

# OUT

INFORM

Annual Issue, Vol 4  
June 2014



## ANNIVERSARY *of the* **STONEWALL RIOTS**

**Official Houston Pride Guide®**

of the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration® and Houston Pride Week®





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Frankie Quijano is President of the Board and CEO of Pride Houston, Inc. Pride is a registered 501(c)3 organization commissioned with enriching the lives of the Houston LGBT community.

# LETTER

## from the PRESIDENT

It seems like I was just writing last year's letter but if you haven't guessed it yet...

**It's Pride season!**

Did you know that the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration® is still the fourth largest Pride Celebration in the United States and sixth largest in the World? Pride Houston® attended the latest World Pride Conference in 2013 and found out these interesting facts about our own Pride Celebration. Everyone in the city should feel a sense of pride with the evolution of our own Pride Celebration that now welcomes over 400,000 guests from around the World. This is just a testament to how amazing the City of Houston is and you help make this possible.

Time and time again I get the eternal question... Why Pride? The answer is quite simple. Because we can for those who can't. Pride is never over. Pride is never irrelevant. People have to understand that Pride is a deep word, and that they have to search in their souls for what that word means to them. We must always take a moment to reflect on the struggles of the past, and thank those that fought them for us.

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. When I first joined Pride I never really knew much about the riots but took the time to do the research and find the facts about how the foundation of Pride Celebration's around the world took shape. For a few year's Pride Houston® has been working on creating an event that would tie into the part of our mission that in all honesty has been needing improvement, commemorating our culture's history. In 2014 those plans were put into action as we reawakened the movement to

fund an endowment to create a future Houston LGBT Museum. Many of the local LGBT Historical organizations, along with other Community members, have pledged their support of this great initiative and its goal to fund this local project versus a national campaign. Help us make this a reality.

The evolution of the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration® is taking shape to enhance the experience for the LGBT Community, local residents and those traveling in to take part in any of the events during Houston Pride Week®. One of our goals has always been to assist Houston in becoming a true LGBT travel destination. This goal has helped guide Pride Houston® in creating new programs and events. This is just one of many steps in the evolution and you can look forward to more steps to move the organization's efforts forward to a new era.

Our teams of dedicated volunteers have been working diligently all year to produce this amazing event. If you see a Pride volunteer be sure to thank them for their efforts. That said, on behalf of the Committee Chairs, Committee Members, Volunteers, the Board of Directors and Pride Houston®, I wish to welcome you all to the 36th Houston LGBT Pride Celebration®, presented by Bud Light.

Sincerely,

FRANKIE QUIJANO  
CEO & President of the Board  
Pride Houston, Inc.



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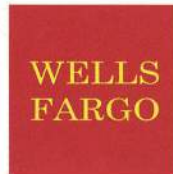
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# YOUR FIRST PRIDE

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## Paige Thomsen Houston, TX

I don't remember all of the details about my first pride, but I do remember the moment I arrived. I remember how I felt, and the overwhelming feeling that came over my entire being. I was just walking down the sidewalk, near one of the stores and just stopped. Looking all around me I saw nothing but happiness. There were so many colors, so many different people. Gay, straight, trans, drag, it was this entire melting pot of different entities all in the same place for the same reasons: love, tolerance, acceptance. At that very moment in time, I knew for a fact that what I felt, and the thoughts I had were not wrong, and that everyone there loved me for it. I've been back every year since, but I will never, ever forget the first time I went to Pride.

---

## Christopher Soliz Houston, TX

I had no idea what having Gay Pride was even about. I went with my best friend and we met an old friend from High School, who was a friend of the family. Him and his bf took us under their wing and showed us around introduced us to all kinds of LBGT. Before that I thought all drag queens were too weak to be men, now I know they are too strong to be men. They walked the entire parade in full heels, gowns, wigs, and makeup. And in Houston in 100+ degree weather that's saying a lot. But afterwards we went to a bar and it was the first time I felt acceptance with who I am, and I have never missed a Pride since. It's more than just one person, it's accepting everyone no matter where you fall, it's LOVE! And I love forward to it every year!

---

## Ray Hill Houston, TX

I was released from Texas Prison in March, 1975, and returned to Houston where there had been no mention of Pride Celebrations. Early in June I attended a Texas Gay Task Force Conference in San Antonio and was challenged by Morris Kight of Los Angeles and Phil Johnson of Dallas to get something started in Houston. When I got home, I called news conference to announce that 1975 would be the last year in which there was no Pride Celebration. We also announced the founding of Houston Gay Political Caucus (an official photograph was taken of the founders for the Houston Chronicle archives, it is still there) The following year 1976 we had a March on Main Street where I met a young Rice undergraduate named Annise Parker.

---

## Estephania Perez Houston, TX

I felt like if I belong. Like I didn't have to hide who is really was I was amongst people that understand me. All the hot girls didn't it difficult to be me either.

---

## Jalisa Alvarado Houston, TX

My dad and I were left to our own devices one summer when my mom and sister went on vacation, and one night somehow we ended up randomly driving. While we were driving, we started seeing floats and colors peaking from around some street or another that hadn't yet moved. Of course we tried to figure out what was being celebrated. I can't even remember if I knew what a Pride parade was at the time, though I did know I was a lesbian, and my parents had an idea. After a few minuets my dad put it together that it was Pride, and he let us stay and watch for a while. I don't remember what the floats looked like or how many people were there. I do remember that I thought it was the coolest that my dad let us stay and watch for a while and I remember feeling more comfortable there than anywhere I had been before. And I remember the love and some how the lack of secrets in the air (if that makes any sense). Most importantly, I think this was the moment that solidified the fact that when I was ready to say it, my dad would be there for me when I came out.

---

## Shelby Ivy Houston, TX

I attended my first PRIDE with my first girlfriend at 19 years old. I had only heard of PRIDE a couple of times in my life, so I had no idea what to expect. Of course, Houston's summer weather was sweltering hot and there were thousands of glittery perspiring rainbows of people. Being a pale redhead, I reeked of 50 spf sunblock and had to continuously apply throughout the day. It was my first experience being surrounded by happy accepting people, and it was incredible. I had only seen and heard the harsh side of being out, but PRIDE gave me an opposing perspective. People were happy and surrounded by loving friends that accepted them fully for their differences. It was insane and beautiful. I have attended PRIDE ever since and even walked the parade last year. I am happy to know that there are other people attending their first PRIDE parades with similar experiences. I'm happy to know that PRIDE offers a day of happiness and acceptance to those who go the rest of the year without.

