

# PRIDE 04

THE OFFICIAL  
MAGAZINE OF  
HOUSTON PRIDE  
2004

ZACKIE ACHMAT:  
ONE MAN'S WILL

THE  
RETURN  
OF JOBRIATH

LOVE  
after 50?

VIOLENT  
(& PEACEFUL)  
ACTIVISTS

OUR UNIQUE

# UNIONS

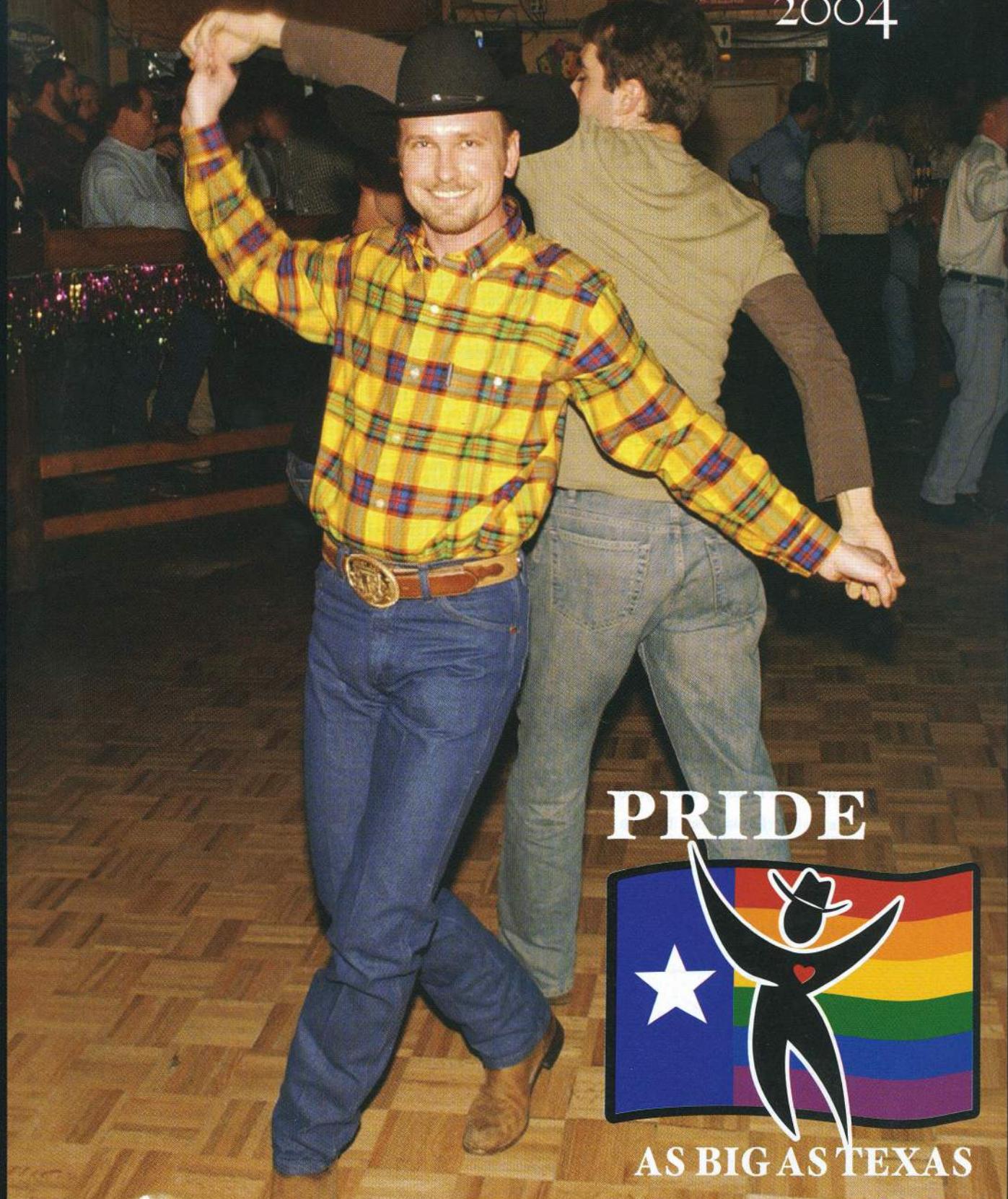
PLUS  
EXCLUSIVE  
HOUSTON  
PRIDE GUIDE

InterPride



# Houston

2004



PRIDE



AS BIG AS TEXAS



# Welcome to Houston's 2004 Pride Celebration!

The Pride Committee of Houston has been very busy planning and organizing events, raising funds, recruiting and training volunteers and working with the many people and organizations that are a part of our GLBT community to produce a top-notch celebration for you to enjoy.

It will be hard to top 2003. Last year, we hosted 25 days of events to coincide with our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Films, workshops and social events brought us together to learn, discuss and celebrate. We had the milestone Lawrence v. Texas Supreme Court decision announced just two days before the Pride Parade. With perfect weather for Houston in June, at least the parade boasted record attendance, with hundreds of thousands lining up along Westheimer.

But the volunteers of the Pride Committee are not content to let it end there. We still have work to do. We still have discrimination in our schools and workplaces. Our unions are not legally recognized. Funding is limited (and sometimes non-existent) for our health, legal and social issues. We still have a need to be out and visible to our neighbors, co-workers, family and friends. We hope this year's celebration, capped off by the Pride Parade, can create an avenue for everyone to participate and make a difference in their own special way.

On a personal note, this is my tenth year with this organization and my second year as President. It has been a pleasure to get to know Houston's GLBT community. Since I first joined, this organization has been growing and building steadily to be a popular, fun annual celebration that is inclusive, enjoyable and responsive to all. I first volunteered after three years of watching the Pride Parade and consistently having a great time. In 1993, I was sitting on the curb, drinking a beer, hanging with my friends and watching a fantastic float pass. I turned to one of my friends and asked, "Who organizes this parade every year, anyway?" A little research and a phone call later, I was sitting in a Pride Committee meeting. I volunteered and have never looked back. I learned this organization is so much more than just the Pride Parade. It's a great way to network, be involved, learn about our community, make a difference, and feel good about making Houston better for us all. If you have ever wondered how this event happens year after year, call or e-mail us. You won't regret it!

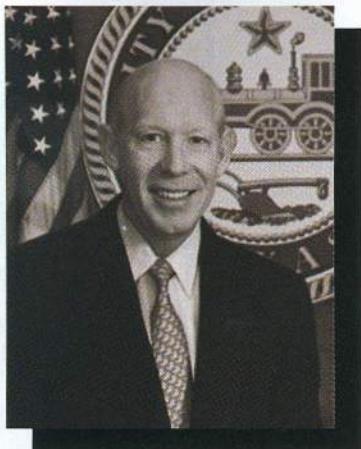
Thanks also for picking up this Pride.04 Magazine! Now in our fourth year, we hope you will think of this annual magazine as our community yearbook to feature the many events, leaders, issues and trends that make up the diverse gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community of Houston and beyond.

I always say there is something for everyone during our annual Pride Celebration. Whether you are marching proudly in the parade, attending one of our many workshops, or just reading this magazine . . . Welcome! This is YOUR celebration. Enjoy it. Be a part of it.

Nicolas Brines

President  
Pride Committee of Houston





Greetings,

As mayor of the City of Houston, I am pleased to extend my warm greetings to all participating in various activities to be held during the annual Pride Celebration. I would also like to welcome the many guests who will be attending these events from across the state.

Houston historically has offered an array of activities, organizations and services that are reflective of its diversity, and this celebration continues in that tradition.

The strengths of this great city are in the men and women who make up our diverse cultural richness.

Your work shows that Houston is a city of communities, and we all strive to make this a better place to live and work. I look forward to working with you on the issues that are important to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community, and all Houstonians.

Best wishes for a successful and memorable Pride Celebration.

Sincerely,

Bill White  
Mayor



Dear friends,

Greetings from the Houston City Controller's Office! Yes, that's right! I am now the second highest elected city official in Houston.

Congratulations on what I am sure will be another grand parade. All of you work so tirelessly to make this a classy and exciting event. I want to personally say thank you.

I also want to extend a heartfelt thank you for the ongoing support I receive from the GLBT community. Just look at how far we have come!

Sincerely,

Annise D. Parker  
City Controller

145	Pride as Big as Texas Houston Pride 2004
146	Welcome from PCOH President Nicolas Brines
147	Greetings from Mayor Bill White & City Controller Annise Parker
150	Houston Space City by the Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau
153	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Eric A.T. Dieckman
154	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Joyce Gabiola
155	Vive la Différence by Mark Willis
156	Texas Prides A highlight of other Pride events throughout the state
162	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Joyce Gabiola & Rebecca Mahaffey
163	Texas Prides A highlight of other Pride events throughout the state
166	iPride Become a Friend of Pride
168	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Rebecca Mahaffey
169	The 2004 Pride Committee of Houston Officers, Board & Committee
173	London calling . . . PCOH says Farewell to One of Its Best
174	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Rebecca Mahaffey
175	2003 Volunteers of the Year Aaron Blinka & Cindy Hudson
176	In the Lead for 2004 Pride as Big as Texas Grand Marshals
178	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Tim Brookover & Ken Donnelly
179	2003 Parade Review Silver Celebration
180	Houston Pride Parade 2003 Photo review compiled by Yvonne K. Feece
186	The Best of The Best 2003 Silver Celebration Trophy Winners
189	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Rebecca Mahaffey
190	The Chamber The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce
191	The Pride Cabaret Highlights of 2003
192	Pride as Big as Texas Houston's GLBT Pride Parade 2004
195	Winds of Change by Randall Ellis of LGRL
196	Gay Myths by Sharon Ferranti
198	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Eric A.T. Dieckman
200	Love Knows No Boundaries by Eric A.T. Dieckman
202	Discreet by Ken Donnelly
203	A Day in The Life Of . . . by Joyce Gabiola
204	2004 Community Resource Guide
206	It's a Culture thing by Josef Molnar
207	Houston Bar Map Courtesy of The Houston Voice

Insert Cover Photo by Yvonne K. Feece: Two Dancers Two Step at the Brazos River Bottom  
 Pride as Big as Texas logo by Stef Silvano

# HOUSTON

A space of infinite possibilities



In 1836, two brothers from New York, Augustus and John Allen, navigated north from Galveston Bay to Buffalo Bayou. They were land speculators and saw the area as a perfect place for a community to thrive. Houston was born. Today, SpaceCity represents all that is typically Texas – and much, much more. Houston has grown to more than four million people; the fourth largest city in the U.S. Houstonians speak more than 90 languages, creating an exciting, diverse environment for all people to live, work, play and visit. The sights are remarkable and each area of the city offers visitors something different. Houston's downtown is a great place for entertainment. The resurgence of development and energy downtown has brought many people to the area for dining, entertainment and much more. The new Hilton Americas-Houston Hotel adds 1,200 guestrooms to downtown Houston. Bayou Place, an entertainment complex, offers the multi-screen Angelika Film Center & Café, several excellent restaurants and clubs including Hard Rock Café, a live-music venue, Slick Willie's for billiards and dance clubs like BAR Houston and Have a Nice Day Café. Additionally, there are dozens more restaurants and nightspots for any taste. The Downtown Entertainment District, The Main Event is downtown Houston's newest "place to be." Beautiful fountains and the new light rail train which takes riders

from downtown to Reliant Park make this district a hub of activity and fun. Dining, dancing and great people-watching are The Main Event.

Downtown is also the place for sports fans. The Houston Astros' home, Minute Maid Park, is the ticket for baseball fans every season. The park and souvenir shop is open year-round for memorabilia and tours. The recently opened

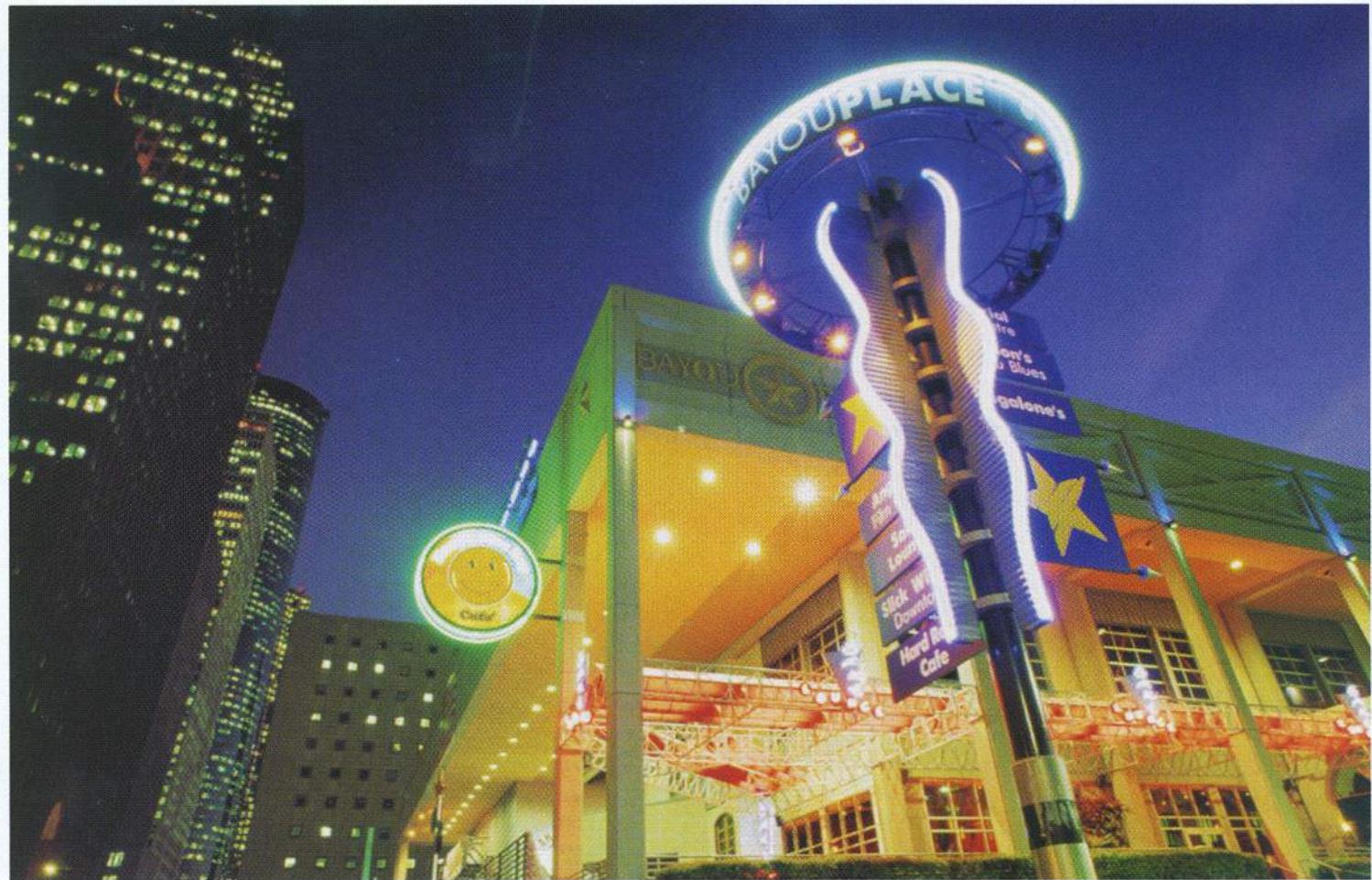
Toyota Center is the shiny new home of the Houston Rockets, Comets and Aeros. It's also the site of concerts and special performances. For star-studded performances, the Theater District is ready to dazzle you. Opera, ballet, performing arts and the symphony are the options in this multi-block downtown

district. Just south of downtown, Reliant Park is the site of many major events and conventions. Reliant Stadium is the 69,500-seat retractable-roof home of the NFL Texans and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo – the world's largest rodeo. Next to the stadium is the world's first domed stadium, the Reliant Astrodome. Reliant Center encompasses more than 700,000 square feet of state-of-the-art space, which can host events, meetings and trade shows of any size and scope. Reliant Park is also neighbor to one of the city's largest attractions – Six Flags AstroWorld and WaterWorld. The theme parks draw millions of visitors annually. But AstroWorld and

## Each area of the city offers visitors something different



Above: An ongoing exhibit at the Menil Collection Opposite: The Houston city skyline at dusk



Bayou Place has become a main draw for tourists and locals alike

WaterWorld share the spotlight with several other major attractions. Splashtown is the biggest water park in Texas and it offers hours of watery fun in the summer months. At Space Center Houston, visitors can explore the past, present and future of manned space flight, land the space shuttle or touch a moon rock. The great outdoors is also a big perk in Houston. The Houston Zoo is found in scenic Hermann Park. Centrally located, the park offers a golf course, two beautiful gardens, the Japanese Tea Gardens and the Houston Garden Center, and free outdoor performances at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Additionally, find hike and bike trails and beautiful and challenging golf courses around the city to test your skill and endurance. The Museum District, within walking distance of Hermann Park, gives visitors a taste of Houston's impressive cultural scene. The city is home to more than 500 cultural, visual, and performing arts organizations, including The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Houston Museum of Natural Science, The Children's Museum of Houston, the Menil Collection and the Contemporary Arts Museum. Other additions include the Holocaust Museum Houston, the John P. McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science and the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. For shopaholics, SpaceCity has gained a reputation as one of the world's greatest retail centers. Its most well-known site is The Galleria, a collection of hotels, restaurants and more than 300 retail stores all centered around a giant indoor ice skating rink.

Houston also boasts the world's largest medical center — The Texas Medical Center. Medicine is a growing economic force here, employing more than 61,000 people and comprising 42 institutions, with an economic impact of more than \$13 billion. And don't forget, Houston is a coastal city. Just minutes from the cool breezes of the Gulf Coast, you can dine on great seafood, listen to live music or ride a Ferris wheel on the Kemah Boardwalk. Enjoy the sand and surf of Galveston Island and its beautiful historic homes and the fun of Moody Gardens. And in Clear Lake, take in the smooth sailing of dozens of watercraft cruising along the Gulf waters. With major airports, Houston boasts one of the nation's premier international gateways, linking the region to more than 150 destinations, including some 50 international points in Mexico, Central and South America, Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, Canada and Africa. Host of Super Bowl XXXVIII, the All-Star Baseball Game, Tennis Master's Cup and the 2011 NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four, Houston will be the site of great fun and activity. Houston is a space of infinite possibilities. As a top convention and tourism destination you'll enjoy the very best hotels, convention facilities, sports, entertainment, dining, outdoor recreation and attractions. The Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau and its partners, Continental Airlines and HP, Houston encourage you to make Houston your choice for business or pleasure. For more information on Houston attractions, log on to [www.visitouston.com](http://www.visitouston.com) or call 1-800-4HOUSTON. ▼

# A Day in the Life of . . .

## Naomi Toledo - Lonestar Clothing Company

**N**aomi Toledo matriculated Rice University in '98. A Christian, Toledo was told by members of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship that as a lesbian she could attend meetings but not hold any kind of leadership position. Confounded by the group's limited acceptance, Toledo decided to form a group of her own, Queer Christians. "I felt if I can't be myself and worship God the way I like to, I'm going to start my own thing."

