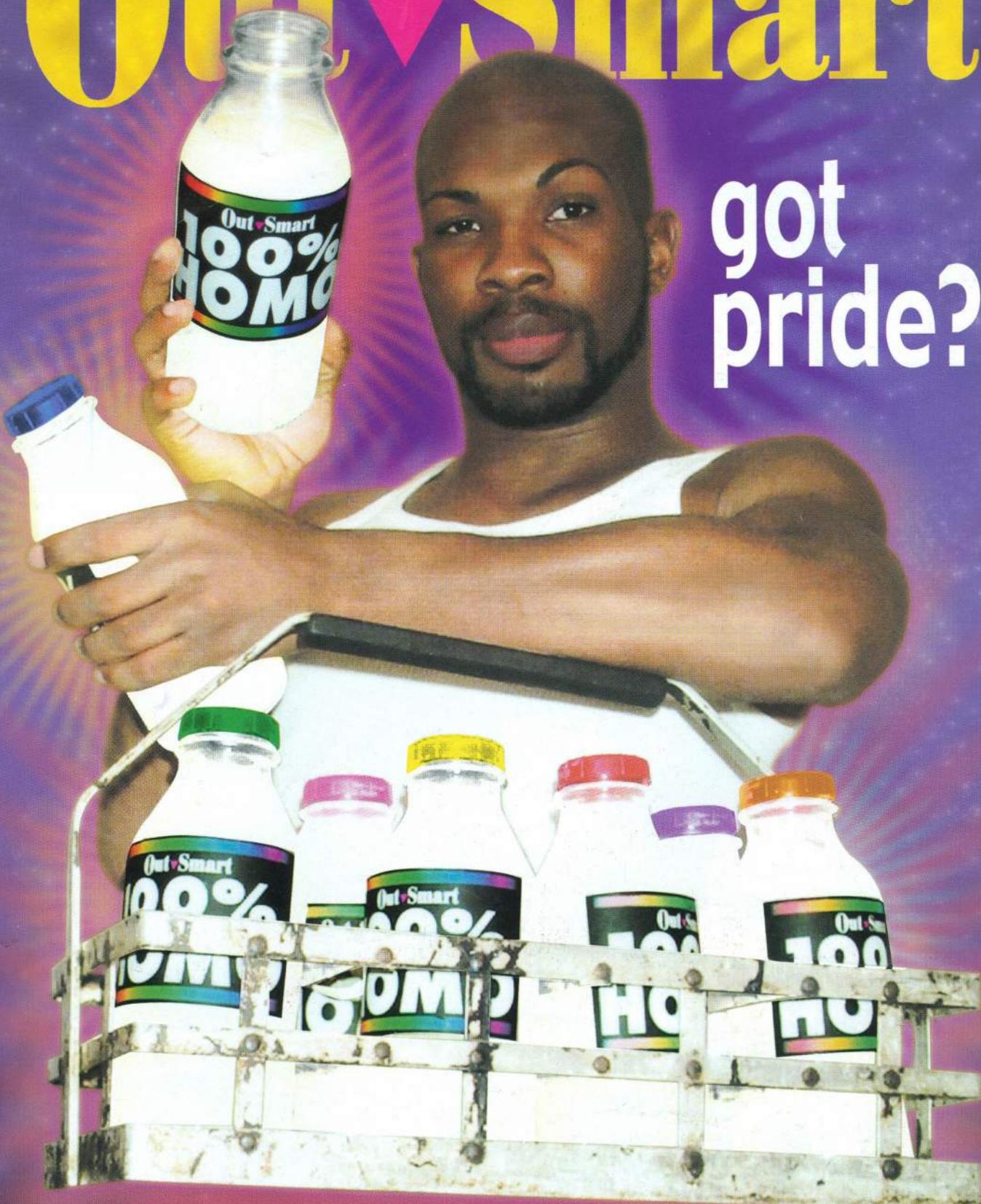


Houston's gay, lesbian, bi, and trans magazine

JUNE 2002 • COMPLIMENTARY

# OutSmart

got  
pride?



TONY CURTIS • HOUSTON'S STONEWALL • PRIDE PIX

# PRIDE PIX



Welcome to OutSmart's special Pride issue featuring the annual pictures of pride. A special acknowledgement goes to our Pride pic photographers: Dalton DeHart, Yvonne Feree, Thomas Chelena, and John Nagy, who have captured the community spirit that fill the OutSmart pages. • Ever wondered who's behind the scene in producing OutSmart each month? Here's a bit about the devoted and proud staff that keeps OutSmart rolling off the press. From all of us at OutSmart, Happy Pride Month!



**Greg Jeu.** Age: 43. Position: Publisher. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: Author Peter McWilliams. What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?: Queeny-meany-putdowns. Who was the first person you told?: My best friend Shelley Saunders. What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Ask for help when you need it; say please and thank you. Trust your intuition. Life's a bowl of: peppers—each one of them is unique: some very sweet, some bitter, and sometimes the most innocent-looking ones turn out to be the hottest.



**Jim Hurst.** Age: 44. Position: Associate publisher. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?: Something to stay cool. What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?: Eating flan in bed naked with my partner. Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?: Harvey Milk. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: Alan Davidson, local writer/massage therapist. What's the best advice you would give?: Learn to believe in yourself and the sky will be your limit. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: Confidence in myself.

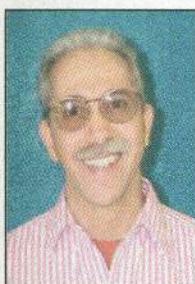
**Tim Brookover.** Age: 41. Position: Editorial director. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?: I embrace all fads. What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Never give up. What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?: Sensible flats. What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?: Trinity Broadcasting Network. Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?: Phyllis Frye. Who was the first person you told?: Eric, my best friend in high school. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: Because I was honest in living my life, all my relationships improved. Life's a bowl of: menudo—sometimes it smells a little funny, once in a while you think you just can't take it, but most of the time it's not so bad after all, and in fact it's pretty darn good.



