In a remarkable series of reports last week by the *Kansas City Star*, the Catholic hierarchy is called to answer for a silent epidemic of AIDS among the priesthood. In an exhaustive survey, the newspaper found the death rate from AIDS among priests to be four times the U.S. average.

"There have always been the comments made on this that a celibate priesthood must be somewhat attractive for one who is homosexual, because you're joining a fraternity or group which has a status in society, and you don't have to come out of the closet," acknowledged Bishop Raymond J. Boland, of the Kansas City diocese, in an interview with the newspaper.

"I can't argue with that statement. There must be that attraction. Now, how much the attraction has ever been fulfilled is very difficult to know."

Harry Morrison, a California priest who has AIDS, agreed.

"Young Catholic boys trying desperately to honor the strict sexual morality of the church and having no attraction for women see a vocation to the priesthood not only as an honorable way out, but also as a social way out," he told the paper.

In fact, 15 percent of priests responding to the *Star's* survey identified themselves as gay

AIDS in the priesthood,
Page 10

and another five percent said they are bisexual. Assuming most priests would be extremely reluctant to acknowledge same-sex attraction, the numbers are extraordinary.

And they suggest widespread knowledge among Catholic clergy about the existence of many, many gay priests.

Four years in the making, the *Star* series tells the heart-breaking stories of priests under pressure from the church who kept secret from loved ones their homosexuality, their sexual activity, their infection with HIV and often even the cause of their deaths.

And whatever the series says about the failure of the Catholic Church to deal effectively and compassionately with AIDS in the priesthood, it says even more about the church's morally bankrupt teachings about homosexuality.

In seminary, the church teaches the vow of celibacy as one of the most important obligations of the priesthood.

For these committed men, each of whom feels a special calling to devote their entire life to their faith, celibacy is viewed as a means of achieving the spiritual purity necessary to perform the holy rites and responsibilities of the post.

But even with that intense and enduring motivation, many fail to live up to their calling to be celibate, and engage not only in sexual activity, but often unsafe sex, as the *Star* report makes abundantly clear.

And yet the very same Catholic bishops who no doubt know much more than the *Star* about sexually active priests, straight and gay, recently issued a modified teaching on homosexuality that required of gay Catholic laity the same vow of celibacy that the church's committed priests cannot fulfill.

The bishops acknowledged in their report—styled as an open letter to parents struggling with accepting their gay children—that homosexuality is experienced as an unalterable orientation by most people and harboring same-sex desires is no more sinful than



At the graveside of his brother, a Jesuit priest who died of AIDS in December 1990, Dennis Dobbels told the *Kansas City Star* that he regrets his brother waited until only weeks before his death to tell his family about his secret life and cause of death.

heterosexual attraction.

Implicitly admitting the uselessness of prayerful or psychotherapeutic efforts at "converting" to heterosexuality, the bishops still drew the line at acting on homosexual desires.

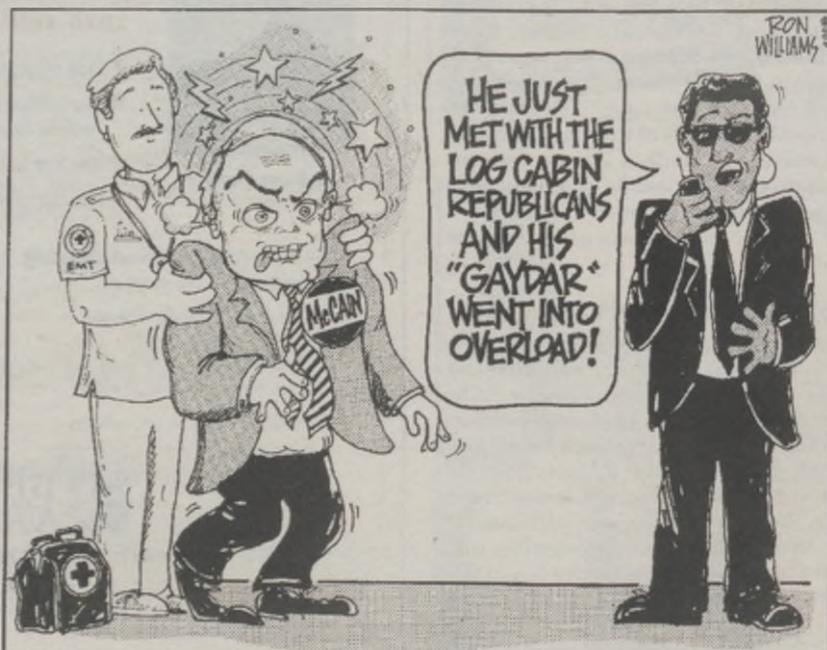
Gay Catholics are required by their church to live a life of celibacy, like priests, never acting on their natural, God-given sexual desires, even within the confines of a loving, committed and monogamous relationship.

In fact, in places like Hawaii and California and Vermont, Catholic clergy have been active in opposing same-sex marriage even though the institution has been shown by centuries' evidence to foster the type of committed romantic relationships that win church approval among heterosexuals.

It's true, of course, that the Catholic Church has a colorful history of teachings completely separated from human reality, as illustrated recently by an angry lecture from Pope John Paul II, who urged opposition to secular divorce laws that permit the dissolution of even one consummated marriage.

But the church's teaching on homosexuality is particularly cruel because it allows for absolutely no expression of human sexuality—the proscription covers masturbation as well, as any spilling of semen is considered sinful—even though our orientation is viewed as morally neutral.

With this new and devastating evidence that celibacy fails at an alarming rate even among clergy, the church's most committed members, the Catholic record on homosexuality has been laid bare as illogical, hypocritical, corrupt and barbaric.



INFO

**Kansas City Star
"AIDS in the Priesthood"
series**

available on the web at
www.kcstar.com/projects/priests/



VIEWPOINT

A San Francisco transplant finds the redneck within

by KIRK READ

As fate would have it, I moved all the way to San Francisco to get in touch with my inner redneck. I recently broke my longstanding boycott on country-western dancing. It wasn't so much a boycott as it was something I thought was for the most part a good idea, but something I never got around to doing.

At the suggestion of a Sunday lunch bunch, I ran home to change and taxi over to the bar where such dancing takes place. I had the boots already, but the only "boot-scootin' boogie" I'd ever encountered was when I was too tired to pick up my feet and walk properly.

I got halfway into the cab and realized I was wearing a black belt with tan boots. Naturally, I did what any self-respecting gay man would do: I made the cabdriver wait while I changed belts.

See, I grew up in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, so this two-step business wasn't completely new to me. The thing is, the boys who clogged to bluegrass were often the boys who shouted "Faggot" at me in the school parking lot as their Ford trucks unleashed a torrent of exhaust and Hank Williams, Jr. They laughed their Yee Haw laughs and sped home to their respective hollers.

That Sunday night promised to be either a personal reconciliation or an unmitigated nightmare.

On a stylistic note, I must say that I prefer men in flannel button ups to stretch nylon muscle tees. I tell you, looking around at a crowd of smiling gay men in cowboy regalia was nearly psychedelic.

I grew up with these guys and their mother-of-pearl buttons. I remember all too well the clomp of boots and the tipping of hats.

But as a teenager, I saw all this hillbilly stuff as my nemesis. The third-string football players with perms and Bocephus T-shirts were not exactly thrilled with me; their openly way-gay classmate had made it possible for same-sex couples to attend their 1990 prom, naively themed "Stairway to Heaven."

"I got that rule changed so you could take me to the prom, Stephen," I told one of the hallway cowpokes who greeted me daily with a murmured "Fag." From that moment on, Stephen was terrified of me.

Given this background, surely you can understand that willingly subjecting myself to Reba McIntire and Wranglers was something of a noble challenge.

I admit, I can be a bit culturally stodgy. I can't tell you the last time I played a Merle Haggard CD, and I've never been much for dancing at all. While many friends my age have relished circuit parties and drunken tea dances, I've been continually frustrated by the clubs. I find the music mostly deafening and monotonous. When I hear techno tribal, it doesn't send me into a trance. It usually sends me for the door.

So I arrived at 6 p.m. that Sunday night for what my friends ominously termed "The Lesson." We learned the basic two-step and the waltz. I'd waltzed at my small town's version of cotillion. Two self-anointed society ladies whose mission it was to instruct Lexington's pre-adolescents in the art of ballroom dance made this class possible.

My sixth grade fox trots turned out to be



SHER PRUITT

I recently broke my longstanding boycott on country-western dancing, and it was so nice to see a room of gay men who weren't sucking in their guts or puffing their chests out like some pre-op Dolly Parton.

an easier affair than the full-tilt kicking and spinning line dances I was about to learn. But I persevered. Worst case scenario: As I badly bruise the feet of strangers, I bat my eyes and work that "It's my first time" charm. But what am I going to say on my second and third visits?

I'm not trading my Levi's for Wranglers anytime soon, but the men were friendlier than in any bar I've ever visited, and I didn't see a single person doing bumps in the bathroom or stumbling around drunk.

Not to wax puritanical, but teeth-grinding and nasal drainage are not all that conducive to conversation. It was so nice to see a room of gay men who weren't sucking in their guts or puffing their chests out like some pre-op Dolly Parton.

The men were admirably patient with me, content to push me around like a broom as veteran dancers performed complicated turns and dips to our sides. Every time I tried to add to the dance floor conversation, I'd lose the beat and stomp on four people, but none of my missteps required hospitalization.

During my third dance with a particularly adorable bear, he whispered in my ear: "Don't talk, baby. Just follow." Which is indeed a charming thing for one man to say to another. Certainly enough to guarantee my return.

Kirk Read lives in San Francisco and can be reached at KirkRead@aol.com and www.temenos.net/kirkread.

LETTERS

What will it take for action on HIV?

To the Editor:

Thank you for writing frankly about Mayor Lee Brown's failure to act quickly on the HIV/AIDS front as he had promised back on World AIDS Day ("Mayor stumbles on HIV follow through," Jan. 21). Anybody can give lip service to a problem, but a good leader does more.

Before the November elections, I personally gave Brown the letter from Ryan White Planning Council that declared this state of emergency. He was notified about the very high HIV infection rate in the African American community and that we needed black leaders to step forward immediately and help us get a handle on this problem. He saw things differently. He cared more about that arena project of his and his trip to Africa than he did the crisis on his doorstep.

Since he received that letter, more than 250 African Americans have been diagnosed with HIV. And this is from infections that actually occurred years earlier when the rates

were lower. How many black people need to get sick before he and his team respond? Does the black community have to suffer the lessons and losses the gay community did before massive action starts?

