

# PRIDE

07

## THE WAR AT HOME

TWO SOLDIERS FIGHT FOR  
EQUAL TREATMENT  
FROM THE US MILITARY

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS QUEER ART?

EASTERN EUROPE: HOW MUCH FREEDOM? HOW MUCH PRIDE?

A SPORTSWRITER/TRANS WOMAN MUSES ON THE STATE OF TRANSWORLD

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF HOUSTON PRIDE 2007



LONE STAR  
**PRIDE**  
2007  
HOUSTON  
JUNE 23rd



## History of Pride

This year marks the 28<sup>th</sup> 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 no-gay friends.

We invite you, our friends and family to come to the neighborhood on Saturday evening, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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**PRIDE.07**

HOUSTON

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PRIDE MAGAZINE is  
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Committee of Pride  
Houston



Pride Houston is an energetic group of committed volunteers who meet year-round to develop, organize, coordinate and promote the Pride Parade and Festival and other annual events for our community. It is our goal to create the means by which gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons can commemorate, educate and celebrate; we build on our past while creating new paths toward a positive future for all humanity, not excluding any aspect of who we are as a people.

269

Westheimer RD  
1000

Montrose BLVD  
3200

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# Friends of Pride

## Become a Friend with Benefits!

If you've enjoyed Houston's Pride festivities over the years, then Friends of Pride is the group for you! Your financial contribution will help support the important work of Pride Houston, and you'll enjoy great benefits in return.

The Wine Tasting is the signature "Thank You" event for our Friends of Pride (or FOPs, as we affectionately call them). You'll stroll from station to station, sampling wines from a variety of the world's premier wineries, noshing on an extensive offering of appetizers, and mingling with your fellow FOPs. The Wine Tasting is always held at an intriguing, visually interesting venue, and it has truly become a "must be there" event for our community.

Friends of Pride also enjoy a bevy of Parade and Festival Day benefits. Your entry to the festival is free, and you'll enjoy free ice water, shade and reserved Porta-Potties at our FOP hospitality area, adjacent to the festival. The VIP bleachers provide our Friends of Pride with the best seats in the house for viewing our spectacular Night Time Parade. Of course, private Porta-Potties and cash bar also help make the VIP bleacher area THE place to enjoy the Parade. And for those Friends of Pride who join at the \$300 level or higher, you even get private reserved parking space!

As you can see, Friends of Pride offers you a great way to support the GLBT community and have a lot of fun at the same time! For as little as \$75, you can become a Friend of Pride today. The chart at the right explains the benefits you receive with each donation level. Sign up only by visiting our website: [www.fophouston.org](http://www.fophouston.org).

We look forward to meeting you at our Friends of Pride gatherings this year!

**At the \$75 Sweet Ruby level you receive:**

- One pass for the Festival
- One pass for Parade VIP seating (cash bar and private porta-potties)

OR

- One ticket to the Wine Tasting Event
- Individual recognition on "thank you" web page

**At the \$100 Vibrant Amethyst level you receive:**

- One pass for the Festival
- One pass for Parade VIP seating (cash bar and private porta-potties)

AND

- One ticket to the Wine Tasting Event
- Individual recognition on "thank you" web page

**At the \$150 Warm Amber level you receive:**

- Two passes for Parade VIP seating (cash bar and private porta-potties)
- Two passes for the Festival
- Two tickets to the Wine Tasting Event
- Individual recognition on "thank you" web page

**At the \$300 Sexy Garnet level you receive:**

- Four passes for Parade VIP seating (cash bar and private porta-potties)
- Four passes for the Festival
- Four tickets to the Wine Tasting Event
- One Festival and Parade Day reserved parking place
- Individual recognition on "thank you" web page

**At the \$500 Whimsical Topaz level you receive:**

- Six passes for Parade VIP seating (cash bar and private porta-potties)
- Six passes for the Festival
- Six tickets to the Wine Tasting Event
- Two Festival and Parade Day reserved parking places
- Individual recognition on "thank you" web page

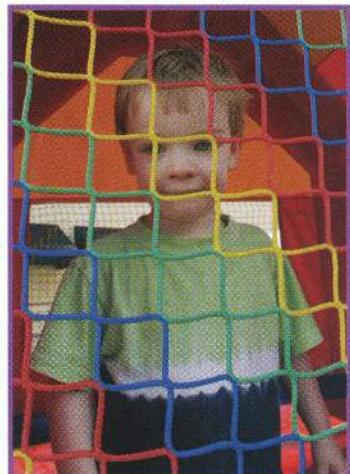
**At the \$1000 Luminous Emerald level you receive:**

- Twelve passes for Parade VIP seating (cash bar and private porta-potties)
- Twelve passes for the Festival
- Twelve tickets to the Wine Tasting Event
- Three Festival and Parade Day reserved parking places
- Individual recognition on "thank you" web page

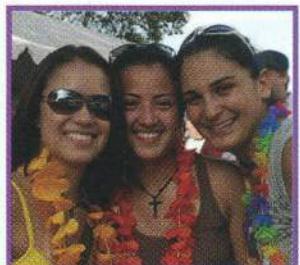
# 2007 Pride Houston Festival

The 2007 Festival promises to be bigger and better than ever!

This year's festival will be twice as large and will include even more food, more activities, more places to relax with friends, and more entertainment than ever before. Visit our new and improved Bunnies on the Bayou Community non-profit area; or our expanded Black Tie Dinner Kid's Zone with tons of exciting new activities, this area will be a must for anyone with kids. Add onto that the Walgreen's Wellness World, all the expanded exhibitor areas and some lone star entertainment; you just can't miss it.



There's only one place to be on the afternoon of Pride Day—the 2007 Houston Pride Festival! Come on out June 23rd from 2 pm - 8 pm and celebrate the GLBT community as Pride Houston throws a fun-filled street carnival in the heart of Montrose.



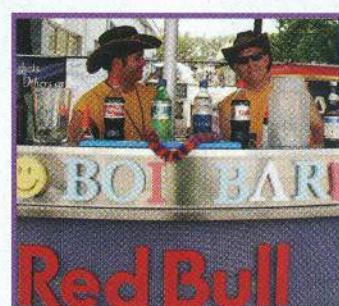
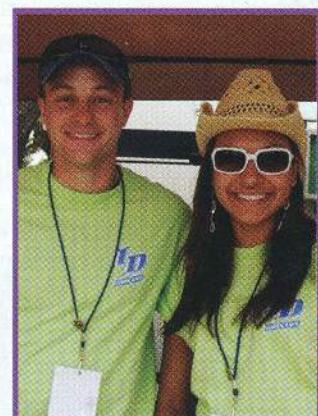
The 2007 Pride Festival will offer the Houston community the opportunity to see top entertainers from all over the country, as well as hot artists from our own backyard. And don't miss the stage devoted completely to the best in local GLBT performers. Pride Houston brings you the Pride Idol Competition! Check out [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org) for complete information about this year's lineup, including artist bios, links, and scheduled show times.

The festival is more than a party, though. It's also a place to learn about our history and discover those organizations that are working to make our community better. Stop by to learn, shop, visit, and get involved.

There's a lot to look forward to at this year's Pride Festival, so be sure to get your tickets now. Go online to [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org) for complete event and ticketing details, as well as information about how you can be a part of this year's festival.