**Ann Walton Sieber.** Age: 40. Position: Editor. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Bi. What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?: An OutSmart T-shirt, of course. What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?: Tacqueria breakfasts. Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?: Harvey Milk. Who was the first person you told?: My Unitarian youth group. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: It was all part of a continuum of growing up, exploring who I was.



**B.J. Smith.** Age: 30. Position: Photographer/graphic designer. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: Robert Mapplethorpe. What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?: Anything to do with Michael Jackson. What would make the parade even more fun?: If everyone were naked ... just kidding. Organization and less time between each float would definitely be a start. What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: My best friend Talitha once told me something her grandmother used to tell to her. It has helped me often in this lifetime: "This too shall pass." Life's a bowl of: sweaty, hairy, burly, excited nasty men wearing rubber chaps.



**Blase DiStefano.** Age: 55. Position: Creative director/entertainment editor. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: Rita Mae Brown. What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?: Rosie O'Donnell. What would make the parade even more fun?: Bette Midler, Whoopi Goldberg, and Dame Edna. What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Never say never. Read. Life's a bowl of: Kevin Bacon.



**Thomas Chelena.** Age: 59 & 11 months. Position: Account executive. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?: Miss Nellie in leather chaps & harness. What would make the parade even more fun?: Marching bands. What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Celebrate life today!—Never, never wait for tomorrow, or for retirement. This is it ... now! Life's a bowl of: experiences.



**John Nagy** Age: 39. Position: Account executive. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Straight...oh, OK, GAY! What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?: A big smile! What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?: Smoking and doughnuts. Life's a bowl of: great friends. Who was the first person you told?: My baby sister, but she already had me figured out. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: I slept with men rather than women.



**Debbie Ratliff.** Age: 31. Position: Account executive. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Just Debbie. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: Boy George—I didn't know gay people existed until I saw him come out in an interview with Barbara Walters. What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?: Anne Heche. What would make the parade even more fun?: Having it in the winter. What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Labels limit you. Life's a bowl of: possibilities.



**Todd Pace** Age: Thirtysomething. Position: Account executive. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: Ellen DeGeneres. She's got guts! What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?: Christopher Lowell. Yuk! What would make the parade even more fun?: Seeing The ROCK walk by! He's my hero! What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Do the right thing. If not, Karma will get you every time! Life's a bowl of: ups & downs. Enjoy the ups and learn from the downs! Stay strong!



# It Was



# Years Ago Today

Houston's Stonewall: The night

*You squeeze mine, Anita . . . I'll squeeze yours,  
Anita;  
Yours are frozen, Anita . . . You are chosen, Anita.  
Terrible cost, Anita . . . All covered in frost, Anita;  
Smile and pray, Anita . . . You'll feel gay!!*

—Tom Paxton

**W**hen renowned singer, Florida Citrus Commission spokesperson, and ardent Christian Anita Bryant was asked by the Texas Bar Association to sing at their annual state convention held in Houston in June 1977, no one could have foreseen what significance her appearance would have on our community. The leaders of the march to protest her antediluvian views had no inkling that their peaceful, yet loud, protest would rouse Houston's queer populace with a roar unheard since NYC's Stonewall riot of '69.

While Greenwich Village was the unruly sight of broken bones, sidewalk bloodshed, and uprooted parking meters hurled through windows, Houston's tame nighttime demonstration was a love fest of slogans, candlelight, and long-stemmed daisies. Stonewall roused the nation; but it was "hurricane Anita" who personalized our struggle.

By December 1976, Bryant's career, while immensely lucrative from singing appearances at corporate gigs and religious conferences, had stalled. Once, she had been Miss Oklahoma and a second runner-up for Miss America. A discovery of Arthur Godfrey's, she had three gold records. In the '60s, she toured with Bob Hope and his USO shows, was featured with Billy Graham on his crusades, had sung at both presidential conventions in 1968, and delivered her signature *Battle Hymn of the Republic* at Lyndon Johnson's funeral. But now, still pretty, popular, her voice unmarred, she hawked orange juice from Florida. She needed a jumpstart with national exposure.

When Florida's Dade County Metro Commission unanimously passed an amendment to their civil rights ordinance in December 1976 that banned discrimination in housing, public accommodations, and employment based on "affectional or sexual preference," Anita Bryant found her new voice.

Overnight, she became the public persona for the "straight-thinking normal majority." She became shrill and strident, a mouthpiece for a vengeful Old Testament God as she spewed hate and bigotry with abandon.

Her *Save Our Children From Homosexuals* petition drive bowled over the commissioners, who were forced by law to put the ordinance to the vote. Gays lost 2-1. As of June 7, 1977, it was legal to discriminate against homosexuals in Dade County.

**W**e marched past the Hyatt to the library plaza [as] a group of angry individuals being mistreated by a lot of elements in society, symbolized by Anita Bryant. But we marched back as a community, no longer angry but confident that we could make a difference in our lives.

Flushed with easy success, Bryant set her sights much further. "We shall not let the nation down," she vowed.

She was now a national media celebrity with spectacular clout, quoting Scripture. She had become extremely dangerous. It was this Anita Bryant who was coming to Houston, June 16, at the invitation of the Texas Bar Association to sing at their President's Dinner.

"I found out that the Texas Bar Association was having her appear at their state convention at the Hyatt," remembers *Houston Post* reporter Jane Ely. "Two lawyers told me, but they didn't want to get crossways with the bar. My recollection was that the bar people were kind of doing this in defiance. How and why the stupid Bar

Association would have wanted Anita Bryant? Who'd say, *Oh, great, let's get Anita Bryant to come sing for us?* I can't imagine they weren't making a statement."

Veteran GLBT rights activist Ray Hill credits Ely's *Post* article as the heads-up warning to Houston's somewhat scattered gay community. To some in the nascent activist movement, Hill was persona non grata, having been released from prison only two years earlier. But Gary Van Ooteghem, Houston Gay Political Caucus president, realized Hill's value as a political organizer and rough-hewn firebrand. Both men worked together to bring off a protest march that would culminate at the downtown Hyatt at the precise moment Anita Bryant took the stage to sing for the assembled lawyers.