In the time it lasted, Queer Christians affected some lives and was met with some resistance. Posters were sometimes found torn down and thrown away. "A friend told me, 'I walked by the hallway with your Queer Christians flyer and this dude walks past it and he's like, You heard of that group? Weird Christians.'" There were visits from Christians who were suspicious of gays, gays who were suspicious of Christians, and those who were just plain curious. "I think in the long run it did open up some eyes."

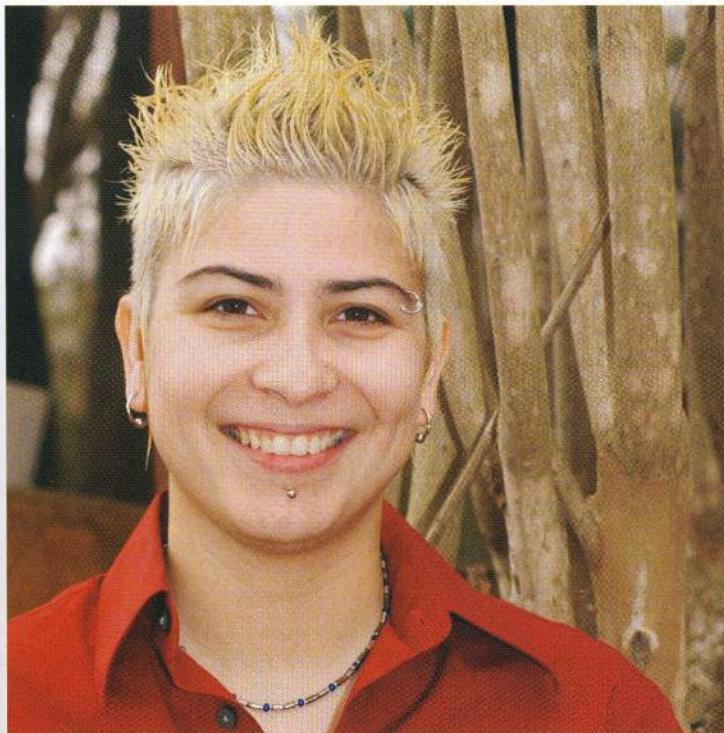
Now a graduate, Toledo has become an entrepreneur in the t-shirt business. "I once saw a Chicana girl at Rice wearing a shirt that read 'Little Brown Girl.' I thought, 'Why can't I do that?'"

Toledo is building a stock of queer designs, Chicano pride designs, and others. "I'll do just about anything unless it's offensive to me, homophobic, racist, or just maligning of any group. I may be broke but I'm not that broke."

One of the funnier custom design requests Toledo has received is for local black comedian Daryl Wright who wants shirts to sell after his shows. The image is of his face over a Stars and Bars Dixie flag with the caption, "What, me mad? They lost."

[www.lonestarclothingcompany.com](http://www.lonestarclothingcompany.com)  
[info@lonestarclothingcompany.com](mailto:info@lonestarclothingcompany.com)

—ED



## Rev. Dwayne Johnson - Pastor, Metropolitan Community Church

**B**orn in Lubbock, Reverend Dwayne Johnson was often asked if he was going to follow in his father's footsteps and become a minister. "I thought that was the last thing I would want to do." But in his senior year at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas, he had a change of heart and decided to choose a calling where he could affect people in deep and meaningful ways. He has. "A young woman came to talk to me," recalls Johnson. "She said, 'I'm here to say thank you.' On a whim, she decided to come and worship with us and found it to be a transforming experience, pointing her life in a whole new direction. She's been coming ever since."

To those who define the GLBT community as opprobrium, saying God hates gays or even quoting scripture (such as 1 Cor 6:9) to that effect, Johnson offers this insight. "The main thing is the Bible really doesn't address gay-straight issues. The references are misconstrued, referring to some of the cultural traditions at that time. It had nothing to do with GLBT love relationships. Of course Christ doesn't say anything about it at all. I encourage people to read the Bible as a book that is descriptive as opposed to prescriptive. If you read it through the lens of a loving God, you're not going to find that hateful context."

Rev. Johnson's advice for a healthy spiritual life? "Don't just take it face value, everything you've been told that religion is about. Make it your own. Keep asking questions 'till it becomes your spiritual body, not somebody else's."

[www.resurrectionmcc.org](http://www.resurrectionmcc.org)

—ED

Page 153

# A Day in The Life of . . .

## Mitch Pengra - Art Teacher

**M**itch Pengra has been the Art Teacher at The Parish School for 10 years. The School creates a positive and nurturing learning environment that empowers children with communication differences to develop effective, lifelong communication skills. Mitch always got along with children. He has a passion for helping kids communicate, and along with his BFA in Painting and Drawing and an MA in Child Development, he follows his passion through art.

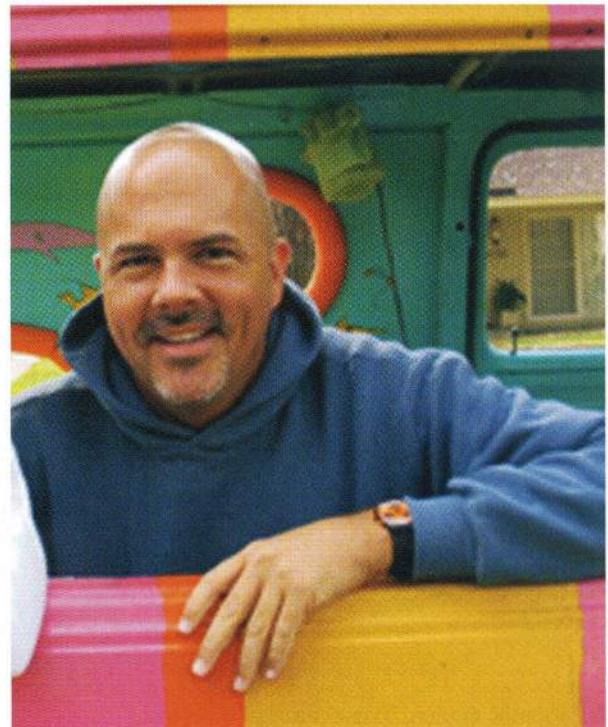
Mitch aims to teach his students that everyone has their own way of doing things, and not to be concerned with the way others do things. He wants them to be secure in their own beliefs, so that they will achieve their language goals and take risks to add to the project in front of them.

"The kids are interesting," says Mitch. "But the school is staffed with special people, too. We all have weird traits."

He was concerned once about being gay. He thought to himself that, even though the School embraces his artistic abilities and purpose, every year begins with new students and parents that don't know him. His concern passed quickly as the school has always been supportive. In fact, Mitch co-produced an in-your-face theatrical show a few years ago called *In Gay Company*, which about 10 fellow teachers attended and drove down to Galveston to further support him at the Opera House.

Mitch is fun, positive and upbeat, which is reflected in his classroom, friendships and his art car. Look for him truckin' around the city in his orange-green-purple-yellow-striped AquaVan (painted blue inside with sea creatures and crazy fish). Don't jump into the roofless art-on-wheels, as you may ruin his students' artwork, the beanbag chairs and the well-stocked cooler.

-JG



### Mission Statement

"The Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center provides a home for the birth, nurture and celebration of our organizations, institutions and culture; cares for our individuals and groups in need; educates the public and our community; and empowers our individuals and groups to achieve their fullest potential."

For information call 713-524-3818 or visit the center at 3400 Montrose Blvd. Suite 207.

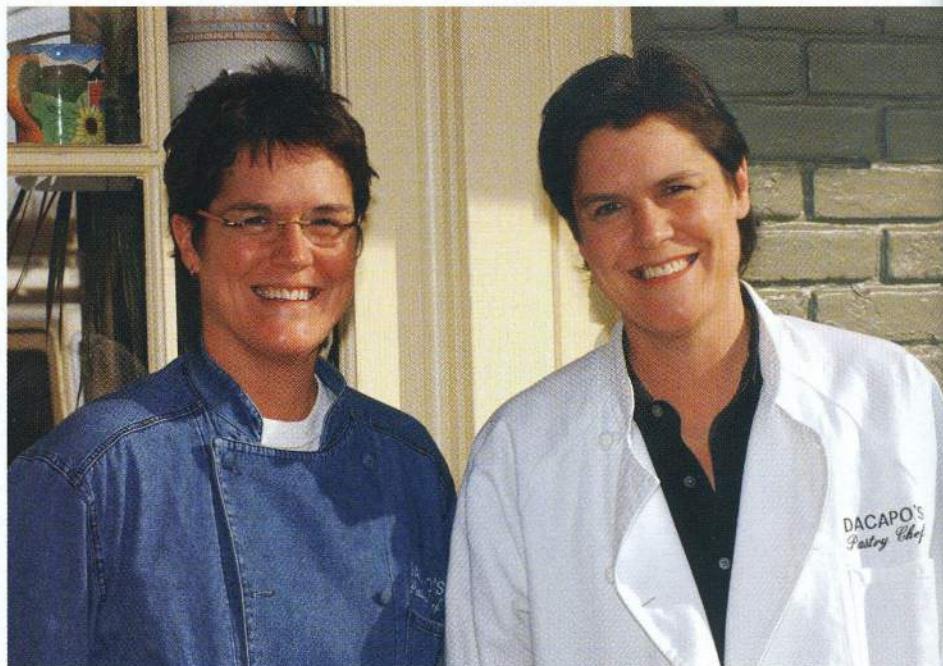
# A Day in the Life of . . .

## Lisa & Teresa Biggerstaff - Dacapo's Pastry & Deli

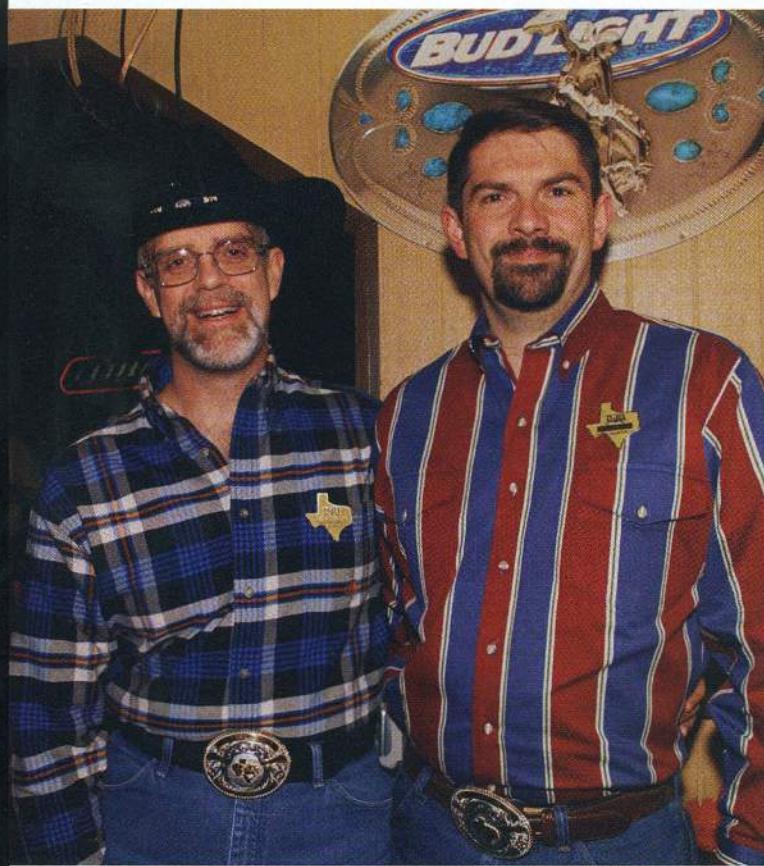
**D**acapo, a musical term meaning "from the beginning," is used as a direction to repeat a passage. Begin with the scent of pita chips and garlic baking in the oven permeating the kitchen. Pause to indulge in the aroma of a warm culinary heaven. Slowly approach the end with the tart sweetness of the key lime cheesecake melting in your mouth.

Nestled on the corner of Studewood and E. 11th St. in The Heights, Dacapo's Pastry & Deli approaches its 10th year in business. It offers catering services, including cakes for weddings and other special occasions, corporate box lunches, and party trays, as well as a simple menu of pastries, soups, salads, homemade breads and sandwiches for a casual dining experience. Lisa and Teresa describe themselves as a balancing act, which makes for a good, solid business. And this one is made with the love of family and for the love of unforgettable food..

-JG



Dacapo's boasts 20+ desserts of 5-star quality from the simple, delectable chocolate chip cookie to the layered flavors of tiramisu. Lisa and Teresa guarantee that it is love at first bite!



## Kevin Tobin & Bryan Hopkins - Texas Gay Rodeo Association

**T**he Texas Gay Rodeo Association was founded in the summer of 1983. November 1984 heralded the first annual Texas Gay Rodeo, beginning the tradition of the TGRA November rodeo which continues to this day.

The growth of TGRA coincided with the fight against HIV/AIDS. The founding members recognized the need for the community to pull together to raise money to combat this epidemic in light of limited government intervention and funding.

Since its inception, TGRA members, Royalty, and community have raised and donated over \$2 million to Texas charities.

TGRA is administered and run totally by volunteers with a membership in the hundreds. There are many committees within each of the five chapters that exist to meet the widerange of challenges in hosting a rodeo and maintaining a focused charitable concern. Bryan Hopkins is the current President of the Houston TGRA chapter. He has attended Gay Rodeos for over 10 years and has served on the association since relocating to Houston.

There are many areas of TGRA and degrees of involvement available to its members. Our success is entirely dependent on the support of the membership and the community that we serve. We are engaged in fighting a war on infectious diseases and terminal illnesses, but prefer the rodeo arena as our battleground.  
[www.tgra.com](http://www.tgra.com)

-RM

Dear Friend in Pride,

You have probably been as upset as we have by the continuing homophobia seen in the news. National televangelists attack gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. These attacks have increased in the wake of the news about the possibility of GLBT marriage. The FBI reports that violence against us is a significant portion of bias-motivated crime in America. Politicians continue to devise ways to legalize discrimination in our community. Here in Houston, the right wing won the vote in a recent election barring domestic partner benefits for city workers. The most important factor allowing this bigotry to continue is that the good people of this city and county who might support us know little about us.

The Pride Committee of Houston works year-round to host events that showcase our GLBT community in all of its diversity. The fabulous night time Pride Parade that you see every June is a celebration of both individual pride and pride in our community. It is also the biggest GLBT event in Houston and the Southwest, so it receives a lot of positive media coverage. It's a great opportunity to educate society about the scope of our community. Additionally, attending the parade is the first step out of the closet for many of us, starting us on a journey in which we educate many others.

The mission of Pride—celebrating individual pride, commemorating our community's history and educating society—can change the world. Surveys show that when we come out to the people around us, and when people are educated about real GLBT lives, bigotry diminishes.

Pride is everything and everyday. With your help, the Pride Committee can continue to produce events and resources to educate and empower all of us. Your contribution today allows us to work year-round, which is necessary to produce even more successful events and programs year after year.

Just as we are trying to change the world through Pride, we are always open to your suggestions. PCOH holds open Board of Directors meetings the second Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 pm, in the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, an accessible, secure city facility located at 1475 W. Gray. All meetings are open to the public and participation is highly encouraged. You may also contact us anytime through the Pride Line at 713-529-6979 or via e-mail at [info@pridehouston.org](mailto:info@pridehouston.org).

Become a Friend of Pride. Please consider a tax-deductible gift of \$250, \$100 or whatever you can afford. To thank you for your gift, you will receive a host of benefits, which are detailed on the enclosed card. Please use the enclosed envelope to return your gift today. Not only will you receive VIP bleacher seating to view and enjoy the Pride Parade, but your contribution also allows the Pride Committee of Houston to produce empowering events and educational resources throughout the year.

Yours in Pride,

*Nick Brines*

Nick Brines  
President  
Pride Committee of Houston



# A Day in The Life of...

Bill & Barry - 23 Years and counting . . .

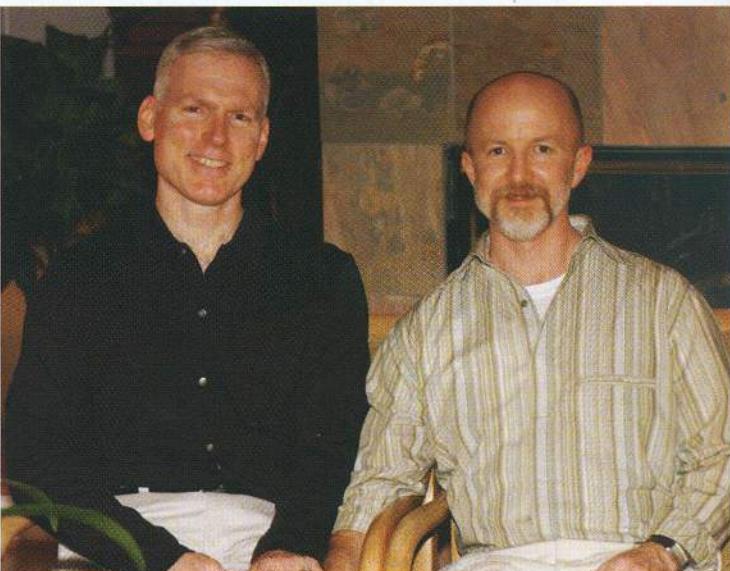
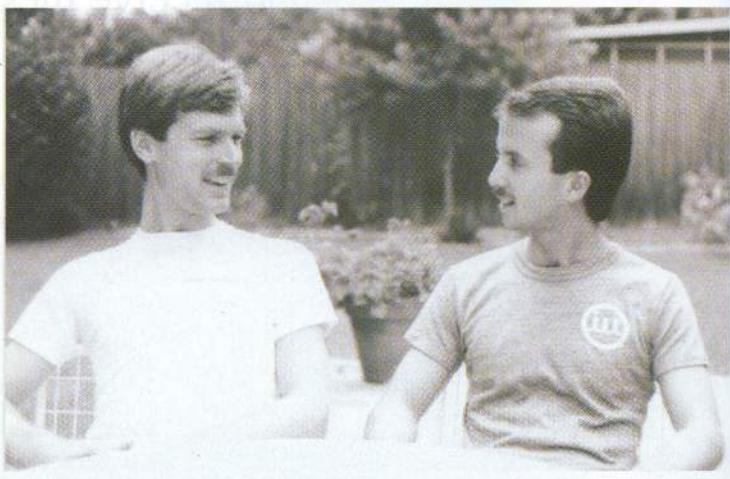
**B**ill and Barry met back in 1981 while working together. "When I opened the door our eyes met and I knew right then," says Barry. As soon as they started talking there was an instant connection, and they decided to have lunch together. Working for a large company, they didn't run into each other often. In fact, Barry wasn't sure that Bill was gay. He found out later through one of Bill's co-workers. It wasn't until the Fourth of July weekend 1981 that they saw each other again. They have been together ever since!

What's their secret? There is no secret! Bill and Barry are just a lot alike. They have very similar personalities, although Bill seems to be a bit more reserved than Barry. Of course, being totally in love might have something to do with it, too.