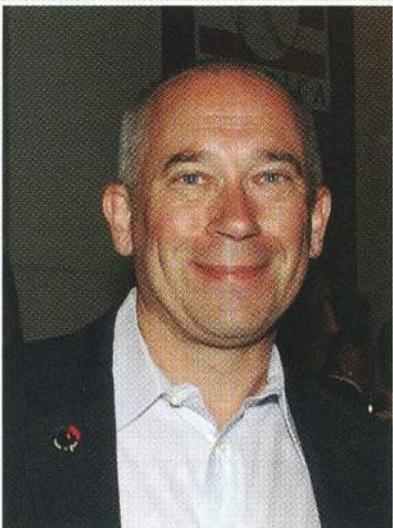
The Pride Festival could not happen without the generous contribution of all of our volunteers. Whether you want to volunteer a few hours on the day of the festival or be a part of the great team that organizes and coordinates this fantastic event - contact us today! With positions ranging from exhibitor sales to ticket takers, we have many open positions and guarantee that we'll have a position that interests you. Contact us at [Festival\\_staffing@pridehouston.org](mailto:Festival_staffing@pridehouston.org).



[PRIDEHOUSTON.org](http://PRIDEHOUSTON.org)

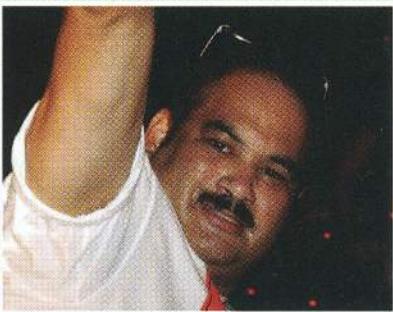
# 2007 Grand Marshals

The Male, Female, Honorary, & Honorary - Organization Grand Marshals will preside over the nighttime Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Pride Parade on June 23, 2007. They were each selected over several other nominees by a vote among the entire community.



**Male Grand Marshal:** **Jack Valinski** moved to Houston in 1981 and within months he was hard at work for the GLBT community. Jack started out helping on a radio show, then called Wilde 'n' Stein, now called Queer Voices. He also started volunteering with the Houston GLBT Political Caucus (HGLBTPC) taking on diverse roles including board member. Along with other community activists, Jack was one of the original founding members of the Houston Pride Parade. Jack guided Pride Houston into its current form, and served as Executive Director of Pride Houston. Currently he serves as Director of Operations for Houston Equal Rights Alliance. After 25 years of service, he still does it all while he produces and co-hosts Queer Voices on KPFT radio.

**Female Grand Marshal:** **Maria Gonzalez** is an associate professor of English at the University of Houston. Her areas of specialization include Mexican-American literature, feminist and queer theory, and Chicana Lesbian writers. She was a founding member of Progressive Voters in Action (PVA) and a founding organizer of Equality Knocks-Houston. Maria has previously served as the President of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus (HGLBTPC). Currently, she serves as Committee Chair for the Screening and Endorsement Committee.

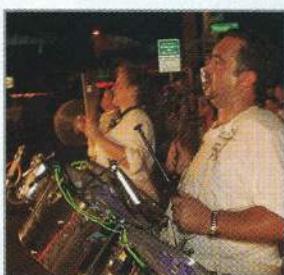
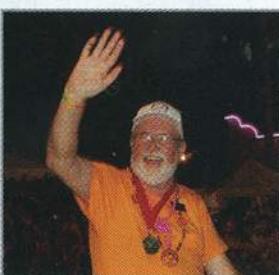
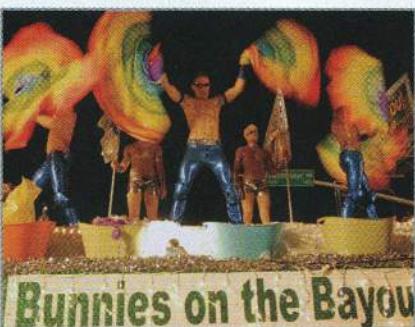


**Honorary Grand Marshal:** **Garnet F. Coleman** has served the people of District 147 in the Texas House of Representatives continuously since 1991. Throughout his years of service, Rep. Coleman has earned a reputation as a diligent leader in the areas of health care, economic development and education. Rep. Coleman remains active and involved in the Houston community.

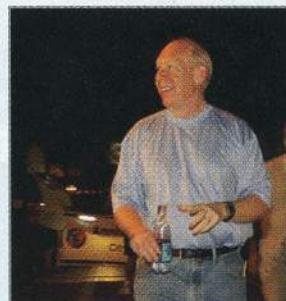
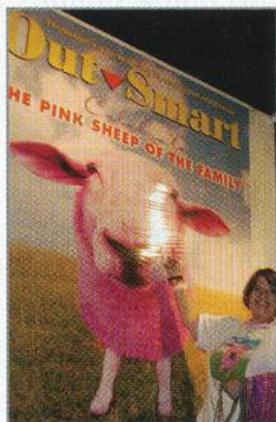
**Honorary Organization:** **The Imperial Court of Houston, Inc. (ICOH - The Space City Empire)** is a 501(c)3 non-profit diversity-focused charitable and social organization open to and supportive of all individuals who uphold the ideals of Integrity, Community, Opportunity and Humanity; and is further dedicated to raising funds for worthy 501(c)(3) charitable charities including but not limited to organizations fighting HIV/AIDS, Breast Cancer, Hepatitis C, Prostate Cancer and other disease and to help educate our members and community on the programs offered by local agencies and organizations.

# Houston Pride Parade 2006: "Say It Out Loud!"

Photos by Yvonne Feree



oud!



PRIDEHOUSTON.org

# 2006 Houston Pride Parade Award Winners

Pride Houston announced the winners of the 2006 Houston Pride Parade at an awards ceremony at Blur Bar on Sunday, June 25, 2006. Winners in all categories were:



Judges' Choice: AssistHers, Houston Comets, Houston Humane Society



Stonewall (*best social commentary*): Harris County Democratic Party



Aria (*best creative sound*): Inergy Club

Fabulous (*best costumes*): Eros 1207

Rainbow (*best lighting*): Krewe of Olympus Texas

Ruby Slipper (*best walking*): Asians and Friends Houston

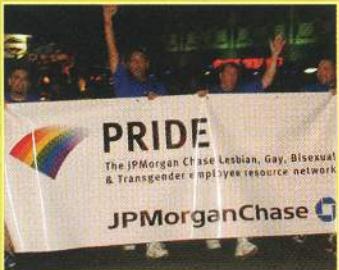
Judy Garland (*best performance*): Community Gospel Church

Say It Out Loud! (*best interpretation of '06 theme*): Rich's Houston

Pink Diamond (*best float by a for-profit*): JP Morgan Chase Bank

Priscilla (*best float by a non-profit group*): Bunnies on the Bayou

Spirit of Montrose (*best overall*): Charles Armstrong Investments



A panel of independent judges reviewed over 110 entries in the nighttime Parade. Judges for the 2006 Parade were Bettie DeBruhl, Vice President of Stevens/FKM Public Relations; Carolyn Mayo, President of Vollmer Public Relations; on-air radio personality Keith Scott from KHMX Mix 96.5; designer and architect Adam Vuong, Director of Merchandising for Lot 8 Boutique; and Wade Wilson, owner of Wade Wilson Art Gallery. Emcees for the Parade were Maria Todd, 104 KRBE Radio's popular morning host; Ernie Manouse, host of the award-winning InnerVIEWS program on Houston PBS; and the inimitable drag performer Kofi.