"The first word we had of it was in print from Jane Ely," says Hill, "and that gave us plenty of time to organize. I come from the old anti-war and civil rights movements. Marching and demonstrating I know how to do. My problem was that I was just out of prison in '75, so I was a real embarrassment to the community."

"But we started having meetings and it became quite apparent that I knew how to do this and they didn't. So we divided up the responsibilities. Since I knew the nuts and bolts stuff, I would be the liaison to the police and be in charge of security."

With the caucus shaky but operational, allied with the Houston Human Rights League, the Gay Activists Alliance at the University of Houston, the Metropolitan Community Church, and student groups from Rice University, they had a reasonable coalition, in Hill's words, to "stir the pot."

They invited national heavy hitters such as MCC founder Troy Perry, *The Advocate*'s publisher David Goldstein, Ginny Apuzzo from the Gay Rights National Lobby, and *All in the Family* supporting actress Liz Torres.

Since Houston at that time didn't permit the streets to be closed at night for a parade, they asked and got permission to march down the sidewalks of both Smith

## Anita Bryant came to town

By D.L. Groover

and Louisiana streets. Meeting in the parking lot of the old Depository II bar on McGowen, the small rally would head downtown at 8 p.m.

Hill and Van Ooteghem anticipated 300 marchers. That would have been a respectable turnout. What they got was an incredible outpouring, estimated anywhere from 4,000 to 10,000.

"Heaven knows where they were parking their cars," says Hill. "For years, I estimated the crowd at about 6,000. Gary insisted that we use the number 12,000. I was always a little uncomfortable with that, and I told him, 'If I outlive you, it's going to be 6,000. If you outlive me, it's going to be 12,000.' When he died, I had so much respect for his activism, I adopted his figure. So you can quote me at 12,000. He who lives the longest gets to write the memoirs."

There were so many people, the police ordered the marchers off the sidewalks and onto the two streets, exactly where Hill and Van Ooteghem wanted to be for greatest media visibility. Police called in reinforcements to control the DeMille-like multitudes; and the noisy, peaceful demonstration was covered by local press, television, and on live NBC national radio.

John Nechman, former Stonewall Lawyers president, was 12 years old when he heard the march over the radio in his parents' car.

"Suddenly, a nervous-sounding radio announcer came on, talking about a civil uprising in downtown! When he started mentioning that the crowd was comprised of homosexuals, my nervous parents quickly changed the station. The second we got home, I ran and turned on the radio—in my closet, I'm embarrassed to say—and found a station that was providing continuous coverage of the event. I remember hearing descriptions of a 'sea of men' coming from all directions and converging on and around the Hyatt, where they all peacefully but potently began chanting so loud that many feared the event would have to be cancelled.

"When I tell people today of what I remember of that magical night at the Hyatt 25 years ago, they look at me like I'm crazy. 'That couldn't happen in quiet, complacent Houston!' Bryant's pathetic crusade was very big national news back then; but that night, Houston's finest were able to drown out her hate. I don't think it's an understatement to refer to that event as our Stonewall. That was the first time in my life that I really knew I wasn't the only one."

Marion Coleman, owner of the printing firm House of Coleman and executor of Gary Van Ooteghem's estate, while hazy on

details, recalls the march's indelible emotions.

"I was so proud of our community because we really stepped up and stepped forward. It was very positive and very loving in what we were trying to do. It wasn't so much as anger as it was all of us getting together and being together and supporting each other. That was the most important thing."

"The demonstration was great fun," says Jane Ely. "It kind of overwhelmed everyone. It brought out a great mixture. It brought out all the old civil rights people; it brought out the anti-war people who hadn't got to go to a good demonstration in a long time; and it brought out a lot of the gay community that was the first time they had done anything. Here they were with all these people who were glad to see them. It was an experience of acceptance and support."

"I wish so much I could have been there in person," recalls Nechman. "It's one of those things I'll never forget. To this day, whenever I travel around the country and speak, it's something I bring up. We had our own incredible moment that evening here in Houston. It really galvanized this community in so many ways."

"As I listened on the radio, there was a respect in the announcer's voice. They may have expected a few vocal people with placards, but they never expected this mob that was so well controlled and ready to make their voices heard. Other than the hysterical stories, you didn't hear much about the GLBT community. And here was a night when anybody, even if they were homophobic, would have been impressed with this amazing turnout that could be heard throughout the Hyatt."

"I've always considered that particular event the birthplace of Houston's activism," Ray Hill says, "and the birthplace of Houston's GLBT people as a community."

"We marched past the Hyatt to the library plaza [as] a group of angry individuals being mistreated by a lot of elements in society, symbolized by Anita Bryant. But we marched back as a community, no longer angry but confident that we could make a difference in our lives. We could marshal the attention of the power brokers and it would ultimately result in some level of equality for us."

The protest demonstration's slogan that night was: *For one evening come out of your closet, you may never go back.*

"That proved to be true for hundreds of people," says Hill with pride. "Houston's gay and lesbian community actually became a community. Before Anita, gay community meant where the bars were; after Anita, gay community meant people."

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# Anita Bryant

Everything isn't coming up citrus for Anita

by Sarah Richards

Imagine showing up for a press conference with the whole world watching—and you get a banana cream pie smack in the kiss. Anita Bryant's story is perhaps the greatest proof of that age-old saying, "What goes around, comes around."

Twenty-five years ago, "America's sweetheart" was busy touring the country, speaking out against homosexuality. For three years running, the Miss America runner-up had won *Good Housekeeping's* "Most Admired Woman in America" contest, and was squeezing a fruitful ad campaign with the Florida Citrus Growers that made her one of the most recognized faces in America.

And there were the books—many of them, and with titles like *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* and *At Any Cost*.