If a gay person did the same thing to the gay community regarding this disease, we would take strong action. Maybe if we tied an arena deal into the response, Brown might act faster.

Gary J. Van Ooteghem
Chairman

Ryan White Planning Council

Editor's note: The Ryan White Planning Council will distribute about \$17.6 million in federal funding this year to help county residents already infected with HIV through services like food banks, drug reimbursements, dental services,

counseling and hospice care. The money is restricted to treatment; HIV prevention and education efforts are left to the city's \$5 million-a-year HIV Prevention Program and private AIDS service organizations.

Shell's diversity training includes gays, lesbians

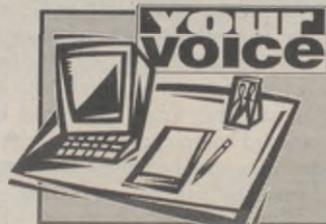
To the Editor:

I was pleasantly surprised by the interest of the *Houston Voice* in profiling where the oil companies stand with respect to workplace issues pertaining to sexual orientation ("Fill 'er up?" Jan. 28). Overall you did a thorough job, but I do need to correct one of the quotes from my interview.

During the interview, I was asked if Shell includes sexual orientation in its diversity training. I had explained that diversity training is prevalent throughout the company. However, training specifically on the topic of sexual orientation is spotty. Some parts of the business have included sexual orientation in diversity awareness training, others are looking at pilots, and some parts of the company aren't there yet.

Rick Schroder
Shell Oil Co.
Houston

Editor's note: The article also incorrectly listed the e-mail address of the company's gay and lesbian employee group, which is SEAShell@shellus.com.



Let us know what you think

Send the editor your letters (400 words maximum) or op-ed submissions (800 words maximum).

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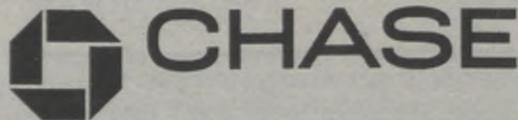
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Gay couple, trans woman among victims of Alaska Airlines crash

PORT HUENEME, Calif. (AP)—The search for survivors among the 88 people flying on Alaska Airlines Flight 261 ended Wednesday after 41 hours. Among the victims of the crash were Toni Choate, a Santa Cruz man who was living as a woman, and William Knudson and Bradley Long, who owned a bed and breakfast in Puerto Vallarta. Choate was returning to the San Francisco Bay area with his daughter when the plane crashed. Choate was a general contractor and cabinet finisher originally from Visalia, Calif. He was formerly known as Larry D. Choate, but changed his name and started living as a woman in the mid 1990s, according to friends and relatives. In 1995, Choate bought the Savoy Bar in Santa Clara, Calif. and moved to San Francisco about a year ago. "He was an excellent father, as far as taking her places and showing her things," Elliott said. "They were real close." Knudson and Long were headed home after visiting their inn. They "lived life to the fullest," said Laura Lyon, vice president at Lyon & Associates Real Estate in Sacramento, where Long, 38, had worked for the past decade. "They were very much into boating and had a large hobby restoring old cars," Lyon said. "They were always entertaining, very, very generous, warmhearted gentlemen."

Military services spell out training, gay discharges down slightly

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. military services for the first time have spelled out for field commanders a policy of ensuring that troops who complain of anti-gay threats or harassment are not themselves investigated. The intent is to allow such complaints to be aired without fear of being kicked out of the service for being gay, and to reinforce the idea that those who make anti-gay threats will not be tolerated. Defense Secretary William Cohen said Tuesday the new guidelines on how to investigate anti-gay threats are incorporated in updated training programs designed to ensure that the Clinton administration's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on gays is enforced fairly and uniformly throughout the services. "These plans make it very clear ... that there is no room for harassment or threats in the military," Cohen said in a written statement. The Pentagon also announced Tuesday the number of discharges from the military for being homosexual fell to 1,034 in the fiscal year ended Sept. 30 from 1,145 in the year-earlier period.

'Millionaire' quietly includes gay couples among game winners

HOLLYWOOD—The game show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" has garnered attention for more than its No. 1 ratings, according to a New York Times report. The quiz show has also quietly broken sexual and racial barriers, including among its contestants gay and racially mixed couples that in the past wouldn't have been aired. When contestant Rob Coughlin, of Shoreline, Wash., appeared on a show that aired Jan. 23, host Regis Philbin introduced Coughlin's companion, Mark Leahy, as soon as the contestant walked onstage. "Your partner, Mark, is in the audience, 'Hey, Mark,'" said Philbin, to audience applause. As Coughlin began answering questions correctly, Philbin asked Leahy what his partner should do if he won \$1 million. "Get a new wardrobe," replied Leahy. When Coughlin won \$500,000, Philbin said, "Hey, Mark, come down." Leahy bounded onto the stage and hugged Coughlin. "Hey, Mark, nice to see you," Philbin said. ABC executives, who admitted to some trepidation about the episode, said there was no reaction from viewers. Airing on ABC three nights a week, "Millionaire" has an average audience of 28.5 million viewers, the Times reported.



Network executives were nervous about the Jan. 23 episode of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' when a gay man hugged his partner after winning \$500,000, but viewers didn't complain.

Report says priests dying of AIDS at higher rate than general

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—AIDS has become a serious problem among Roman Catholic priests and has caused the deaths of hundreds of priests across the United States, the Kansas City Star reported Jan. 29. The newspaper said the actual number of AIDS deaths is difficult to determine because death certificates are often altered, but that the death rate from AIDS appears to be at least four times that of the rate for the general U.S. population. Examination of death certificates indicated several hundred priests have died of AIDS-related illnesses since the mid-1980s, and hundreds more are living with HIV. The Star conducted a survey of American priests with a margin of error of 3.5 percent. Six of 10 priests responding said they knew of at least one priest who had died of an AIDS-related illness; one-third knew a priest living with AIDS. Asked about their sexual orientation, 75 percent said they were heterosexual, 15 percent said they were homosexual and 5 percent said they were bisexual.

—From staff and wire reports

Student says school didn't stop anti-gay harassment

> Continued from Page 5

New legal ground: officials responsible

Henkle's case builds on a 1996 Lambda victory in a lawsuit brought on behalf of Jamie Nabozny, where after a jury verdict finding liability, school officials in Ashland, Wisconsin agreed to pay almost \$1 million for ignoring Nabozny's abuse.

Since then, similar cases in California, Massachusetts, New York and Washington have drawn national attention to the problem of anti-gay harassment and violence in schools.

Henkle's case differs from the Nabozny case in its charges of First Amendment violations, and because the plaintiff seeks punitive damages against individuals, rather than the school district, according to Lambda staff attorney Doni Gewirtzman.

Under the 11th amendment, Gewirtzman said, it is unlawful to sue a state entity for damages in federal court. In Nevada, unlike in Wisconsin, the public school system is considered a state entity and can't be held financially responsible for past wrongs.

The school district can, however, be sued for forward-looking relief, in this case Henkle's high school diploma.

School officials can also be sued as in-

dividuals, and Henkle's case seeks punitive damages against all eight defendants, Gewirtzman added.

Henkle v. Gregory also raises state law claims of negligence, negligence of supervision, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of emotional distress, and seeks unspecified compensatory damages.

Lambda has asked for a jury trial, Gewirtzman said, and expects to begin the discovery process within a few months.

In addition to financial compensation, said Gewirtzman, the best possible outcome for the case would be that it "send a message to school officials around the country that when lesbian and gay students are being beaten up, they must take action. It's unacceptable to just send the student to another school."

INFO

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www.lambdalegal.org

Family of sodomized student sues school board

FAYETTEVILLE (AP)—A 12-year-old was repeatedly sodomized in woods near his middle school, according to a lawsuit accusing school officials of failing to adequately protect students.

The boy's grandmother and mother sued the Cumberland County Board of Education, seeking more than \$10,000 in damages.

The lawsuit, filed Jan. 12, charges that the school system failed to protect the former Westover Middle School student, now 16, from his alleged assailants, who attended Westover High School less than 200 feet away.

It also charges that school administrators were aware that woods near the school had been "repeatedly used for assaults, drug use and other illegal activity, but still failed to take proper and adequate safety measures."

Westover Principal Reginald Ennett said there never has been a problem with students trespassing onto his schools grounds in his three years there. The woods near the school are not a problem, he said.

In 1997, Westover High student Chris Eggleston was murdered in woods near the school.

The student said he was sodomized every day for two months beginning in September 1996. He finally told his mother about the attacks on Oct. 22, 1996.

His ordeal began as harassment, when the high school students would accuse him in phone calls of being a homosexual and threaten to kill him. Within weeks, the boys began coming to the middle school from the high school. The student said they forced him at knife point into the woods, where they raped him.

"I was embarrassed," he said in an interview. "I thought I deserved it. They made me feel bad about myself, and I thought they were going to kill me and they were going to get my grandma."

One of the two alleged assailants, who was 15 at the time, was convicted of rape, sentenced to three months' probation and ordered to perform community service. The other boy was never prosecuted, but is now in prison for another crime.



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Rallying for change

Michelle Hughes (right) searched through a handful of signs before selecting one to use during a Jan. 28 protest in downtown Houston. Gay men and lesbians gathered in a city park a few blocks from Exxon Mobil's Houston headquarters to protest the company's dropping of sexual orientation from its non-discrimination policy and ending domestic partner benefits for gay employees. Company officials have said Exxon Mobil does not discriminate and strongly enforces its harassment policy. Bob Taylor (below) was one of several protesters who signed a petition from Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus calling on the company to change its policies.



MATTHEW A. HENNE



MATTHEW A. HENNE

Station mum on other complaints

> Continued from Page 1

segment of the show and several commercials, leaving little context for listeners to reference the comments.

It also made no mention of a reported Jan. 24 incident in which alleged anti-gay lyrics were inserted into a remake of a Crosby, Stills and Nash song. Station officials have either refused to comment on the second incident, or said that they were unaware of it.

Parker said the apology was the minimum the station could do after Dorsey's comments. "They did what I asked," Parker said. "They made a public apology and they agreed that similar behavior wouldn't happen in the future."

Parker said she intends to file a letter of protest with the Federal Communications Commission over the incident, an action some gay men and lesbians have already taken.

Station officials initially refused to comment to Parker or media outlets about the Jan. 21 comments. But as media coverage intensified last week, the station responded with a five-paragraph letter hand-delivered to Parker and the on-air apology.