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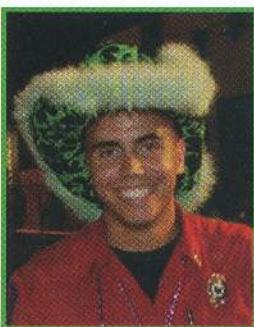
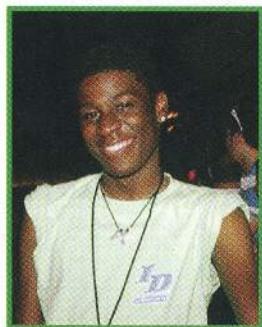
# We sure “Said It Out Loud” in 2006, Time to show our “Lone Star Pride” - Houston Pride Parade 2007

*“Tell it to my heart...”* Okay in words, I sing like an angel...in reality, I couldn't hold a note if it had two handles on it. (Yeah, Simon would rip me to shreds!) But, who can sing those classic words? None other than the beautiful Taylor Dayne. Her performance at the 2006 Pride Houston Parade and Festival were classic and proves why she remains an idol in our community. Just as exciting, we had local celebrities bringing it down the parade route. From our elected officials to local news personalities, they were there showing support. The stand out this year was the Conroe Gay-Straight Alliance. It took these young people courage to not only to start a GSA in their school, but to join our celebration and let society know this is who they are. I am not the only one who can say that we were honored that they chose to join us and may they be with us for many more years.



So what are we going to do for 2007? Same thing we do every year Pinky...TRY TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD! Ok, maybe not take over the world, but at least take over Westheimer for one night. Be here for some Idol worship, some new brave faces, and a “Twist” at the reviewing stand. The date...June 23...the time...8:45PM sharp. Don't forget the fun and merriment at the Pride Houston Festival going on all day before the night-time parade. I know you will be there because **“love will lead you back...”**

- Jason Ayala, Parade Co-Chair



PRIDEHOUSTON.org

# 2007 PRIDE HOUSTON Events

Following are just a few of the dozens of events sponsored by a variety of GLBT community organizations that will be held in June as a part of Houston's Pride Celebration.

For complete event listings, check the Pride Houston website at [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org).

## **Sunday, June 10, 2007 -**

Pride Houston Kick Off Party - Join Pride Houston's many volunteers, board, staff, and the houston community as we celebrate pride month Lone Star style! For more information visit [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org).

6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Houston Museum of Natural Science



## **Thursday, June 14, 2007 -**

PRIDE IDOL Qualifying round. Cheer on your favorite contestant and see who has what it takes to make it to the PRIDE IDOL finals! Check out [www.myspace.com/houstonprideidol](http://www.myspace.com/houstonprideidol)

10:00 p.m., Guava Lamp, 570 Waugh



## **Saturday, June 16, 2007 -**

Friends of Pride Wine Tasting Event - Sign up as a member of Friends of Pride, and you too can join in on the annual Wine Tasting extravaganza. For more information visit [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org). Location TBA



## **Sunday, June 17, 2007 -**

PRIDE IDOL Semifinals round. Contestants are narrowed down, see who has what it takes to make it to the PRIDE IDOL finals! Check out [www.myspace.com/houstonprideidol](http://www.myspace.com/houstonprideidol)

10:00 p.m., Guava Lamp, 570 Waugh



Party on the Patio! Visit with friends, shoot some pool, swing on by and say howdy!

5:00 p.m., Tony's Corner Pocket, 817 West Dallas



## **Saturday, June 23, 2007 -**

### Houston Pride Festival 2007

Get to the Parade site early and enjoy the day with friends, food and fun. There will be a full day of GLBT entertainment on two stages, including the finals for Houston's own PRIDE IDOL! For more information visit [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org).



2:00 - 8:00 p.m., Westheimer & Yoakum, cost: \$10

## Houston Pride Parade 2007

Experience the thrill of America's original nighttime Pride Parade and the Southwest's largest Pride event as our community will show its "Lone Star Pride" For more information visit [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org).



8:45 p.m., Westheimer between Woodhead & Whitney



## **Sunday, June 24, 2007 -**

### Houston Pride 2007 Parade Awards Ceremony

The award ceremony commemorates the outstanding entries in the 2007 Parade. For more information visit [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org).

**PRIDEHOUSTON.org**

# Be a part of the nation's original nighttime Pride Parade!

Saturday, June 23, 2007

8:45 - 11:00 pm on lower Westheimer

Between Woodhead and Whitney

Here are a few suggestions to make everyone's Pride more enjoyable . . .

1. Drink plenty of water. Houston in June is very hot, even at night.
2. Get there early. Did you know that Houston Pride is more then just a Parade? Come early and enjoy live entertainment, food & fun in our Festival area.
3. Walk, take public transport, carpool. Parking can be scarce in the area on Parade and Festival day and the traffic leaving can be heavy.
4. Respect our neighbors. Help keep Montrose the unique, friendly, beautiful neighborhood it is. Please do no park on lawns, block driveways or disturb the neighbors. You also show your respect by using a trash can.
5. Dress light. Don't know what to wear? Why not try a new Pride Houston T-shirt or tank top!
6. Keep the pets at home. Sure your pet has Pride too, but a crowd of 150,000 plus 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/Festival just isn't the same with out 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!

[PRIDEHOUSTON.org](http://PRIDEHOUSTON.org)

**HATCH** (The Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals) is a program of the Montrose Counseling Center, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit, United Way organization. HATCH was originally founded in 1987, and is dedicated to empowering gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (GLBTQ) adolescents to become positive contributors to society by:

- Providing a safe social environment for GLBTQ youth.
- Offering role models and peer support.
- Sponsoring educational and community outreach opportunities.