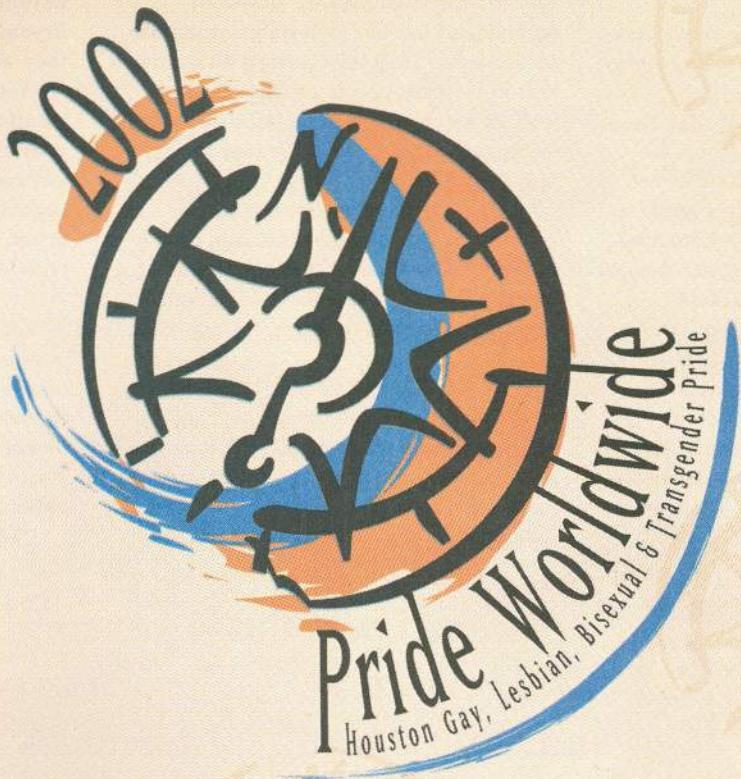
But to this day, it is Bryant's 1977 *Save our Children* campaign to repeal an ordinance she believed forced private and religious schools to hire gay teachers that won her the most notoriety. The boycotts, death threats, crank calls, poop, and voodoo dolls heaped upon Bryant eventually brought about her downfall. She lost her advertising gigs as well as her husband.

"If Stonewall was the match that started the modern gay liberation movement, then Anita Bryant was really the wildfire that spread across the entire country," James Sears, author of *Rebels, Rubyfruit and Rhinestones: Queering Space in the Stonewall South*, has said.

Fast forward 25 years. Once again, things aren't looking too rosy for Bryant. After purchasing the Music Mansion in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, Bryant and her new husband, former astronaut test crewman Charlie Dry, began producing a Christian show called *Anita With Love*. But low/no attendance meant the gig was shuttered.

Bryant could not be reached for comment, but verbiage on her website promises that it is undergoing the always portentous "transitional phase" with "exciting announcements forthcoming." No word yet, though, as to when ex-employees and other creditors will be paid. They are reportedly owed thousands of dollars in numerous states.

With reporting by the *St. Petersburg Times*



# EXPLORE YOUR **WORLD** OF PRIDE

## YOUR HOUSTON PRIDE 2002 ITINERARY:

**FRI JUNE 21 PRIDE KICK-OFF PARTY**, Sonoma, 1415 California, 8 p.m. - 2 a.m. Socialize with fellow community members and enjoy a cash bar and fabulous family entertainment at this all-ages event. \$10 donation requested.

**DAYS OF PRIDE** Experience the diversity of our world during a week of community-sponsored events with a different focus each day:

**SAT JUNE 22** *Health & Recreation Day*  
**SUN JUNE 23** *Family & Youth Day*  
**MON JUNE 24** *Community Awareness Day*  
**TUE JUNE 25** *Commemoration Day*  
**WED JUNE 26** *Spirituality Day*  
**THU JUNE 27** *Pride Worldwide Day*  
**FRI JUNE 28** *Arts Appreciation Day* Featuring the First Annual **PRIDE CABARET**, *Before the Parade Passes By*, Alley Theatre, 615 Texas, 8-10 p.m. Some of the finest entertainers of the Houston stage perform in this benefit for Houston Pride. Call 713-228-8421 for tickets.

**SAT JUNE 29** America's original nighttime **PRIDE PARADE** steps off at 8:45 p.m. on Westheimer between Woodhead and Whitney. Experience the fun and excitement you've come to expect from the Southwest's largest GLBT event, along with new announcers' stages, new lighting and other surprises.

**A WORLD OF PRIDE** is too big to fit here. Get all of the details at [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org) and in your GLBT community publications.

## ITINERARY CHECKLIST:

**DRESS PROUD** Get your 2002 T-shirts, tanks and hats at Basic Brothers, 1232 Westheimer; M2M Fashions, 3400 Montrose; and other retail outlets. Find a complete list at [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org).

**TAKE A SEAT** Purchase bleacher seating—the best spot for watching the Pride Parade—for yourself and your friends. Call 713-529-6979 for information.

**GET A ROOM** Visiting from out-of-town? Spend Parade weekend at the Holiday Inn Select near Greenway Plaza for a flat rate of \$69 per night. Call 1-800-HOLIDAY and use group booking code PRI.

**BUT DON'T SLEEP** Join us at Rich's Houston, 2401 San Jacinto, host of the official Pride parties on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

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# PRIDE PIX



**David Lindsay.** Age: 27. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?: Least as possible. What's your favorite

unhealthy indulgence?: Smoking. Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?: Luke. Who was the first person you told?: Mom. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: I was always out.

Chris Donatella. Age: 40. Occupation: Self-employed/upholstery. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Lesbian. What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?: Tight mesh shirt from Basic Brothers. What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?: Body women painting. Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?: Marion Coleman. Who was the first person you told?: My dad. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: I became real with all women.

Ken Mingus. Age: 43. Occupation: Sales. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?: TGRA chapter dress shirt, jeans, boots, and a cowboy hat. What's your

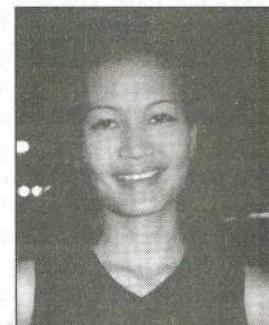


favorite unhealthy indulgence?: Beer. Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?: Annise Parker. Who was the first person you told?: A friend at church. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: I was just relieved that I actually told someone.