"A lot of the times people just think too hard on their relationships. We're just doing what we feel. If you have to think about it that hard then something is missing," said Barry. Bill adds, "We just enjoy being together. It doesn't have to be anything fun or exciting. Just being together gives us so much pleasure." Barry smiles at Bill and says, "We could never think of being apart."

Until the last couple of years they really hadn't thought about getting married, although they did go through steps to document legally their relationship. Several years ago Bill and Barry attended a symposium at Empower by the Moore & Hunt Law Firm and learned about the importance of legally documenting a same sex relationship. "Even though you think everything will be ok, you can't count on it," said Barry. So they set up Powers of Attorney, Wills and Trusts to insure that they would be able to protect their rights. Legally, a gay couple is not automatically protected no matter how long they've been together.

-RM



'We just happen to be two men instead of a man and a woman. That's the only difference,' says Bill. Two men that have been in love for 23 years! It's beautiful!

Alexa Ramirez - #98 Houston Energy

**A**lexa Ramirez graduated from the University of Houston with a Bachelor's in Science for Kinesiology – Exercise Science in 2002. She is an exercise physiologist by day. In her spare time she plays on the offensive line for the Houston Energy, Houston's three-time championship football team of the Women's Professional Football League. Ramirez, a two-year veteran to the team, got involved with the Houston Energy after attending several home games. With a strong desire to get back into sports, Alexa decided to prove the masses wrong by tackling the arena of male dominated football. In the off-season, Ramirez plays for the X-Treme, of the Houston Women's Flag Football League to keep up her training. [www.houstonenergyfootball.com](http://www.houstonenergyfootball.com)

-RM



# The 2004 Pride Committee of Houston

The Pride Committee is an energetic group of volunteers who work year-round to produce the annual Pride Celebration for Houston, which marks the anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion, the beginning of the modern American gay and lesbian rights movement. The Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of every month at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray at 7 pm. The meetings are open to the general public. Sub-Committees have regularly scheduled meetings throughout the month to accommodate volunteers' schedules. PCOH also reaches out to Pride organizations around the region and throughout the world through its membership in InterPride, the International Association of Lesbian and Gay Pride Coordinators.

The Pride Committee of Houston brings the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community together to celebrate individual pride, commemorate our community's history and educate society for the liberation of all people. We salute the many volunteers who sacrifice their time and energy in pursuit of these goals.

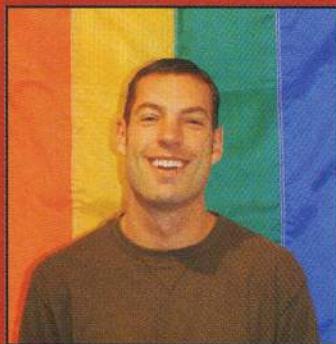
## Pride Committee of Houston

P.O. Box 66071  
Houston, TX 77266-6071

Phone: 713-529-6979  
Fax: 713-529-6929

Visit us on the web at  
[www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org)

# Officers



JOHN SCHILLING  
Treasurer



NICK BRINES  
President



JASON WILSON  
Vice-President



RUDY MARTINEZ  
Secretary

# The 2004 Pride Committee of Houston

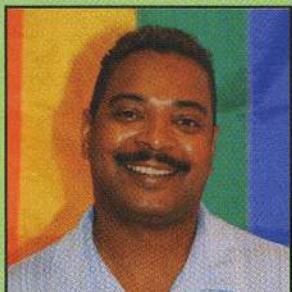
## Board of Directors



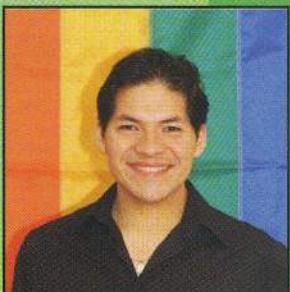
**LYNN SIXKILLER**  
Director  
Parade



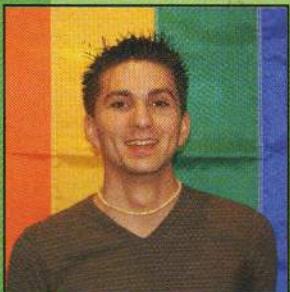
**BETH PURYEAR**  
Director  
Events



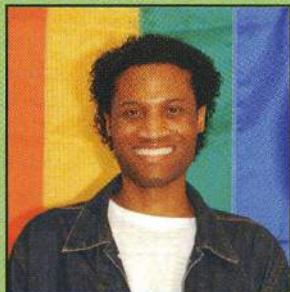
**ALTON PEARCE**  
Director  
Diversity



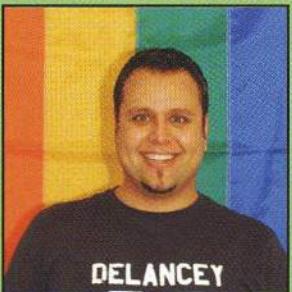
**JOSE LARA**  
Director  
Volunteer Recruitment &  
Retention



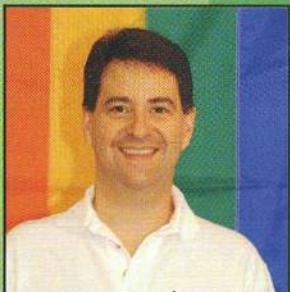
**AARON BLINKA**  
Director  
Marketing & Promotions



**TORELEN WINBUSH**  
Director  
Public & Media Relations



**TROY MENN**  
Director  
Pride Cabaret



**MARK WILLIS**  
InterPride Vice President  
of Member Services



# The 2004 Pride Committee of Houston

## Committee Members



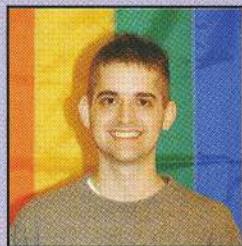
DICK DICKERSON  
Parade



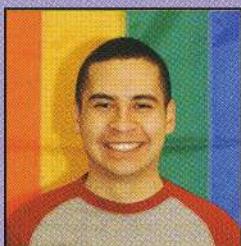
MANNY GUTIERREZ  
Parade



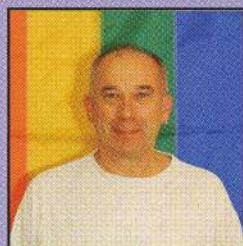
BILL BURFORD  
Parade



JOHN DOBORSKI  
Parade



JAY DELGADO  
Parade



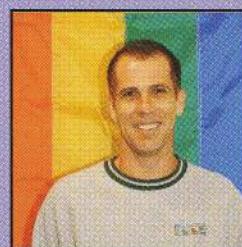
JACK VALINSKI  
Program Coordinator



TROY CHRISTENSEN  
Videographer



CHRIS ALANIS  
Volunteer Chair



RUSTY MARTIN  
Financial Manager

## Magazine



REBECCA MAHAFFEY  
Editor  
&  
Director of Regional  
Pride Relations



YVONNE FEECE  
Editor



STEFANIE SILVANO  
Art Director



KEN DONNELLY  
Contributor

Not Pictured: TERESA CUNNINGHAM  
Copy Editor

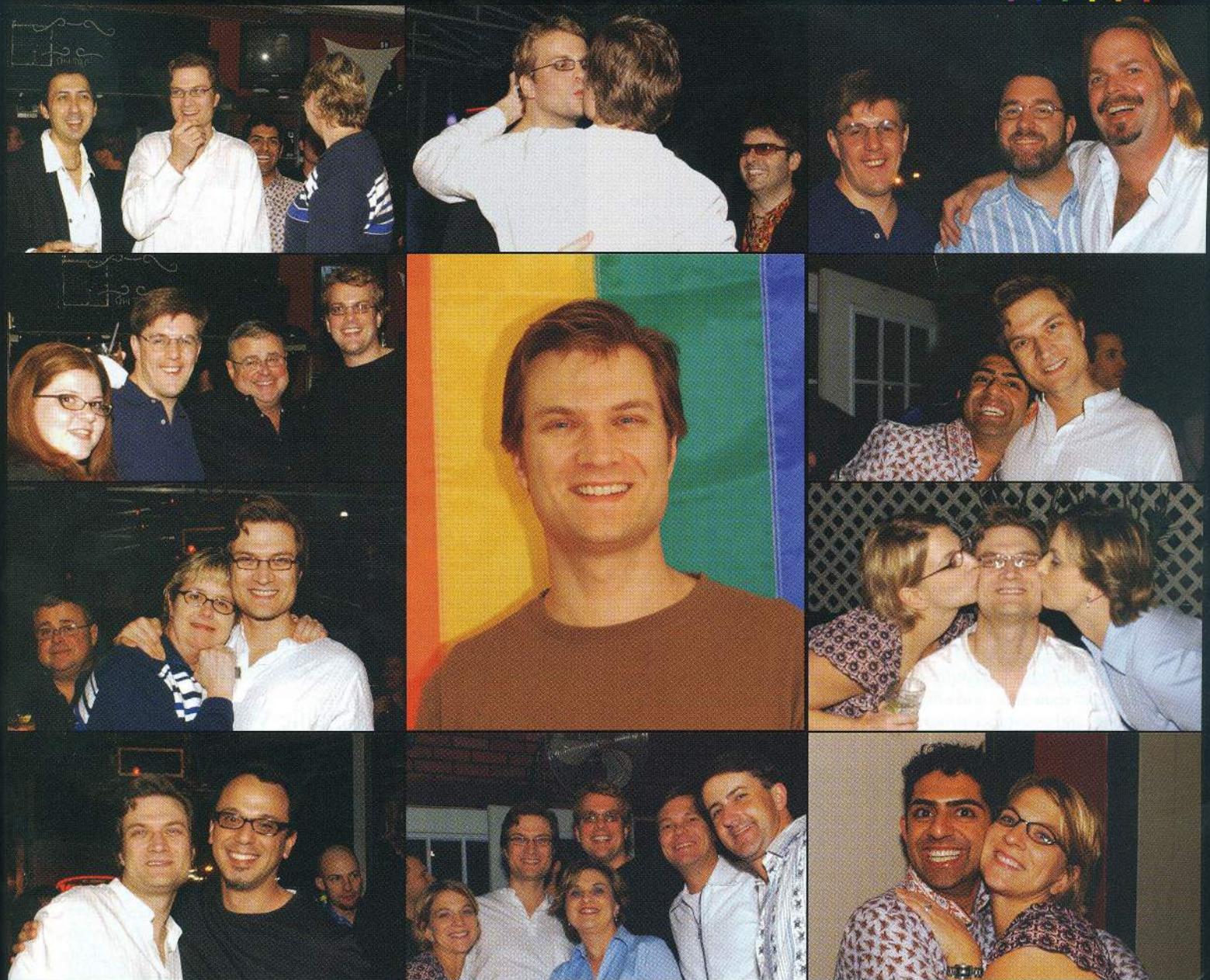
# HAPPY HOUSTON PRIDE AS BIG AS TEXAS



check out the pride calendar of events at [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org) for our **BIG BASH 30th ANNIVERSARY PARTY**  
an official event of HOUSTON PRIDE

# “London calling . . .”

## PCOH Says Farewell to One of Its Best



The Pride Committee of Houston offers congratulations and best wishes to Paul Radous as he departs Houston, Texas for London, England to pursue his new employment opportunity.

Paul has been an integral component of the Pride Committee of Houston since 1998. He has served in various leadership roles since joining the organization, including Treasurer and Co-Chair of the Celebration Committee. In fact, Paul served as Treasurer for most of the planning for this year's Pride Celebration, and continues to serve as a long distance mentor to the new treasury volunteers. His efforts helped to transition a small, casually run group of volunteers into a strong, professionally operated non-profit organization. By instituting strong fiscal controls, budget planning, standardized accounting, insurance management and legal oversight, Paul pushed the Pride Committee forward to new heights. Paul was never afraid to question expenses, or to roll up his sleeves to make things better. Our organization continues to grow (and maintain the bank balances!) because of Paul to ensure Houston will always host a world-class series of events each June to educate, celebrate and commemorate our GLBT community.

**Cheers, Paul! Good luck in London. Houston will miss you!**

Page 173

# A Day in the Life of . . .

## Brenden Stewart - Case Manager for Social Services

**A**fter learning more about the clinic and its involvement with HIV/AIDS education and testing, Brenden immediately offered his services as a volunteer. Although Brenden is heterosexual he was never bothered by the fact that the clinic is geared toward targeting the GLBT community.

In the next four years Brenden made his way through the ranks of the clinic, starting with front desk administrator and then moving on to Out Reach HIV/AIDS testing and finally settling into his current position as a Case Manager for Social Services.

The program with which Brenden is involved with assists people living with HIV/AIDS in obtaining housing, food, clothing and other social service needs they may have. Most of his clients are unaware of the resources that are available to them through assistance programs in the HIV/AIDS community. "Clients come into the clinic when they need help and don't know what to do. The case manager must relay this information to the client in a way that they can understand and empower themselves to do it in the future." As a case manager Brenden sets up referrals for his clients' needs and tries to resolve those needs within a given period of time. Some clients have very few needs and can get taken care of efficiently. Others have more complex issues like drug dependency and homelessness which makes it more difficult to get them on "even ground." Whatever the case may be, Brenden is there to help those who seek it.

The Montrose Clinic has been a vital part of the GLBT community's awareness of HIV/AIDS and the need for HIV/AIDS testing. Kudos to Brenden and all others out there who give their time and effort to support HIV/AIDS education, testing, and assistance programs.

—RM

OSIRIS



## Melissa Carruba & Sallie Woodell - Couple

**W**ho says you can't find love in a crowded bar? While most of us think this rule to be true, Melissa and Sallie are the exception. They met at a local lesbian hangout and now, two and a half years later, they have three cats, one dog, and a wonderful relationship.

many people assume that just because women are raised to find a mate for life, so they think that lesbian relationships are somehow easier than others. Although Melissa and Sallie have a great relationship, they "face the same problems that everybody faces," explains Sallie. Just because they are two women does not mean their relationship should be any different. "You have to make sure the person knows how much you care about them, how much you love them. You have to put the time into the relationship to make things work. You have to do all these things, yet they're not work because you want to be with this person," Sallie adds. "Our main problem is dealing with my families difficulty in accepting our relationship," says Sallie.

After spending the evening with these two ladies in their home full of pictures of friends, family and beloved pets, it seems like the biggest problem is keeping their pets from spilling red wine on the carpet.

—RM

# 2003 Volunteers of the Year

The Pride Committee of Houston, being a non-profit organization, can honestly say that, volunteers are the heart and back bone of the organization, since every Board Member freely and willingly volunteers their time to produce the annual Houston Pride Parade. The commitment and effort put forth to bring the Parade to Houston every year is immense. When most of us are racing to buy those last minute items for a joyous Thanksgiving feast or on the run to finish last minute Christmas shopping, the Pride Committee is hard at work brainstorming and organizing next year's parade. Sponsorships and donations from the community definitely allow the committee to stay alive and ultimately produce the Parade, but without that commitment and effort from our volunteers, I believe we would not have a Parade. This year, as in previous years, PCOH is committed to making sure everyone under the GLBT umbrella is being represented. With GLBT issues currently being focused on from a national level to here in our backyard of Houston, let's show our unity and commitment to these causes. Join our team and show your PRIDE AS BIG AS TEXAS!

To volunteer simply visit us at [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org) and complete an online Volunteer Application or e-mail me at [volunteers@pridehouston.org](mailto:volunteers@pridehouston.org) or [jlara@pridehouston.org](mailto:jlara@pridehouston.org).

Jose Lara  
Director of Volunteer Recruitment & Retention



Volunteer of the Year Aaron Blinka with PCOH President Nick Brines



Volunteer of the Year Cindy Hudson with PCOH Volunteer Beth Puyear



PCOH Volunteers appreciation party

# In the Lead for 2004

## Pride as Big as Texas Grand Marshals



**Jerry Simoneaux**

President of Stonewall Lawyers for 2 years Jerry, with the help of his life partner Christopher Bone, made Stonewall events a success. Among them are the Freedom to Marry Demonstration, the Alternative Family Law Seminar and the Community Law Day. He has sacrificed innumerable hours of his time promoting the professional image of the GLBT community by attending functions, fundraising events, and seminars. He serves on the State Bar of Texas Section on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification Issues as well as heading up the Houston Bar Association on AIDS Outreach for the Houston legal community.

**Sonna Alton**

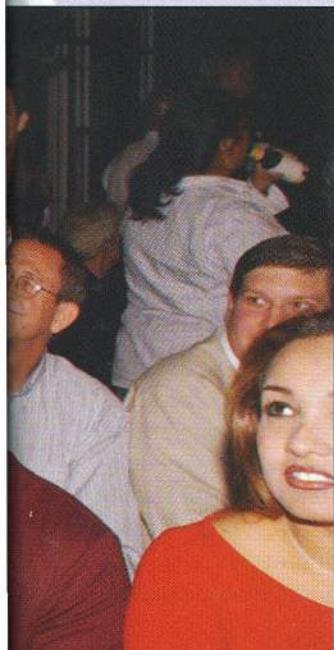
Director of Communication and Events for the Montrose Clinic, member of the Krewe of Olympus for 5 years, member of the Executive and Professional Association for 2 years. Sonna has also volunteered as an interviewer for the PFLAG/HATCH Youth Scholarship Foundation for the past 3 years.





### Jim & Sue Null

Through their work with PFLAG, the Nulls have implemented the following projects: METRO bus signs proclaiming "Unconditional Love — Keep Families Together," GLBT training for 600 HISD principals and vice principals in 2002, in-service workshop for HISD teachers and counselors in 2000, "HATE FREE ZONE" tape for supportive churches and other buildings during Houston's Proposition 2 ballot. Sue and Jim have been honored with the following awards: Ray Hill Award for Advocacy by a Non-Attorney from the Stonewall Law Association, Champion's Award for an individual at the Transgendered Unity Banquet in 2002 (Sue), Proclamation for Mayor Lee Brown declaring Sept. 28, 2003 "Sue Null Day" sponsored by the Houston Women's Group and the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, and recipient of a Certificate of Recognition from Councilmember Ada Edwards for being an "agent of social change, a voice for uncompromising values, and a source of unconditional love through her work in the Houston Chapter of PFLAG."



Lesbian/Gay  
Rights Lobby of  
Texas (LGRL)

Help to increase the  
influence and visibility  
of LGBT Texans in  
the state legislature.  
Led efforts to pass the  
James Byrd, Jr. Hate  
Crime Act protecting

LGBT citizens under state law, defeated  
attempts which would have prohibited LGBT  
Texans from adopting children or serving as fos-  
ter parents, and continually fights against work-  
place discrimination.