---

## Heather Martin Houston, TX

My first Pride was great. I had come out a few months prior (January) and it was the first year I had been interested in even going. I'm active duty military and I was supposed to be leaving for basic the week before Pride weekend. I was angry but due to so things my orders were amended and I ended up being home. I was staying at a friends house and decided I wanted to go to Pride. My parents aren't overjoyed about my being a lesbians so when they found out I was downtown for the parade they freaked. After I handled the situation with them everything else was great. I met up w some friends. Had a great spot to watch the parade. Met some new people who are awesome. My first Pride was a blast. I can't wait for June to roll back around so I can come home for the weekend and have the time of my life. I felt so accepted and didn't have to worry about people judging me. It was great.

---

## Mary Pavliska Houston, TX

My first pride was in Houston in 2005. I still hadn't come out to my parents yet so when my sister told me they were going to come out to the parade for awhile I was nervous. While standing at the intersection of Waugh and Huffmeister an old high school friend came up and essentially outed me in front of my mom. I was horrified and by the look on my face my friend knew I was and bolted. I turned and faced my mom and took a deep breath and told her there was something I needed to tell her. "I'm gay". I was nervous and scared and anxious and my mom just looked at me and smiled. We hugged and I had never felt freer than in that moment until I realized my dad was coming right back and I had to do it all over again. When my dad walked back up a ran up to him and said "dad I'm sorry to do this in front of so many people but I have to tell you something." my dad looked at me and I said "dad I'm gay. I'm a lesbian." At first he stood shocked, as did everyone in else who stopped to watch, and then he smiled and messed up my hair (which was in a faux hawk) and said "I hate your hair. ..but you will always be my mary." it was the best pride I have ever had. And what's even better is that about 15 minutes later this picture was taken at the burger King. It was in the 2006 pride mag.

If you would like to share your first pride story with Pride please visit [www.pridehouston.org/about](http://www.pridehouston.org/about)



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# will HIV ever be safe enough?

There is a classic episode of Oprah from 1987 that can still raise my blood pressure. That year, the tiny town of Williamson, West Virginia, became part of a national discussion about AIDS when Mike Sisco, who had returned to his home town to die of the disease, dared to step into a public pool.

The community freakout was immediate. Sisco was quickly labeled a psychopath (rumors emerged accusing him of spitting into food at the grocery store), and the town pool was closed the next day to begin a Silkwood-style pressurized cleaning.

Soon thereafter, Oprah Winfrey arrived with cameras for a town hall forum about the incident. Fear was the order of the day. "If there's just one chance in a million that somebody could catch that virus from a swimming pool," the town's mayor told Winfrey's worldwide audience, "I think I did the right thing."

Sure. Why not react in the most extreme way possible, if there is a chance in a million?

Williamson citizens were not swayed by health officials who calmly explained the established routes of HIV transmission and the impossibility of infection from a pool. "The doctors can say you can't get it this way," a woman countered, "but what if they come

back someday and say, 'We were wrong?'"

Indeed. What if? If there's a chance in a million ...?

That broadcast might have remained a sad footnote in HIV/AIDS history, an instructive example of people ignoring scientific fact to protect a satisfying fear, if history didn't enjoy repeating itself so much. Today, though, the willful ignorance isn't coming from uneducated residents of a southern town you can barely find on a map.

It's coming from gay men. And they are just

as threatened, frightened, and dismissive of science as the townsfolk of Williamson were thirty years ago.

Recently, research known as The PARTNER Study was presented at the prestigious Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI). PARTNER proved something HIV advocates have long suspected: people with HIV with an undetectable viral load are not transmitting the virus to their partners. The study included nearly 800 couples, all involved in an HIV positive/negative relationship, gay and straight, with the positive partner maintaining an undetectable viral load. Over the course of two years, more than 30,000 sex acts were reported and documented (couples were chosen based on their tendency to have sex without condoms).

Not a single HIV transmission occurred during the study from someone with an undetectable viral load. If PARTNER had been researching a new medication, they would have stopped the trial and dispensed the drug immediately.

The PARTNER results bolster the prevention strategy known as "Treatment as Prevention" (TasP), meaning, a positive person on successful treatment prevents new infections. To date, there is not a single confirmed report of someone with an undetectable viral

load infecting someone else, in studies or in real life.

Just don't tell that to a sizable contingent of skeptical gay men, many of whom took to their keyboards to dismiss the PARTNER findings. Phrases like "false sense of security," "positive guys lie," "junk science," and "if there's even a small risk" appeared on Facebook postings and in web site comment sections. The people of Williamson must be slowly nodding their heads.

Resistance to the PARTNER study corresponds with stubborn doubts about PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis, or HIV negative people taking the drug Truvada to prevent infection). Although virtually every nervous argument against PrEP has been overruled by the facts, naysayers continue to either reject the evidence outright or make moral judgments about the sex lives of HIV negative gay men on PrEP.

Yes, there are unknowns. There always are when scientific studies meet the real world. And every strategy will not work for every person. But the vehement rejection of such profound breakthroughs suggests there is something more, something deeper, going on in the minds of gay men. What is it?

Our collective memories of AIDS horror are hard to shake, and that's a good place to start. On a gut level, any study suggesting that HIV could be neutralized is met with a weary doubt. Good news is no match for the enduring grief that has shadowed us for 30 years.

The PARTNER study also threatens the view that positive men are nothing more than risks that must be managed. The study kills

**AS LONG AS  
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UNDUE  
ATTENTION  
TO FANTASY  
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WE'RE NOT  
FOCUSED ON  
THE REAL  
THREATS.**

the HIV positive boogeyman. It means positive gay men who know their status might actually care enough about their health to seek out care, get on treatment, and become undetectable. And, once the positive partner is

no longer a particular danger, both partners would bear responsibility for their actions. What an enormous psychic change that would require in our community.

It's tough to do that when fear creeps in and "what if?" fantasy scenarios take hold. What if my partner missed a dose yesterday and, even though HIV meds stay in the blood-



stream for extended periods, his viral load has inexplicably shot up? What if he isn't being truthful about his viral load? What if he doesn't know?