The delay in responding was so station officials could investigate, said Brian Purdy, vice president and general manager of KKRW and KLOL.

"After reviewing the tape on the show, keeping in mind that we are dealing with live radio and an emotional topic not only for festival-goers but for Keven ... he voiced comments directed to Ms. Parker which were

inappropriate and went too far," Purdy said.

No action will be taken against Dorsey for the Jan. 21 comments, Purdy said.

"We feel like him making a public apology is a reasonable response," Purdy said. "We have sensitized our staff to issues that are important in being a public voice and let them know that was not acceptable behavior."

Purdy did not outline what steps station officials took to sensitize staff members. He was also unaware of complaints about the remake of the Crosby, Stills and Nash song.

"Keep in mind that when you reach over 400,000 [listeners] listeners each week, we do receive a number of calls and opinions levied on what we broadcast. Most radio stations do," Purdy said.

In the station's letter to Parker, Purdy said KKRW has supported through on-air promotion "gay community focused events such as a Houston visit by the AIDS quilt to benefit persons with AIDS, and several concerts by openly gay artists in which proceeds went to gay related cases."

But when pressed during an interview Monday, Purdy wouldn't list specific gay-related events the station has supported.

Parker said gay men and lesbians should continue to monitor the station, citing public pressure as a key in KKRW issuing its apology.

"I don't believe they would have responded without public pressure. It clearly sent a message through local radio circles that I hope other stations were paying attention to," Parker said.

For more information, see story page 25

EDITOR

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Ballot courtesy *Houston Voice*



'For some, oral sex is equated with safe sex. This false assumption has led to tragic lifelong consequences.'—Dr. Helene Gayle, director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention

RIC FELD/AF

'Receptive' partner in most danger

> Continued from Page 1

The CDC study—conducted by Dr. Beth Dillion in collaboration with the University of California, San Francisco's Options Project—surveyed 102 gay and bisexual men who had recently become infected with HIV.

Using a new testing technology developed by the CDC, researchers pinpointed those with recent infections, enabling them to then conduct intensive interviews with the HIV-positive men to determine risk factors near the time of infection.

Of the 102 participants, eight, or 7.8 percent, appeared to have been infected through oral sex.

"If any other risk behaviors were identified by the infected individual or their partner, oral sex was excluded as the route of transmission," according to a CDC summary of the study. "Because of these stringent requirements, 7.8 percent may be an underestimate of transmission through oral sex in this group."

The receptive partner in oral sex is at the most risk, said Dr. Richard Valdiserri, deputy director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, STD & TB Prevention. All of the men in the study believed to be infected through oral sex were the receptive partners, Valdiserri told *Houston Voice*.

"For the individual who became the oral partner, with either semen or pre-ejaculate in their mouth, that is where the risk is," he said. "If the receptive partner is HIV-positive and the insertive partner is negative, the risk is not as great of transmission to the insertive partner."

Simply abstaining from ejaculating into the mouth is not sufficient, Valdiserri said, because pre-ejaculate also contains HIV.

The new study "is perhaps the most definitive to date" on the risks of oral sex, "and the most important message is that most of these men reported they really didn't think much risk at all was associated. They thought low risk means no risk," Valdiserri said, noting that risk appears to increase with repeated exposures.

"Oral sex is lower risk than receptive anal intercourse, but because it is low risk doesn't mean it can't result in infection. You can't put oral sex on the same level as mutual masturbation, for example," he said.

The study focused on men having oral sex with men, but the results could reasonably be expected to apply also to oral sex performed on a man by a woman, Valdiserri said.

As for cunnilingus, oral sex performed on a woman by either another woman or a man, "what we have said is it is certainly possible [to transmit HIV], but we don't have a lot of good data about that," he said.

HIV can be present in vaginal secretions and menstrual blood, making transmission theoretically possible, he explained.

"Abstaining from vaginal, anal and oral sex is the most effective way to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV," the CDC's summary of the study concluded.

"Individuals who choose to be sexually active can protect themselves by having sex with only one uninfected partner who has sex only with them, or using a latex condom with all forms of sexual intercourse—anal, vaginal and oral."

According to Valdiserri, individuals need to understand the risk associated with oral sex, know their partners' HIV status, and make conscious decisions about sexual behavior.

Successful HIV drugs prompt risky behavior

by LAURA BROWN

The success of new treatments for HIV/AIDS has led some at-risk individuals to take fewer precautions to avoid becoming infected, according to another CDC study presented at the seventh Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections.

The study, led by CDC epidemiologist Stan Lehman, confirms the results of several smaller surveys that have reached the same conclusion: New treatments may be leading to complacency about HIV prevention.

Lehman and his colleagues studied 1,976 HIV-negative or untested individuals in seven states who are considered at risk for contracting HIV: 693 gay and bisexual men recruited at gay bars, 600 street-recruited injection drug users, and 683 heterosexuals recruited at STD treatment clinics.

Overall, 31 percent reported being "less concerned" about HIV infection because of the new drugs, and 17 percent reported being "less careful" during sex or drug use.

Among gay men, 25 percent said they were less concerned and 13 percent said they were less safe; 30 percent of heterosexuals reported being less concerned and 15 percent reported being less safe; and among injection drug users, 40 percent said they were less concerned and 25 percent said they were less safe.

While gay and bisexual men had the lowest numbers in

the study, that doesn't necessarily translate to mean this group is the least complacent because of the new drugs, Lehman told *Houston Voice*.

As a group, gay men showed the highest correlation between saying they are "less safe" and reporting engaging in specific risky behaviors, Lehman said.

Even gay men who answered "no" when asked if they were "less safe" still reported engaging in specific high risk behaviors at relatively high numbers.

For example, while 71 percent of gay men who said they were "less safe" acknowledged having unprotected receptive anal intercourse in the last year, 43 percent of those who said they were not "less safe" still reported engaging in the activity.

"When it comes to stopping HIV, nobody knows as much—from a personal perspective and just because it is important to the community—as what gay men know, ... so possibly the lower reports [of being less concerned and less safe] are based on the higher levels of knowledge," Lehman said.

"But people are apparently not translating that knowledge into action, or they are putting too much faith in the efficacy of treatments," he said.

Study participants were recruited from Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oregon and Texas, including Houston, where gay men were recruited in the Montrose district popular with many gays.

Weighing the relative risk

Most early AIDS prevention programs focused on the message delivered in the CDC's study summary: Practice abstinence, or use a condom every time, all the time, for every sexual act that involves any contact with another person.

While that remains sound advice, many AIDS educators say they have realized that such simple, forceful approaches can end up alienating the very people who most need to get the message.

Instead, they advocate a "harm reduction" or "negotiated safety" model of safer sex education. Such programs focus on encouraging people to make decisions about their sexual boundaries thoughtfully, before they are confronted with a sexual situation, by weighing what is known about the relative dangers of particular acts and considering how much risk they are willing to take.

Compared with acts like unprotected anal intercourse, unprotected oral sex has generally been considered relatively low risk, and some men have considered it as a good compromise when deciding on their own sexual behavior, said Tony Braswell, AID Atlanta executive director, especially because many men consider oral sex less pleasurable with a condom.

"Most folks believe that oral sex is their best trade off—you are crossing the line just a little bit, being physically

intimate without the barrier of a condom, but in the minds of some of our clients, you are not putting yourself at as great a risk," Braswell said.

A harm reduction approach to HIV prevention, he said, "is all about negotiating in your own mind what you will absolutely never do, what you will do only if the person is really hot as a one-time thing, and what you will do all the time.

"For people who felt secure in unprotected oral sex, this study will probably rattle their cage and cause them to think twice," Braswell predicted. He called the new study "alarming."

"I think the value of this study is it gives us one more opportunity to scare people into a little more responsibility," Braswell said. "I think it is one more warning sign that we cannot guarantee you won't catch any infectious disease if you engage in a sexual act with another person, although you can take steps to limit your risk."

Some people avoid brushing or flossing their teeth before performing oral sex to try and avoid opening an easy route for HIV to enter the blood stream, Braswell said.

Dr. Richard Valdiserri, deputy director of the CDC's National Center for HIV, STD & TB Prevention, declined comment on the efficacy of such measures in preventing HIV transmission.



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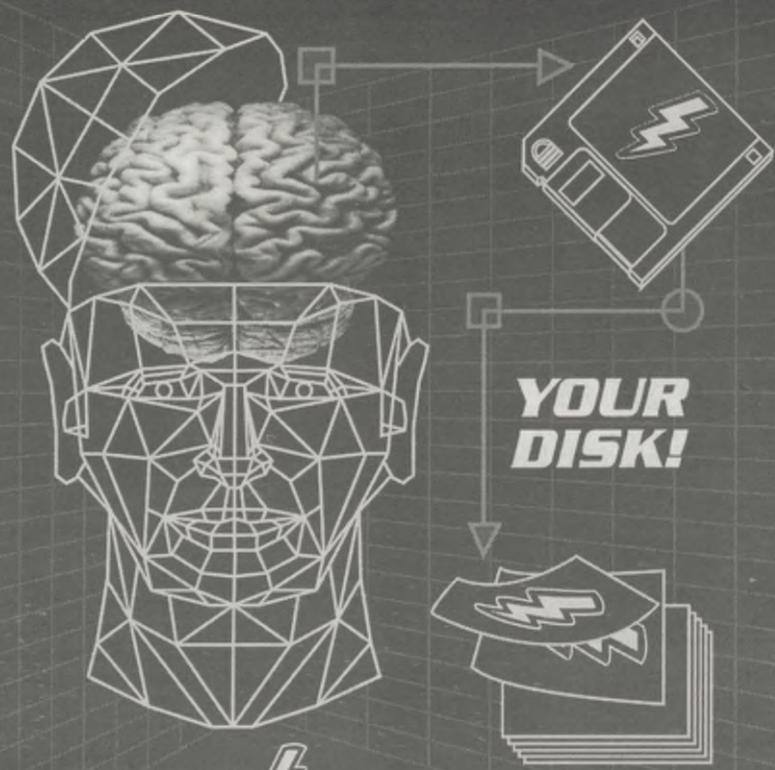


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Out on the Bayou

HOUSTON VOICE • FEBRUARY 4, 2000

A GUIDE FOR YOUR LEISURE TIME

CHO'S time to SHINE

by MATT MONTGOMERY

Comedian Margaret Cho came through a difficult time and learned to love herself; now she's spreading the story with laughs in her one-woman show, 'I'm the One That I Want' that started its national tour in Houston last year

Margaret Cho describes her nationally touring one-woman show, "I'm the One That I Want," as "still stand-up comedy above all else."