**PRIDE**



**AS BIG AS TEXAS**

**PRIDEHOUSTON.ORG**

# A Day in the Life of . . .

Greg Jieu - OutSmart Magazine

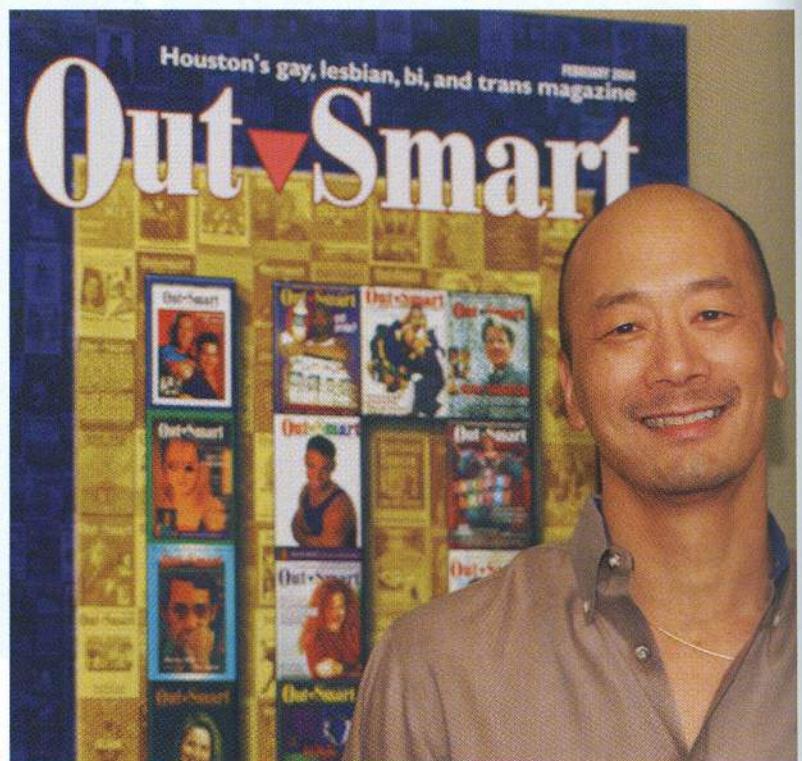
The 1993 March on Washington inspired Greg Jieu to launch OutSmart, the Houston-based GLBT magazine. "It was an incredibly healing experience," he recalls about the equal-rights event. "We were marching with thousands of other people. After being discriminated against, after having my relationship disrespected because I was gay, marching with thousands of people helped to re-energize my soul. When we came back, we were hyped and felt so empowered we wanted to do something."

OutSmart debuted in February 1994. "In our first issue we had just a handful of advertisers," Jieu recalls. "We had some pretty lean years. Today we have over 200 regular advertisers who support us and the community."

Jieu and his staff mark the magazine's tenth anniversary this year. In celebration, OutSmart will publish a limited-edition commemorative book, host special events including a fall benefit evening, and sponsor a photography contest and exhibition.

Today, the award-winning publication—one of the few GLBT monthlies in the nation—is distributed across the Houston/Galveston area and in several other Texas cities including Austin, Dallas, El Paso and San Antonio.

"We named the magazine OutSmart," Jieu says, "because



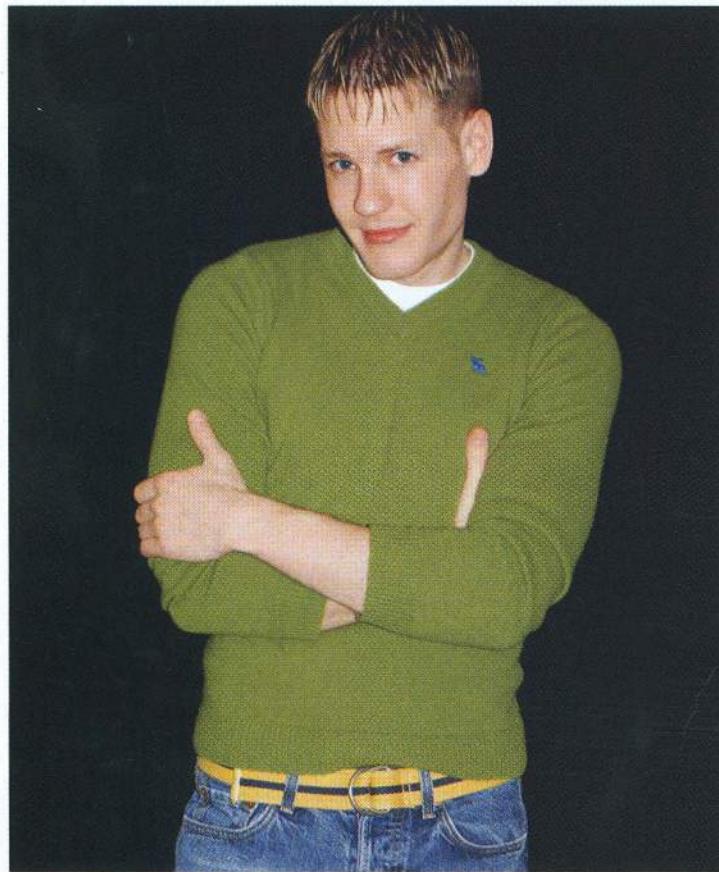
we felt people needed to know how to come out safely and to be smart and educated about our rights and hopefully find the power of their own voices. We all need to know our political power and the clout that our collective voice can create." —TB

## Adam Frejvid - Model

He's young, tall, blonde, green-eyed and handsome with a disarming smile that can get you to buy anything. But he is not just the next fresh face in modeling. He is also a fresh face in Houston. Adam recently moved from Loveland, Colorado. When asked why, the answer is surprising. "I had never been here before," he laughs. "Besides, I liked the idea of living in Texas."

Modeling is a new endeavor for Adam. "I want to be a model because I am better looking than everyone," he quips. "Honestly it's because I spent most of my life hiding my body because I was overweight." Adam has lost over 100 lbs. to get the body he has today. "I wanted to make a drastic change. Modeling is my chance to come out of the shadows and stand out. It is not to show off but to prove to myself that I can do anything."

These feelings carry over into his advice for others. He notes that so many people are afraid of who they are and so afraid of rejection by others that they never reach their potential. Through his experiences of coming out to a hostile family and overcoming a weight problem he has gained valuable insights. "It doesn't matter what others think of you, but it does matter what you think of yourself." With a smirk he adds, "So when do we eat?" —KD



# PRIDE 04

THE OFFICIAL  
MAGAZINE OF  
HOUSTON PRIDE  
2004

ZACKIE ACHMAT:  
ONE MAN'S WILL

THE  
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OF JOBRIATH

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after 50?

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PLUS  
EXCLUSIVE  
HOUSTON  
PRIDE GUIDE

InterPride



# 2003 Parade Review

The 25th anniversary "Silver Celebration" Pride Parade was truly a commemoration. We've come so far from where we began. Our city held worldwide attention because the Texas Homosexual Conduct Law was struck down within days before the Parade because of people in our very own community. What a way to celebrate 25 years of Pride!

A record crowd of est. 170,000 strong came together that night to watch the parade, catch beads, celebrate, and just be together. The weather was perfect and the lights on the floats were fabulous, not to mention the beautiful chandelier that hung over Montrose & Westheimer for the first time. Another first was the festive performance put on by The Strangerettes from Dallas. Seeing all the past 25 years of Grand Marshals on one float was a very moving and motivating experience for all.

Almost every year the Parade grows larger and the 2003 Parade was no exception totaling 135 entries. The 2004 Parade promises to be bigger and more spectacular than ever and we look forward to seeing a crowd as big as Texas enjoying themselves and celebrating Pride!

# Silver Celebration



## 2003 SILVER CELEBRATION TROPHY WINNERS

### RUBY SLIPPER

(Best walking unit)

Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce

### GYPSY ROSE

(Best out-of-town unit)

Turtle Creek Chorale / The Strangerettes

### EDISON

(Best lighting on a non-professionally built unit)

Community Gospel Church

### HOUSTON

(Best non-professionally built motorized unit)

The Krewe of the Moons of Uranus

### RAINBOW LIGHTS

(Best lighting on a professional built unit)

Diageo & Smirnoff Twist

### TEXAS

(Best professionally built motorized unit)

JP Morgan Chase P.R.I.D.E. Team

### STONEWALL

(Best commemoration of pride)

Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation

### SILVER CELEBRATION

(Best interpretation of theme)

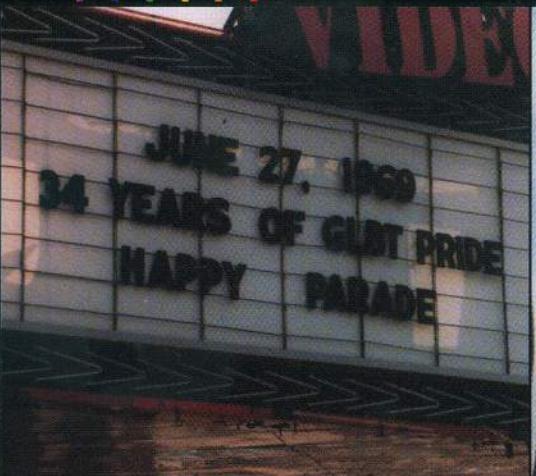
Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History, Inc.

### SPIRIT OF MONTROSE

(Best overall entry)

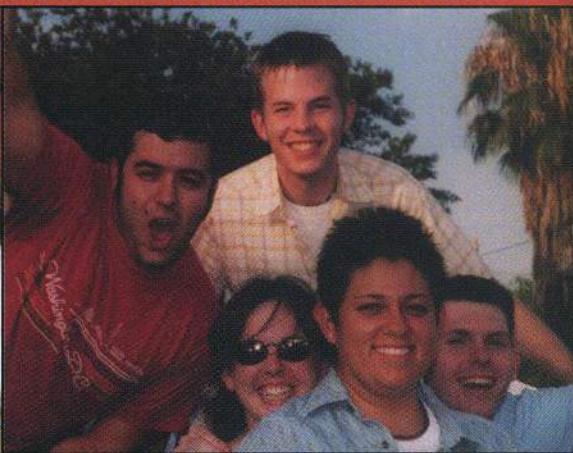
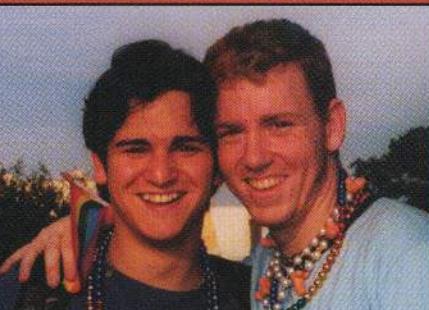
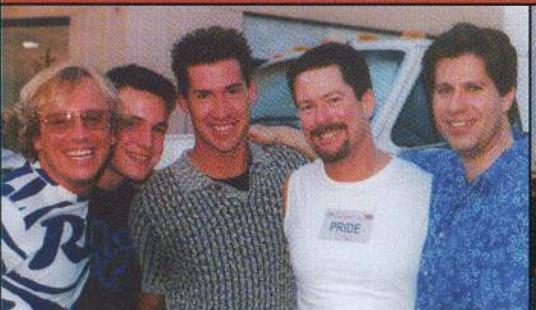
Turtle Creek Chorale / The Strangerettes

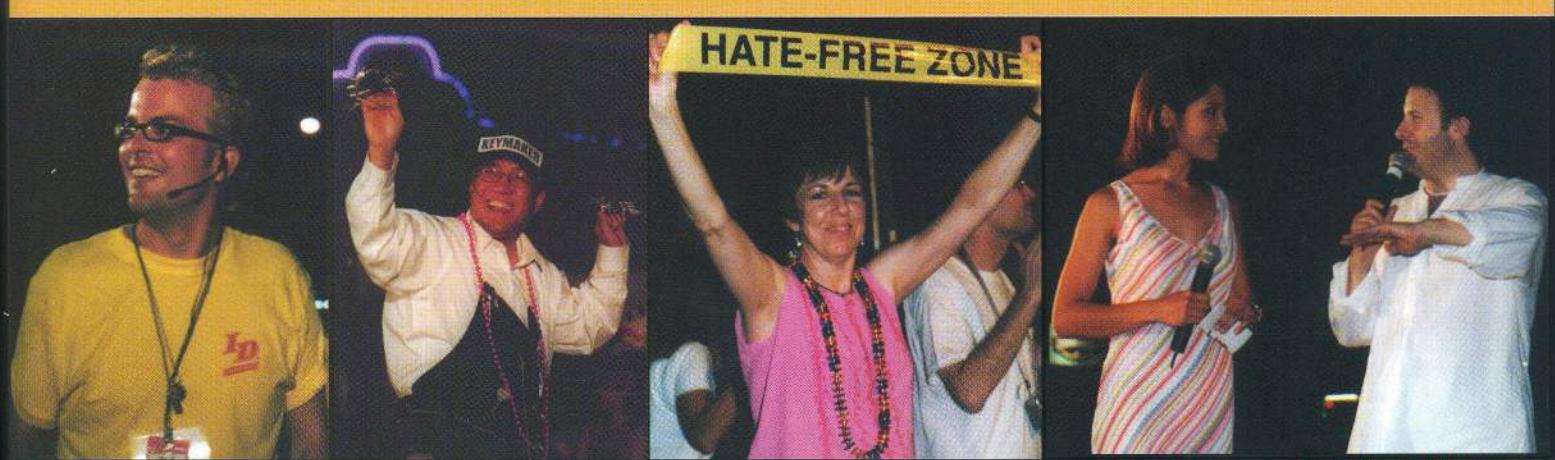
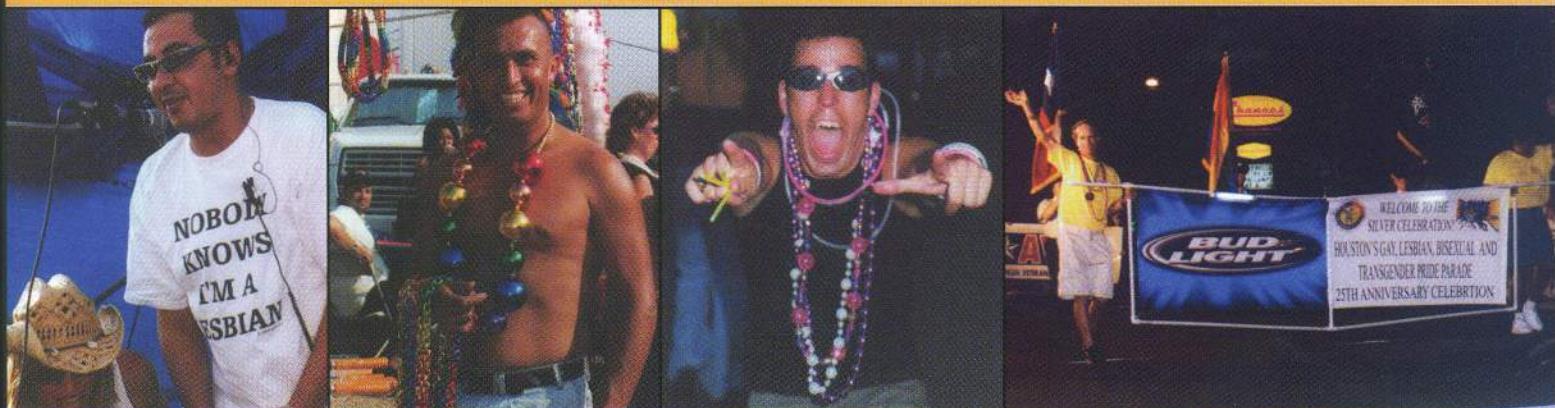
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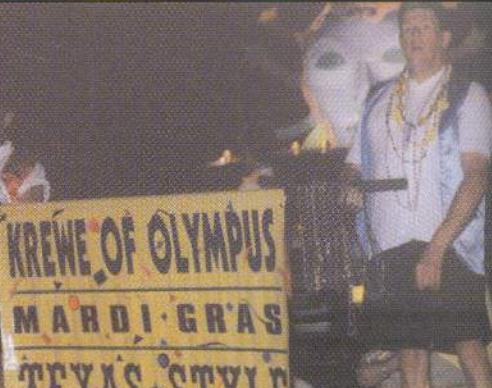
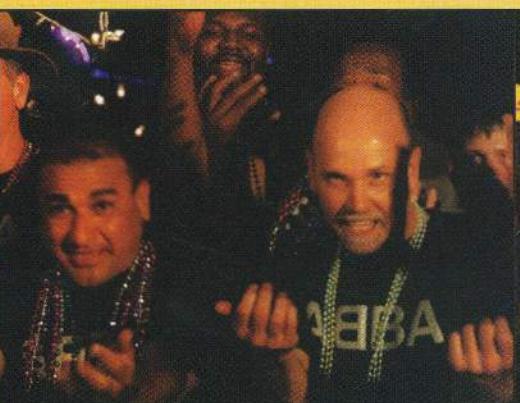
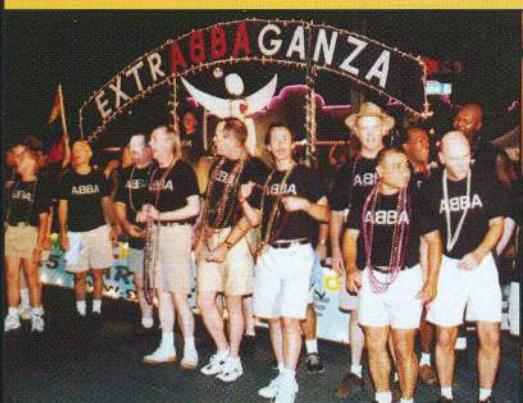
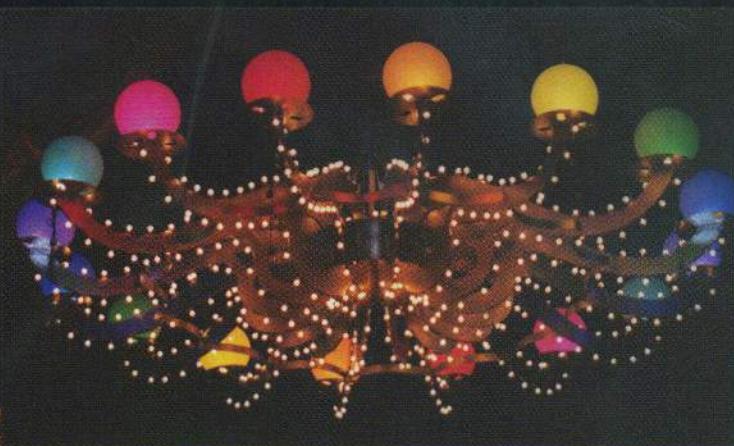
## HOUSTON PRIDE PARADE 2003