The greater threat, folks, isn't positive guys who think they are undetectable but are not. It's men who think they are HIV negative but are not. But we'd rather stay focused on the positive person being at fault, because, well, people with HIV lie a lot. We miss doses constantly because we have a death wish or we're too busy finding our next victim.

I have some "what if?" questions of my own. What if these unrealistic fears were meant to stigmatize and isolate HIV positive people? What if I am undetectable and feel no responsibility to discuss my status with a sex partner because I don't care to engage in a science lesson? What if everyone availed themselves to prevention options that worked best for them? What if my HIV status were none of your damn business?

These risks could be alleviated, of course, if everyone simply protected their own bodies when having sex with people they don't know or trust. But that would place an equal burden on negative men, and what a bother that is. Better to leave that discomfort to those with HIV, vectors of disease that we are. Just consider us criminals, lying to you about our viral loads and spitting in the food in Williamson, just waiting to infect you when we get the chance.

As long as we're giving undue attention to fantasy scenarios we're not focused on the real threats. The rates of STD's are up. Young gay black men in the United States don't have proper access to healthcare and have infection rates worse than any developed country. Our community is plagued by alcoholism,

addiction, and mental illness. Do we want to debate established science or should we devote that energy to other challenges to gay men's health?

If you still have the arrogance to believe you could win the HIV Powerball Lottery and be the one person who gets infected in ways science has disproven, you're perfectly entitled to that point of view.

Here are some helpful instructions, however. Carefully step away from your computer and don't touch the cords because 50 people die of product related electrocutions each year. Walk slowly to your bedroom, being mindful of debris in your path because slip-and-falls kill 55 people every single day. Once there, refuse food or water because, well, you never know. Now slip into your bed of willful ignorance and try to make yourself comfortable.

The good people of Williamson are keeping a spot warm just for you.

Written By: M.S. King

p.s. In the time it took you to read this article, the number of people who were infected by someone with HIV who had no viral load was zero.



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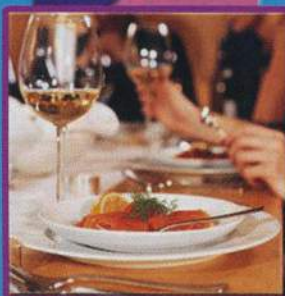
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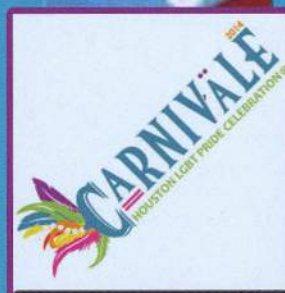
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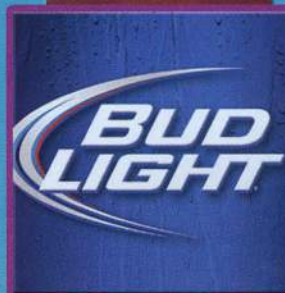
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# Grand Marshals 2014

Houston has influential and committed leaders who have been dedicating their time to serve our community in the fight for equal rights! For this year, we have our Male and Female GM's—JD Doyle and Christina Gorczynski, and our Ally GM's—Sara and Fernando Aramburo; all thrilled and eager to share their pride!



# Christina Gorczynski

Female GM

I honor all of those who came before us, worked hard and who made our work as organizers and our lives as LGBT people easier. We must realize the dream of full equality for ALL people for ours and all future generations. Remembering the Stonewall rights should encourage us to keep pushing until we as an entire community experience freedom from discrimination.

## 6 What challenges face the LGBT community moving forward locally and nationally?

Many communities across The South face widespread bigotry and lack basic civil rights. People in the LGBT community experience employment instability, poverty, homelessness, discrimination based on national origin and immigration status, along with gender and racial inequality. Our especially vulnerable trans\* family needs everyone's support, as do those our community who are living with HIV. Folks need access to jobs, health care, food, shelter and legal protections.

## 7 With the LGBT community being more accepted in today's society why do you think Pride is still relevant?

Until we achieve full equality for all people, the struggle continues and we have work to do. Plus, the party aspect of Pride will always be relevant because people love fun and friendship.

## 8 What is your favorite part about Houston Pride Week or the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration and why?

I love having a good time. Let's face it-- Houston knows how to put on a party!

## 9 What advice would you give someone who wants to find a way to contribute to the LGBT community in some way?

Get in touch with me ([christina@firstpersonhouston.com](mailto:christina@firstpersonhouston.com)) and I will put your talents to work on a cause that fits your interests

## 10 Coming out is always a tough decision. What advice would you give the youth of today on coming out?

Make sure you have the support you need to be able to survive without the people who might reject you. Contact the Montrose Center, PFLAG, and HATCH to talk to people who can be extremely helpful. Seek support before you even know if you need it, because sometimes coming out doesn't happen on your timeline and it is better to be prepared than caught off guard.

## 11 What is the one (1) thing that you'd like readers to know about you that's not in your biography? Do you have a quirk?

I know the words to every Beyonce song and every line of the United States Constitution.

### About her first pride story including:

#### 1.City, State

Houston, TX

#### 2.Year (estimated)

2006

#### 3.The size of the crowd

Big

#### 4.Why they went

Moved back to Houston earlier that year and wanted to connect with community.

#### 5.How it felt when they go there

Empowering and exciting

#### 6.Describe their full experience that day/weekend

Brunch, festival, parade.

#### 7.How much fun they had

I had a blast.

## 1 What does it mean to you being named Grand Marshal of the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration?

I'm honored to serve as the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration's Female Grand Marshal this year. Pride is a great time to celebrate the present and acknowledge previous generations of hard work in the LGBT community.

## 2 What do you think makes Houston's LGBT Community so unique?

Houston's LGBT community is beautifully diverse and proudly engaged. We are culturally rich and dedicated to loving each other and our fabulous city.

## 3 What sparked your fire to begin the work that you have done for the LGBT Community?

Community engagement is the best way to meet friends, make a difference and meaningfully contribute to society. I've always wanted to leave the world a better place than I found it. There are always people to meet and work to do.

## 4 Who are your role models and why?

Tammy Baldwin, Bayard Rustin, Harvey Milk and Gabby Giffords because they put themselves out to lead, mobilized communities, stayed true to their convictions and never gave up even when their lives, reputations and careers were on the line.