Sophia Cheung. Age: 23. Occupation: X-Ray Student. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Lesbian. What GLBT writer, artist, or

performer has made a difference in your life?: Sarah McLaughlan. What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see

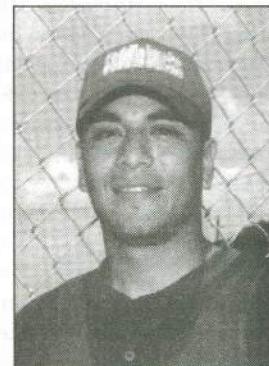
again?: RuPaul. What would make the parade even more fun?: Monkeys dressed as Marilyn. What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Live every moment you can 'cause life is too damn short! Life's a bowl of: chocolate.



Vincent Sanchez. Age: I still get ID-ed. Occupation: Banking. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What will you be wearing at the

Pride parade?: Shorts, T-shirt, & baseball cap. What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?: Bud Light. Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?:

Billy Bean & the gay Boy Scout leader. Who was the first person you told?: Myself. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: I grew taller.



Armando Orduna. Age: 28. Occupation: Community relations for the Children's Museum. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or

Straight?: Straight. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: Federico Garcia Lorca. What gay fad/mannerism/

celeb do you wish you could never see again?: John. What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Eat breakfast. Life's a bowl of: bourbon on the rocks.

Jessica Arias. Age: 26. Occupation: Personal trainer. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or

Straight?: Bi. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?: My friend Tony. What's the

best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?: Be yourself always.



Tony Arrington. Age: 32. Occupation: Physical therapist. Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?: Gay. What will you be wearing at the

Pride parade?: Shorts and T-shirt.

What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?: Beer. Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?: None. Who was



the first person you told?: A friend. What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?: The way I dress.

# INSIDE PRIDE

A history of the Pride movement

by Mark Willis



**W**hat we know as Pride began with a small civil disturbance in New York's Greenwich Village. Bars that attracted gay and lesbian customers were often subjected to police harassment, usually a raid, including the arrest of anyone in the bar deemed "deviant." In late June of 1969, a raid on one of these bars, the Stonewall Inn, resulted in several nights of conflict now called the Stonewall Riots. Although barely noticed at the time (and much smaller than many similar incidents of the era), it is the event that most of us consider the birth of our equal rights movement.

A year later, the events at the Stonewall were commemorated by a march in New York, as well as in several major cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Francisco. The tone was one of protest rather than celebration, and most ended with a political rally rather than a festival.

Over the next several years this movement attempted to define its identity, moving from calling itself Gay Liberation and similar names, on to what we now call Pride. Even now, some locations don't call it Pride, for instance, the Alan Ross Freedom Parade in Dallas or Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras. Organizers in France and Germany use "Christopher Street Day" in recognition of the location of the Stonewall Inn. However, Pride is generally accepted as the overall term for the movement.

Over the years we have often been spurred to action by events that affected us

negatively. After Stonewall ignited the first wave of Pride activity, the wave continued in response to the homophobic campaigning of singer/orange juice queen Anita Bryant (see p. 50, "It Was 25 Years Ago Today") and the murder of gay San Francisco politician Harvey Milk. And in Sydney, Australia, police used brutal force to suppress the Aussies' first march, creating their own Stonewall. In response to these events, cities all over the country and world, including Houston, held their first gay march or rally.

In 1982, members from five of the major groups organizing these events met in Boston, and founded a network of support that is now known as InterPride.

Through the challenges of the '80s and '90s, the number of Pride celebrations increased, and spread all internationally. We estimate that there are nearly 400 Pride celebrations around the world. There are parades, marches, rallies, festivals, dances, picnics, proms, and any other type of event you can imagine. The smallest are a hundred people or less in rural communities or places where it's viewed as dangerous to gather and be identified as gay or lesbian. The mega-Prides of New York, San Francisco, Toronto, and Sydney attract more than 800,000 people. Some communities have a week or more of events, and some are on one day only. Most are in the month of June, but some have moved to the spring or autumn months to beat the heat. Some have even followed Houston's lead (we were the first!) and gone to a night parade.

We are fortunate to be in Houston, for we have the largest Pride parade in the South Central and Southwestern United States, and have one of the most diverse and inclusive group of participants and spectators anywhere. We have consistently been one of the leading organizations in InterPride and are respected for our stability and experience.

Every group needs a day to celebrate its identity. Whether it's St. Patrick's Day or Cinco de Mayo, Juneteenth or Bastille Day, a recognized holiday or season brings a diverse group together, creating unity, if for only a very short time. We have Pride. Having our community on display lets people know there is a whole new world to explore beyond the bars and nightclubs. When people know they are not alone, coming out becomes easier.

I wish everyone a festive Pride season, and hope you will attend some of the many events here in Houston, and even travel to experience Pride elsewhere. Even though it's my busiest month of the year, it's still one of my favorite holidays. I hope you will take advantage of all it has to offer, and enjoy it as much as I do.

*Mark Willis has been involved with the Pride Committee of Houston since 1997 as both parade coordinator and as secretary. In 2000 he was elected to be one of the regional directors of InterPride, the International Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Pride Coordinators. (See InterPride's global Pride calendar at [www.InterPride.org](http://www.InterPride.org).) Originally from New Orleans, Willis has lived in Houston since 1991.*



# Herlinda Mela Contreras

Serving Pride on Tap

by Eric A.T. Dieckman

I'm proud to give my women a place to go and have a good time and not be worried about this and that," says Herlinda "Mela" Contreras, 55, of her lesbian Tejano bar, Mela's, at 302 Tuam. "I'm proud I've been around as long as I have."

Mela's opened its doors in 1980. Back when the average non-Latino Houstonian labeled everyone Hispanic as "Mexican" and considered it scary to even enter a Tejano bar. Fortunately, Contreras says she encountered little to no resistance from the Latino community to her women's bar. And here it still is, through the tough times, through the ups and downs that come with bar ownership. ("It's kind of hard to own a women's bar," Contreras says. "They don't support the bar as much as men would. That's just the way they are.") How does one maintain the confidence to stride through all those highs and lows? Contreras says a lot has to do with the support she got from her family.