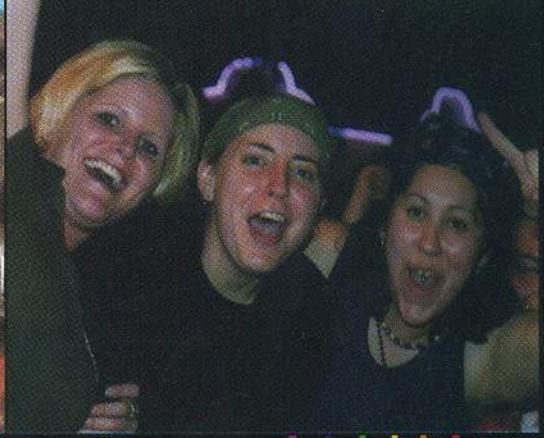
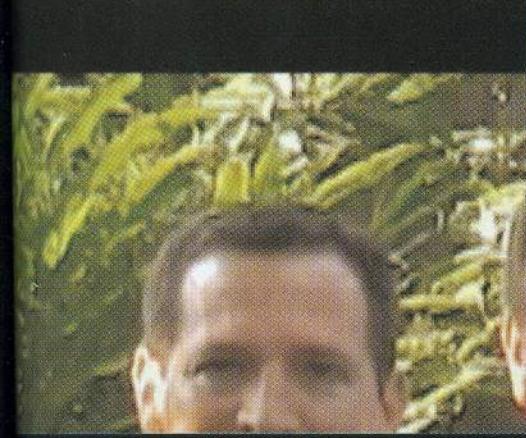
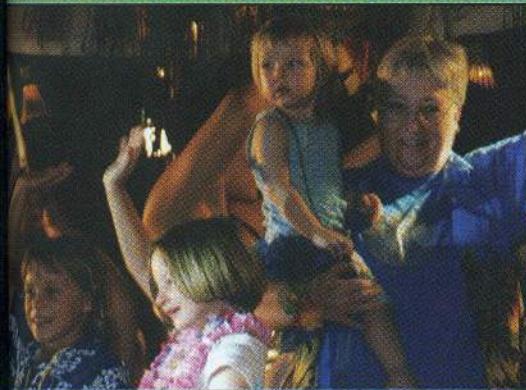
Photography by Yvonne K. Feeece & Rob Martinez



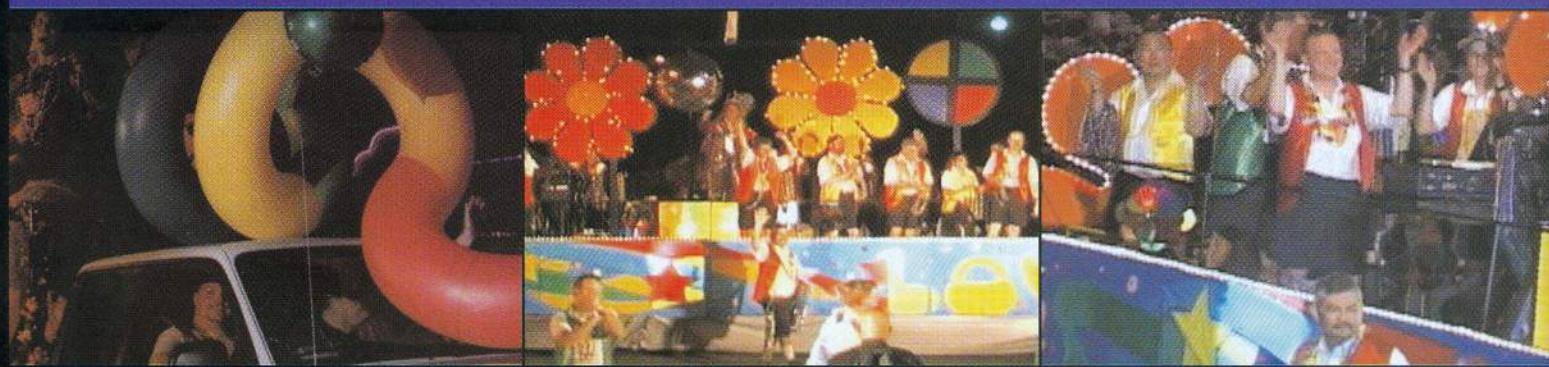
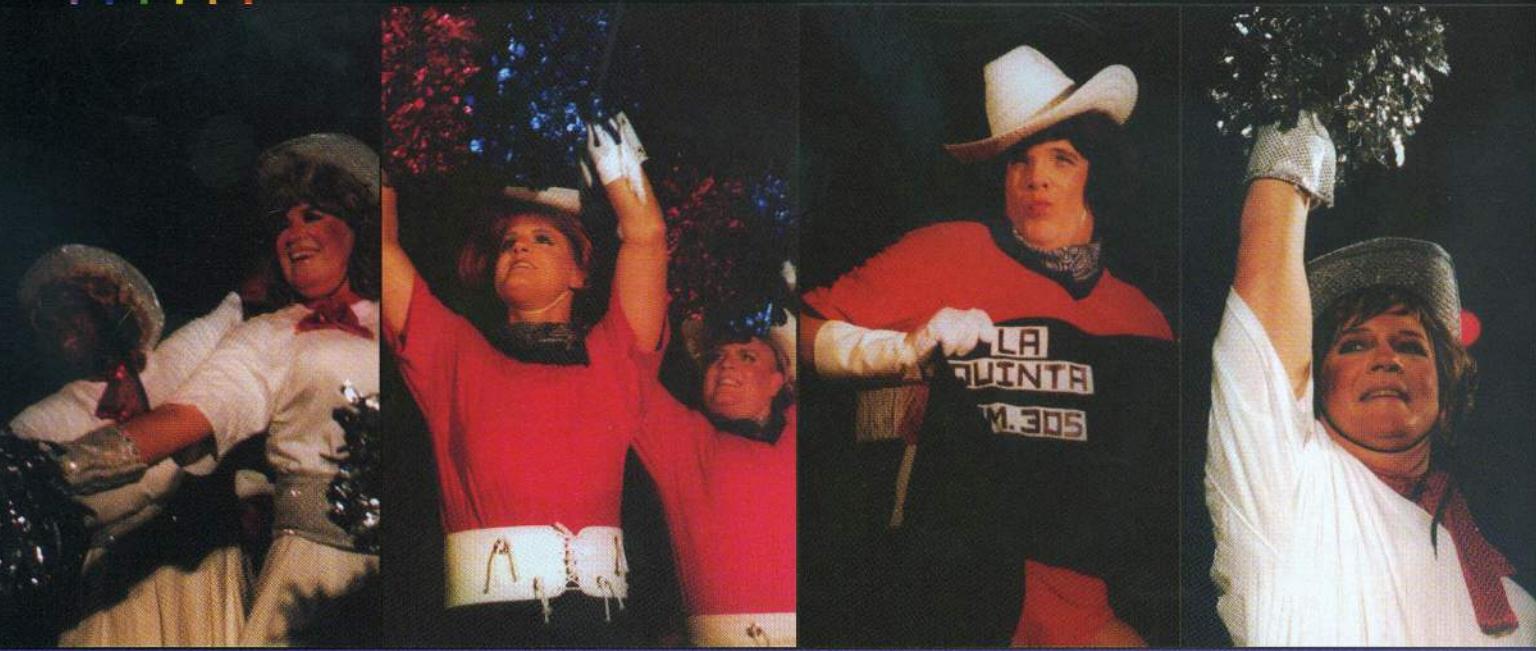


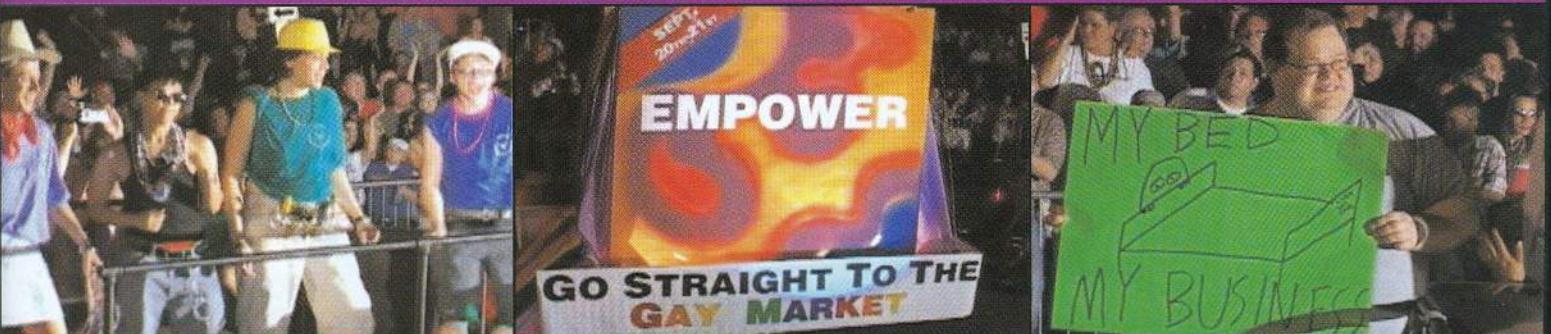
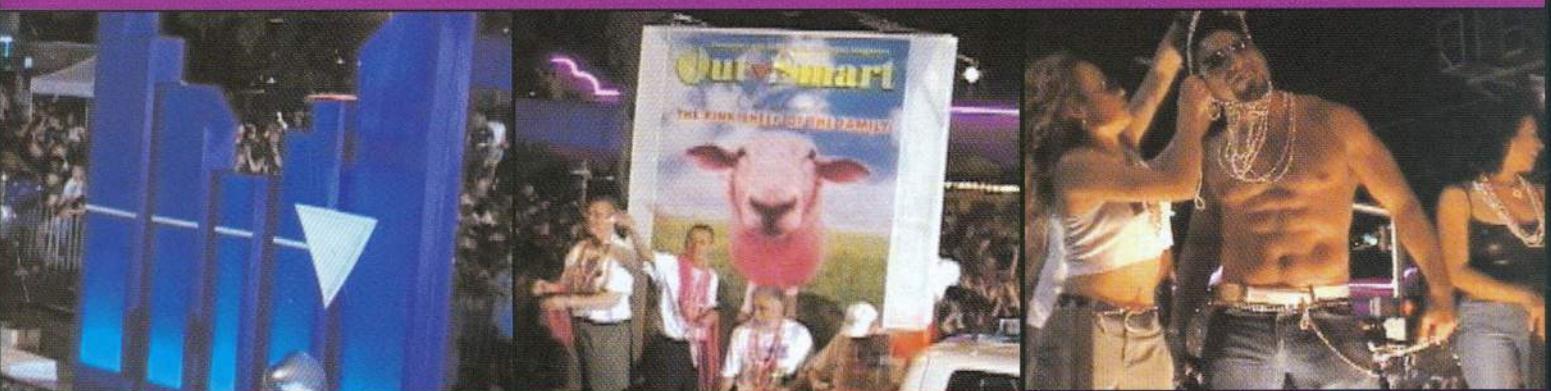
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PRIDEHOUSTON.ORG

# The Best of The Best

## 2003 Silver Celebration Trophy Winners

### 2003 SILVER CELEBRATION TROPHY WINNERS

#### RUBY SLIPPER

Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce

#### GYPSY ROSE

Turtle Creek Chorale / The Strangerettes

#### EDISON

Community Gospel Church

#### HOUSTON

The Krewe of the Moons of Uranus

#### RAINBOW LIGHTS

Diageo & Smirnoff Twist

#### TEXAS

JP Morgan Chase P.R.I.D.E. Team

#### STONEWALL

Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation

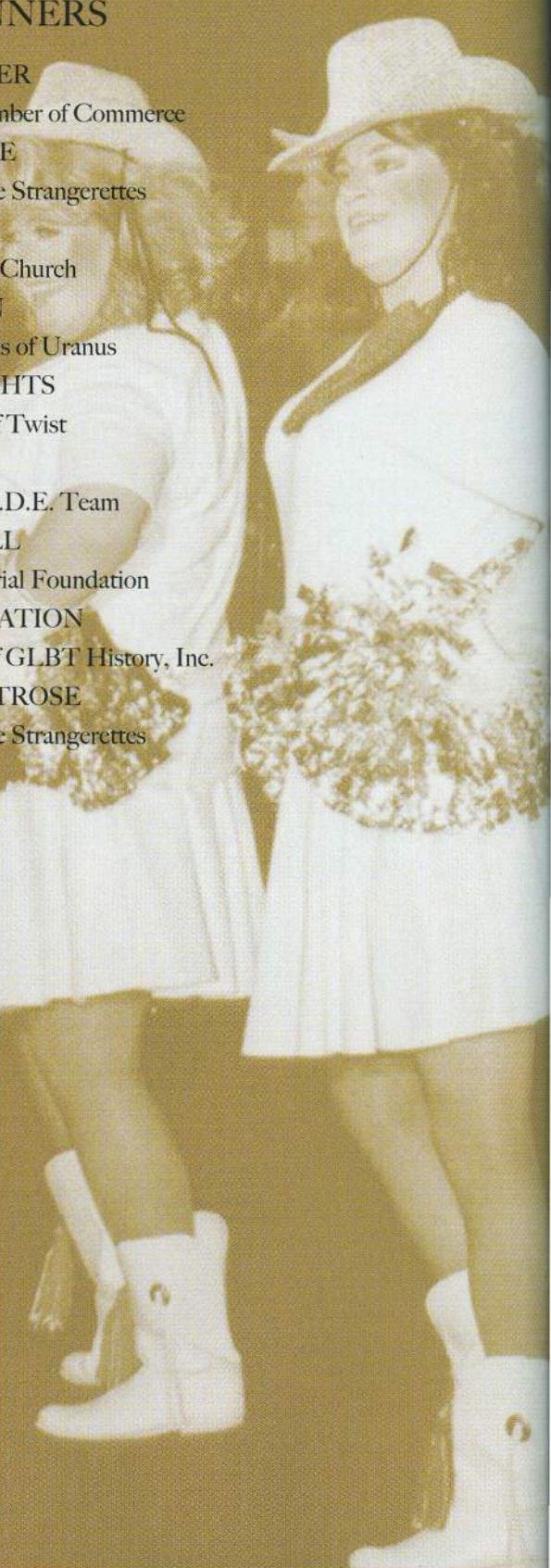
#### SILVER CELEBRATION

Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History, Inc.

#### SPIRIT OF MONTROSE

Turtle Creek Chorale / The Strangerettes

Below: The Strangerettes pose with their trophies. Photo by Rob Martinez.





Above & Below: Diageo & Smirnoff Twist



Above: Aaron & Manny giving out trophies



Above: Community Gospel Church



Above: CoyTow excepts the award for The Chamber

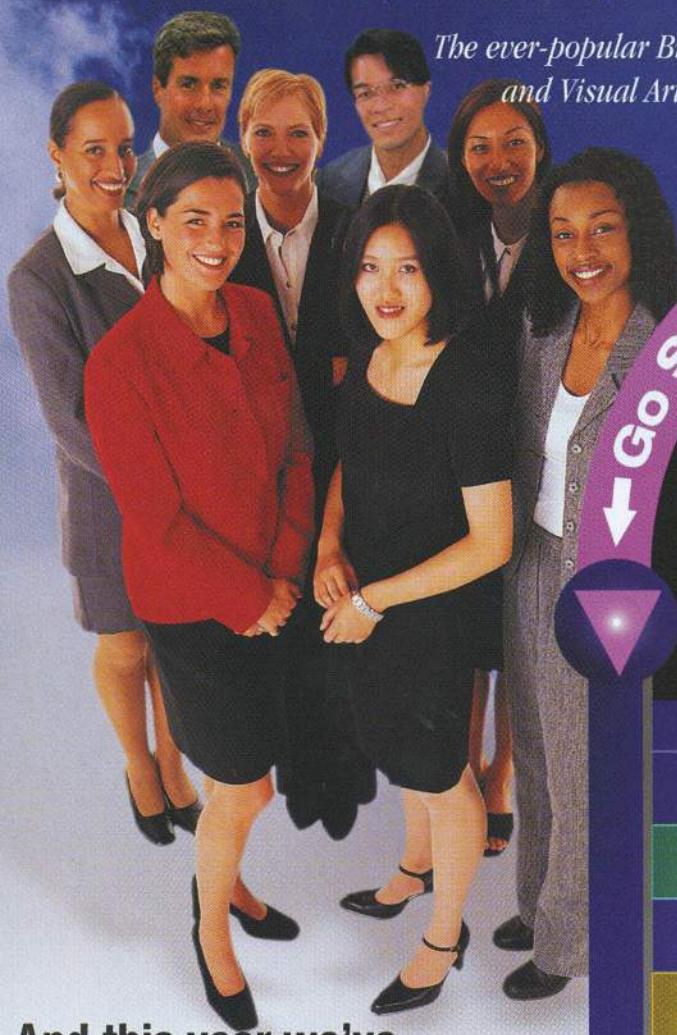


Photo by Rob Martinez

**PRIDEHOUSTON.ORG**

**New! Empower 2004 has moved to Pride Week.  
June 12th & 13th • Sat 1-8 pm & Sun 12-5 pm**

*The ever-popular Business Expo, Job Fair and the Performing and Visual Arts that make Empower a great event.*



**And this year we've added more attractions to the list, including:**

Pet Pavilion, Kids Pavilion  
Home & Garden, Performing Arts  
Visual Arts, Food/Beverage Service  
Big Time Entertainment

For information about becoming a vendor or sponsor, and associated benefits, contact the Chamber at [www.ghglcc.org](http://www.ghglcc.org) or call 713.523.7576

**Go Straight to the Gay Market™**

**JUNE 12-13**

**EMPOWER**  
**2004**

**← FUN →**

**FREE GIVEAWAYS**

**DOOR PRIZES**

**ENTERTAINMENT**

**SHOPPING**

**NETWORKING**

**ROCK CLIMBING**

**SPORTS & OUTDOORS**

**← GOOD FOOD →**

**theChamber**  
the greater houston glbt chamber of commerce



**CHASE**  
THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP IS EVERYTHING.®

**OutSmart**

**houston  
VOICE**



# A Day in The Life of . . .

Ruston Alsbrooks - Houston Police Department

**"When you look back and your heart rate goes up, that's me!"**

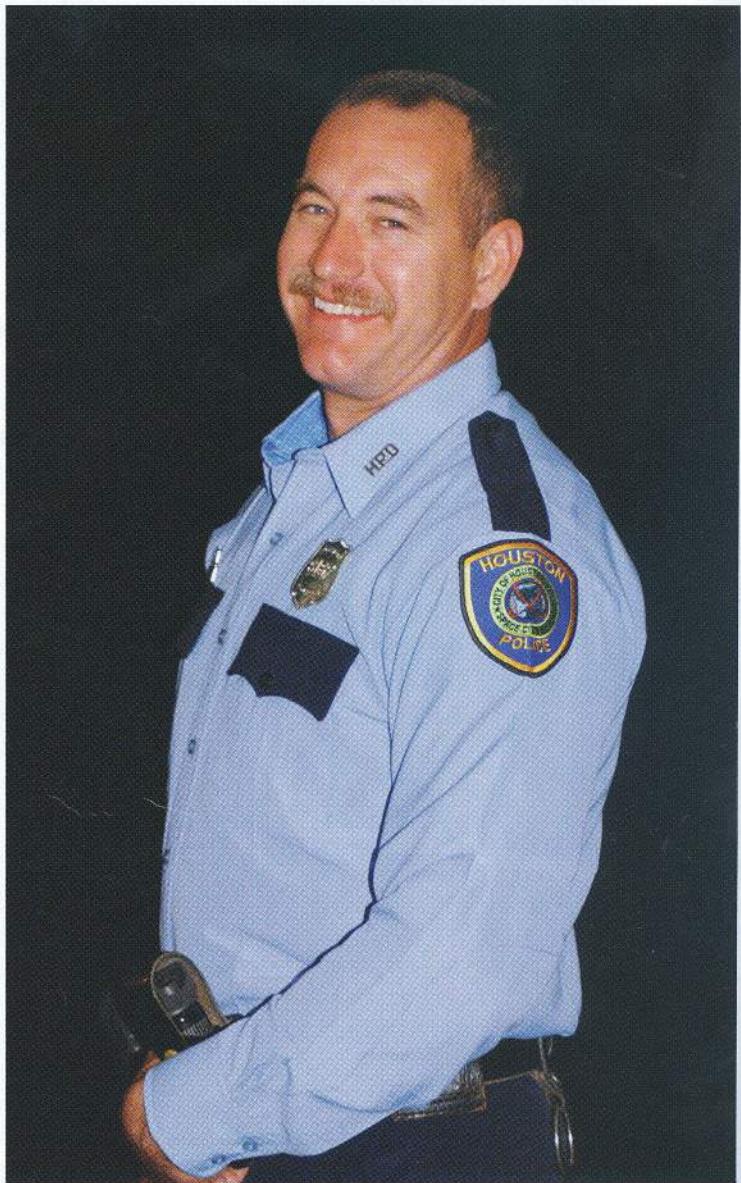
**Y**ou know the type. Big. Strong. Waiting over the hill to catch you zooming by at over 70mph. You guessed it! Ruston Alsbrooks is a 9-year veteran police officer for the Houston Police Department. His current position with the department is in the specialized division of Traffic Enforcement.