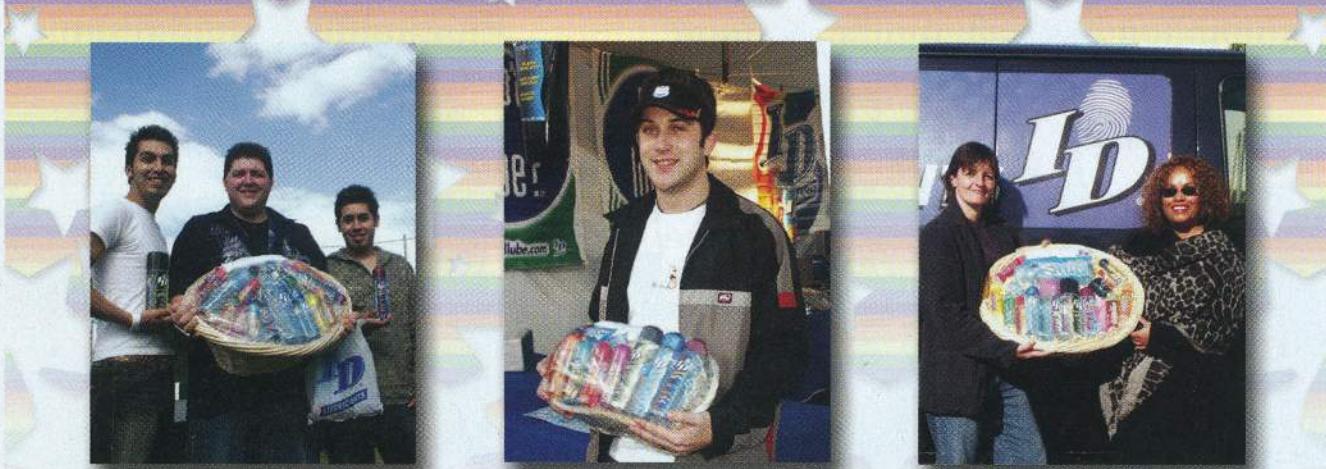
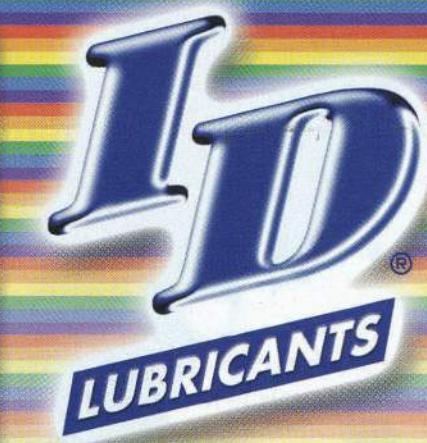
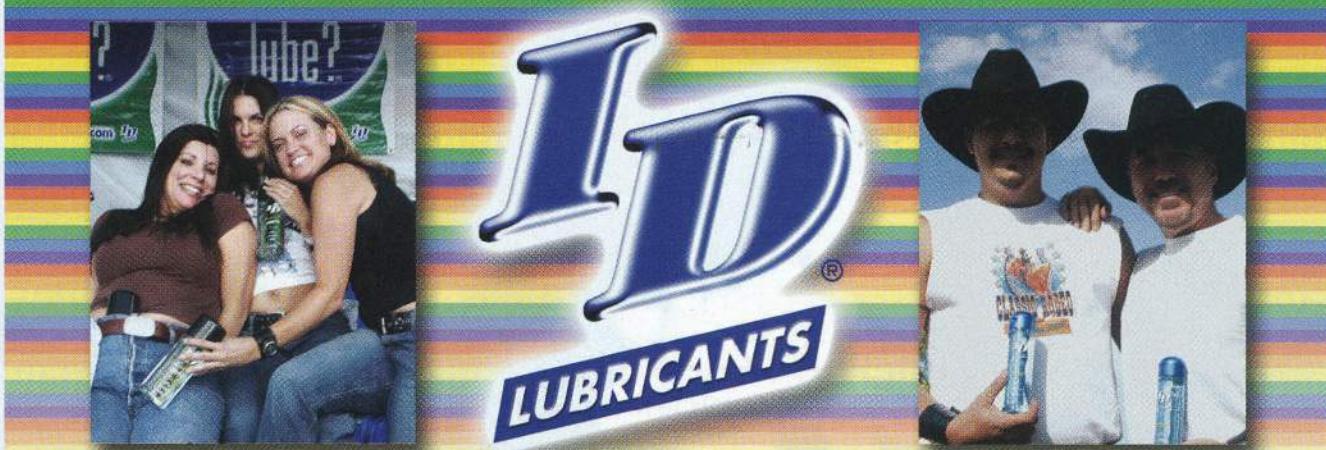
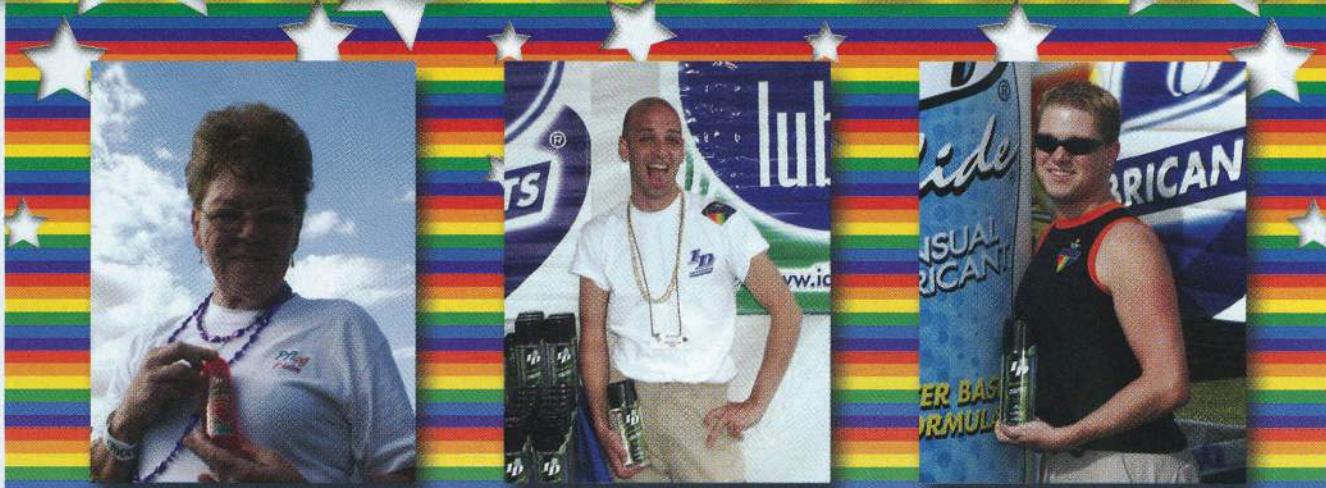
The purpose of HATCH is to provide a positive environment and support for GLBTQ youth in the Greater Houston Area. HATCH programming works to increase the self-esteem of the youth participants so that they can make healthy and life-affirming choices.



**HATCH**  
701 Richmond Avenue  
Houston, TX 77006-5511  
Tel.: 713- 529-3590 Fax: 713-526-4367  
E-mail: [info@hatchyouth.org](mailto:info@hatchyouth.org)



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# Queer Voices: 'Like a magazine on radio'

**'Queer Voices' tunes in to Houston's GLBT issues**

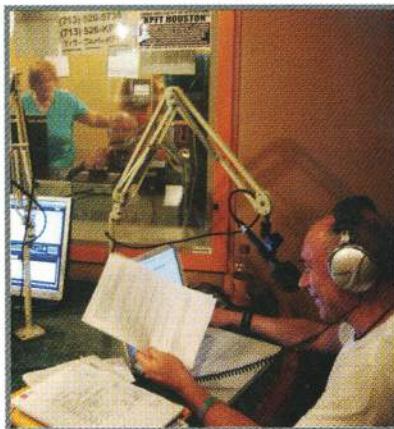
By Nancy Ford

Even though it is by definition a member of the Pacifica radionetwork, KPFT 90.1FM has not always been a cradle of peace. The public radio station, its studios lodged amid the stately homes on Lovett Blvd in Montrose, has been bombed twice since first taking to the airwaves on March 1, 1970.

Apparently the free speech flavor of the stations programming was too a bit too free for the locals. On May 12, 1970, members of the Ku Klux Klan, those crazy kids in the white sheets, blew up the KPFT transmitter, closing the station and silencing its programming for a few weeks until repairs could be made.

Then, on October 6, 1970, the transmitter was bombed again. It returned to the airwaves on January 21, 1971, with Arlo Guthrie performing live in the studio playing "Alice's Restaurant," the song that had been playing when programming was interrupted.

It was all part of the evolution of queer radio that has evolved since Jack Valinski became a part of it.



Valinski was one of the first hosts—with the venerable Ray Hill—of "Wild 'N' Stein" (you know, as in Oscar and Gertrude) when KPFT 90.1 FM introduced Houston listeners to gay radio in 1975. Though station executives decided to purge KPFT of "specialty programming" in 1972, Valinski says, he was eventually able to salvage the show, renaming it *Lesbian and Gay Voices* in 1993.

**Now known as the more inclusive Queer Voices, the program is recognized as one of the most enduring gay institutions on the airwaves.**

Hosted by Valinski, Deborah Bell, Jennifer Poole, and J.D. Doyle with at-large reports by Jone Devlin, *Queer Voices* is Texas' sole prime time radio broadcast for GLBTs. The program presents talk radio with local and nationally renowned guests interspersed with music from queer artists.

"We try to cover as many topics, especially now that we don't have a weekly community newspaper," Valinski says, referring to the closing of the *Houston Voice*, which folded earlier this year after 36 years in print. "We are like a magazine on radio."