"I haven't changed the nature of what I do as a stand-up comic at all," she explains.

Yet there's something different about this Cho show, coming to Dallas's Majestic Theater on March 4. While the Korean American funny lady has always had rave reviews, standing ovations, and leagues of loving fans, this show isn't just leaving them crying with tears of laughter.

"It's about survival and self-reliance, self-love and self-worth," she said of the show, which opened its national tour in Houston's Aerial Theatre last July.

The glowing reviews that have hailed

her successful run off-Broadway at the Westbeth Theater in New York and are now causing her national tour to explode, are signaling the emergence of a Margaret Cho who has the kind of staying power of the best of stars.

Audiences are not just being touched with laughter, but moved by the inspiration of her story of survival and recovery presented in her uniquely irreverent style.

The irony is that Cho stands at the pinnacle of praise from her industry, her fans, and the media just at the time that she needs external praise the least.

Overcoming the devastating effects of the cancellation of her sitcom, "All-American Girl," after one season and a battle toward sobriety, Cho has discovered a new sense of self, carved from hardship, heartache and a fierce survivalist instinct.



CINDY SPROUL

After dealing with being pressured to lose weight and overcoming an alcohol problem, Margaret Cho has learned to love herself and is at the pinnacle of her career.

"It wrecked my life," she admitted of the cancellation, the pressures to lose weight, and a problem with alcohol.

She recalled that the transformation of her comedy club routine into a 90-minute show was something that happened seemingly on its own.

"My act has a life of its own. It's always been organic. I had been doing a lot of comedy clubs and I felt like I'd gotten to a point where my act, independent

> Continued on page 21

BIGhair bigDREAMS

In 'The Big Tease,' Craig Ferguson plays a gay Scottish hairstylist who comes to Los Angeles to match scissors and wits with the world's best beauty operators

Craig Ferguson as gay Scottish hairstylist Crawford MacKenzie in 'The Big Tease'

PHOTO: YARIV MILCHAN



by DAVID GOLDMAN

Craig Ferguson moved from his native Scotland—where he's ranked among the top comics—to Los Angeles in 1995, and well remembers the shock of hitting the streets in rough-and-tumble Tinseltown.

"I was kind of a big fish in a small pond in the U.K., and I decided I was going to share my genius with the world," he laughed. "Then I went to L.A. and found myself sitting in long lines of actors holding resumes and photographs. I started right back at the beginning. It was a humbling experience."

But Ferguson's career didn't get bogged down in those lines: He landed the role of Mr. Wick, the boss on ABC's "The Drew Carey Show."

Now Ferguson is mining comic material from his Scottish heritage and his first impressions of L.A. in "The Big Tease," which opens this month. Ferguson stars in the movie, which he co-wrote (with Sacha Gervasi) and co-

> Continued on page 22

SPA

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On Stage

Shakespeare's greatest hits

by D.L. GROOVER

Sometimes, it just doesn't pay to be the world's most famous dead dramatist, except that Shakespeare luckily doesn't have to see what contemporary playwrights do to his work.

Case in point: Joe Calarco's adaptation of Shakespeare's most accessible play, "Romeo and Juliet," now titled **SHAKESPEARE'S R&J**.

The conceit in this version is that it's set to tell the story of four male students in parochial school. We know this because they wear matching school uniforms, genuflect before they begin, and recite by rote some catechism precepts and rules for living well. What we don't know is why they do this, or who they are in a poor introduction to the new setting.

Calarco doesn't give his new characters any dialogue to let us know what's going on. He doesn't even give them names, only numbers. The four slink into the room almost on tiptoe, warily looking over their shoulders and putting fingers up to their mouths to shush each other, and then proceed to make enough noise to be heard in a neighboring diocese. There's much back-slapping and youthful playing in this forced dumbshow, but strangest of all, none of them seems concerned that this particular play might dredge up sexual stirrings and forbidden feelings. To say nothing about having to kiss a Juliet who needs a shave.

Once you realize that Calarco's contemporary subtext is under-realized and haphazardly draped over the play like a wet shroud, a remarkable thing occurs: Shakespeare takes over, and we get a surprisingly splendid rendition of "Romeo and Juliet," albeit in zip drive and reduced to a Greatest Hits. Nimble directed by Rob Bundy, the play survives and generates real thrills and heat.

James Lee Burke makes an impetuous Romeo, and is matched by the distinctive clear-eyed Juliet of Dustin Ross, who rounds out this maiden with new-found edges.

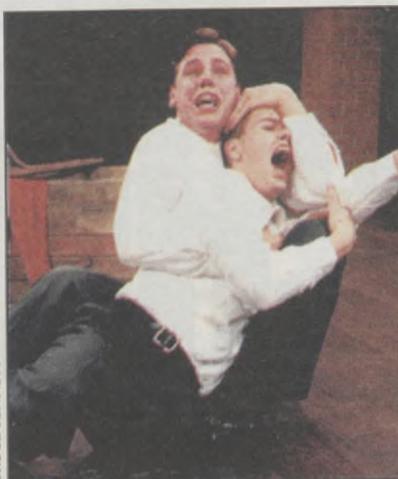
John Raymond Barker, a sharp-tongued Mercutio and meddling Friar Lawrence, is least successful as a surprisingly fey Lady Capulet.

Drake Simpson shines as the Nurse, imbuing her addled but loving speeches a special depth that only a trusted member of the family could impart.

If you think glaciers move slowly, you haven't heard the justly famous prelude to Wagner's masterwork, **TRISTAN UND ISOLDE** conducted by Maestro Christoph Eschenbach. Furtwangler sounds like Toscanini at this dirge pace. As those chromatic waves of sound lumbered through the Wortham, I flashed forward to the end of this production—sometime in 2003.

But once this impediment was hurdled, this glorious opera—a musical hymn to sex—turned out splendidly. Even the maestro fell under Wagner's magic spell, conducting this ultra-Romantic masterpiece with fiery passion, meticulous care, and loving speed.

"Tristan" is not for the faint of heart, nor the novice. If it's not sung with conviction, if the singers look like sideshow attractions at



Drake Simpson and Dustin Ross in an all-male adaptation of "Romeo and Juliet" in "Shakespeare's R&J" at Stages.

Barnum and Bailey (see the Metropolitan Opera), if it lacks the magic-realism, it can fall apart with a deadly thud. By all accounts, HGO's rendition of Wagner's titanic opus came very near perfection.

Visually stunning, this production, designed by the artist David Hockney, is a child's pop-up storybook realized in pulsating colors where psychedelic neon meets the medieval: emerald next to orange, ruby next to lapis. This hot scheme, complemented by hallucinogenic lighting, perfectly captures the seething, throbbing emotion in the music.

And what music they make! Renate Behle is a powerful Isolde: haughty, spurned, humiliated, then transfixed and ultimately transfixed. Her dark lustrous voice, befitting her early days as a mezzo, wraps around Wagner's soaring dramatics with flawless diction, pitch and control.

Stig Andersen fills out the heroic Tristan with great sense of character and intelligence. He looks the warrior prince, but seems slightly overpowered by the tempestuous orchestra.

The veteran mezzo Florence Quivar with her burnished seductive voice proves how beautiful the role of Brangaene can sound, and Carsten Stabell's sonorous bass and commanding presence as King Marke is regal dignity personified.

Any production of "T&I" is fairly rare, especially one like HGO's with such outstanding musical caliber, so this production is your chance to set sail.

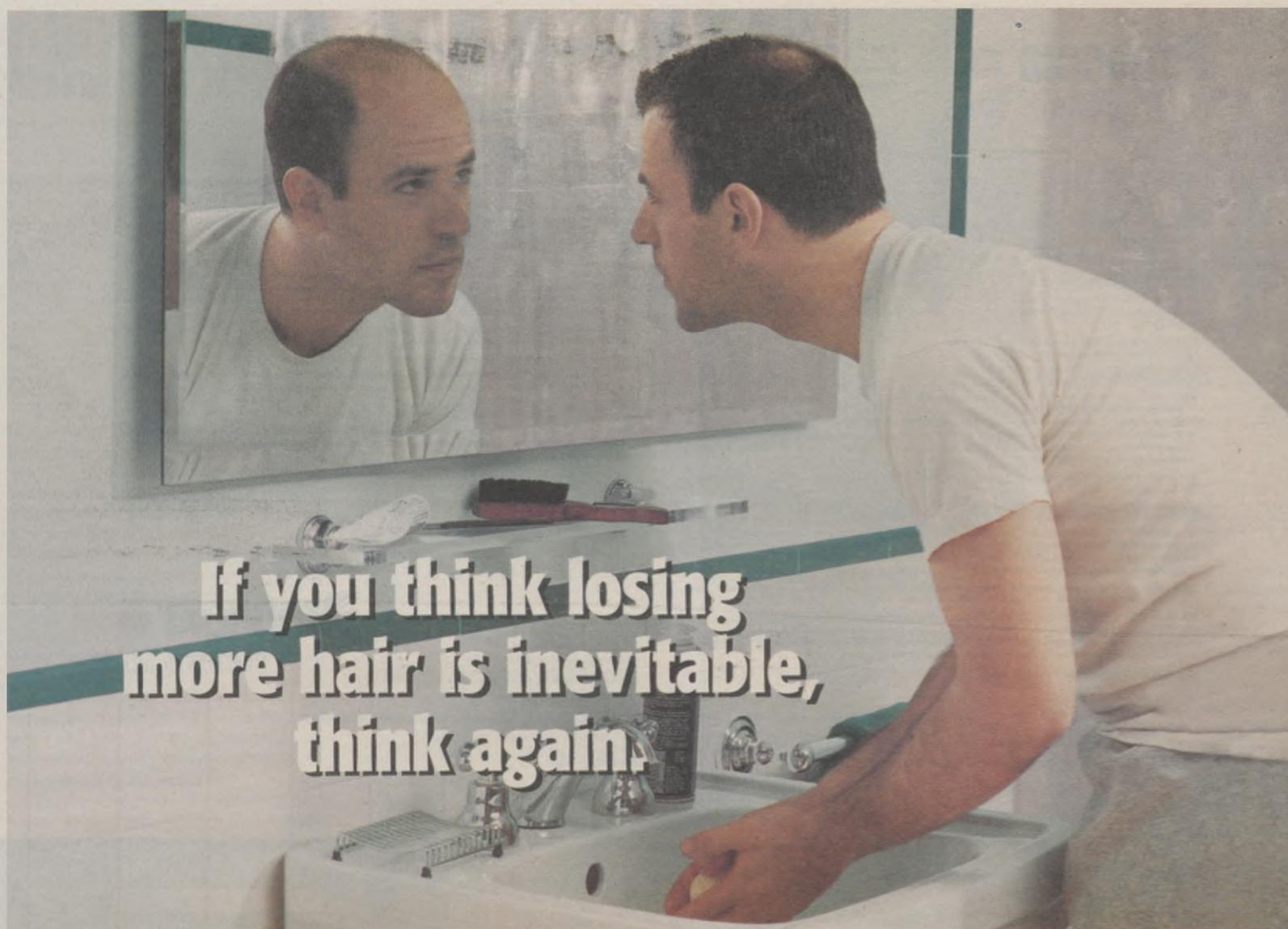
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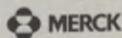
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What is PROPECIA used for?