## 5 This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. What are your thoughts on where we've come to where we are today?



# JD Doyle

Male GM



## 1 What does it mean to you being named Grand Marshal of the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration?

I am deeply honored and greatly appreciate the recognition of the work I try to do for the community.

## 2 What do you think makes Houston's LGBT Community so unique?

Definitely the diversity, and it is very encouraging that so many young people are getting involved in the political future of our movement.

## 3 What sparked your fire to begin the work that you have done for the LGBT Community?

I have always loved music and history, so starting my radio show Queer Music Heritage over 14 years ago was a logical way to share and help preserve this part of our culture. To that I've added work making accessible to all Houston and Texas LGBT history. It wasn't being done online, and I had the interest and ability to do it, so am doing what I can.

## 4 Who are your role models and why?

I greatly respect Ray Hill, because since the beginning of the LGBT movement in Houston he has always been the constant consummate activist.

## 5 This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. What are your thoughts on where we've come to where we are today?

The growth in the movement today is such that few would have predicted even fifteen years ago, and it is accelerating. I am proud of Houston's role in that, which was the beginning of the Lawrence v Texas Supreme Court victory. That truly paved the way to the rapid progress across the country in LGBT rights.

## 6 What challenges face the LGBT community moving forward locally and nationally?

While there are many other important areas, I think achieving equality for same-sex marriages will have the main focus for the next few years, and once that is accomplished nationally it will be hard to stop progress in other areas. Though, of course many will try. The current wave of freedom to discriminate laws is the other side's striking out in fear. As I write this the hearings for the Houston Equal Rights Amendment are being held, and it is encouraging to see the diversity in those willing to speak out and help.

## 7 With the LGBT community being more accepted in today's society why do you think Pride is still relevant?

Being accepted is a relative term, and while there are certainly gains there is much work still to do. Just choosing one example, bullying in schools, shows much education, outreach and acceptance are still needed.

## 8 What is your favorite part about Houston Pride Week or the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration and why?

It all builds to the Festival and Parade. The Festival is entertaining and social and I never miss it, but the Parade is the main event.

## 9 What advice would you give someone who wants to find a way to contribute to the LGBT community in some way?

Get Involved. And the benefits reach much farther than just helping at an event or in an organization. It helps you make friends you may have never known, helps you grow in ways you never dreamed, and makes you a part of the community and not just an observer. Find a cause or organization that interests you and make it happen.

## 10 Coming out is always a tough decision. What advice would you give the youth of today on coming out?

We have some excellent organizations in Houston to assist, HATCH and PFLAG. Seek out advice and know that there is no one method for everyone, and everyone comes out on their own schedule. If you are still in school and dependent on parents, be very aware of ramifications. Coming out as soon as you can may not be better than doing so wisely.

## 11 What is the one (1) thing that you'd like readers to know about you that's not in your biography? Do you have a quirk?

While I am very busy with a number of projects, hey, I'm single and available.

### About her first pride story including:

#### 1.City, State

Houston, TX

#### 2.Year (estimated)

1979

#### 3.The size of the crowd

Estimates of over 125,000

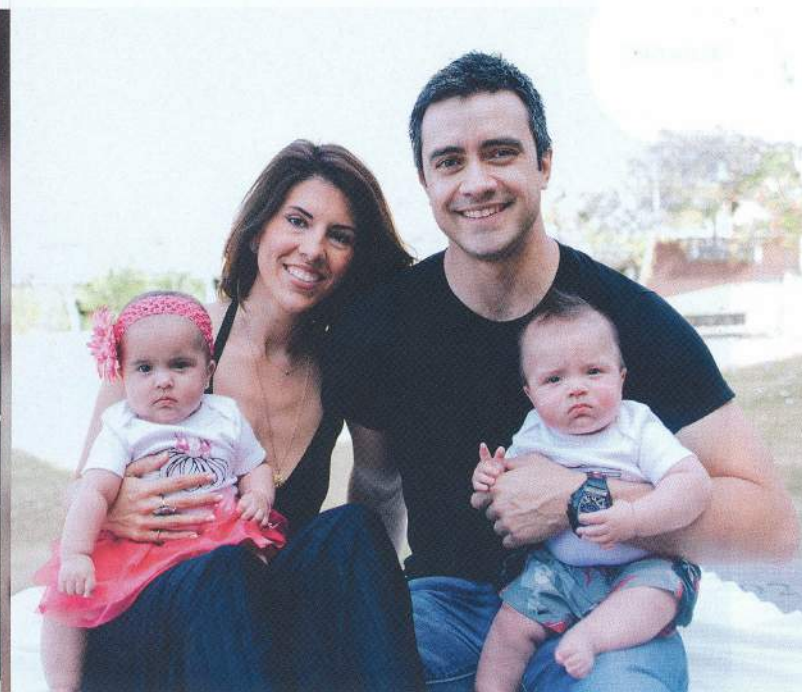
#### 4.Why they went

I was part of a gay organization in Norfolk, Virginia, and Editor of the city's gay newspaper, so I was not only protesting/celebrating with a large local group who attended, but I was also "covering" the event for the paper



# Sara and Fernando Aramburo

Ally GM



## 1 What does it mean to you being named Grand Marshal of the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration?

**Sara:** Let me say it is a great honor to be named Grand Marshal with my husband, but mostly this means more to me now than what it would two years ago. We have 2-year-old twins and being called a Mami to them has been my biggest honor. With the title of Mami comes great responsibility. Fernando and I knew and discussed in depth how we would raise and teach our children. The topic that popped up most in these conversations was Love and what that means to us.

For them to look back on this pride parade and see that their parents were recognized for their contributions and involvement in the LGBT community is an immensely proud moment. Being named Grand Marshal is confirmation that I am well on my way to raising and setting a great example for my children.

**Fernando:** What an honor I feel to not only have been nominated with my wife but to have been selected by our community to help represent the major progress in acceptance and bonding that has become increasingly prevalent in a modern and intelligent society. This year we are humbled to be your Allied Grand Marshals, and I hope that the LGBT Pride Celebration can continue to grow and evolve to one day be a labelless celebration of pride that includes all of our bright, intelligent, and capable Houstonians.

## 2 What do you think makes Houston's LGBT Community so unique?

**Sara:** My husband and I are raising our children in Houston, Montrose area, on purpose. The diversity seen, felt and heard daily is worth all the travels I can afford them.