Queer Voices also includes the award-winning monthly "Queer Music Heritage" segment, and news from the nationally syndicated "This Way Out".

"But we like to keep most of the topics local, focusing on the ordinary heroes who contribute to our community," Valinski says.

All these years and bomb threats later, Valinski believes accessibility to queer radio programming is as important today as it was before high-speed internet and 24-hour cable news. He estimates that there may be as many as 50 radio stations nationwide that offer queer-focused programming which, he believes, is a good thing.



"It seems like the right wing has so much radio out there," he says. "We still need to have our voice, in radio."

*Queer Voices* airs Mondays, 8-10 p.m. on KPFT-90.1 FM. Archives of previous broadcasts are available at [www.Kpftx.org/archives/kpftsignal/](http://www.Kpftx.org/archives/kpftsignal/).

*Nancy Ford, senior editor of OutSmart magazine, was a grand marshal for Houston's 1999 GLBT Pride Parade. She can be reached at [nancyford72@aol.com](mailto:nancyford72@aol.com).*

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*Technology Chair*

*Not Pictured: Rob Camp *Outreach Co-Chair*, Mary Alice Ethridge *Festival Co-Chair*, Bradley Gaugh *Co-Chair Events* & Eric Skains *Co-Chair Events**

# To move or not to move? The two sides have their say on the topic of moving the Houston GLBT Pride Parade.

Pride Houston, Inc. is again threatening to move our parade from Montrose to downtown and from its traditional date commemorating Stonewall to September. Despite claims that the board has made no decisions nor arrived at an official position, Pride Houston president Carol Wyatt continues a relentless campaign for the moves. The Pride Houston board should listen to the overwhelming opposition and reject this proposal, which has the potential to turn into the most divisive event in the history of our community.

A group of concerned citizens, including

several past Pride  
grand marshals,  
formed People  
Opposed to Moving  
Our Parade Out of  
Montrose (POMPOM)  
in January and sent  
the Pride Houston

board a list of compelling reasons to reject the proposal. At a Pride Houston hearing on the proposal on January 13, only one of 50 people in the audience spoke in favor. When the Queer Voices radio show invited callers to voice their opinions during a January broadcast, no callers spoke in favor. Even the Houston Chronicle published an editorial on January 21 calling for Pride Houston to leave our parade where and when it is.

Our parade does not have to move for Pride Houston to accomplish its stated goals of creating the best possible Pride festivities, outreaching to the entire community, and making Houston a weekend travel destination. Why not show communities of color that they are integral to Pride by sponsoring events such as Splash or Latino Pride? Ms. Wyatt has proposed a commitment ceremony on the steps of City Hall, but why not support the weeklong Freedom To Marry events that already take place each February? Why not gauge support for a downtown event by trying the festival there? Taking these steps would give our community reasons to

celebrate and visitors reasons to visit Houston throughout the year and not for just one weekend.

The essence of our parade does not come from flashy floats choreographed to zip through the soulless canyons of a downtown devoid of GLBT businesses. Furthermore, the notion that downtown provides some imprimatur of credibility we lack in Montrose is offensive.

Montrose is where our community's soul resides. These are the streets that nurtured us

and taught us to be strong and proud even as we endured demoralizing raids and arrests and saw our loved ones perish from heinous acts of hatred or our own

government's shameful neglect. These are the streets where our heroes planned, fought, and won the battles that give us countless reasons to be proud and carry on their legacy. Despite repeated efforts to rebuild, redefine, redevelop, or redistrict the Montrose we know into oblivion, the colors of the rainbow continue to shine proudest in this resilient, remarkable neighborhood and never more so than at our parade, when we invite Houstonians and thousands of out-of-town visitors to our home to celebrate our community and those extraordinary days in June 1969 when we told the world, "No more."

Pride Houston should abide by its mission statement and lead the effort to embrace and reconfirm Montrose as our home, educate the world on our amazing history, and leave our parade where and when it belongs.

*John Nechman is chair of People Opposed to Moving Our Parade Out of Montrose (POMPOM).*

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## Pride Houston has three goals for its future:

1) To produce the biggest and best Pride festivities, 2) To provide offerings that are of interest to all elements of our community, and 3) To make Houston's Pride festivities a destination weekend event, attractive to visitors from around the world.

Let's face it – no one likes change unless you understand how it will personally benefit you. Did you know that the Nighttime parade concept was approved by only ONE vote back in 1997? Many of the people fighting today's proposed changes also predicted catastrophe for the Night Parade. As we now know, that move helped revitalize our festivities and got us international recognition. If we are to pursue these goals, then we believe that change is necessary. The debate becomes one of tradition vs. change, and the emotions are high on both sides of the issue. Pride Houston has no official position on this yet – the Board of Directors is not scheduled to vote on this until August of 2007.

Even those of us in favor of change have a warm spot in our hearts for Montrose. But while it may be our

"spiritual home", Montrose is not in fact the exclusive site of all Houston gay history. Most people consider the start of Houston's Pride movement to be the protest march against Anita Bryant, which occurred Downtown – only a few blocks from the proposed festival site. Important announcements such as the overturn of the sodomy laws and marriage equality rallies occurred

downtown, on the steps of city hall. And as we all know, Montrose is not predominantly gay, and most gay people no longer live in Montrose – we are everywhere in this city.

We're not proposing the move for political reasons, but it certainly would make a very powerful political statement for us to take our events downtown. It says that the GLBT community is part of the very fabric of Houston, and we will make full use of all that this city has to offer its citizens. It also says that we refuse to ghetto-ize ourselves, or to place ANY limits of what we can achieve. And that is a tradition that I personally would be proud to pass on to the next generation of GLBTs.

Enough philosophy for now – let me explain the practical issues at hand. Let's start with venue: Our festivities include both a Parade and Festival. The Nighttime parade is a big success, but the Festival has always been problematic because there is no green space in Montrose suitable to accommodate a large crowd. So, we have been forced to fence off several streets to create a festival space. That means that we're holding a festival on the pavement in the heat of June, and we are competing for space with the dumpsters behind many of the area businesses. Not only is our space limited, but because of the way it is laid out, we're limited even further. For example, we can't bring in a big name performer because there is no space big enough for us to set up a stage and viewing area that would accommodate a large crowd.

Also, because we can only close down those streets for a certain amount of time, both the Festival Committee and our vendors work under enormous stress to get everything set up in time.

About now, you may be saying "Well, why is a festival important? Maybe we should just give up on the festival, especially if it is the driving factor for moving." For most cities, the festival is the biggest part of the Pride celebration. It has never been that way here because there is no obvious place to hold one. I think a festival is important because it allows you to participate in a more interactive way than you do as a parade viewer. But it is also an opportunity for more fun – more entertainment, more socializing, more things to do, more eating and drinking and shopping. And finally, if we are to attract visitors from other cities, they expect to see a robust festival because that is what they are used to in their own towns.

The other problem with our current situation is the heat. The public is miserable (and people drink far too much – at least in part due to the heat), we have trouble recruiting enough volunteers to help on Parade and

Festival Day and we can't get enough vendors to participate because they say that people don't want to eat when it is that hot. Most cities celebrate Pride in June, to commemorate the Stonewall riots which mark the start of the Gay Civil Rights movement. However, there is ample precedent for holding Pride festivities in other times of the year, as cities like San Diego, Tucson, Phoenix, Ft. Lauderdale and many others do.

With a clear picture of the limitations and challenges we face in our current situation, Pride Houston set up a Task Force to consider alternatives for our future. The Task Force looked at a number of alternatives (other possible Montrose sites, Hermann Park, Memorial Park, and Allen Parkway) and has recommended that the downtown parks area represents the best venue for Pride to achieve its goals for expansion and enhancement.