PROPECIA is used for the treatment of male pattern hair loss on the vertex and the anterior mid-scalp area. PROPECIA is for use by **MEN ONLY** and should **NOT** be used by women or children.

What is male pattern hair loss?

Male pattern hair loss is a common condition in which men experience thinning of the hair on the scalp. Often, this results in a receding hairline and/or balding on the top of the head. These changes typically begin gradually in men in their 20s.

Doctors believe male pattern hair loss is due to heredity and is dependent on hormonal effects. Doctors refer to this type of hair loss as androgenetic alopecia.

Results of clinical studies:

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In one study, patients were questioned on the growth of body hair. PROPECIA did not appear to affect hair in places other than the scalp.

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You may need to take PROPECIA daily for three months or more before you see a benefit from taking PROPECIA. PROPECIA can only work over the long term if you continue taking it. If the drug has not worked for you in twelve months, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit. If you stop taking PROPECIA, you will likely lose the hair you have gained within 12 months of stopping treatment. You should discuss this with your doctor.

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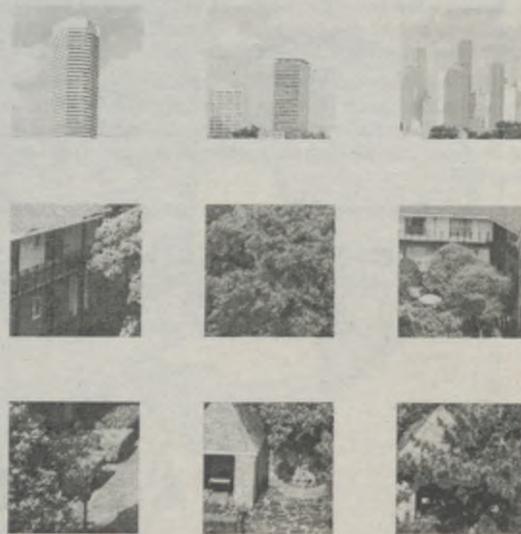


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CHO'S time to SHINE

> Continued from page 17

of what I was doing, changed and grew into something that had too much emotional weight and was too long, too big for comedy clubs," she said.

The tour started out with just a few cities and has grown to include 25 stops. New cities and shows are being added every day.

Cho has presented her personal life in her comedy from the start, poking fun at her Korean family and her childhood in the Haight of San Francisco of the 1970s.

"My philosophy is that truly nothing is really personal. We are all living experiences that are universal, and to show them you do people a great service," she said.

Cho, who began performing stand-up comedy when she was a teenage high school dropout, confesses that "I started so young that I didn't have a clear perception of who I was, and I said yes to a lot of stuff and that caused problems."

"All I knew was that I wanted to get out of school and out of my family and out of where I was living. I wanted to change my life," she said.

Saying that "my sense of humor has helped me to survive," Cho explains that when she presents images of Asian culture, it's less about making fun than just presenting it to the world.

"There's a lot of love in everything I do. I have respect and love for [my parents]

and for my culture," she said. "Throughout my career, I've been pulling out my culture and presenting it."

Cho says that when she first started performing she just did what she knew—her mother.

"I began doing my mother. There has always been truth in the way that I show Asian culture," she said.

Her mother takes it all in stride it seems. "She loves it. She feels like a star. She's just so happy about my career," said Cho, who was the first Asian American to be the focal star of a sitcom.

"I never saw people representing me, so I always had a slight inferiority complex about what I was doing. For me, personally, I want to inspire a younger generation of people who want to do better than me. Not just Asians, but anybody who feels that they're not represented," she said.

Her performing has brought her closer to some women who she considers inspirational. She recently performed for First Lady Hillary Clinton.

"We first met at the White House and she asked me to come to New York for a benefit for a fund-raiser for her Senate race. We've been acquainted for a while, and she is a hero for me, so brilliant and so lovely," said Cho.

"Her and Madonna," she added.

"It's sort of a joke about gay men and Madonna, but it's really not a joke. She is a cornerstone. For me and my friends, everything that she does is really important," she said.

Despite her admiration for other intelligent, creative women, there has not always



CINDY SPROUL

Margaret Cho hit it off big with the audience at a gay bar in Atlanta last Sunday when she contributed live broadcasts from the bar for 'Politically Incorrect's' post-game Super-Bowl show.

been love in the way she looked at herself, she says.

"I used to cringe and be sad about myself, but now I'd want to be my friend if I didn't know me. That's pretty cool," she said.

She explains that an active spiritual life of meditation, healthy living and good

friends has helped build this empowering self-love.

"It's not about really valuing myself over other people but about not being negative of myself," she said.

She doesn't let the road keep her from staying in touch with all of her friends. "We hook up all over the world, and e-mail is an amazing thing," she said.

These friendships and relationships provide the foundation of Cho's beliefs about her own self-love. The key to finding love for yourself comes from giving it to others, she says.

"If you believe in world loving, then you can't help but to also include yourself in that, and love yourself," she said. "Once I made the connection that I had to be my own support system, sobriety was an outgrowth of that. It grew from that thinking."

While Cho says that she would consider another sitcom if she were to have more control, for now her plate is more than full.

"Everything I'm doing now is self-generated," she said.

She just finished the filming of her show for cinematic release this fall. She's writing a book, working on a new show and considering a European tour.

"I find it very joyful. My life is full of love," she said.

INFO

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BIG hair big DREAMS

> Continued from page 17

executive produced (with Gervasi and Kevin Allen). Allen also directs.

Houston Voice interviewed Ferguson recently when his publicity tour stopped in Atlanta last month.

In the movie, Ferguson plays Crawford Mackenzie, a gay hairstylist in Scotland who receives what he believes is an invitation to come to Los Angeles as a contestant in the World Freestyle Hairdressing Championship. Crawford gets a royal send-off from his lover, family and friends. Such big news is his invitation that a documentary filmmaker (Chris Langham) and camera crew come along to memorialize his pending triumph for the BBC.

But soon after he checks into his posh suite, Crawford learns the horrible truth: His precious invitation was simply a form letter inviting him to watch the hair-doings from the audience.

A lesser man might have headed home (thus making a very short movie), but not Crawford. He meets a high-powered Hollywood type Candy (Frances Fisher), saves her hair (which had been treated to within an inch of its life) and sets about snipping away at the red tape that's keeping him from standing centerstage on the big night.

Ferguson's own experiences in the City of Angels gave him the ideas for Crawford's adventures.

"We didn't take any license with our stuff. Pretty much everything that happened, I based on some kind of reality—even the world of competitive hairdressing. There are a lot of desperate people in L.A., so it heightens things. There are a lot of people chasing stuff."

But while Crawford gets shot at and encounters plenty of typical Hollyweird characters direct from central casting, he also moves with an almost child-like innocence through the urban jungle.

"We kept trying to get into the movie that although, per square yard, there are more dip-shits in L.A. than you meet anywhere else in the world, there are also nice people there as well. I've met some great people in L.A."

Questions about Crawford's sexuality don't throw Ferguson—though his answers may raise more questions with some viewers.

What's his own relationship with the gay community?

"I don't know, really. I don't know that I have one."

So why is Crawford gay?

"Because he would be. Because it would be homophobic for him not to be gay."

Because he's a hairdresser?

"No. Because he's based on a real human being. And because the real human being he's based on is gay. You notice that none of the other hairdressers are gay in the movie. That's on purpose, because we didn't want to say hairdressers are gay. But a lot are—duh!"

"We wanted to make a movie where the lead guy from the movie was gay, but it really wasn't an issue. Whether that becomes an issue or not depends on you guys—the press—and the gay community. I hope it

doesn't.

"The only thing I was asked about was what about a straight man playing a gay character. I don't really get that. Tony Hopkins ['Silence of the Lambs'] isn't really a serial killer. You don't really have to be what you portray."

Ferguson said his inspiration for Crawford was "a guy I used to share an apartment with in Glasgow years and years ago." He described the man, whom he would identify only as Robby, as "a fabulous human being... fearless... He had a strange mixture we tried to get with Crawford. He was arrogant, but he was also innocent. It's an odd combination in a character like that." After seeing the movie, Ferguson said, Robby sent him a one-sentence letter: "It's me, isn't it?"

In one scene, morning finds Crawford and Candy waking up in bed together after a long night of partying. Both are shocked and can't remember if they did more than cuddle up and snore. Did they?

"My belief is that they didn't," Ferguson said. "That's because Crawford is a character [for whom] from the waist down ain't nothing happening for that particular set-up. It's just not his inclination." He speculated that strong friendships sometimes grow between gay men and straight women because gay men bring "listening without an agenda, which is not what a straight man brings to a relationship with a woman. It just isn't."

A punk rock band first brought the young Ferguson to the stage in Scotland. He gradually made the transition to stand-up comedy and acting in some of Glasgow's "brainy European theaters."



Mee-ow! Crawford confronts rival beauty operator Stig Ludwiggsson (David Rasche).

"I wanted to be involved in a profession that was very forgiving toward erratic behavior," Ferguson said, though he noted he lives quite a different life these days. "Now I'm sipping cocoa and in bed by 10 o'clock. But I was a bit wilder then." Ferguson and his wife married right after he shot "The Big Tease." They live in Hollywood Hills.

You wonder if Ferguson drew on his memories of those "wilder" days when he wrote his second film, which is also due out this year. In "Saving Grace," an English country gentlewoman on hard times decides with her gardener to bring in extra money by "growing really strong ganja in her greenhouse."

Ferguson didn't go gay to prepare for his role as Crawford, but he did have to learn to cut hair. "I'm not very good at it. I can fake it. I learned to cut on nylon wigs. No one would actually let me cut human hair. If your hair was nylon, I could give you a real nice bob and weave."