"I'm a police officer who just happens to be gay." For Alsbrooks, there was never a question of being out at work. After about a year on the force Alsbrooks came out to his peers by introducing his "other half," of now going on 11 years, to his co-workers as his "partner" which eventually made its way through the department. "Did you hear Alsbrooks is gay?" Although Alsbrooks's riding partner is his complete opposite (ex-military, Republican and, of course, straight) they are best friends on and off duty. Not everyone is comfortable being out on the force, but for Ruston "being gay was never an issue. [Besides,] you can't lie to police officers." Working as closely with each other as they do in the department makes it practically impossible for anyone to remain ambiguous. But for those who aren't yet comfortable with being out on the force, Alsbrooks stands as an example of a successful openly gay officer.

What few problems did occur after Alsbrooks came out were handled "quite harshly" through the department with great speed. "My supervisor is the one who stood up for me" and made the complaint. Personally, I couldn't imagine anyone wanting to pick a fight with this guy!

"For gays as well as straights, you get out just what you put into it. If you go in with a lot of negativity then people are going to pick up on that and you're not going to have job satisfaction. I have tremendous job satisfaction. I can't wait to put my uniform on in the morning . . . and when it's over I'm not ready to go home. I was meant to be a police officer. That was my calling."

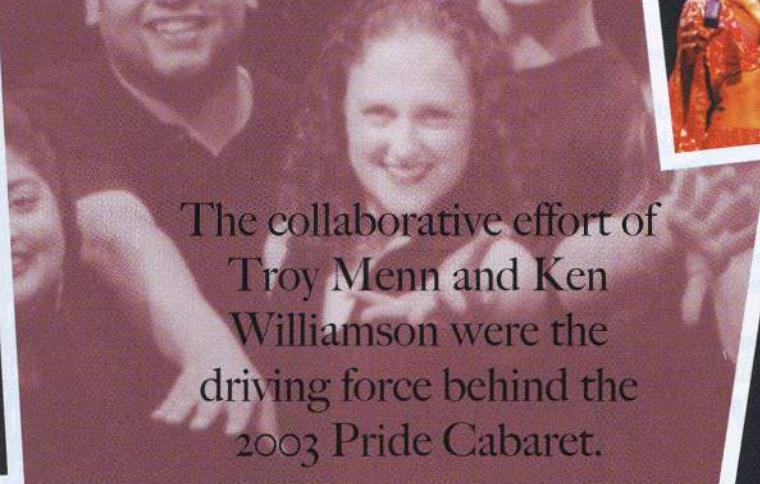
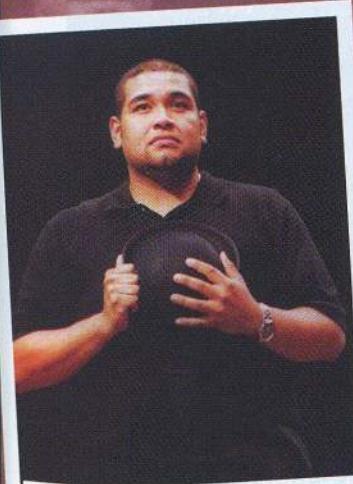
—RM



Q-Patrol was formed 10 years ago following the gay-bashing murder of Paul Broussard in the Pacific Street area. Since then, the Q-Patrol volunteers have dedicated themselves to making sure the Montrose streets are safe on the weekends. Q-Patrol organizes at the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center every Saturday night. Help keep your community safe. Call 713-528-SAFE (7233) for more information. [QPatrolHouston@yahoo.com](mailto:QPatrolHouston@yahoo.com)

# 2003 Pride Cabaret

MUSIC!



The collaborative effort of  
Troy Menn and Ken  
Williamson were the  
driving force behind the  
2003 Pride Cabaret.

Thanks to last year's  
fabulous cast and crew  
for making the show  
a smashing hit!



SONG!

DANCE!

All photos courtesy of Yvonne K. Fecce

# Pride As Big As Texas

## Houston's GLBT Pride Parade 2004

This year marks the 26th annual Pride Parade. Our parade has lasted through all of the modern GLBT history in the Southwest of the United States to grow into the largest Pride event in our region. In the early days the Parade was a great undertaking just to get the street closed and raise the money for a permit. Actually, one year the Parade was only on one side of the street. As years passed on, the traditional Sunday afternoon Parade took its toll. Houston's heat and humidity wore down spectators, we suffered a major political defeat in 1985 in a vote against nondiscrimination in city employment and a number of our people were sick due to complications of AIDS.

Yet we are resilient, as a community we worked together. No matter what happened to us we seemed to be able to pull together every year to assemble a celebration of who we are. Our Parade has always been that symbol.

GLBT people were people of the night. So in 1997, after a lot of study and debate we decided to do a night Parade. This was our Phoenix of rebirth. We were able with music and light to express whom we are. And that expression shows our many different faces of a community.

The Parade serves every year as a renewing of our commitment of a people who have been discriminated against. We see hope. We see that we are not alone. We see that we have friends both within the community and from our non-gay friends.

We invite you, your friends and family to come to the neighborhood on Saturday evening, June 26 and help us celebrate. We celebrate all our community. We celebrate the work of everyone who volunteers in our community. We celebrate the journey we all made in being who we are. And we remember everyone who we lost be it by violence, by AIDS or other medical condition, or by not having self worth.

### 2004 Pride Parade Awards

**ARIA**

Best creative sound

**FABULOUS**

Best costumes

**RAINBOW**

Best overall lighting

**RUBY SLIPPER**

Best walking unit

**PRISCILLA**

Best float (non profit organization)

**PINK DIAMOND**

Best float (for profit organization)

**STONEWALL**

Best social commentary

**JUDY GARLAND**

Best performance

**SPIRIT OF MONTROSE**

Best entry

**PRIDE AS BIG AS TEXAS**

Best interpretation of theme

**JUDGES CHOICE**

For entries not fitting in other categories

# PRIDE



## AS BIG AS TEXAS

Saturday, June 26, 2004

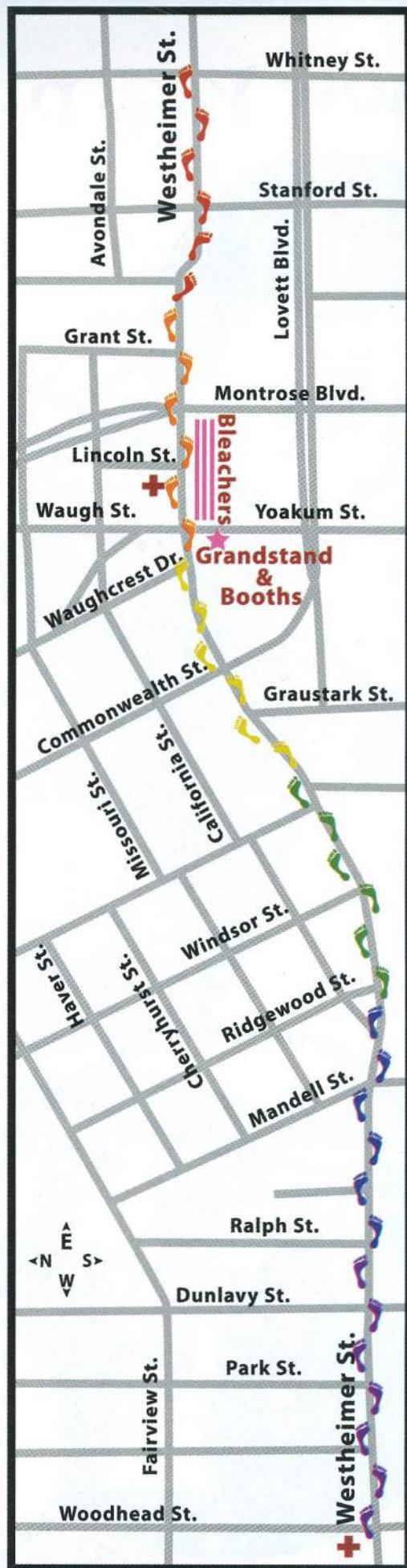
8:45 - 11:00 pm, on lower Westheimer

Between Woodhead and Whitney

Be a part of the nation's original nighttime parade!

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3. Walk, take public transport, carpool. Parking can be scarce in the area on Parade night and the traffic leaving can be heavy.
4. Respect the neighbors. Help keep Montrose the unique, friendly, beautiful neighborhood it is. Please do not park on lawns, block driveways, or disturb the neighbors. You can also show your respect by using a trash can.
5. Dress light. Don't know what to wear? Why not try a new Pride as Big as Texas T-shirt or tank top!
6. Keep the pets at home. Sure your pet has Pride too, but a crowd of 150,000 might scare the GLBT right out of Fluffy!
7. Don't worry, be happy. If you encounter any problems please let one of the many volunteer parade marshals along the route know.
8. Invite everyone. Pride celebrates our diversity and the Parade just isn't the same without it.
9. Play it safe! This may be Montrose, but you're still in a big city! Don't ruin your celebration by becoming a victim of crime. Call 911 if there is trouble!



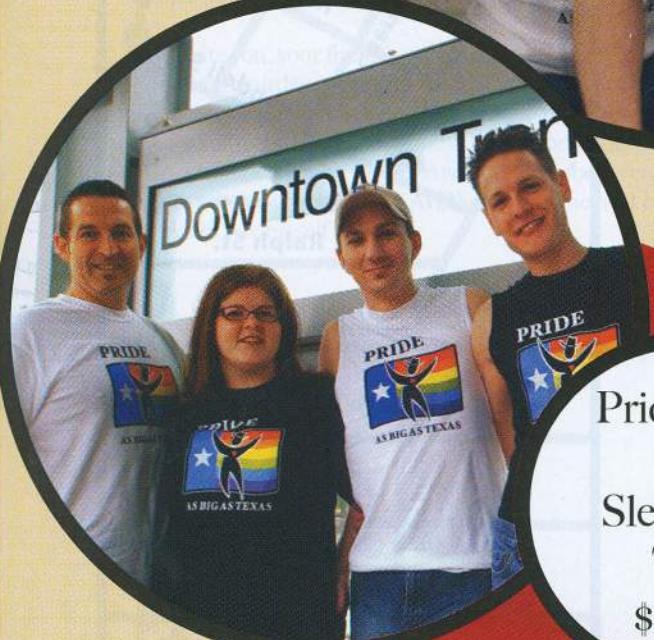
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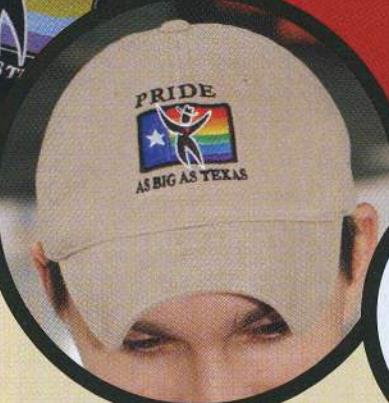
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# Winds of Change

## The LGBT Political Climate in Texas by: RANDALL ELLIS

Over the past twelve months, the LGBT community in Texas and across the nation has achieved unprecedented progress in our struggle for equality. The United States' Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* declared that states could no longer demean the existence of LGBT Americans as it struck down the sodomy laws used by law enforcement to target and harass LGBT people. Soon thereafter Wal-mart announced, after years of staunch resistance, that it had adopted a policy to protect LGBT workers from discrimination in the workplace. The Capitol Area United Way of Austin followed with its announcement that it would no longer fund the Boy Scouts of America because BSA would not comply with the United Way's new non-discrimination policy covering sexual orientation. The momentum of change continued to escalate when the Massachusetts Supreme Court decided that the state of Massachusetts could no longer deny LGBT couples the right to marry. Back in Texas, openly gay Houston city council member Annise Parker was elected to the office of Houston Controller, representing two million constituents – the second largest number of constituents represented by an openly LGBT public official in the country.

Across the nation the winds of change have begun to blow in our direction and the marriage issue appears to have kicked up the most dust. Although the national debate of LGBT rights has centered on the issue of same-sex marriage, it is important that the Texas LGBT community take a step back from the eye of the storm and remember to focus on the current political landscape of Texas. As we craft the Texas "gay agenda" we must not forget that the Bible Belt runs deep through the heart of Texas, helping to secure the religious right's tight grip on the state's political ideology and our elected officials. Only one month before the United States Supreme Court announced its historic decision in the *Lawrence* case, lawmakers in Austin read from the Bible as they attempted to ban LGBT Texans from adopting children or serving as foster parents. The fight for marriage equality must not become a self imposed obstacle that sidetracks us from the issues where we have already made enormous progress.

We cannot and must not ignore the marriage issue. The religious right has for too long steered this debate with vicious rhetoric. At the same time, we must not let our advancements on other issues fall to the wayside. Currently, five school districts in Texas have recognized the importance of protecting LGBT youth from harassment and discrimination and enacted policies to ban this behavior. Five Texas municipalities have extended some form of protection to LGBT workers in the public and private sectors. With the passage of the James Byrd Hate Crime Act in 2001, gays and lesbians were recognized and protected by Texas law for the first time. These advancements were won with well thought out strategies, tailored to fit the local political climate. We must continue to build on these Texas victories as we plot our movement's course of action in the coming months.

**'Take a step back from the eye of the storm and remember to focus on the current political landscape of Texas.'**

Dallas, Houston, Austin, Denton and Hays County Independent School Districts have adopted policies to protect LGBT youth from harassment and discrimination. Numerous studies have shown that this type of protection reduces hostilities in the classroom and improves the learning environment for all students. As Texas lawmakers seek innovative ways to improve our public education system without increasing the tax burden on taxpayers, we must continue to push for safer schools as we tout the potential cost savings of non-discrimination in education policy. LGBT

youth cannot be left out of the Bush mantra "Leave No Child Behind."

Austin, Fort Worth, Dallas and El Paso have local non-discrimination employment ordinances that include sexual orientation, and Houston has protections in place for city workers based on sexual orientation. These pockets of progressiveness differ greatly from most of Texas, where one can be fired from her/his job simply because she or he is gay. Throughout this state, qualified, hardworking people are denied job opportunities, fired, paid less or otherwise discriminated against for reasons that are unrelated to performance or abilities, but instead due to sexual orientation, perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. With the demise of anti-gay sodomy laws, which criminalized homosexual activity, a new opportunity for advancement has emerged. Texas lawmakers can no longer cite Texas Penal Code 21.06, otherwise known as the Texas Homosexual Conduct Law, as an excuse to justify resistance to protecting LGBT Texans in the workplace. Denying LGBT Texans the fundamental right to hold a job and contribute to society stands in stark contrast to the rugged individualism and self-sufficiency that typifies the Texan's mentality. If we are to succeed, we must seize this opportunity and challenge the status quo with a message adapted to the Texas state of mind.

Texas has always reveled in its no-nonsense, tough-on-crime justice system. Lawmakers demonstrated this with the passage of the James Byrd Hate Crimes Act, which allows for enhanced penalties in crimes motivated by an anti-gay bias. Sadly, the transgender community was left out of this legislation. If we are truly to create a safer place for all Texans, we must endeavor to expand our hate crime legislation. We must take advantage of the tough-on-crime attitude in the Lone Star State as we work to create a safer place to live for all Texans.

Given the current political climate in Texas, these goals will not be accomplished overnight. We must remember, though, that none of our victories have come easily. The tenacity of the Texas LGBT community and the commitment of courageous lawmakers have gotten us where we are today. If our community remains focused and thoughtful in how we engage those who oppose equality, nothing will be able to hold us back and the victories will continue. ▼

# A Day in The Life of . . .

Phyllis Frye - Transgender lawyer/activist  
 (713) 723-8368  
 prfrye@aol.com  
<http://members.aol.com/prfrye/>

**P**RIDE: You have so many moments of your life for which you are recognized, acknowledged, and remembered. What are a few that stand out most to you?

**PHYLLIS FRYE:** I was thrilled that the local LGBT lawyer group (Stonewall Lawyers) named an annual award after me. I was also thrilled that the State Bar's LGBT Section and the national LGBT lawyer group (NLGLA) each gave me their highest awards. I was pleased several years ago that the Corpus Christi Pride Parade named me to be its first Grand Marshall. And I have been honored by similar honors from the largest TG groups and other national gay organizations.

But I have been most pleased with three particular events.

One deals with my relationship as a lawyer with my professional peers. To have the first TG law article to be published as an out TG lawyer (with co-author Katrina Rose) in the journal that is sent to every lawyer and judge in Texas is a "high" for sure. The State Bar of Texas has come a long way from back in the late 1970's when it invited gay-bashing Anita Bryant to its annual convention. Now the State Bar has an official nondiscrimination employment policy that includes LGBT, and I was central to that policy being adopted. In passing that provision, the then State Bar Board Chair likened me in his remarks to the Board as an "Atticus Finch" from the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird." I can ask for no higher praise.

I also include my accomplishments as a lawyer. During my thirteen years of criminal defense law, I know that I saved over two dozen innocent people from going to prison either via jury trial or from good investigation that persuaded the prosecutors to dismiss. And I know that I saved another several dozen who were guilty from prison time as felons because I was able to demonstrate that the prosecutors were overzealous in over charging or "piling on" when the infraction deserved mere county jail time.

In the area of transgender law, I pretty much invented many of the notions and arguments currently being used, such as name change with gender identification correction on the drivers license at the beginning of the transition. That is, a change of name without an accompanying correction of gender on the identifying document acts as an incomplete change of name. I have personally freed hundreds and hundreds of TG people in courts across Texas using these argu-



ments – this is the ONLY law that I still practice.

Another such notion was using the Littleton court debacle and turning it on its head to get TG same-sex marriage in San Antonio. Go to my website at [transgenderlegal.com](http://transgenderlegal.com) and go to Littleton and click on Wicks for details.