The Festival footprint would include Tranquility Park, City Hall and the Reflecting Pool, the Library pavilion and Sam Houston Park. The area is lovely, with lots of stately oaks, grass and water interests, and of course you are surrounded by Houston's impressive architecture. There are over 10,000 parking spaces within a very short walk. But if you live in Montrose, and/or want to party there after the festivities are over, we'll work with Metro to run continuous free shuttle service between Montrose and Downtown.

*This article continues on page 30*

## Hoppin' with Pride!



**Bunnies  
on the  
Bayou**

HOUSTON, TEXAS

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



In the Center's eleventh year the board and volunteers are developing new programs and community forums on critical issues such as hate crimes and same-sex marriage and workshops on matters that affect organizations, including fundraising and promotions.

The Center is a comprehensive resource guide of community organizations, resources and services. In the meantime, like organizations across the community, the Center seeks financial support and volunteers for tasks including phone duty, fundraising, special-events planning, web design and maintenance and more. —Victor Zorn

Houston GLBT Community Center  
3400 Montrose Blvd. Suite 207  
Houston, Texas 77006  
713-524-3818

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

PRIDEHOUSTON.org

# Bering Omega

Community Services

Bering Omega Community Services was born out of the vision and compassion of two local churches and a number of dedicated individuals to address the then unmet need for AIDS care in the early days of the epidemic.

Originally founded in 1986 by Eleanor Munger, a retired 76-year-old Montessori schoolteacher, Omega House opened its doors to respond to the devastation of terminally ill AIDS patients discharged from the hospital with nowhere else to go. Christ Church Cathedral provided the initial resources to create this residential hospice that has been the final home to over 800 men and women who have lost their lives to HIV/AIDS-related illness. Today Omega House continues Ms. Munger's original mission of providing a safe and loving home to people who need compassionate care as they complete their life's journey.

The Bering Community Service Foundation opened under the guiding hand of Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Responding to the critical needs of their community, the Foundation opened its dental clinic, adult day care center and housing assistance programs for people living with HIV/AIDS. These programs provide critical primary care services to people who have no other healthcare alternatives. Nationally recognized for their innovative approach to HIV/AIDS care, these programs are committed to quality and compassionate service through programs that help individuals manage their HIV infection.

Today, Bering Omega Community Services, formed through the consolidation of Omega House and Bering Community Service Foundation in 1999, provides a cost effective continuum of care through the delivery of their programs, completely free of charge to those living with HIV/AIDS: oral health care, adult day care, housing assistance and residential hospice. Each of these programs provides unique, unduplicated service to nearly 2,600 individuals each year. Kym King, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Government Relations for Bering Omega sums it up nicely: "With our unparalleled experience in oral health care and our

outstanding reputation, we are uniquely positioned to provide leadership and technical assistance to those seeking to build our community's capacity to serve the vital health needs of Houstonians."

Bering Omega is able to provide such a cost effective continuum of care because of their numerous and generous community partners as well as their over 650 active volunteers. Bering Omega volunteers have the opportunity to work in partnership with staff and clients to help with the intake process and administrative tasks at the dental clinic, to lead arts and crafts activities and engage in client interaction at the care center, and to provide bedside care and companionship for those in the final stages of AIDS at Omega House, Bering Omega's hospice. However, the sky is the

limit when it comes to volunteer opportunities at Bering Omega and they are always actively recruiting volunteers who are interested in helping

As Bering Omega celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> year of providing compassionate care to those in need in our community, they look forward to growing each of their four core programs, as well as strengthening ties with local nonprofits and developing other strategic partnerships and collaborations.

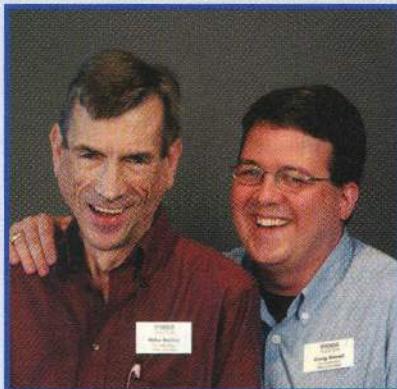
to fulfill their mission of providing compassionate care to people who are living with HIV/AIDS.

"As we look forward to 2007 and beyond, we are so pleased to have the opportunity to work with and collaborate with other wonderful community leaders, nonprofit organizations, and corporate partners. Together we will all strive to fulfill the common goal of helping those who are living with HIV/AIDS," says Dan Snare, president of Bering Omega Community Services. Dan also speaks of Bering Omega's strategic plan: "Our board of directors has worked diligently to create an ambitious, yet feasible strategic plan for Bering Omega over the next few years. We look forward to more effectively providing compassionate care to our clients as we dynamically plan for our future of service to our community."

*For more information about Bering Omega Community Services, or to learn more about their many volunteer opportunities, please visit [www.beringomega.org](http://www.beringomega.org).*



# Show Your Lone Star Pride, Volunteer today!



You, too, can help shape the history of Pride! You can volunteer your time to help Houston celebrate our heritage, our diversity and our community. Moreover, you can volunteer for as little as one hour a week or just on Parade and Festival Day. You can commit to as much or little as you like. The volunteer opportunities with Pride Houston are as diverse as the community we serve.



To find out more about how you can volunteer, visit us on the web at [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org), email us at [info@pridehouston.org](mailto:info@pridehouston.org) or call the PrideLine at 713-529-6979. Volunteer and make an impact on history!



*The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.*

PRIDEHOUSTON.org

~Oscar Wilde

Here are some of the ideas we have come up with for using the space:

- 1) The parade would stay in the Nighttime, but it would no longer be linear – it would make a large rectangle around the outer perimeter of the Tranquility/City Hall/Library blocks. And it would have FOUR simultaneous starting points. At the stroke of 8 pm, each segment would enter the parade route simultaneously and proceed clockwise around the entire route. So, you won't have to wait several hours for the parade to get to you anymore! Not only will this make the parade more efficient, we think it will also get us the same sort of international recognition that the Nighttime Parade concept brought us.
- 2) As it begins to get dark, we'll project enormous images on the face of the skyscrapers facing the festival area. Whether they be pictures from gay history, Montrose, or perhaps pictures taken at the mass commitment ceremony held that afternoon on the steps of city hall, we can make it entertaining and educational.
- 3) During the daytime festival, performances stages will be set up in all four of the park areas, with the headliner appearing in Sam Houston Park. We'll offer a broader variety of entertainment including music of interest to various ethnic groups, excerpts from theatrical productions, fashion shows etc. And speaking of Sam Houston Park, Team Houston is very interested in hosting athletic competitions and exhibitions in that area before the concert begins.
- 4) The area around the City Hall reflecting pool would serve as the vendor area, including a Taste of Montrose area featuring Montrose eateries and bars.
- 5) We'll build a bridge across the reflecting pool, and use it as a stage for short performances like dancing Carmen Mirandas, the synchronized lawn chair marching unit, the Strangerettes and a variety of silly, whimsical short acts). Our goal is to fill the festival site with energy, entertainment and fun all day.
- 6) The steps of city hall would be a great place to hold a mass commitment ceremony at some point in the afternoon, and of course we would need to have a ceremony to raise the gay flag over city hall.
- 7) We'll work with the library to host our gay history exhibits.
- 8) To help the non-profit organizations communicate with you in a fun way, we'll create a country fair area, in which you roam from booth to booth, competing in games like ring toss to win prizes. Each booth will be staffed by a different non-profit group. Of course, we'll have to "gay" those games up! Instead of throwing a baseball at a stack of milk bottles, maybe we'll throw a sequined shoe at a stack of lube bottles! And for the lesbians, we'll have something duct-tape related!
- 9) Tranquility Park will host our family/children's activity area. On the north end of the park, we'll use the raised area to create a Stonewall Biergarten, with lots of signage to explain the significance of Stonewall. Of course, drag queens will perform at this venue.
- 10) Tranquility Park has great fountains running through it. I'm lobbying to put real mermaids in there to perform and to interact with the crowd –

we'll see what the city would let us do! At a minimum, we can certainly light up the water towers to create a rainbow effect for the evening.