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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEWS

A wonderful thing for veggie-lovers

by TRAYCE DISKIN

A restaurant that names itself after a single superlative sets itself up to be challenged. When entering **WONDERFUL'S** stripmall storefront, I was startled by the large, bare dining room nearly empty but for a slew of muddy green Formica tables. Clean and clinical, with bright track lighting and only one or two pictures on the wall, I hardly felt compelled to sit down.

But a friend urged me on. "C'mon," she said. "I feel like I'm eating in a minimalist art gallery, where the only art happens to be a metal buffet table over in the corner." But the argument was soon made moot by the warm and friendly greetings from the staff.

"Have you ever been here before? Are you both vegetarians?" one of the two servers casually asked. "Tell me, what kinds of food do you like? I'll tell you what would be good," cheerily offered another.

In fact, it seemed that all the customers that began to trickle in—from funky Montrose teens to young families and flashy affluent couples—had one thing in common: a love for Wonderful's strictly vegetarian food and personalized service. Although more mainstream veggies can always find something on a typical Chinese menu, vegans usually have slim pickings.

Wonderful's food, which uses spices, veggies, wheat gluten, tofu and other soy products to imitate any number of meat dishes, takes care of the vegans and veggies

many times over, and will even please adventurous carnivores, too. Although the standard menu divides into (faux) beef, chicken, seafood and vegetable dishes, the most sensible option is the buffet, which includes most everything on the menu, soup and dessert for \$6.95.

My favorite by far is the Vegan Fish, a sauté of eggplants, fish sauce and vegetables. It wasn't only the fool-proof taste that sold me, but the moist, flaky texture of the eggplant helped, too. If it weren't for the purple skins surrounding each slice of "fish," I would be worried I was biting into a tangy piece of eel or cod.

I made several trips to the buffet for the Vegan Sesame Soy Protein, small puffy soy disks smothered in sweet and sour orange glaze. The Vegetable Curry also kept me returning for its potatoes, carrots and a creamy curry that soaked up the fresh steamed rice.

The Vegan Chicken was less impressive, as its greasy, clear sauce did little for the chicken substitute, and the cabbage in the sauce was bitter and slightly overcooked. The Vegetable Fried Rice was delicious, though, with bits of peppers and marinated soy. The Vegetable Balls were compelling in texture, but were a tad bland.

From the regular menu, we also tried the Kung Pao Vegetarian Chicken in Hot Pepper Sauce (\$8.95). Lined with fresh steamed broccoli and cauliflower, this dish seemed more fresh and a bit less greasy than some of the buffet options.

The peanuts are stewed in sesame oil and hot peppers, and toasted before being added to the sauce. Its these little nuggets of heaven that give the dish its spark. Although my friend found the soy chicken substitute incredibly rubbery, I loved the chewiness and thoroughly hot, nutty flavor.

For dessert, the buffet offers fresh grapefruit—deep, dusky pink and incredibly juicy. We stared at the mango-colored jello cube for minutes before a server informed us it was Vegan Pineapple Pudding. With a taste I could only describe as that of Chinese White Rabbit candy, its made from water chestnuts.

Although Wonderful doesn't necessarily present an escape from the often greasy and heat lamp-singed foods of the typical Chinese buffet, it does live up to its name in some respects. It provides vegetarians with a wide range of options that can't be found elsewhere. And it does so with some of the most genuinely kind service around. That's a wonderful thing.

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BOOK NEWS

Modern epistolary recalls star-crossed love

by VINCENT KOVAR

"Dunno where to begin. Dunno really how to write a letter! We buried him, Jerome."

And so the exchange begins. Award-winning New Zealand author, William Taylor, has written another rending story of young love, star-crossed with the irrevocable realities left behind after a death. This short (96 page) novella is written with a modern twist on the classic epistolary tale.

Confused and emotionally shattered by the death of their friend, Jerome, the remaining pair of an intimate trio span thousands of miles through e-mail, faxes and on-line chat sessions. Across the distance of both miles and misunderstanding, Marco and Katie find a caustic closeness that strips away their preconceptions and erodes the illusions that kept them apart, even under the façade of togetherness.

Marco, in New Zealand, grows to understand that the friends' lifelong connections were pieces of a puzzle whose illustrations only appear when broken apart.

The book is not about Jerome, though his death precipitates the story. Instead, Taylor tells a tale about the two still left behind.

Marco is a punk, an adolescent rogue whose charm is diminished after the death of his friend. He must struggle to understand his homophobia both in regards Katie's lesbianism and her former relationship with Jerome.

"You are going to miss him so much your—'other half.' I used to laugh at the two of you. You were so close ... I loved him, too, Marco, altho' maybe not quite in the way you think," she writes.

In America, Katie, the more mature of the two, finds her adolescent crushes blossoming into adult love with Ann, an African-American woman who completes her in a way Jerome could not. "She is part of me and I am part of her," Katie writes.

Eventually, their correspondence brings Katie face-to-face with Marco over the Christmas holiday. The two at last confront the futility of denial and bring the tragedy of errors and mistrust to its heartrending finish. Although these moments take them further from the death of their friend and bring them closer to each other, Katie and Marco also find the hidden truth of Jerome's own desire for closeness, deepening the mystery of both his death and his life.

The two tear open their souls atop Jerome's grave, drinking cheap champagne and smoking American cigarettes. "There was only one ... he ever wanted, Marco," Katie reveals, "Only one ... that Jerome Winter Fucking lived and breathed for... Look!" she points at a photo. "Who the fuck was he looking at with that beautiful, beautiful smile across his face and that shine in his eye?"

As the novel draws to a close, Katie's developing love draws her back to Am-



erica. Marco is left with the painful truth of what might have been and an uncertain future where he must choose between facing life alone or embracing the facts he doesn't want to deal with.

The epistolary form and the novel's length make it a quick read, but don't mistake it for fluff. The immediacy of the faxes and e-mails give the book a lifelike element wherein the characters both think and talk in way that is less literary than lifelike.

This form is difficult, and while one or two chapters are made unsteady by inconsistent points of view, overall Taylor uses the technique to deftly create tension.

What makes this form crucial to the novel and prevents it from being merely a gimmick is the honesty with which the characters write.

The sense of separation inevitable in modern communication gives the characters' feelings and dialogue time and space to develop.

Readers who are used to the immediacy of half-hour TV dramas might find this initially slow, but the pace and brevity of the book keep it from dragging. These elements also make the book accessible to both young adult and older readers, though its realistic language would probably be inappropriate for those younger than 14.

Though William Taylor is known mostly for his humor writing ("Agnes the Sheep"), "Jerome" is his most striking foray in to the crucible of young love since his novel "The Blue Lawn," which garnered him the AIM Senior Fiction Award.

"Jerome" is a fast read, and while it is somewhat predictable in its development, the story has the same effect as a doctor's needle—you see it coming, but it still makes you flinch and stings your insides.

INFO

Jerome

by William Taylor
Alyson Publication, \$9.95

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Pride organizers to host media workshop for local groups

by KAY DAYUS

Though the Pride parade is still five months away, the Houston Pride Committee is in full swing.

Officials recently unveiled the logo for Pride 2000 and are in the midst of collecting ballots from throughout the community that will elect grand marshals for the June 24 event.

The all-volunteer committee is also hosting a regional conference and putting the final touches on a media workshop this month.

The logo for Pride 2000 interprets the theme, "Take Pride, Take Joy, Take Action." Designed by local graphic artist Diane Jolley, the colorful design depicts two heads that are close enough to portray intimacy. Jolley said that the image can be interpreted as either a gay or lesbian couple and as a symbol of unity and love.

The logo's violet, yellow and magenta colors were chosen for strength and warmth, Jolley said.

The pink triangle, a symbol for gays since it was used as part of the Nazi persecution of gays, is also incorporated into the logo as a point of intimacy between the two faces, Jolley said.

Local Pride organizers adopted the them from an international pride conference held in Scotland last October, said Jack Valinski, executive director of the Pride committee.

For the second consecutive year, voting for

parade grand marshals is community-wide, meaning residents of Harris and surrounding counties can take part, he said.

Organizers are hoping to surpass last year's vote tally of about 200, Valinski said. To help, more than 3,000 copies of "Inside Pride"—the committee's newsletter—will be distributed throughout Houston and will include a ballot for people to fill out.

Pride organizers also reversed a year-old decision and allowed local gay publications, like the *Houston Voice*, to include the ballot for residents to clip, fill out and mail to the pride committee. (Ballot, page 14)

Ballots must be returned by Feb. 24 and should include a signature and proof of residency, like a copy of a driver's license. Voting will also be held Feb. 26 at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Results of the vote will be announced March 9.

Grand Marshals for the parade are divided among four categories—female, male, honorary and honorary organization.

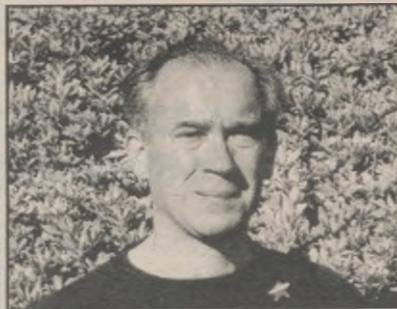
Nominees for female Grand Marshal include Pat Gandy, a longtime community activist who is now retired; Anita Renteria, past president of the Greater Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce; Barbara Walker, a lesbian health advocate; and Tori Williams, co-founder of AssistHers, a volun-

teer group that provides support to lesbians with life-threatening or chronic illnesses.

Male Grand Marshal nominees include Tony Brigandi, who has helped raise money for AIDS organizations; Kevin Davidson, founding board trustee and president of Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals; Ray Hill, a longtime gay activist; Grant Martin, a community fundraiser and political activist; Pete Martinez, longtime volunteer for NAMES Project; Bill O'Rourke, a community volunteer; and Richard Wiederholt, a member of several HIV/AIDS groups.

Honorary Grand Marshal nominees are: Jack Adams, who has been active in many fundraising activities in the community since 1982; Sarah Gish, founder of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Film Festival; Ann J. Robinson, executive director of the Montrose Counseling Center; Don Sinclair, retired pastor of Bering Memorial United Methodist Church; and Blake and Gordon Weisser, longtime members of PFLAG.

On Feb. 19, Houston organizers host a regional Pride conference, with volunteers from five states expected to take part, to share ideas and to help improve Pride celebrations.



Jack Valinski, executive director of the Houston Pride Committee, wants to increase participation in community-wide voting for the parade's grand marshals.

In conjunction with the conference, a day-long media workshop will be held Feb. 20 for community organizations to learn how to better get the word out to local media outlets about their activities and events.