Born and raised in Houston, Contreras was one of 16 children. All of her nine sis-

ters, six brothers, and both parents knew at an early age that Contreras was gay. Yet no one ever objected. "My family, I guess, always knew I was gay, but we didn't really talk about it. They all accepted me." Of course there was the ubiquitous hassle from peers and outsiders, but never from family. "You know, family. They're always there for me, I'm always there for them."

Bar ownership demands a lot of one's time. These days, after almost half of her family has passed on, Contreras finds new family in the regulars at Mela's. The Jefferson Davis high school class of '68 graduate spends most of her time there, keeping shop with her partner, Eileen Ledgerwood, 39, at her side. Mela's fills such a tight niche, no other bar like it exists in town. The closest is NRG—although NRG is more of a guy's hangout, plus it's more Central American and Cuban, not so much the Tejano crowd. To find anything like Mela's, one would have to venture out to San Antonio. Niche aside, Mela's has changed. Contreras comments non-Hispanics are beginning to get over the aforemen-

tioned stereotype that Tejano bars are dangerous places where white folks (or *bolillos*, meaning "white bread") are not welcome. At Mela's can be found drinkers of any race, either sex, straight couples even, enjoying mixed drinks or spicy-cool *micheladas*, a house favorite made with Mexican beer (preferably Corona) mixed with lime and hot sauce. Contreras might even be found taking a moment to chill with her drink of choice, Crown and Diet Coke.

As grand marshal of this year's Pride parade, Contreras is proud to be a woman who owns a bar for other Hispanic women. But she serves her community in more ways than that. "I'm there for the community, whatever that community is, whatever nationality. Anybody who comes to me for a fund-raiser, I've never told anybody no." Her fondest memory is of a Christmas three years ago. Contreras arranged for two impoverished families to receive a truckload each of furniture, food, and toys. "Seeing the kids, how their eyes just shined, it made me smile, made me feel really good inside. That one I always remember." ■



## Irv & Jane Smith

**PFLAG parents progress from shock to pride**

by Sarah Richards



Irv Smith remembers the day his son first revealed he was gay. He had been celebrating his 31st wedding anniversary with his wife at a Houston restaurant when the couple opened a letter addressed to them from their son. It was brief and to the point.

"He merely said, 'I'm moving to a new apartment. Here's the address. It's a one-bedroom apartment. My friend Gary is moving in with me. Love, Paul,'" recalls the 67-year-old retired oil engineer.

But the aftershocks of the letter were anything but brief.

The news that their only son was gay profoundly shocked the Smiths, sending them tumbling down a steep road of depression and fear.

"It was devastating," says Jane, sipping on an iced coffee at a Westheimer café. "I thought I knew how to raise children because I was a first-grade teacher. I thought, *Oh my God, I've done something awful*. I cried for three years."

But the Smiths told their son they would do their best to come to terms with his revelation. Six months passed before they attended their first Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) meeting. The topic of discussion that night was marching in the Pride parade. For two Texans who considered themselves "apathetic

Republicans" and members of the Methodist church, it was just too much.

"On the way back from the meeting, I said to Irv, 'Forget the parade. I just want to stop crying!'" says Jane, 66.

Nearly 10 years have passed since that first meeting—and what a decade it has been. On June 29, the Smiths will be perched on the back seat of a convertible, waving and grooving to the beats at Houston's annual Pride parade as the honorary grand marshals. They admit to having come a long way since the days they believed upbringing and environment caused a person to become homosexual.

"Our son's coming out gave us a real cause," says Jane.

After working on billboard campaigns and numerous conferences as well as coordinating PFLAG Houston's help line, Jane recently became a board member of the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Over the years, Irv has had editorial letters published in the likes of the *Wall Street Journal*. He and Jane have also provided guidance counselors at high schools in the Fort Bend district with information and pamphlets for gay teens.

Neither Jane nor Irv knew much about the gay community prior to their son's coming out.

"There were probably some gay roughnecks on the rigs I was working on, and they

were probably deeply closeted," says Irv. "When we were in high school, *fairy* was the word used for gay. I'd never heard the word *lesbian*."

After experiencing so much emotional upheaval—including the decision to leave the Methodist church for a Unitarian congregation—the couple decided they could help others going through similar situations by getting involved with PFLAG. They continue to work on promoting gay rights in the workplace and schools, and hope that recent court rulings like the one in Arkansas—in which a gay student was beaten, then successfully sued the local school district for failing to protect him—will convince businesses and schools alike that protecting sexual minorities is not merely an ethical requirement, but a financial must.

But it is undoubtedly the human cost of ignorance the Smiths have fought most arduously to end. For eight years, they watched their son's boyfriend struggle with a family unwilling to accept him for being gay.

"He would come to me and say, 'Why can you accept me, and yet my parents can't?'" Jane remembers. "It would touch us so much."

He later died from AIDS, having never told the Smiths he was sick.

"The lessons have been very painful," Jane remarks. "But they have been very good for us. It has kind of been like an awakening." ■

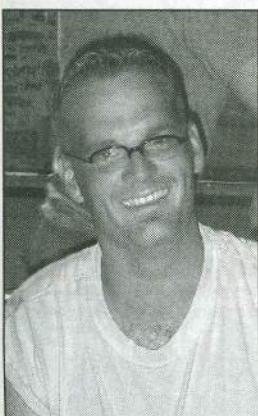
# PRIDE PIX



**Sallie Woodell.**  
**Age:** 25.  
**Occupation:**  
Bookstore  
manager. **Gay,**  
**Lesbian, Bi,**  
**Trans, or**  
**Straight?**:  
Lesbian. **What**  
**will you be**  
**wearing at the**  
**Pride parade?**:

**My HRC T-shirt. What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?**: Alcohol. **Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?**: The girlfriend of the woman in California who was killed by dogs, who is fighting for emotional & other damages; and Rita Mae Brown. **Who was the first person you told?**: My sister. **What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?**: My perception of people, treatment of gays, and the reaction when people find out that I'm gay.

**Corbin Young.**  
**Age:** 38.  
**Occupation:**  
Merchandiser.  
**Gay, Lesbian, Bi,**  
**Trans, or**  
**Straight?**: Gay.  
**What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?**:  
Sweets. **Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?**: Rosie O'Donnell. **Who was the first person you told?**: My brother. **What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?**: The ability to show affection openly.