**Fernando:** We are unique because we are Houstonians and we live in one of the largest cities in our country and with that we are able to push progressive and equalitarian agendas with the force that our numbers provide for us. Together as a cohesive community, the lines of distinction which we are often found facing will continue to blur until one day they will no longer exist.

## 3 What sparked your fire to begin the work that you have done for the LGBT Community?

**Sara:** My sister came out to me several years ago and I've witnessed her struggle. The sole reason I chose the LGBT community specifically is for her. I wasn't able to be there for my sister in her hardest times. I hope that in some way the work I do will lessen someone else's struggle and there will be a day when the phrase "coming out of the closet," is retired. My sister is a brave, kind soul and her constant battle to find her place in a world that doesn't understand her pain just doesn't seem fair. I hope that I can be a voice for someone that isn't being heard. I hope that I make her proud.

**Fernando:** Many years ago, I was given the opportunity to work with Bering Omega Community Services, an HIV/AIDS 501-c which has long been providing services to indigent persons with HIV/AIDS, as a member of their Board of Trustees. Thanks to the then President of the Board, Shane McCardell, I was introduced to BOCS, and from that point, my wife and I have continued to expand our support to the community we live in and look forward to continue building on that support in the future.

## 4 Who are your role models and why?

**Sara:** In using the term "role model" by definition means "a behavior or success that can be emulated by others...imitated or idolized." I choose my own path and always have. I do have individuals that have inspired me and those that I have great respect for. The most "powerful presence" I have had during my life is my Mother.

My Mother instilled strong morals in me as a child and has definitely given me the tools to be a community leader. My innate need for what is right and just, comes from her. My current girlfriends are the most interesting, beautiful, coolest people on the planet and I aspire to be the same for them. They intimidate me, they're so cool.

**Fernando:** I find that we really are a reflection of our environment; specifically the people we surround ourselves with. Two people had the greatest influence in my life on how I interact with others and who I choose to surround myself with; my mother and father. Through their education and influence, I learned the importance of respect, caring, hard work, fairness and loyalty. I was taught that because



these principals are multidimensional, they require constant introspection and effort in order to truly understand their importance and application. As an example, I cannot respect others if I do not respect myself, and once I respect myself I should respect others and require the same respect from them that I give.

**5 Being an ally to the LGBT movement can take great courage. Can you tell me about a time where you were faced with adversity for supporting the cause?**

**Sara:** I would say I am blessed to be a part of a community currently that is very inclusive and accepting. I've heard unkind words spoken from peers that have shocked me and I've seen ignorant actions that have made me nauseous. The most recent statements were made to me after I had my children. I was at an LGBT community event and a peer of mine asked me, "Now that you have kids, how are you going to introduce them to all of your gay friends? Aren't you afraid they will turn out gay?" At first I did not know how to answer. I was completely taken off guard and dumbfounded that these words came from what I had considered a "straight ally" to the LGBT community. My response: My children are in a house where we teach Love, in ALL it's glory. My hope for them is that they'd never have to 'come out' because they don't feel a need to 'closet' their feelings towards anyone. I hope they feel comfortable to bring their friends to our home and know it's a safe place to express and feel loved.

**Fernando:** It's difficult to pinpoint a specific instance because I tend not to think about specific instances, rather generalities. I know that I make every effort to always fight and protect the ideals that are important to me, so I am sure that there have been many instances that would fall under "facing adversity for supporting the cause." However, we all fight the cause, the cause of equal rights, in ways that may not seem directly connected because everyone at one time or another has or will have faced a time in their lives that they will be treated unequally and as good people it's our obligation to fight for ourselves and others.

**6 With the LGBT community being more accepted in today's society why do you think Pride is still relevant?**

**Sara:** Inclusion is a constant battle. It will always be relevant. We've come miles as a society but we have years of strife to overcome. As seen currently in Houston's city council's struggle to pass HERO, this fight is not over. Pride week is a chance for the LGBT community to celebrate who they are. It's a unique opportunity during the year to feel free and to raise our voices up in numbers to be celebrated.

**Fernando:** Pride is still relevant because "being more accepted" is not the end of the road, is just part of the ride. Once total acceptance is achieved, then I like to think that Pride will be even more relevant; a celebration of true pride, that we have found in ourselves and others.

**7 What is your favorite part about Houston Pride Week or the Houston LGBT Pride Celebration and why?**

**Sara:** Who doesn't love a good party?! Pride celebration is always full of life! The parade particularly is the best party in town!

**Fernando:** The actual pride parade is my favorite. There is so much emotion, effort, and displays of individuality in not only the parade participants but the bystanders as well. It's a wonderful display of unity and support for a cause that should be important to everyone. As the event grows it becomes evident to me that the support and evolution of the issue of equal rights also progresses.

**8 What advice would you give someone who wants to find a way to contribute to the LGBT community in some way?**

**Sara:** It is not cliché to say, "Be the change you wish to see in the world!" Go find a way to be a part of your community. There are multiple ways to volunteer. Think of something that you wish could improve, change or give voice to. Then go be it, do it and live it. It's ok to be selfish too. It feels great to give. Find something that makes you feel most needed, most utilized and a place that really nurtures your soul. Be present in the community. No excuse.

**Fernando:** There are so many events every year that people attend whose beneficiaries are LGBT associated charities and it's funny, but often people don't actually know who the charity is or what it does. The easiest way to contribute is to pick your favorite event, learn about the charity it benefits and call them.

**9 What is the one (1) thing that you'd like readers to know about you that's not in your biography?**

**Do you have a quirk?**

**Sara:** I have two! I get major social anxiety and have worked on overcoming it most of my life. I believe if you are on time, you are already late.

**Fernando:** I love jujitsu! I've never had a sport totally take me over. I can't get enough of the sport and before our twins, I would practice 10 hours a week. Its less now, given that having twins is a whole other sport that requires its own intense training!

**About their first pride story including:**

**1.City, State**

**Sara:** Houston, TX

**Fernando:** Houston, TX

**2.Year (estimated)**

**Sara:** 1995

**Fernando:** 1999

**3.The size of the crowd**

**Sara:** Man I have no clue, but thousands it seemed.

**Fernando:** Lots and Lots!

**4.Why they went**

**Sara:** I was invited by a friend and it was an opportunity to go "into the city." (I was a suburbanite)

**Fernando:** Its when I officially moved to inside the loop and I enjoy being part of my community.

**5.How it felt when they go there**

**Sara:** It was a party like I had never seen!! To come from a small conservative suburb to this amazing party was a sight to behold.