INFO
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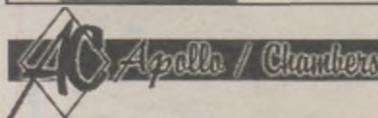
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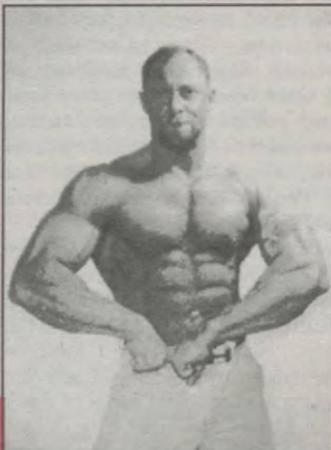
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Flexology

A GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH

by GREG HERREN

Are you over-training?

The body has limits. No big surprise there, right?

Everyone knows that the body can only be pushed so far before something has to give. The body will often send alarms out to the brain when it is being pushed too hard: shortness of breath, intense sweating, cramps, extreme thirst and loud beating of the heart.

Most people heed these warning signals and stop exercising, as well they should. Pushing your body beyond its limits can frequently cause heart attacks or strokes. Since the purpose of exercising is to improve your health, you have to know your limits, which is why aerobics instructors frequently stop at some point during the class to measure your heart rate.

Ideally, when exercising you never want your heart rate to go above 70 percent to 80 percent of its maximum working capacity. Usually, if you go above that, your body will send out alarm signals.

Yet there's another form of overdoing it where the body's alarm signals are not as obvious. Over-training almost seems like an oxymoron. How can you over train? The more you exercise, the healthier you'll get, right? The better conditioned? So how can you overtrain?

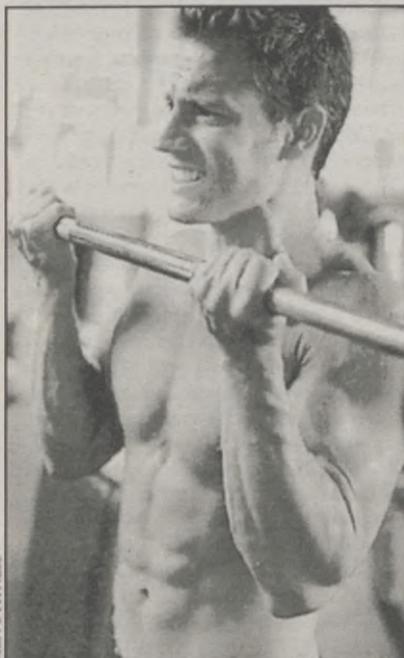
To understand this better, it's necessary to understand a little bit about the muscular system and how it works. To simplify, muscles are made up of proteins. When you exercise the muscle, the body pumps blood to the muscle working. The blood carries oxygen to the muscle, which will convert to energy to do the work.

The object of the exercise is to fatigue the muscle so much that the body will work to repair the muscle, have it grow and become stronger so the next time the work will be easier. In order for the muscle to grow and become stronger, it needs an adequate recovery time. Working the muscle again before it has recovered from the stress of the previous exercise is counter-productive.

When the muscle is in a state of recovery, it is not as strong as it was initially. The body is focusing on healing the muscle, so it is vulnerable. Putting stress on it again could easily cause an injury, like muscle fibers being torn or pulled to the point of severe pain. If you've never experienced the pain of a pulled, strained or torn muscle, consider yourself lucky.

The recovery time for an injured muscle is a great deal longer than the exercise recovery period. The traditional accepted amount of time in the industry is 48 hours—two days between working out muscle groups. When you are just starting out, most trainers will put you on a full-body workout and recommend three days a week, like Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The intensity of your workouts should also be taken into consideration. Some peo-



Over-training can lead to strained muscles, loss of flexibility and even reduced strength.

ple exercise one or two body parts per workout; since that workout is more intense, the recovery time needed is longer, generally three days to as long as a week.

How can you tell if you're over-training? It's actually pretty simple. The first sign is soreness and pain. The day after a good workout, the muscles worked should be fatigued, but able to move without pain. If the muscles cannot be moved without a feeling of tightness, soreness and even pain, they've been over-trained and you need a longer recovery period. (Over-training also inhibits the flexibility of the muscle, which is also self-defeating because the tighter the muscle, the less opportunity it has for growth.)

A second sign is an inability to get stronger. If your muscles aren't getting stronger, you are possibly over-training. Sometimes, over-training can cause a loss of strength, like when a weight you used previously is too much for you to handle again.

A proper period of rest is crucial. You have to take care of your muscles and your body daily. I always recommend that someone who is starting an exercise program should increase their protein intake; protein is what the body uses to repair and rebuild the muscles.

Massages are also important, as they help force the lactic acid built up during exercise out of the muscles and help to keep the muscles relaxed, flexible and supple.

Greg Herren is a certified exercise professional. He can be reached at greg121@aol.com.

community calendar

saturday, feb. 5

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM, 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.
Q-Patrol walks the streets at 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Visual Arts Alliance. 10 a.m. 281-583-8408.
Dignity mass at 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary at 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. 713-863-1860.
Rainbow Fishing Club. 713-526-7070.
Houston Lesbian and Gay drop-in hours from noon to 4 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818. Montrose Writer's Project 3 to 4:30 p.m. 713-956-1866.

sunday, feb. 6

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals meets. 713-942-7002.
Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.
Church of the XII Apostles Anglican Rite Old Catholic Church. Holy Communion 10:30 a.m. at 239 Westheimer. 713/665-7903.
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I at 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II at 8:55 a.m.; Education hour at 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist at 11 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.
Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. "Preaching the Gospel" Bible study at 9:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.
Resurrection MCC Services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. 713-861-9149.
Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages at 9:30 a.m. Service at 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.
First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m.; 7 p.m. Sunday School for children. 4305 Lillian. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
Houston Mission Church. Service at 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.
Covenant Baptist Church. Service at 1:30 p.m.; education hour at 3 p.m. 713-668-8830.
Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m., 10:50 a.m. Sunday school at 9:40 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Resurrection MCC Handbell Choir rehearsal at 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.
The Women's Group. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.
Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 402 Church St. in Galveston. Service at 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.
Faith and Hope Fellowship. Service at 11 a.m. 713-520-7847.
First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 11 a.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.

Church of Kindred Spirits (Beaumont). Service at 7 p.m. 409-835-4765.
Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum at 10 a.m. Service at 11 a.m. and noon. Open Circle Family Support at 12:30 p.m. 1504 Wirt. 713-686-5876.
Interfaith Worship Celebration. 7 p.m. 2515 Waugh Dr. 713-528-3601.
Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion at 9:45 a.m.; service at 11 a.m. 3945 Greenbriar. Stafford. 281-277-8882. www.neosoft.com/~thoreau.
Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-868-5039.
Montrose Ice Picks. Galleria. 5 p.m. 713-629-1432.

monday, feb. 7

Gay Fathers/Fathers First support group, 8 p.m. 713-861-6181.
Calendar/Computer workshop for Pride Week, 7 p.m. 713-529-1223.
Bering Support Network. Grief and Divorce Groups at 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.
Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
AIDS Caregivers' Support Group. 6 p.m. 713-732-4300.
HIV testing. Free from AVES from 1 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. 713-626-2837.
FrontRunners. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.
Kolbe Project. Eucharist at 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.
Integrity Houston. For gay and lesbian Episcopalians. 7:30 p.m., Astry House, 6265 Main.
More Light Presbyterians. Meeting. 1110 Lovett. 9:30 p.m. 281-444-8861 X309.
AIDS Foundation Houston Creative Writing Class. 3 p.m. 713-623-69796.
Black Lesbian and Gay Coalition's weekly meeting at 7 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. Houston Lesbian and Gay Community drop-in hours from 6 to 9 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

tuesday, feb. 8

Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. 7 p.m. 239 Westheimer. 713-495-8009.
Gay Men HIV+ Psychotherapy. Montrose Counseling Center at 4:30 p.m. 713-529-0037.
Youth-Rap. 6:30 p.m. 713-822-8511.
Aftercare Group Treatment. Montrose Counseling Center at 6 p.m. 713-529-0037.
AIDS Alliance of the Bay Area. 7 p.m. 713-488-4492.
PROTECT. An HIV-negative support group at 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.
Women Survivors of Childhood Abuse. Montrose

Counseling Center at 6:30 p.m. 713-529-0037.
Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang at 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.
Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m., 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.
Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men, 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.
More on Relationships. Discussion group. 7 p.m. 415 W. Gray. 713-861-9149.
Lambda Skating Club skates at 8 p.m. at the Tradewinds. 713-523-9620.
Gay & Bi Male Support Group support group forming. Sponsored by AVES 713-626-2837.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m.; Lesbian Coming Out Group meets at 7:30 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-528-3818.

wednesday, feb. 9

Free HIV Testing at Thomas Street Clinic at 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2015 Thomas Street 713-793-4026.
BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Social meeting at Cafe Toopees, 1830 W. Alabama. 713-467-4380
Women's Network. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond. 713-529-0037.
HIV survivor support group. 7 p.m. 713-782-4050.
Mind/Body Connection: Alternative Approaches. 7 p.m. 1475 W. Gray. 713-524-2374.
Project: Caesar. 7 p.m. APH, 3203 Wesleyan. 713-623-6796.
Out Skate Rollerskating Club, 8 to 10 p.m. at 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.
HAMS Motorcycle Club meets for coffee. 713-688-1300 or hams1999@yahoo.com
Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Alliance at the U of H (GLOBAL) meets at 4 p.m. 713-743-7539.
Rainbow Ringers free C&W dance lessons at the Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.
Houston Pride Band. All skill levels. 7:15 p.m. 713-522-4282 or www.houstonprideband.org.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

thursday, feb. 10

Art Labs. The Art League at 1 p.m. 713-225-9411.
Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal at 7 p.m. 713-521-7464.
HIV+ Men Psychotherapy. Montrose Counseling Center, 1:15 p.m. 713-529-0037.
Relapse Prevention. Montrose Counseling Center, 2 p.m. 713-529-0037.
Aftercare Group Treatment. Montrose Counseling Center, 6 p.m. 713-529-0037.
Women's Therapy Group. Montrose Counseling Center, 5:30 p.m. 713-529-0037.
Center for the Healing of Racism. 7:30 p.m. 713-738-RACE.