**John Brown. Gay,**  
**Lesbian, Bi, Trans,**  
**or Straight?**: Gay.  
**What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?**:  
Gallery Furniture T-shirt. **What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?**: This and that. **Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?**:

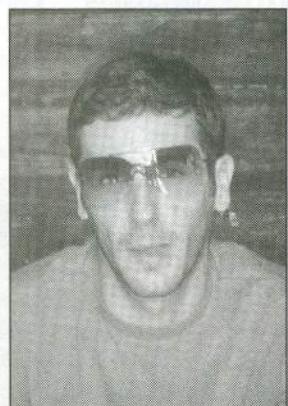
**Mattress Mack. Who was the first person you told?**: My sister. **What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?**: Drink prices.

**Tammy Tran**  
**Age:** 22.  
**Occupation:**  
Hotel &  
Restaurant  
Management  
**Gay, Lesbian,**  
**Bi, Trans, or**  
**Straight?**:  
Lesbian. **What**  
**GLBT writer,**  
**artist, or**



**performer has made a difference in your life?**: Ellen DeGeneres. **What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?**: RuPaul. **What would make the parade even more fun?**: Women flashing! **What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?**: "Learn from yesterday, live for today, and hope for the future." **Life's a bowl of:** luscious cherries.

**Rattaele Soggiu.**  
**Age:** 29. **Gay,**  
**Lesbian, Bi,**  
**Trans, or**  
**Straight?**: Gay.  
**What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?**: Oscar Wilde. **What gay fad/mannerism/**

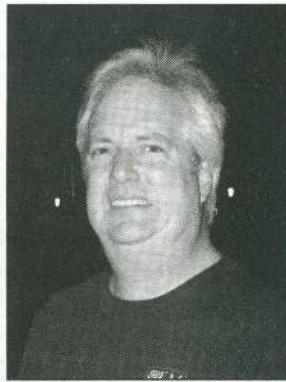


**celeb do you wish you could never see again?**: Celine Dion. **What would make the parade even more fun?**: Fashion. **What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?**: *Vivi ogni giorno come fosse l'ultimo!* (Live every day as if it is your last!!) **Life's a bowl of:** dreams.

**Wade Wilson. Age:** 42. **Occupation:** Art education director. **Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?**: Gay. **What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?**: Artist Ross Bleckner. He paints brilliantly and supports the community. **What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?**: Boys who call everyone "girl." **What would make the parade even more fun?**: A

**float of Houston TV weathermen.**  
**What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?**: Kill 'em with kindness. Always take the high road, the view is better.

**Life's a bowl of:** oxymorons.



**Tammy Yoder. Age:** 33. **Occupation:** Self-employed, owner Chulo's Icehouse. **Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?**:

**Straight. What GLBT writer, artist, or performer has made a difference in your life?**: John Nagy. **What gay fad/mannerism/celeb do you wish you could never see again?**: Cher. **What would make the parade even more fun?**: Fireworks. **What's the best advice you've received and what is the best advice you would give?**: Life is too short to be miserable. **Life's a bowl of:** beer caps.



**Adam Esguena Age:** 24. **Occupation:** Photo lab manager. **Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, or Straight?**: Gay. **What will you be wearing at the Pride parade?**: Almost nothing. **What's your favorite unhealthy indulgence?**: Strawberry cheesecake. **Who is a hero to you in the GLBT movement?**: Mr. Dalton DeHart—he's the best. **Who was the first person**



**you told?**: Both of my parents; they're completely cool. **What's the biggest thing that changed after you came out?**: The atmosphere. It's more fun being in the gay crowd than the other crowd.



# Pride Week 2002

**H**ouston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgender Pride 2002 comprises nine days of social, cultural, educational, and charitable events sponsored by the Pride Committee of Houston and other GLBT community organizations.

While Houston Pride celebrations of the past several years have lasted a month or more, this year's festivities are much more manageable and focused in what we on the Pride Committee hope will be a more meaningful series of events for Houston's GLBT community.

Another change aiming toward a more meaningful celebration is in the scheduling of events. Between the Pride Kickoff Party on Friday, June 21, and the world-famous nighttime Pride parade on Saturday, June 29, is a week of community-sponsored events. Each day has a different focus to

emphasize the wide diversity of our community: Saturday, June 22, is Health & Recreation Day; Sunday, June 23, Family & Youth Day; Monday, June 24, Community Awareness Day; Tuesday, June 25, Commemoration Day; Wednesday, June 26, Spirituality Day; Thursday, June 27, Pride Worldwide Day; and Friday, June 28, Arts Appreciation Day.

Arts Appreciation Day begins the exciting parade weekend with the very special presentation of the first annual Pride Cabaret, "Before the Parade Passes By," at the Alley Theatre. Then Houston Pride 2002 climaxes with the exuberant Pride parade on Saturday, June 29. There are several ways to take full advantage of all the festive activities being offered during this year's parade weekend. Purchase bleacher seating—the best spot for watching the Pride parade—for yourself

and your friends. Call 713/529-6979 for information. Visiting from out-of-town? Spend parade weekend at the Holiday Inn Select near Greenway Plaza, two miles from the parade site. Call 1-800/HOLIDAY for reservations and use group booking code PRI for a flat rate of \$69 per room per night. And join us at Rich's Houston, 2401 San Jacinto, host of the official Pride parties on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Listed here are the events scheduled as of press time. For a complete up-to-date listing, check out the Pride Committee website, [www.pridehouston.org](http://www.pridehouston.org). All events are open to the public and attire is casual, unless otherwise noted. Since event details are subject to change, contact the individual event sponsors for any changes, cancellations, or additional information.

—Troy Christensen  
Houston Pride Committee

## FRIDAY, JUNE 21

### Pride Kickoff Party

Meet and mingle with fellow community members and enjoy a cash bar and fabulous family entertainment at this all-ages event starting Pride 2002. 8 p.m.–2 a.m., Sonoma, 1415 California. \$10 donation. 713/529-6979, [info@pridehouston.org](mailto:info@pridehouston.org).