11) Other Pride festivals do things like pet shows, bake-offs, new car exhibits etc. We'll also work to incorporate as many of these ideas as we can. With lots of room, we have the latitude to try all sorts of things.

12) We'll end the festivities with fireworks over downtown.

The Task Force also recommended that we move to a cooler time of the year. Although the last weekend in September was the only spot on the city calendar that would work, it is still an average of 10 degrees cooler than June.

I hope you are getting a good idea of the kinds of creative, fun and unique things we envision for the downtown venue. But I also want you to know that wouldn't abandon Montrose and the traditional date. We believe it is important to do something commemorative in Montrose on that last weekend in June – possibly a candlelight march, which Pride Houston would be happy to take the lead in organizing. We also envision a new event, to be held in Montrose the night before the downtown festival and parade. We think it would be great fun to block off some of the streets in Montrose and hold a "Float Crawl", which will be modeled after the Art Car Ball. We'll have live music and adult beverages and it will be like a big block party. All of the parade entries will park their floats within the party area, so that people can walk by and get a close up look. And float builders can solicit last minute help from the crowd. We think this would be fun since most people have never had the opportunity to help prepare a float for the parade.

I am often asked what Pride's real motivation is for proposing change. Although we have stated our goals publicly and repeatedly (see the three goals at the beginning of this posting) some people seem eager to think the worst of us and have speculated that our interests are financial. Frankly, in evaluating the wisdom of moving, our sole financial concern has been "can we raise enough additional corporate sponsor dollars to fund the expansion?" We've never even attempted to figure out how much incremental revenue we might bring in, because it is impossible to project. However, if we do things properly, then the larger crowds we anticipate should end up producing more revenue. But remember, we're a non-profit organization, so any money we make would go back to the benefit of our organization and the community. In no particular order, here are things we would do if we ever made a profit off the Pride festivities:

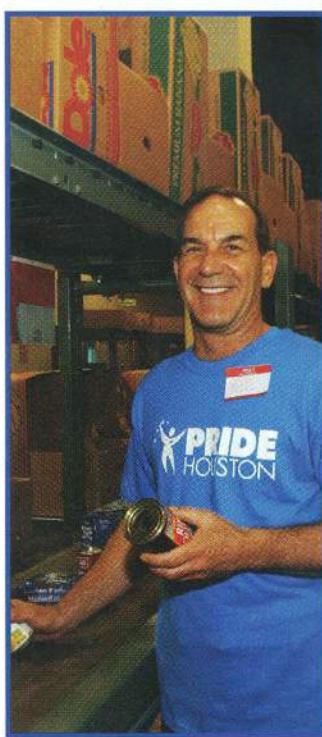
- 1) eliminate the entry fee for the Festival,
- 2) reduce the costs of booth space and parade entry fees for non-profits,
- 3) subsidize the downtown parking fees,
- 4) improve the festivities, and
- 5) give excess profits back to the community in the form of grants or scholarships.

*Carol Wyatt is President of Pride Houston*

# Pride In Action: Working Year Round

Pride Houston charitable efforts target the Houston Community with its Pride in Action Committee. The Houston Area Freeway Forestation Project is one of several city-wide programs that's on the Pride-in-Action agenda. Ruth Ann Ethridge and Rob Camp, Chairpersons of **Pride in Action**, proudly state, "it gives us great pleasure to give back to the Houston Community. We are committed to helping the Houston Community when possible. Our passionate volunteers have already participated in several major charitable events.

Already, **Pride In Action** volunteers have served meals at Waste Management City Feast for the homeless during Thanksgiving Day, unpacked and sorted toys at Jingle Bell Express Toy Drive for The Christian Community Center and dished hot foods at the HEB George R. Brown Christmas Eve Dinner for the general public." **Pride in Action** is everywhere all year long. In the past year trees have been planted, food has been distributed and served, volunteers have worked at the Houston Food Bank, distributed water at the AIDS Walk, and so much more.



Ruth Ann Ethridge, co-chair of **Pride in Action**, commented, "Pride in Action enables **Pride Houston** Volunteers of Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual and Transgender to care for all aspects of the Houston Community."

Volunteers who are interested in joining the **Pride In Action** committee should contact Ruth Ann Ethridge or Rob Camp at the **Pride Houston** Office, 713-529-6979.



[PRIDEHOUSTON.org](http://PRIDEHOUSTON.org)

Also a special thank you to all of our volunteers who work tirelessly through out the year to make pride happen. Because of your work, our community is strong.



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Visit [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org) for news, events, photos from past events, official pride merchandise, parade & festival applications, community resource guide, more!