**Fernando:** Its was tons of fun, energetic, and a great spectacle!

**6.Describe their full experience that day/weekend**

**Sara:** The parade was a full day of color, music, dancing, laughing and all out celebrating. I soaked it all in.

**Fernando:** I went with a great friend of mine, we waited at a local bar (Ej's) while the parade started. After the parade was over, we meet up with several other friends and partied late.

**7.How much fun they had**

**Sara:** It should be considered a holiday, because you need at least two days to recover. It redefined party for me and it help me mold my husband and I's annual Halloween party! Costume mandatory!!

**Fernando:** Tons! It took several days to recuperate!



A portrait of Mondo Guerra, a man with dark hair, wearing thick black-rimmed glasses, a black short-sleeved shirt with a large red rose pattern, and a light-colored tie with small white polka dots. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus pink and white.

# MONDO GUERRA

Fashion designer Mondo Guerra won the hearts of judges, fellow contestants and viewers following the emotional disclosure of his HIV-positive status on Lifetime's hit reality TV competition, *Project Runway* season 8. Mondo returned to the runway in 2012 on the debut season of *Project Runway All Stars*, where he emerged as the series' first champion. And earlier this year, Mondo joined fashion guru and Emmy Award winner Tim Gunn as a mentor on the new show *Project Runway: Under the Gunn*.

Mondo has been HIV-positive for over ten years and his courageous revelation on *Project Runway* has launched him into HIV awareness advocacy. He is currently collaborating with Merck on I Design, a national HIV education campaign aimed at helping to empower people with the disease to play an active role in designing their treatment plan with their doctors. Through I Design, Mondo shares his experience living with HIV and discusses the importance of people living with HIV to have an open and honest dialogue with their doctors to address important topics such as how they are feeling on their current therapies, other conditions they may have and other medications they are taking beyond their HIV therapy.

In addition to his work with I Design, Mondo has designed an exclusive collection of frames and sunglasses for national optical boutique SEE Eyewear, with a portion of sales benefitting amFAR. He has also collaborated on a line of shoes with Crocs, Inc., a world leader in innovative casual footwear. Mondo also continues to develop his eponymous label, offering his designs exclusively on his website, [mondoguerra.com](http://mondoguerra.com).

More information on  
I Design is available at  
[www.ProjectIDesign.com](http://www.ProjectIDesign.com).





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SVEDKA

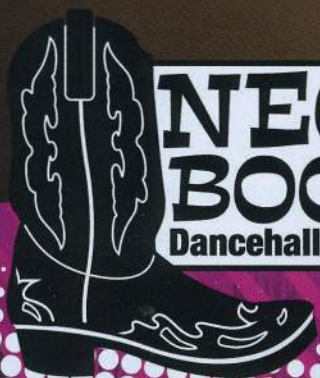
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Texas country still swings"  
- USA TODAY | March 26, 2014

"Top Ten New Venues to Hold  
and Event or Meeting"  
- BizBash.com | March 2014

"Houston's Top 10 Gay Bars,  
Clubs & Icehouses: Honorable  
Mention"  
- The Houston Press | August 23, 2013

"Best Saturday Night"  
- AbOut Magazine FACE Awards | 2013

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OutSmart Magazine - Gayest & Greatest | 2013

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STONEWALL

45

the Gay rights movement

*Ramon Johnson*



# JUNE OF 2014 MARKS THE 45<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROTESTS AT STONEWALL INN

The history of the gay rights movement can be traced to the Stonewall Inn in New York's Greenwich Village, which is considered by many to be the launch of the modern gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights movement.

This brief history of the Stonewall Riots explores the angst by LGBT young adults and police entrapment that led up to the riots and the early activism and marches that ensued throughout the country:

The Stonewall Rebellion of 1969 is widely considered the beginning of the modern LGBT rights movement. The six-day riot, which began inside of the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City, was the breaking point of years of tensions between police and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender street youth and pedestrians.

The 1960s were a heightened time for human and civil rights issues in the United States. Tensions boiled as the population tired of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam. Race dynamics were compounded by continued disenfranchisement of African-Americans, bubbling the rise of the Black Panthers and calls by Louis Farrakhan and Dr. King to stand against discrimination and disempowerment were being heard. And lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people grew increasingly intolerant of continued harassment and arrests by police.

LGBT people were subjected to civil laws that criminalized sodomy and, in New York City, allowed bars to refuse service to LGBT patrons. Arrests, harassment and instances of entrapment by police were frequent. Civil laws reinforced their actions. Establishments often cited Section 106, Subsection 6 of the New York State Penal Code to refuse service to queer patrons. The code barred premises from becoming "disorderly houses." Many, including the courts, considered homosexual patrons to be disorderly.

And, in establishments where LGBT patrons were served, they could not touch each other while they danced. Section 722, Subsection 8 of the New York State Penal Code made it an offense to "solicit men for the purpose of committing a crime against nature." Again, it was argued that homosexuality was an act against nature. Queer patrons were often entrapped by plain clothes police officers, posing as regular bar patrons. Transgender people were openly arrested on the streets.

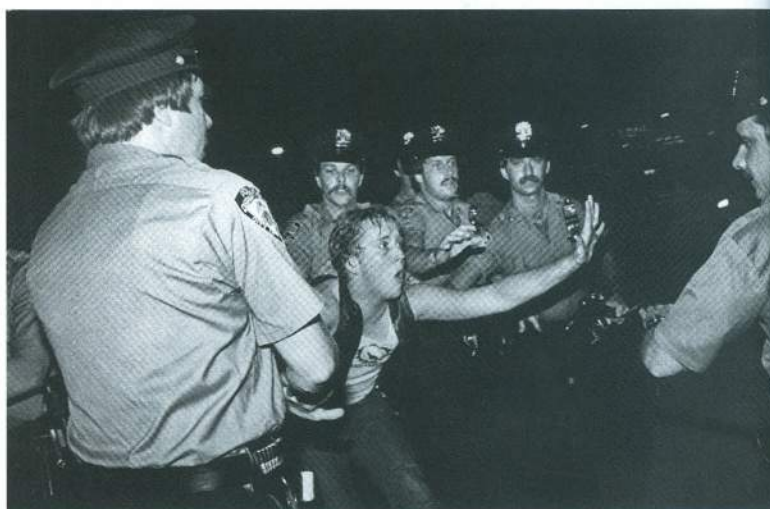
One establishment where LGBT patrons found refuge was the mob-run Stonewall Inn. To enter, bar goers paid a \$3 cover and signed a register (often with a fictitious or humorous name). Bar management was often tipped off when the local police district planned a raid on the bar and would warn LGBT patrons by turning on the lights.