FrontRunners at 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.
HIV Art Course Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer at 713-526-1118.
Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic, 713-830-3000.
Faith and Hope Fellowship. Bible study 7 p.m. 713-520-7847.
Twenty Something Rap Session. 7:30 p.m. 713-315-6786.
Open Mike Night at Cafe Artist. 8 p.m. 713-528-3704.
Community Gospel. Service at 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.
HIV/AIDS Support Group. 2:30 at Family Service Center. 713-861-4849.
Women's HIV/AIDS Support Group. 4:30 p.m. Family Service Center. 713-247-3810.
HIV/AIDS Support Group. 7 p.m. Family Service Center in Conroe. 888-247-3810.
Yoga at Body Positive. 6:30 p.m. \$5. 713-524-2374.
U of H Gay & Lesbian Support Group. 4 p.m. 713-743-5454.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. 713-524-3818.

friday, feb. 11

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) meets. 713-942-7002.
Aftercare Group Treatment. Montrose Counseling Center at 6 p.m. 713-529-0037.
Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.
Lesbian Avengers. Cafe Toopees, 1830 W. Alabama at 7 p.m.
Q-Patrol walks the streets at 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.
Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer at 10 a.m. Park Plaza Hospital visitation. 713-861-1800.
Positive Art Workshop. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer at 713-526-1118.
Lesbian and Gay Voices. KPFT 90.1 FM, 7 p.m. 713-526-5738.
Movie Time at the Kolbe Project. 7:30 p.m. "Out of Africa" 713-522-8182.
Life Begins at 40. Pot luck dinner. 6:30 p.m. 1440 Harold. 713-526-1017.
Mishpachah Alizim Shabbat Services. 8 p.m. 713-748-7079.
Co-dependents Anonymous. 7:30 p.m. at MCCR. 713-861-9149.
Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. 713-524-3818.
Healing Eucharist at Christ Church Cathedral. 7 p.m. 1117 Texas. 713-222-2593.
"Love is in the Air." 6 p.m. Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center. 713-524-3818.

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

Occasions

Birthdays

Happy motoring birthday of Tim B. of the CCCC on Feb. 2.

Shopping goddess Mark Ferrin charges in his birthday on Feb. 4.

Doting new mom Denisa Scott celebrates her birthday on Feb. 5.

Bill Havard enjoys his birthday on Feb. 6.

Errol Carter can't decide which decorations he wants for his birthday on Feb. 6.

Terry, the owner of Paradise Bar, toasts his birthday on Feb. 6.

The fabu Carol at Dr. Bruce Smith's office, has her birthday on Feb. 6.

The one and only Dave Parker, owner of Brick's II lifts his birthday glass on Feb. 7.

Frankie, a.k.a. Rita Charles, drags in a birthday on Feb. 7.

Jay P. of the RSICSS ads a birthday jewel to his septer on Feb. 7.

Last, and certainly not least, Steve Simpson, a.k.a. Sill, enjoys his birthday on Feb. 9.



Happy birthday to Eclipse columnist Mark Goebel on Feb. 12.



Happy birthday to Houston Voice contributor Kay Dayus on Feb. 10.

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

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February 16, 2000 • 7 - 9pm

Hollyfield Foundation, 2700 Albany

The Ryan White Planning Council
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for HIV Related Services over the
next ve years.

For further information please call 713-572-3724.
Sodas will be served.

Classifieds

Announcements

GAY & LESBIAN SWITCHBOARD

Volunteer classes now forming. Reserve your space online or call 713.529.9615 • www.gayswitchboardhouston.org

gayDAR

Dream • Affirm • Restore: A new wellness community for persons 18 to 29 years old who are interested in making healthy connections meets every Monday at 7 p.m. at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold. For more information, call Russ Robinett at 713.526.1017 X211.

PROTECT

ANNISE PARKER, Houston City Council Member is the scheduled speaker for the PROTECT meeting Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. 1440 Harold. 713.526.1017 X211.

DISCUSSION ABOUT DATING • Feb. 9

at the Women's Network, 7-9 p.m. at the Montrose Counseling center, 709 Richmond. 713.529.0037.

MOVIE GROUP

Dinner and a movie • Every other Saturday for singles and couples • For more information, contact Mark @ 713.839.0904 M-F after 5 p.m.

The PFLAG/HATCH Scholarship Foundation's dinner and celebration will be held on Friday, March 1 at the Warwick Hotel. The evening will include a social hour with a silent auction, followed by dinner and presentations by some of the scholarship recipients. The fund raising goal for the millennium year is \$100,000. For more information about the Foundation and the scholarship program see www.pflaghouston.org/scholarship.htm.

MARANATHA MCC

MARANATHA FELLOWSHIP MCC will be sharing the home of the Central Congregational Church, 1311 Holman (right across from HCC-Downtown campus). Worship time is 6:30 p.m. and Bible Study at 5:30 p.m. Their offices will be at 117 Tuam. For more information, call 713.528.6756.

HOUSTON LEATHER ALLIANCE

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If you play bass/acoustic guitar, brass or keyboards, a gay Christian praise and worship team needs you. Call 713.686.7735.

PWA COALITION

The PWA Coalition needs the following items: dishes • silverware • pot • pans • sheets • towels • furniture • small appliances • We are available for pick up. Call Wilson or Terry at 713.522.5428.

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Nightingale Employment Services (Division of NADC) is a non-profit organization that provides job seeking skills training and placement assistance for persons with HIV. For more information call 713.981.1543.

EROS 1207

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The Homeless Pet Placement League is a Houston area, non-profit animal welfare organization. HPPL provides for the rehabilitation of stray and abandoned dogs and cats through its unique foster care program. All animals are spayed/neutered and have their first set of shots. For more information call 713.862.7387 or view website at www.HPPL.org

The Spay Neuter Assistance Program will provide FREE spaying/neutering, rabies vaccinations and city licenses for animals belonging to qualifying low income dog and cat guardians. For qualifications and transportation information please call 713.522.2337.

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Volunteers

The Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center is seeking volunteers to staff the facility in more extended hours. If organizations and individuals are interested, please contact Kevin Davidson at 713.524.3818 to discuss how you can help.

Web-sites

www.houstonvoice.com
www.sovo.com
www.impactnews.com
www.montrosesoftballleague.com
www.iblboard.net
www.gayswitchboardhouston.org
www.stevendavid.com

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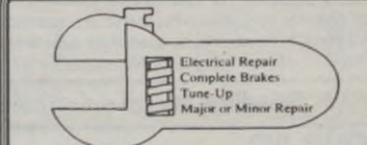


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My Stars!

YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

by JILL DEARMAN

Feb. 4 - 10



- 

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)
Mercury is currently transiting the most psychic sector of your chart, so no wonder you're picking up so many vibes. Center yourself, dear. Meditate. Spend time with your closest friends. Do a good deed, and it could come back to you in spades, or in the form of a Gemini.
- 

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)
Jupiter is sending you confusing signals by way of your dreams. Don't be scared; be excited. A miraculous time in your life is right around the corner. Consider making a major commitment: What are you afraid of? A dreamy Scorpio deserves first-class treatment.
- 

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)
If you want more of an emotional connection with that special person, you're going to have to heat up that cool exterior of yours. You'll soon be the object of much passion, in work and at home, so stop taking the "chill" approach and show some heat. A Libra is on fire for you.
- 

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)
Put business matters in order so you can concentrate on your personal life. Venus is traveling through your house of love and could bring you many gifts in mid-February. So make room for something important: like life-changing sex with another Cancer.
- 

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG. 23)
You can't play both ends against the middle. Let someone you've been resisting sweep you off your feet. No one wants to hear your pompous speeches; put your silly ego aside and say what you really want. A Gemini is getting sick of your diversion tactics.
- 

VIRGO (AUG. 24 - SEPT. 23)
Your body is trying to tell you something: Start making some real changes in your physical and mental health. Do some good for a loved one and your self-esteem and sense of security will shoot up. Your relationship with a Leo is about to get a resurgence of erotic energy.
- 

LIBRA (SEPT. 24 - OCT. 23)
Life is what you make it, and you need to put some energy into yours. Jupiter is finishing up a transit in the most romantic sector of your chart, so throw caution to the wind and do what your heart tells you. Kiss an Aries like you mean it.
- 

SCORPIO (OCT. 24 - NOV. 22)
It's time to have more fun in bed, with yourself or with the Pisces of your choice. You're going through one of those cycles where your sexual desires are changing. You have a rare opportunity to improve something about your appearance that gets you down, or really heal your inner self.
- 

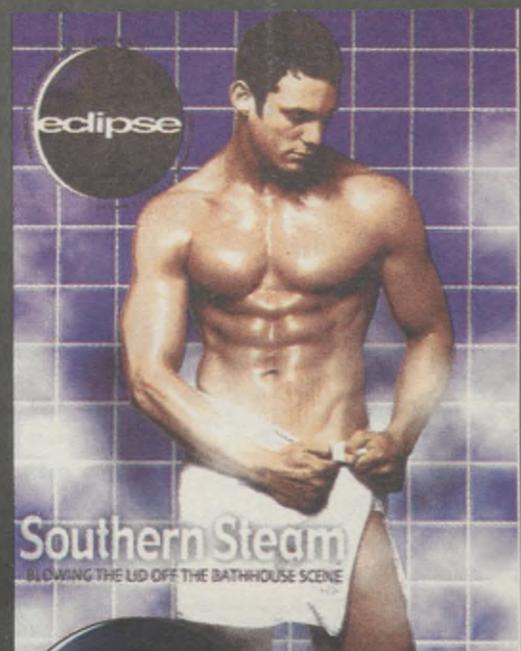
SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 23 - DEC. 22)
Please, darling, just say what's on your mind. It's not like people can't tell what you're thinking, anyway. And don't ignore your family; they are major reflections of you: the good, the bad and the ugly parts of your soul. Working on your relationships garners results, so get busy with a Virgo.
- 

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23 - JAN. 20)
Mercury is in your house of communication, so use that famous Capricorn diplomacy to get what you want. But stay true to yourself. Don't act like a party queen if you're a homebody, and vice versa. A Scorpio wants to see the real you, preferably naked.
- 

AQUARIUS (JAN. 21 - FEB 19)
Get out of your head and into your real life. Your imagination is running away with you. Stop crying about all the terrible things going on in the world and do something to help yourself and those closest to you. A Leo sees through your antics.
- 

PISCES (FEB. 20 - MARCH 20)
A time of major rebirth occurs for you in late February. Before that, put some closure on a painful chapter in your story. Sex and security go hand in hand for you right now: Don't sacrifice one unless you're willing to give up the other. Why not believe you can have both? A Libra does.

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



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