And the other is to be accepted as an out TG in my neighborhood. When I transitioned in 1976, our home was vandalized often and obscene phone calls were made during the two major Christian holidays. Two months ago, I was elected without an opponent to serve as an officer of our 5000+ home civic association.

**P:** You've been married for over 25 years. Tell me a little about your spouse. How has your spouse been an inspiration and a source of support for your work? How did you manage to attain a legal same-sex marriage 25 years ago? What do you recommend to those seeking same-sex marriages now?

PF: Actually, it will be 31 years this coming June 23rd. My spouse and I became best friends before we fell in love. In my experience, love has highs and lows, and if the partners each experience a low at the same time and have no solid friendship to hold them together, then it fizzles. My darling is my bestfriend, and I am hers.

As to me being TG, she decided before we married, that if that was ALL that might be wrong with me, then she had a good deal.

As legally married people, we benefit from so many, many government and legal assumptions that I cannot even fathom — although I know as a lawyer — what gay couples go through to get just portions of the same protections.

Marriage for same-sex people is worth fighting for as a basic civil right. We must as an LGBT people, continue to fight for this right. I say LGBT rather than LG because many BI folks and TG folks are in LG relationships that they would like to have the marriage benefit. So it is an LGBT struggle. The media needs to be told this. For more details go to my website at [transgenderlegal.com](http://transgenderlegal.com) and click on the Albany Law Review article on same-sex marriage.

P: When you first came out, I imagine you knew you'd be discharged from the military. What was the experience of your discharge like then? How were you treated by your fellow officers? Have you had to deal with the military at all since you completed the transgendering process (please forgive my naiveté as I'm not too familiar with the process aside from seeing the Christine Jorgensen Story). Did you receive any flack when you applied to use your GI benefits to get your law degree?

PF: I was outed by my first spouse as she was leaving me in Germany to return to the states and file for divorce. Luckily, I had a regular army commission and was a federal ROTC scholarship recipient. When they tried to discharge me, I told them if I did not get an Honorable, that I would go to the press and embarrass the military.

It was all such a waste of government funds. The Army had paid for four years of college and gotten only 14 months of service because of their own transphobia. I was a good officer and would have continued to be so.

My tour of duty was during Vietnam and I was glad to be assigned somewhere else for sure. That Clinton avoided the draft and Bush went National Guard does not bother me. What bothers me about Bush is that it seems that he shirked even that duty and now is being such a hypocrite Christian liar about it all while he meanwhile trumps up a war and sends people off to die so that he can run around on an aircraft carrier in a flight suit.

I used the GI Bill to buy my house and to go back to college for an MBA and law degree. The government, therefore, paid for all four of my college degrees and made me the lawyer that I am to stir up so much trouble. Funny, isn't it!

P: In your opinion, what are some ways society has taken steps forward in terms of LGBT issues over the past decade? Are there any ways society has taken a step backward? What are you most happy to see in terms of public perception/treatment of the LGBT community? What are some changes you want to see most?

PF: Let us be completely frank on the positive changes that have occurred. These have occurred for only one reason: LGBT people have come out to family, friends, employers and to elected officials. There is no other way.

Having said that, I am very optimistic that our civil rights will continue — if we continue to be out and proud.

Oh, of course a backlash is coming. But so what! The bigots can holler all they want, I will be free, because I want to be free. And so will you if you are out, proud and willing.

I think it is highly amusing that the Supreme Court that crowned King George in 2000 is the same court that gave us the Lawrence decision. Have you noticed that none of them have retired during King George's first term in office? Could it be that they each realize what a mistake they made in crowning this guy?

P: What do you love most about being Phyllis R. Frye? What do you love most about your life and being alive? What gets you up in the morning? How do you want to be remembered?

PF: I enjoy my life because I am the very who that I am. I am true to myself, I have a very best friend, and I make a difference in people's lives. And I finally have the time to enjoy the muse of music (via singing with my guitar) that I was certainly born with.

How do I want to be remembered? As someone who crashed open the barricades and held them open while others came through. But even more so, as someone who taught and encouraged others to crash open other barricades as well. The barricades are to freedom, of course. I guess you could call me a PROUD LIBERAL!

- ED

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# Love Knows No Boundaries

## But the Government Does by: ERIC A.T. DICKMAN

Immigration law. For many of us who were born U.S. citizens, what goes on between the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS—formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service or INS) and immigrants is unknown. We assume a little and move on to the next thought. “Sure, it’s probably a little difficult to get into the U.S., but we’re a country of privilege; you’ve got to earn the right to live here; but I’m sure it’s a fair enough system . . .” What few of us ever hear about is the discrimination gays, bisexuals, transgenders, same-sex couples, and those living with HIV and AIDS have to deal with. Obviously, the U.S. does not recognize same-sex couples for the purposes of immigration, as it generally does for heterosexual married couples. There are fifteen major countries on the globe that do. Even Germany, a country we historically stereotype as a nation of intolerance and hatred, recognizes same-sex couples for immigration purposes. Immigration law bans the HIV+ from immigrating into the U.S., with very few exceptions. (There must be a spouse, child, or parent who is a citizen or permanent resident to be eligible for a waiver, which is often not the case for GLBTs.) Also, the number of successful cases wherein a GLBT has fled to the U.S. for asylum due to sexual orientation-based discrimination is small.

For Justin Blane Smith and Frank Castellanos, the procedures of the USCIS play a role of their daily life.

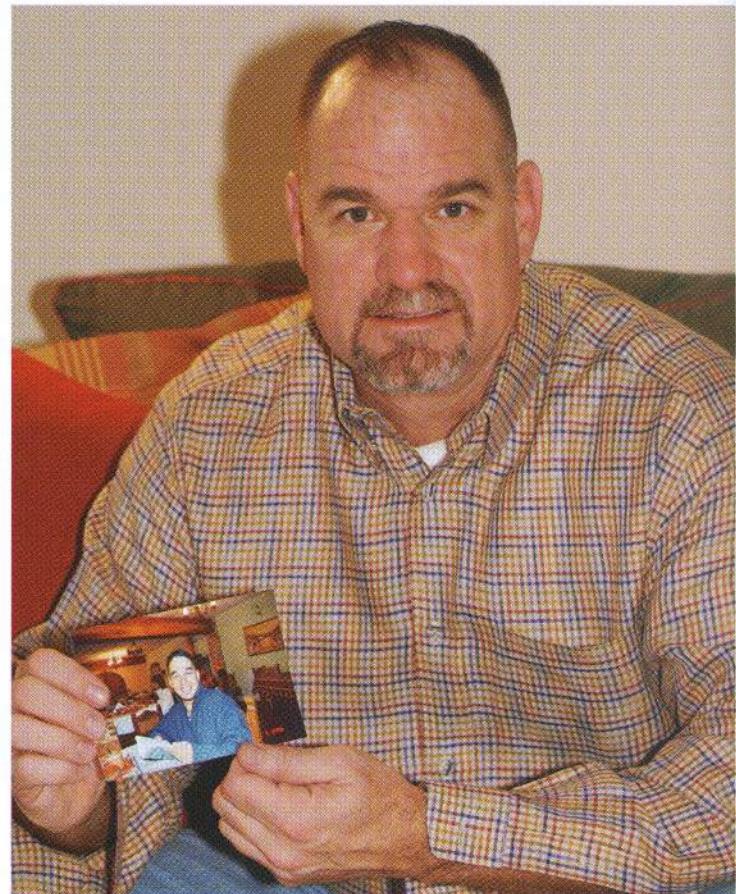
Castellanos was born in Caracas, Venezuela, April 21, 1968 and grew up there and in Valencia (an industrial city west of Caracas). After receiving his degree in Caracas, he worked in the media. Journalism, producer of TV and radio, creative director and columnist, you name it. He was a mixed-media jack-of-all trades. Additionally, he managed and was chef of his own restaurant. Castellanos decided to move to the U.S. and succeeded in entering the media here, working with companies including Liberman Broadcasting, 4 Communications (which publishes El Dia Newspaper in Houston) and Radio Unica, Inc.

Smith grew up in infamous Vidor, attended high school there, then moved to Beaumont to attend Lamar University, getting his Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design in 1983. For the past fifteen years, he's worked at the Houston Chronicle as Creative Supervisor in the Creative Services Department of the Marketing Division.

Castellanos and Smith met over a year and a half ago at a birthday party that a mutual friend threw for his partner. “I had a date at the same party with another person,” says Castellanos (by e-mail from Venezuela), “but I do like better my big musclebear — LOL.” “We discussed common interests,” explains Smith, “the advertising field, media, music, the U.S. Open tennis tournament, and Houston Texans football.” Later that week Smith invited Castellanos to attend a social hour sponsored by a Hispanic business organization. They were a couple almost instantly.

Then on November 16, 2003, Castellanos was on a business trip in McAllen, Texas working for Radio Unica's Health Fair. He decided to join a friend on a leisurely trip across the border into Reynosa. “I was a

big stupid! It was for candies and souvenirs,” he recalls. “I crossed the border without a passport.” When he returned four hours later, goodies in hand, he had nothing but his driver's license to get back into the country. He did not have his passport and visa. The border officer fit the male Latino homophobic stereotype. “He was a Latin guy, with too much attitude. He was dry and short with us and hostile to my friend.”



Justin Smith holds a photo of his boyfriend Frank Castellanos. Castellanos is sure that the fact that the two of them being openly (and noticeably) gay inspired the officer to act out of intolerance, making the situation as difficult as possible. Castellanos was denied reentry into the U.S.

Since then, Castellanos and Smith have been speaking with attorneys and organizations to get him back into the country. It's a difficult and many-layered process to say the least. Although his passport and tourist visa are in order, Castellano does not have a stamp from the border going into Mexico, which raises a bureaucratic issue. Without a stamp entering, how can he get a stamp to exit? To worsen conditions, the company he contracted for a “special work number” to work in the U.S., Latinpro (now Latpro) assigned him an incorrect number and illegal paperwork with fraudulent information. Without knowing it, he was working illegally for Radio Unica. The only group that is helping him with this issue is the Ministry of the Exterior in Venezuela. Then

there's an even bigger issue at stake. The USCIS is contained within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Since, "Venezuela is a country on the terrorist's list of the Bush administration," as Castellanos explains, the only thing that will get him back in the U.S. is "a good, honest, and cheap lawyer. Or a miracle." So far, the frustrated Smith has not obtained assistance from any organizations in the U.S. ". . . people should not be denied their dreams of pursuing a better life if they work hard and are a productive part of society." Castellanos may be able to return in the Fall of 2004, or maybe in five years, "or never!"

In the meantime, Smith and Castellanos keep up with each other, mainly through technology. "We talk almost three times daily," says Castellanos, "and we e-mail each other almost every single day." Needless to say, it has been rough on both, who express confusion and sadness at the predicament. Smith has managed to visit his partner in

Venezuela; however, once for New Year's, and plans to visit again in March. "I miss our togetherness," says Smith, "just hanging out, going to the grocery store, or watching favorite TV shows and movies. He's my best friend and we are never at a loss of words."

Both hope to see Castellanos return to the U.S. and continue their lives together and—if another U.S. policy changes—become a legally recognized married couple. Castellanos is hoping to gain legal residency here. From there, he plans on building an organization to help gay people with immigration issues, "and a serious gay magazine for the Hispanic target." If legal marriage is out of the question, Smith is sure they will in the very least become, "even more committed and better friends than ever!" ▼

## If you are in need of help regarding a partner's or personal immigration issues, there are a number of groups that may be of assistance. Here are a few that can help.

### American Civil Liberties Union Lesbian/Gay Rights & AIDS Project

[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

Self-described as "our nation's guardian of liberty," the ACLU strives to preserve the rights and liberties of everyone protected by the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Founded in 1920, the ACLU works through education and litigation to defend rights such as freedom of speech, separation of church and state, racial equality, lesbian and gay rights, the right to privacy, reproductive freedom, immigrants' rights, and others.

### Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston

[www.slagh.org](http://www.slagh.org)

Founded in 1990, this is an educational and networking resource for law professionals and others interested in legal issues that affect the GLBT and HIV/AIDS community. As a member of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association, an affiliate of the American Bar Association, it provides continuing education for practicing attorneys looking to learn more about these issues. The group also provides a number of networking

and community involvement opportunities; for example, they hold mixers every second Wednesday at Meteor (2306 Genesee, 6-8 pm), they provide an education and referral service to people with HIV/AIDS through the Southeast Texas Legal Clinic (3400 Montrose, Ste. 233, 713-523-7852), and host official Pride events and participate in the Pride parade each year.

### Lesbian & Gay Immigration Rights Task Force LGIRTF-Houston

[www.lgirtf.org](http://www.lgirtf.org)

E-mail: [sdryam@houston.rr.com](mailto:sdryam@houston.rr.com)

Now in its tenth year of service, this group is changing its name to Immigration Equality. The new name better reflects its mission to inclusively reach equality in immigration treatment of all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV status. Founded as a group of volunteers in New York, LGIRTF/Immigration Equality is a coalition of attorneys, activists, and immigrants who dedicate their lives to challenging immigration laws that discriminate against the GLBT community and immigrants living with HIV/AIDS. Their chief tools of

defense include education, outreach, advocacy, and a nationwide resource network. In addition to Houston, they have chapters throughout the country and another in Amsterdam.

### Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund South Central Regional Office

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

This national organization is committed to securing full recognition of the civil rights entitled to all GLBT and HIV/AIDS affected people through education, public policy work, and impact litigation.

### National Center for Lesbian Rights

[www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org)

A national legal resource center, the NCLR aims to advance the rights and safety of lesbians and their families and everyone else in the GLBT, HIV/AIDS community. The group provides free legal counseling and advice, public policy advocacy, education, litigation, and otherwise.

# Discreet

by: KEN DONNELLY

## Discreet (di-skret) adj. 1. Having a judicious reserve in one's

speech or behavior; prudent. 2. Term used to describe a GLBT person who is not quite out of the closet.

There is a growing phenomenon in the GLBT community; the use of the term "discreet." Everyone has met a person who uses it. "I am discreet at work." "I am looking for discreet connections." "I am gay but I am discreet." But why are they defining themselves this way? Moreover, is this a healthy behavior? The answer is not simple.

## Homophobia

The main driver behind the label is internalized homophobia: self-hatred for being GLBT or at least its stereotypes. The current conservative social climate only helps to perpetuate this behavior. According to Chris Kerr, Program Coordinator for the Montrose Counseling Center, who has directed several "Coming Out" groups at MCC, the University of Houston and the Kolbe Project, internalized homophobia forces many to remain completely "closeted" or "discreet." He notes that society fears homosexuality because it is different. Myths that GLBT people are promiscuous or overly nelly/butch or one of the other stereotypes are learned at an early age. One "discreet" man put it this way, "Why would I ever bring home a guy to meet my parents? I am not going to have sex with a guy in the middle of the living room in front of them!" This homophobia also manifests itself in other ways. States Kerr, "Anything beyond, 'Gee isn't it wonderful that people are free to be who they are,' is internalized homophobia." That's why Kerr thinks that events such as the Pride Parade are good for the community. There is such a variety of people represented just being themselves. Unfortunately even positive events such as the Pride Parade can trigger internalized homophobia, as a person focuses on every negative stereotype that justifies their fears.

**"Internalized homophobia forces many to remain completely 'closeted' or 'discreet.'"**

## Fight the System

There are plenty of outside forces at work to help perpetuate this self-loathing cycle. Discrimination is still a very real danger to "out" persons. Systematic intolerance at work, in social situations, in political institutions and within our families punishes diversity and rewards uniformity. People lose jobs, are denied health benefits, have no surviving partner rights to property and insurance, and are even disowned by their families because of their sexual orientation. As another discreet individual stated, "My family will disown me if I come out. They won't understand."

The current arguments against gay marriage highlight systematic intolerance in policies. Instead of celebrating committed relationships, laws such as the Defense of Marriage Act are passed in reaction to perceived threats to heterosexual marriage based on GLBT myths. However, since it is already ingrained in our collective psyche that we are bad, justifying our wickedness by allowing marriage would make it worse. Systematic intolerance will not allow for a marriage not made of one man and one woman.

## The Down-Low

In minority populations, fear of being identified as GLBT is even stronger. Stated one African-American lesbian, "There are no gays in our community. Being gay is a white person's disease." As a result, being discreet manifests itself in a different way, "Getting It on the Down-Low." African-American, Hispanic and Asian communities have a narrower definition of gender roles, with a patriarchal dominance. As one minority woman stated, "A woman is supposed to be there for her man to advance our community." In her community, a lesbian is not just letting down her family but her entire race. For men it's a bit different. "It's okay for me to have sex with another guy as long as I am the top," stated one Hispanic male. In some cultures, only cross-gender people are considered gay while the men who have sex with them are not.

Because gender roles are being confused with sexual orientation in these communities, being discreet is the only way they can live in both worlds.

## The Perfect Gay

Another myth that causes so many problems is that of the Perfect Gay. Kerr points out that this myth perpetuates the idea that a healthy GLBT person is one who is completely comfortable with his or her orientation and out to everyone. This fuels the misconception that if you are not completely out then you are bad. GLBT leaders have called for everyone to come out so the community can be visible and politically viable. However, Kerr reminds us that even the most out person decides to whom they will express their orientation. "You don't go up to every stranger and tell them."

Instead of perfection Kerr says we should strive for "congruence"; the point where your feelings match your actions. Most counseling, he notes, is dealing with this lack of balance where people are out in one part of their life but not in others. People who fall into this mismatched state, such as a discreet person, spend enormous energy trying to keep up their cover. "The more you are out the easier it is on you," states Kerr. He also notes that for some being "discreet" is perfectly fine as long as they are in congruence. "There needs to be balance."

## Balance Point

Openly GLBT people are often frustrated or even hostile toward discreet individuals. As one women stated, "I came out. So should they! I have no patience for them." Many feel that discreet people are benefiting from the accomplishments of other GLBT people who came out while avoiding the negative consequences. Kerr cautions that what discreet people need is not shaming or pushing but rather encouragement to take the next step. Out individuals should be role models and explain the reality of being out. "In general their fears are greater than the reality of it."

In the end, though it is about each of us "coming out" toward healthy self-acceptance as a GLBT person. Observes Kerr, "I have heard hundreds of coming out stories, both good and bad, but no one has ever regretted coming out." ▼

# A Day in The Life of . . .

Michelle Dean & Kelly Gilbert - Family

Please meet Michelle Dean and Kelly Gilbert, their three children, Ashley (15), Kyle (10) and Devyn (8), and their dog, Roxy, also referred to as their "smelly cat." They make up one of the most normal families in Houston.

Michelle and Kelly are both high school teachers, and while they are at work inspiring and motivating young minds, their children attend their respective Jersey Village schools, participate in extracurricular activities, laugh with their friends and consume too much sugar in candy form, but just enough to avoid stomach aches. In the evening Michelle, Kelly and the children gather around the family table to eat dinner and talk about their days, and afterwards they may watch television, surf the Internet, read books, pay bills or play with the family dog. At night the children tuck their homework away in their schoolbags, Kelly tucks Michelle into bed, and they all slumber beneath one roof to wake up the next morning refreshed to live another day.