However, on the morning of June 28, 1969, instead of the usual command, the NYPD First District raided the bar. But that particular time, the drag queens and street youth fought back. There were reports of stilettos, bottles, coins, bricks and debris

thrown. The altercation spilled into the streets and more queer street youth joined in the uprising. As word spread, more LGBT people from surrounding neighborhoods joined the riot. The rebellion, which lasted six days, marked the beginning of the modern LGBT rights movement.

## Early Gay Rights Organizations

Soon after Stonewall, a new wave of gay rights organizations, such as the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) were formed in response to what was



thought of as ineffective, more subdued, protests by groups like Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis.

## The Gay Liberation Front

On the third night of the Stonewall rebellion, thirty-seven men and women founded the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), a more vocal and daring organization. They were the first LGBT organization to use the word "gay" and aligned themselves with other civil rights groups like the



Black Panthers and anti-war organizations. The GLF organized same-sex dances, demonstrations and worked to include gay issues within the social movements of the Black Panthers and populist organizations. They believed that together, they "could work to restructure American society."

GLF, who often called for LGBT people to come "out of the closet and into the streets," had no bylaws or formal leadership. Cells, modeled after the Mattachine Society structure, were formed all throughout the country. GLF believed that patriarchy and sexism were the root cause of the disenfranchisement of people in the States. GLF also believe that assimilation wasn't the answer and that in order to gain rights, LGBT had to take to the streets.

### The Gay Activist Alliance Is Born

Some GLF members grew increasingly frustrated with the organization's focus on militarism, racism, and sexism as well as LGBT rights and in 1970 formed the Gay Activist Alliance, which focused exclusively only on LGBT issues. A number of other LGBT organizations splintered from GLF, including the lesbian feminist organization Lavender Menace, later to become Radical Lesbians.

The Gay Activists Alliance was most active from 1970 to 1974 and housed its headquarters on Wooster Street in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City. Their home, the Firehouse, was burned down by arsonists in 1974.

The GAA adopted the lower case Greek letter lambda (?) as their logo, symbolizing "a complete exchange of energy" or balance and unity. The organization dissolved in October 1981 and would later become Act Up! GLF held its last meeting in 1971.

### The First Gay Pride Parades

After the Stonewall riots in 1969, many LGBT people—even those that did not witness the rebellion—were inspired to contribute to the cause. Gay rights had entered the national spotlight. LGBT people began organizing, protesting and mobilizing. On July 4, 1969, a year after the Stonewall riots, the Mattachine Society along with Frank Kameny, Craig Rodwell, Randy Wicker, Barbara Gittings, Kay Lahusen and many others, picketed in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia in what was called the Annual Reminder. The protest was quiet and organized to the dismay of Craig Rodwell who felt Frank Kameny and Mattachine's methods of calm protest were not enough.

Rodwell returned to New York City and organized Christopher Street Liberation Day. The march, held on June 28, 1970, was the first gay pride march in the U.S., covering 51 blocks from Christopher Street to Central Park. Today, LGBT pride parades are held annually in multiple cities

and countries throughout the world. The month of June is widely considered Gay Pride Month.

### 45 Years After Stonewall

Forty five years after the Stonewall riots, world headlines are filled with news about the progression of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues; gay activists have taken their protests from the streets and into the virtual atmosphere, sending messages further and wider; and laws are slowly changing to ensure equal protections for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Birthed from the Mattachine Society, the Daughter of Bilitis, the Gay Liberation Front, the Gay Activist Alliance, a number of national, regional and local LGBT organizations have emerged, providing services that range from political activism to legal and economic assistance.

These organizations have been successful in assisting many openly LGBT political candidates, LGBT teens in school and college, LGBT-headed families, same-sex marriages and relationships, and the media is becoming increasingly more LGBT-friendly. Let us not forget the historic milestone of the repeal of the ban on gays serving openly in the military. However, despite the many victories since Stonewall, we continue to face challenges of inclusion, acceptance and diversity within both general society and the LGBT community.

There are still only seventeen states with legal same-sex marriage and many states where same-sex adoption is still prohibited. There are many states LGBT people can be fired just for being LGBT. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender teens make up a third of all teen suicides and binational same-sex couples continue to face immigration challenges.

Yet, despite the many difficulties we face as LGBT people, the past has been one of much progress and the picture of the future of LGBT equality has changed from the improbable to the inevitable. Progress is indeed evolutionary and with a force of LGBT activism is at its greatest heights, equality can, and will, be achieved.

Our challenges in the next forty five years will not mirror the forty of the past, but progress will move forward. Our voices, though unified, come from many of different backgrounds and of varying character. The diversity within the LGBT community is perhaps more known today than it was when the first transgender street youth threw her stiletto at oppressive police. The diversity which I refer to, not within the context of general society, but among the ranks of LGBT people all must be celebrated if we are to become a true community. We must be representative of the entire rainbow, of different likes and ideals and hues, linked of a common colorful thread.





# The March:

## A SUBJECTIVE VIEW

The march on Washington for LGBT rights can be easily discussed in terms of the dry facts or the "hard news" aspect of the march. How many were there, what groups, what city and state banners, length of time of the march, what speakers, etc. what is hard to write about is the "atmosphere" of the day, the feelings generated, the emotions and the unity and pride that was there. It's a large event that had individual and personal effects on those who participated. How do you put into words the flash of memories that rebound and make up the whole day?