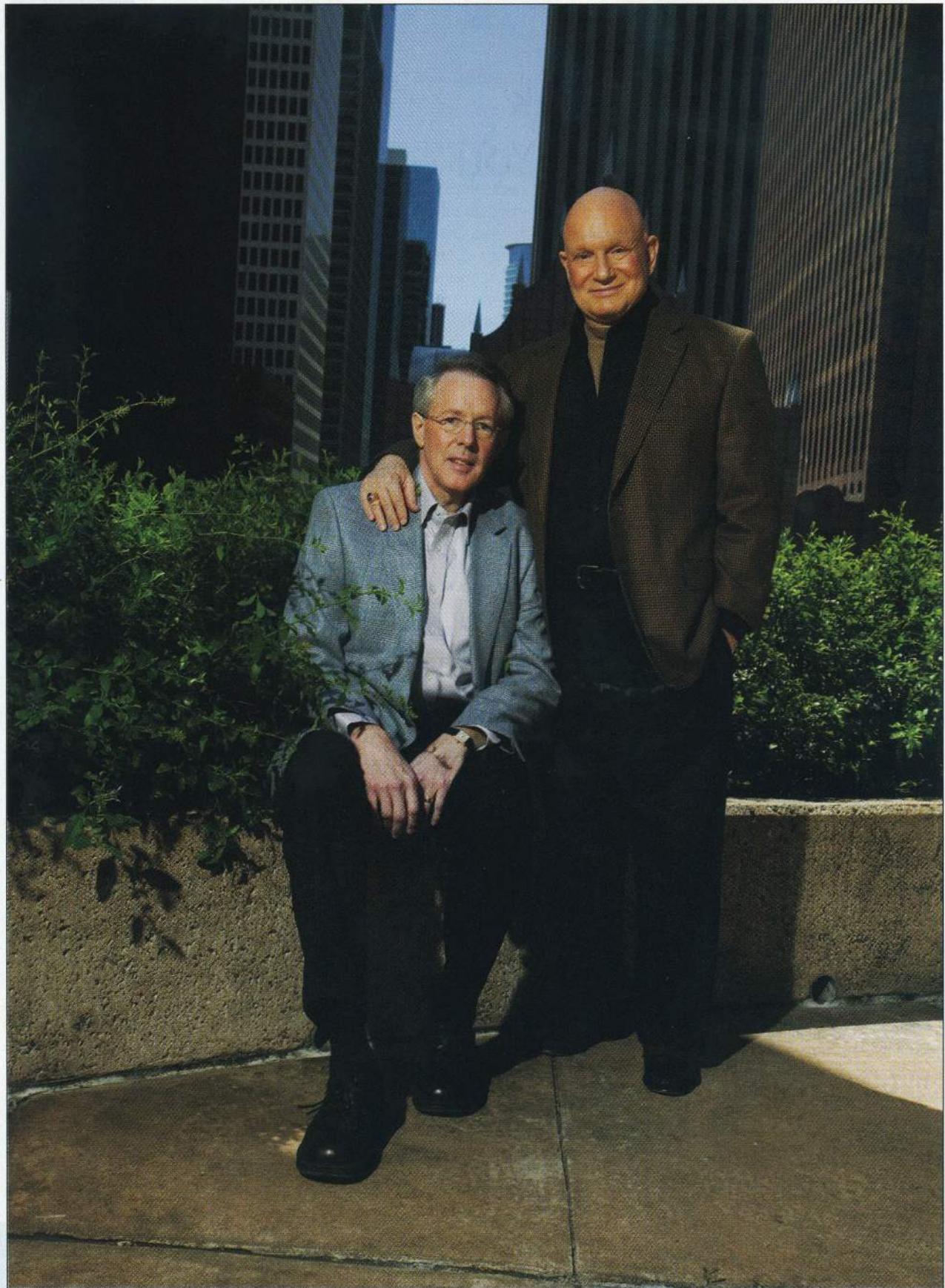


## COUPLED

*We went to Houston to see  
what love is like in the Lone Star State.*

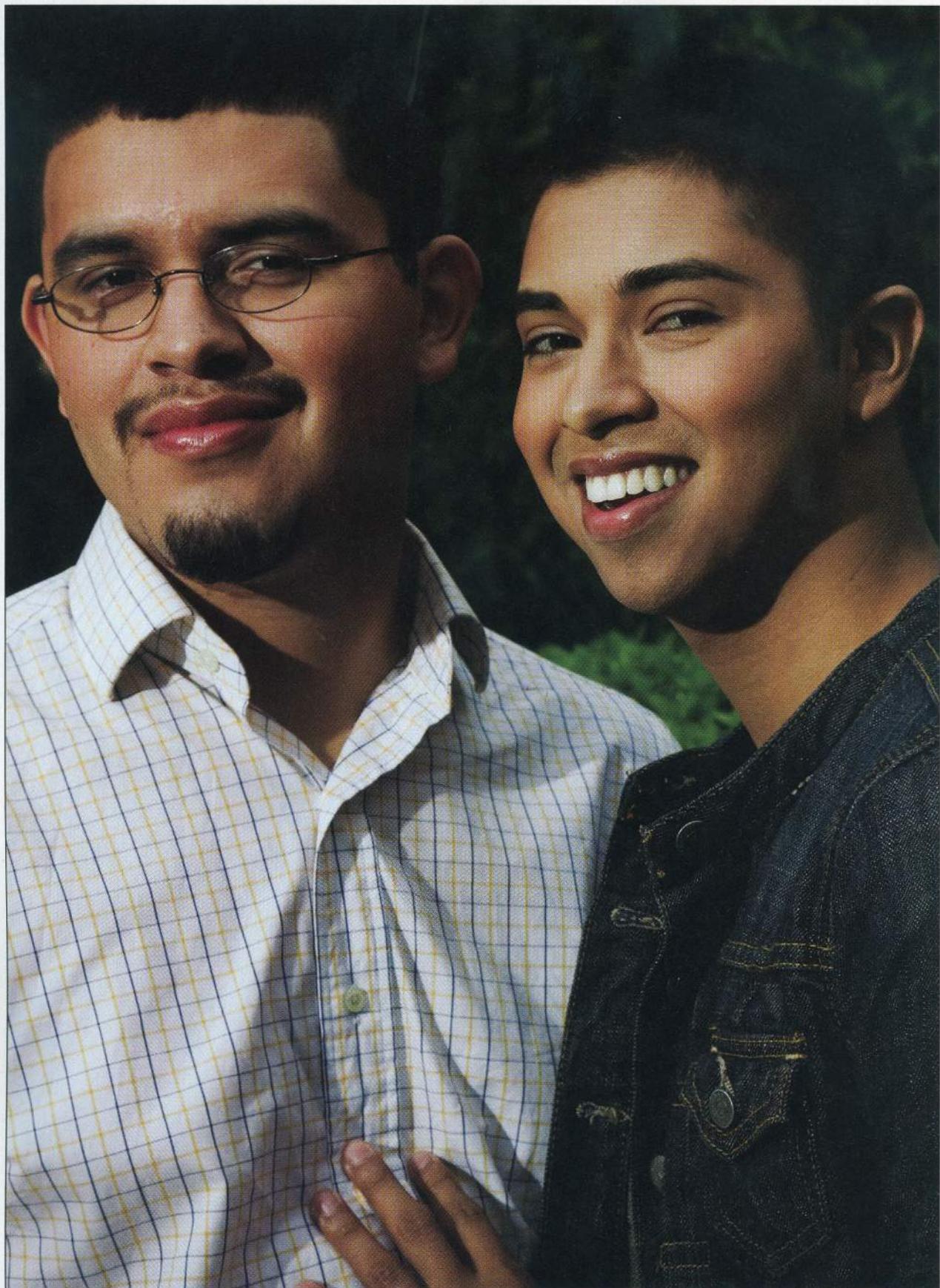
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIUS BUGGE

Photo: MARIUS BUGGE; Styling: KATHY KELLY; Hair and makeup: JENNIFER DAVIS; Styling assistant: KAREN GRIFFIN



*When we first met... I thought he was a fascinating man that night, and I still do.*

TONY CARROLL & BRUCE SMITH



*You've got to be somebody's friend first — then keep it spicy!*  
RAFAEL APARICIO & SAM ACOSTA



*It's not a "this is mine, this is yours" kind of thing; we're in it together.*

JENNIFER POCHE & DIANA CHEW



*She's shy and quiet and reserved and I'm really outgoing; we kind of balance each other out...*

YVONNE FEECE & LISA TRAN



*I made my mind up when I first saw her. She had these incredible dimples...*  
BETH TUDOR & TAMMI WALLACE



*You should be open to finding somebody who benefits from the things that you do well and who on the other side of the coin you benefit from...*

JEFF REID & JIM DUKE

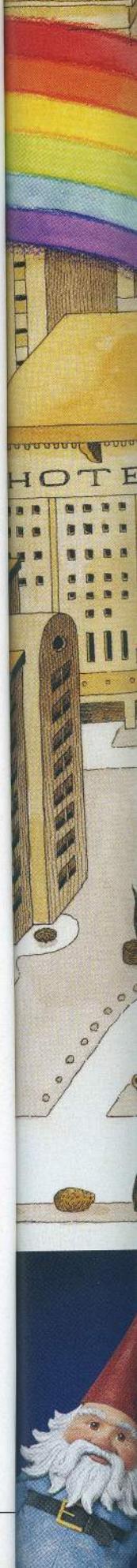


*You should be open about everything, absolutely. Keep it real and keep it honest.*  
SLAVA ABRAMIANTS & JAMIE WENNER



*It sounds simplistic — it sounds overly simplistic — but it's both people wanting  
the relationship to work more than they want anything else...*

MELANIE & PEGGY RUDD



National Gay and Lesbian  
**Task Force**



# CREATING CHANGE turns 20!

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