Their story begins quite simply. "My mom found a girl named Kelly," recalls Devyn. Michelle and Kelly met each other while working at Jersey Village High School. For eight years their family has flourished as a loving one, full of understanding and openness. On March 15, 2002, Michelle and Kelly exchanged vows in Kellington, Vermont. (Kelly accidentally said the 16th of March. Well, someone has to forget the momentous dates in a marriage!) They assert that their marriage and family are normal, as do their children. Kyle has friends that do not care that his parents are gay and Devyn has friends who have heterosexual and homosexual parents. Ashley adds, "I am still a normal teenager only now with four parents instead of two. I am still accepted in school, and most of my friends know and are fine with it. I am happy that my life is the way it is and I wouldn't have it any other way."

We all know that not everyone in the world is so fortunate, as well as not so open to embrace something they do not yet understand. But what is there to understand? Michelle believes that "once you have a personal relationship with God, there's no way you can preach hate." Their involvement in and support from Community Gospel Church are an important part of their lives and their will to strive for the community.

On February 13th, Michelle and Kelly were one of about 30 couples to request a marriage license at the Harris County Clerk's office. There was no expectation to actually receive a license; there was only a purpose: to show the world that there are real people who not only desire and demand equality but who are willing to fight for it. Among the gas-masked, rabid protesters, the couples faced the government, the cameras, their families, friends and foes to simply further the fight for the right to commit to each other in the state's eyes.

Michelle and Kelly, just as you or I, want equality. They want to be recognized as the same as anyone, and they want protection for their spouse and children. They want you to know that, "in order to further our endeavors, we must encourage one another and be our own advocates, not our own enemies."

They are not different. They assert their existence in this world to be normal. They are not special, and yet they are. This family, along with many among us, continues to strive for the normal life they have already built and embrace, for the women and men before them who have done the same, and for you and I and the people that love us to encourage and support the human spirit.

-JG



PRIDE



# 2004 Community Resource Guide

## 6II Club

After Hours [www.kpft.org/afterhours.php](http://www.kpft.org/afterhours.php)

AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc. [www.aidshelp.org](http://www.aidshelp.org)

Alley Theatre [www.alleytheatre.org](http://www.alleytheatre.org)

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) [www.aver.us](http://www.aver.us)

Art League Houston [www.artleaguehouston.org](http://www.artleaguehouston.org)

Bering Omega Community Services [www.beringomega.org](http://www.beringomega.org)

BP America, Inc. Beyond Pride [www.bp.com](http://www.bp.com)

Cabo MixMex Grill [www.cabomixmex.com](http://www.cabomixmex.com)

Community Gospel Church [www.communitygospel.org](http://www.communitygospel.org)

Covenant Church [www.covenanthouston.org](http://www.covenanthouston.org)

District D Council Office - Ada Edwards [www.cityofhouston.gov](http://www.cityofhouston.gov)

Donald R. Watkins & Young Men Saving Men [www.ymsmhouston.org](http://www.ymsmhouston.org)

Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation [www.donaldrwatkins.org](http://www.donaldrwatkins.org)

Fitness Exchange [www.fitnessexchange.cc](http://www.fitnessexchange.cc)

Front Runners [home.swbell.net/marathon/houfr.htm](http://home.swbell.net/marathon/houfr.htm)

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Houston [www.gayswitchboardhouston.org](http://www.gayswitchboardhouston.org)

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston (GMCH) [www.gmch.org](http://www.gmch.org)

GoGirlsMusic.com [www.gogirlsmusic.com](http://www.gogirlsmusic.com)

Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender History, Inc. [www.gcam.org](http://www.gcam.org)

Harris County Libertarian Party [www.lptexas.org](http://www.lptexas.org)

Houston Buyers Club [www.houstonbuyersclub.com](http://www.houstonbuyersclub.com)

Houston GLBT Community Center [www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org](http://www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org)

Houston Gay and Lesbian Parents, Inc. [www.hglp.org](http://www.hglp.org)

Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus [www.hglpc.org](http://www.hglpc.org)

Houston Humane Society [www.houstonhumane.org](http://www.houstonhumane.org)

Houston Invitational Tournament [www.houstoninvite.com](http://www.houstoninvite.com)

Houston Pride Band [www.houstonprideband.org](http://www.houstonprideband.org)

Houston Voice [www.houstonvoice.com](http://www.houstonvoice.com)

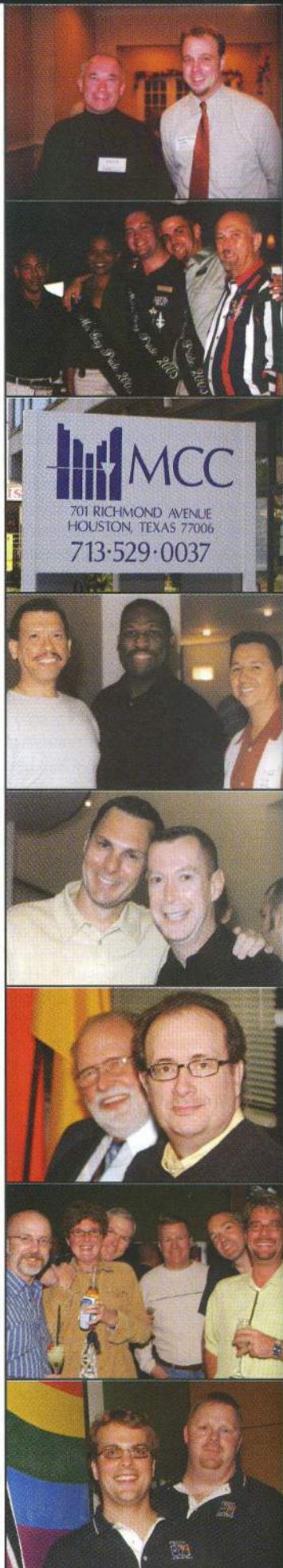
Inner Loop Alternative [www.texasinvite.com](http://www.texasinvite.com)

Integrity/Houston Interfaith CarePartners [www.interfaithcarepartners.org](http://www.interfaithcarepartners.org)

JP Morgan Chase Bank P.R.I.D.E. Team [www.chase.com](http://www.chase.com)

Keys West [www.keyswest.com](http://www.keyswest.com)

KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 [www.kpft.org](http://www.kpft.org)



Krewe of Olympus -TX, Inc. [www.mardigrastexas.com](http://www.mardigrastexas.com)  
Lesbians Over Age Fifty (LOAF)  
Log Cabin Republicans - Houston [houston.logcabin.org](http://houston.logcabin.org)  
Lone Star Volleyball Association [www.lsva.org](http://www.lsva.org)  
Maranatha Fellowship MCC [www.maranathamcc.com](http://www.maranathamcc.com)  
Meteor [www.meteorhouston.com](http://www.meteorhouston.com)  
Metropolitan Multi-Service Center  
Monday Night Men [www.texasinvite.com](http://www.texasinvite.com)  
Monday Night Women [www.texasinvite.com](http://www.texasinvite.com)  
Montrose Clinic [www.montroseclinic.org](http://www.montroseclinic.org)  
National Leather Association Houston [www.nlahouston.org](http://www.nlahouston.org)  
O Houston Nightclub [www.houstono.com](http://www.houstono.com)  
Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC) [www.oloc.org](http://www.oloc.org)  
OutSmart [www.outsmartmagazine.com](http://www.outsmartmagazine.com)  
Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays [www.pflaghouston.org](http://www.pflaghouston.org)  
People with AIDS Coalition - Houston [www.pwach.org](http://www.pwach.org)  
Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southwest Texas [www.pphouston.org](http://www.pphouston.org)  
Pride Committee of Houston [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org)  
Prime Timers, Houston, Texas [www.primetimersww.org](http://www.primetimersww.org)  
Q - Patrol  
Q.Texas Magazine [www.qtexasmagazine.com](http://www.qtexasmagazine.com)  
HoustonQueerVoices [www.queervoices.org](http://www.queervoices.org)  
Rich's [www.richs-houston.com](http://www.richs-houston.com)  
Ryan White Planning Council Office of Support [www.rwpc.org](http://www.rwpc.org)  
South Beach [www.SouthBeachthenightclub.com](http://www.SouthBeachthenightclub.com)  
Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston [www.slagh.org](http://www.slagh.org)  
Texas Triangle [www.txtriangle.com](http://www.txtriangle.com)  
The Center for AIDS [www.centerforaids.org](http://www.centerforaids.org)  
The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce [www.ghglcc.org](http://www.ghglcc.org)  
The Kolbe Project [www.kolbeproject.org](http://www.kolbeproject.org)  
Theater LaB Houston [www.theaterlabhouston.com](http://www.theaterlabhouston.com)



# “It’s a culture thing . . .”

A look into the diversity of the GLBT community by: JOSEF MOLNAR

When Derrick Elliot came out of the closet in the 1970s, he looked forward to a world free of homophobia and racism. As a black man in Cincinnati, Ohio, he assumed the gay community would look past the prejudices they had experienced and try to correct them.

“I thought to myself, ‘Nobody in the gay community is racist,’ he says. “It never occurred to me that they might be.”

The club he wanted to attend still clung to a misogynistic and prejudiced atmosphere in which only white men could attend, and very little changed until a group of women filed a lawsuit to open the club to females. Soon, black people were able to attend, and like the straight world, the gay world began opening to minorities.

“It was like entering the promised land,” he says, “We were so happy to go somewhere they had told us before that we couldn’t.”

The frequency and intensity of this kind of experience have fallen since then, but although the gay and lesbian community is increasingly welcoming minorities into its fold, many still find issues such as culture, religion and even native languages a barrier to that inclusion.

Abel Rodriguez, the president of Gays and Lesbians Organized by Orgullo (Pride), says that while many of the issues in the Spanish-speaking community are the same, outreach efforts still cannot tell many immigrants about health issues in the community, as well as the many gay-friendly clinics and services available to them.

“I see heavy advertising for services at other bars, but they also need to offer them in Spanish and English,” he says. “There are some gay clubs where these services are not represented because they are Spanish-only bars.”

Although white people make up a larger percentage of the community, Elliot, a Houston resident who is founding the local chapter of Men of All Colors Together, sees a lot that these minority communities have in common.

“In Houston, I see a particularly rich tapestry, but I also see minority groups set apart from each other,” Elliot says. “Our respective communities almost never interact. We have so many things in our experience that are alike, and it seems like it would make sense if we came together to complement one another.”

He wants his group to allow gay men—and despite the name, women can participate as well—to get together as friends and associates. Elliot says the traditional view of the gay community still does not always recognize alternative cultures.

“That view is changing, but for the most part we fail to see a lot of diversity in the media, magazines, publications, and in

videos,” he says. “My hope is that all of us will grow in many, many directions, and one of the means of growth would be to include anyone.”

The barriers to gays and lesbians are not just limited to the gay community. Gender roles also play a large part in some traditional cultures, where men play active roles in life and the bedroom, while women are expected to be more subservient. Gay men and women from these cultures still face these discriminations, especially in traditional close-knit families. Many gay men and women from these cultures have to give up everything to come out, losing not only their friends and families, but also

their means of emotional support.

Women such as Janice Trinidad, a Filipino graduate student in Austin and the chair of Trikone-Tejas, an intercultural

minority gay group, find themselves fighting the bias that exists within families still deeply rooted in religious or traditional mores. Although she says her family has gradually adjusted to her open lifestyle, they are still concerned about the social problems and misunderstanding she faces.

“This is not exactly an ideal lifestyle for our families,” she says. “It’s enough of a concern to be a minority, and then to be another minority makes it worse.”

She says that although different cultures react differently, most generally disapprove of alternative sexual orientations and believe them to be a choice. In a close-knit environment where conformity is the norm, disapproval becomes a mandate to stay in the closet.

Even for people not immersed in their communities, family ties and the desire for acceptance run strongly in many gay minorities, so many groups create an atmosphere in which gays and lesbians develop ties which can appear more like families. The bonds created in groups like these help to make up for the lack of support from family and friends. Having the same language also bonds people from different countries.

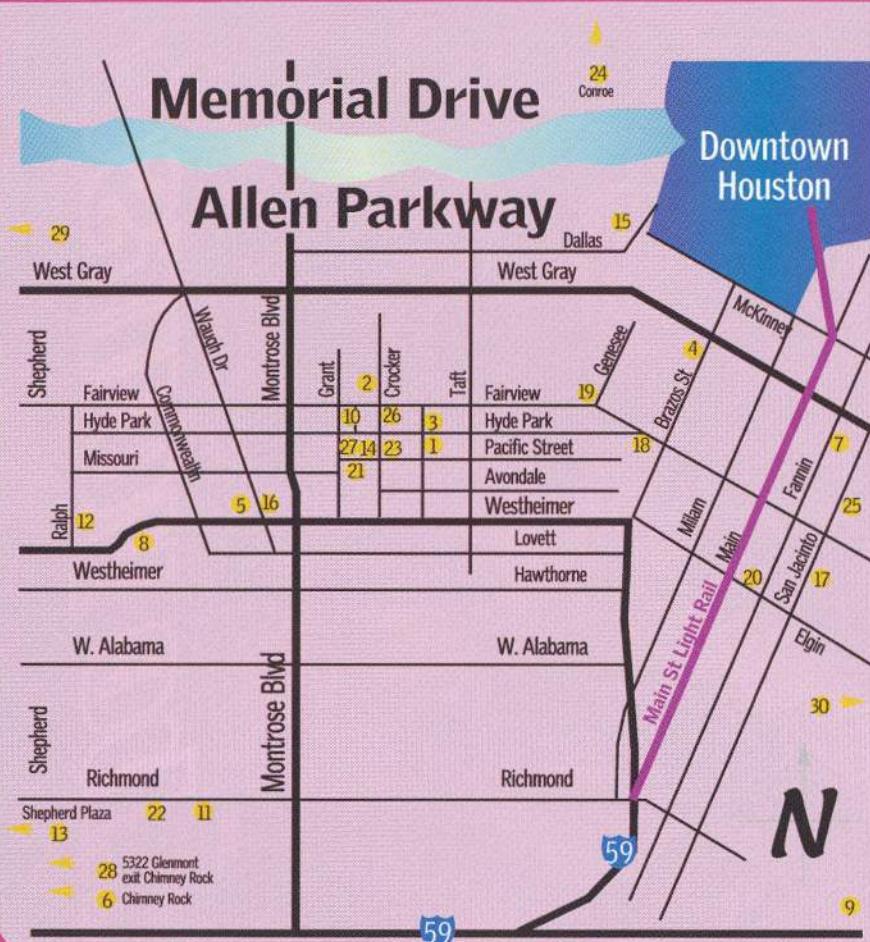
“The Spanish bonds us together,” Rodriguez says, “because wherever you’re from, we all speak the same language.”

GLOBO holds an annual posada in Houston each year the day before the Pride parade to celebrate their communities in a traditional way. Its annual Christmas posadas also emulate the traditional twelve days before Christmas.

“It’s a cultural thing, and the people feel bonded to that,” Rodriguez says. “These are cultural things we need to keep and not lose.” ▼

**“It’s enough of a concern to be a minority, and then to be another minority makes it worse.”**

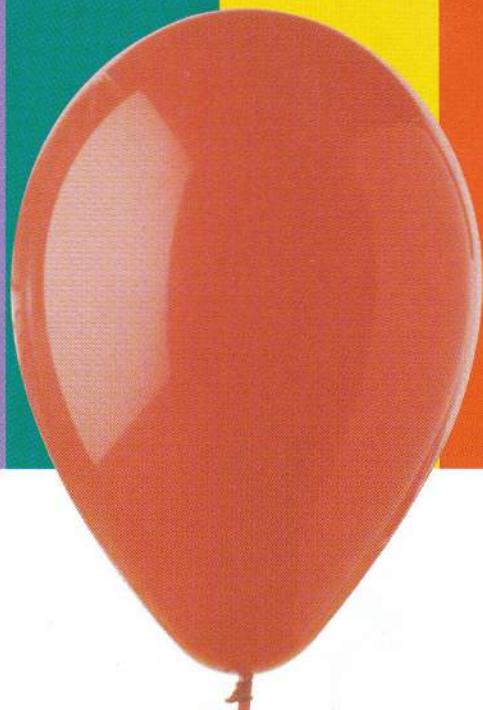
# HOUSTON BAR MAP



1. 611 Hyde Park ♂ 🏠 611 Hyde Park • 526-7070
2. Briar Patch ♂ € 2313 Crocker • 523-7616
3. Bricks II ♂ 🏠 617 Fairview • 528-8102
4. BRB ♂ ♀ 🎶 2400 Brazos • 528-9192
5. Chances/GSpot ♂ ♀ 🏠 1100 Westheimer • 523-7217 • chancesbar.com
6. Club Inergy ♂ 🎶 🎵 🏠 5750 Chimney Rock • 666-7310 • clubinergy.com
7. The Club Houston ♂ € 2205 Fannin • 659-4998
8. Rainbow Room ♀ 🎶 🎵 🏠 1417-B Westheimer • 522-5144
9. Club Xscape ♂ 🎶 🎵 🏠 2612 S. Richey • 944-7663
10. Cousins ♂ 🏠 817 Fairview • 528-9204
11. Decades ♂ ♀ € 🏠 1205 Richmond • 521-2224
12. EJ's ♂ 🎶 🎵 🏠 2517 Ralph • 527-9071
13. Guava Lamp ♂ ♀ € 2159 Portsmouth • 524-3359
14. JR's ♂ ♀ 🎵 808 Pacific • 521-2519
15. Keys West 817 Dallas • 571-7870
16. Mary's ♂ ♀ 🎶 🎵 🏠 1022 Westheimer • 527-9669
17. Meatrack ♂ 2915 San Jacinto • 528-2028 • meattrack.org
18. Mela's ♀ 🎶 🎵 🏠 302 Tuam • 523-0747
19. Meteor ♂ ♀ 🎵 2306 Genesee • 521-0123 • meteorhouston.com
20. Midtowne Spa ♂ € 3100 Fannin • 522-2379 • midtowne-spa.com
21. Montrose Mining Co ♂ 🎶 🎵 🏠 805 Pacific • 529-7488
22. Michael's Outpost ♂ ♀ 🏠 1419 Richmond • 520-8446
23. O ♂ 🎶 🎵 🏠 710 Pacific • 523-0213
24. Ranch Hill Saloon ♂ ♀ 🎵 211 Airport Rd, Conroe • 936-441-6426
25. Rich's ♂ ♀ 🎶 🎵 🏠 2401 San Jacinto • 759-9606 • richs-houston.com
26. Ripcord ♂ 🎶 🏠 715 Fairview • 521-2792 • theripcord.com
27. South Beach ♂ ♀ 🎶 🎵 🏠 810 Pacific • 529-SOBE • southbeachthenight-club.com
28. Toyz ♀ 🎶 🎵 🏠 5322 Glenmont • 668-4892
29. Viviana's ♂ ♀ 🎶 🎵 🏠 5219 Washington • 862-0203

## Codes

- ♂ men
- ♀ women
- ᴸ Latino/a
- drag shows
- Leather/Levi
- Western
- dancing
- live entertainment
- video
- dancers
- neighborhood



**“On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one’s mind. It becomes a pleasure.”**

*-Oscar Wilde*