There was friendliness and pride that emanated from people there and it was evident long before the crowds gathered and all around the city. A friend and I ate breakfast at a restaurant near Dupont Circle. There on

**WE HELD  
HANDS AS WE  
MARCHED,  
PERHAPS A  
POLITICAL  
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ITSELF THAT WE  
HAVE RIGHTS  
TO SHOW  
EMOTIONS THAT  
ARE NATURAL.**

the streets on the way to the Metro station it was obvious that many of the people we saw would later be at the march. The t-shirts and buttons of many, of course, were an obvious sign, but for others a subtle glow was enough

to reveal the common bond. At the Metro station the converging crowds were more apparent. Surely everyone in our car was gay, and it was very natural to start talking to the people around you, total strangers, as if they were friends.

We walked a few blocks from the nearest station to the mall with part of the group from Lansing, Michigan and passed another group from Alaska, while our group spontaneously applauded the Alaskans for coming so far.

On the parade grounds the march seemed remarkably organized (it literally started at noon, as announced, a logistics miracle). We had little time before our region's turn to march to visit others from Tidewater who had arrived. We also got to watch at least some of the first groups start on the route. My favorite memories of that are the Gay American Freedom Band and the man with the sign labeled Gay Dentist. I also got an unexplainable rush of emotion as the Ohio group marched by since I was raised there. Other memories include the matching "We are everywhere" t-shirts on two men who walked by with arms around each other's waist; the signs carried by two mothers saying "I am not a closet mother" and "My son's gay and that's OK. One memory that I like occurred even before we got to Washington. As a friend and I were driving up I-95 on the Friday before the march, a pick up truck from Florida carrying four men passed us, with its occupants smiling and waving to us. We assumed they had seen the march posters in the car window and were sympathetic to our cause. There were many emotions many of us felt during the march and the rally. We held hands as we marched, perhaps a political statement itself that we have rights to show emotions that are natural. We were caught up in the aura that was a composite of pride, unity and friendliness with a touch of festivity and politics.

Though difficult to express, you couldn't ignore the energy that enveloped the crowds, a celebration of our being and a mandate for the future.

**By J.D. Doyle**



# Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup>

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### Tues. June 24<sup>th</sup>

#### ROCK THE RUNWAY

Rock the Runway will feature  
some of the hottest models in  
Houston walking the catwalk  
in this summer's latest styles in  
underwear, swimwear and  
everything to wear on top!  
**NO COVER, ALL NIGHT**

### Thur. June 26<sup>th</sup>

#### PRIDE SUPERSTAR FINALE

Twelve contestants and 8  
weeks of showing off Houston  
local talent all comes down to  
this one night. Find out who  
will be the winner of Pride  
Superstar and take home the  
package of cash and gifts on  
this very special night.  
**NO COVER ALL NIGHT**

### Fri. June 27<sup>th</sup>

#### WONDERLAND

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Venue, better sound and  
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journey. The NEW VENUE  
will be transformed into a  
Winter Wonderland and you'll  
be amazed! Imagine confetti,  
lasers, fog and... SNOW?!

### Sun. June 29<sup>th</sup>

#### FOAM PARTY

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spins all the songs YOU want  
to hear in the versions YOU  
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4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GAY PRIDE  
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A variety of gourmet food trucks will be on the  
800 block of Pacific Street from 6PM-3AM Gay Pride  
night to serve you a variety of delicious food.







## Congratulations, Grand Marshal Christina Gorczynski!

Thanks to you and your Co-Chair colleagues, Bryan Hlavinka, Lou Weaver, and Tamira "Augie" Augustine, for a dazzling Creating Change in Houston!

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



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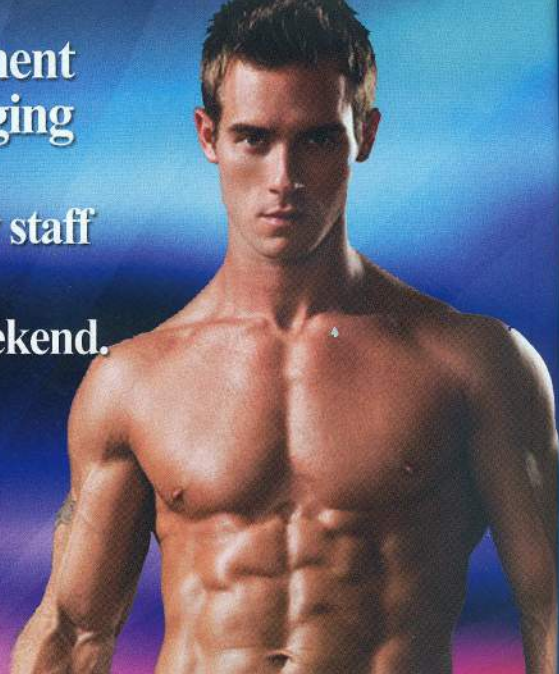


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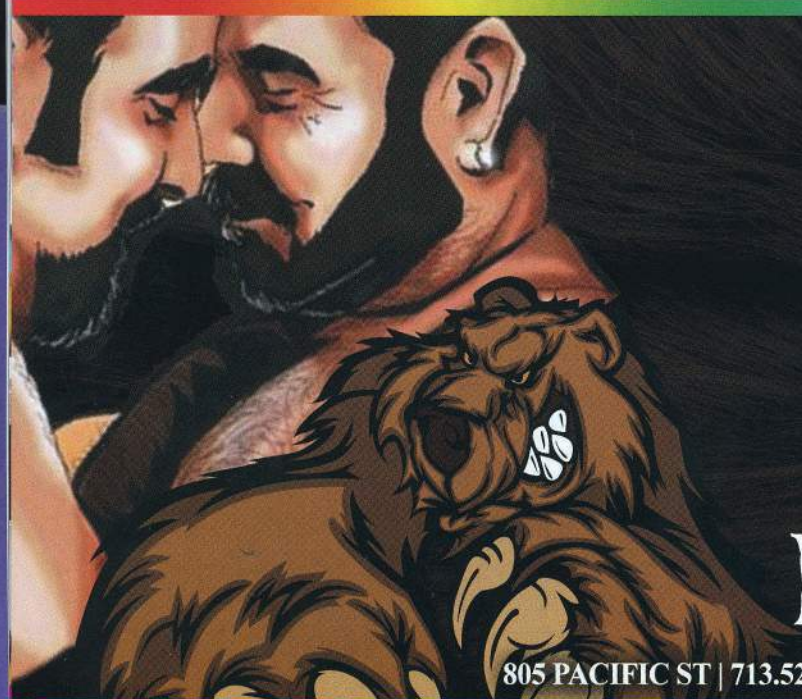
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