## SATURDAY, JUNE 22

### Health & Recreation Day

### Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center Art Festival

A number of local artists, including David Aylsworth, Patrick Palmer, Tori McMillan,

and Vera Taylor, will have work in the community center art festival. Refreshments and live music. Proceeds from the silent-auction art sale will benefit the center. 7:30 p.m., 803 Hawthorne, 713-524-3818. \$10.

## SUNDAY, JUNE 23

### Family & Youth Day

**Pride Family and Youth Fun Day**  
JP Morgan Chase sponsors a family picnic at Hermann Park for GLBT families and friends with an emphasis on activities for children, including a visit to the Houston Zoo. Special guests from the Houston Energy, our champion women's professional football team, will be on hand to speak. 1–4

p.m., Hermann Park near Circle Drive, next to Harlon's BBQ. Discount adult zoo tickets and special Harlon's BBQ box lunches available. 713/216-0372, [donna.h.rickard@chase.com](mailto:donna.h.rickard@chase.com).

## MONDAY, JUNE 24

### Community Awareness Day

**Grand Marshal Reception**  
The Royal, Sovereign, and Imperial Court of the Single Star of Houston, Inc., introduces the grand marshals of the 2002 Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgender Pride Parade, along with grand marshals of parades past. Meet some of the most heroic and inspirational

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members of Houston's GLBT community and enjoy complimentary hors d'oeuvres. 6-9 p.m., Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos. 713/529-6979.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 25**  
**Commemoration Day**

**GLBT History, Houston's First Decade: 1975-1985**

Stonewall Lawyers Association of Greater Houston (SLAGH) presents a panel of speakers who will discuss their personal experiences on the front lines of the GLBT rights movement. Speakers include Ray Hill, citizen provocateur; Phyllis Frye, the transgender menace; and Donna Garrett, lesbian poet extraordinaire. Donations benefit Community Awareness for Transgender Support, Q-Patrol, Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of GLBT History, and SLAGH. 6-8:30 p.m., Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Texas Southern University, 3001 Clayburn. No charge, but donations requested. 713/227-1717, jerry@simoneaux.com, www.stonewall-lawyers.org.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26**  
**Spirituality Day**

**Interfaith Pride Worship Service**

The diverse spiritual traditions of the GLBT community will be celebrated at this interfaith worship service. A reception follows the service. 7-9:30 p.m., Congregation Beth Israel, 5600 N. Braeswood. 713/466-4438, vschill@hcpl.net.

**Introduction to**

**Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism**

Learn how to become happy in this lifetime by chanting "nam myoko renge kyo." Sponsored by SGI-USA Living Out Loud, Houston's gay Buddhist group. 7-8:30 p.m., 3465 W. Alabama. 713/622-6181, rosewoman5@hotmail.com.

**Comfort & Joy**

Jack Heifner's comedy is presented in a benefit performance for the Pride Committee and the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of GLBT History. Join Scott and Tony, a happily married gay couple, in the midst of a Christmas disaster created by the arrival of zany members of their respective families and an unusual fairy who teaches the others about love, hope, and forgiveness. 8-10 p.m., Theatre Suburbia, 1410 W. 43rd. \$10. 713/682-3525, tsuburbia@hotmail.com, www.theatresuburbia.com.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 27**  
**Pride Worldwide Day**

**HRC Pride**

Invite a friend for an introduction to the Human Rights Campaign Federal Club in this Pride celebration with cocktails and light hors d'oeuvres. 6:30-8 p.m., Farrago Restaurant, 318 Gray. 713/416-8470, www.hrc.org. No cost.

**"Love Knows No Borders"—**

**A GLBT Immigration Talk**

The Houston chapter of the Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force presents a GLBT immigration talk by attorney-at-law John Nechman. An emphasis



Stampede performs at Baile Internacional 2002 (see June 28)

will be placed on the right of gay and lesbian binational couples to make a life together in the U.S. 7:30-9:30 p.m., Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold. Donation requested. 281/485-5097, sdryam@houston.rr.com, www.lgirtf.org.

**National HIV Testing Day**

The Montrose Clinic provides free HIV testing in conjunction with National HIV Testing Day. Testing is also available for syphilis and hepatitis C, and free condoms and lube are available. Testing will also be done at Montrose Clinic, 215 Westheimer, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., 8 p.m.-12 midnight, Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos, and EJ's, 2517 Ralph. 713/830-3000, eroland@montroseclinic.org, www.montroseclinic.org.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 28**  
**Arts Appreciation Day**

**"Before the Parade Passes By"**

Join us for this very special presentation of the first annual Pride Cabaret, just before the Pride parade passes by. Some of the finest entertainers of the Houston stage perform your favorite Broadway melodies in a musical celebration of our lives. Directed by Ken Williamson, "Before the Parade Passes By" is presented by the Pride Committee of Houston and benefits Houston's Pride festivities. Also benefiting Houston Pride will be a silent auction. 8-10 p.m., Alley Theatre, 615 Texas, 713/228-8421, 713/529-6979, info@pridehouston.org, \$25-\$100.

**Baile Internacional 2002**

This black-tie celebration and dance is a fundraiser for gay and lesbian community groups. Formal attire. 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m., Ripley House Ballroom, 4410 Navigation, 713/522-9564, lindamorales77006@yahoo.com. \$250 table, \$25 advance, \$30 at the door.

**GoGirls Rock!**

GoGirlsMusic.com, the Houston-based online community of independent women artists, is producing an all-Pride, all-women show, co-sponsored by the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. Liviya Compean, Carol Plunk, Astrogin, Amanda's Waiting, and Beth

Puorro will perform. Rhythm Room, 1815 Washington, 8 p.m. \$7.

**Dirty Little Showtunes . . . Encore!**

Laughter was never this nasty . . . again . . . in this musical revue with new songs. 8-10 p.m., Theatre New West, 1415 California, 713/394-0464, joleewatts@aol.com. \$20.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 29**

**2002 Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Pride Parade**

Experience the fun and excitement you've come to expect from America's original nighttime Pride Parade and the South-west's largest GLBT event, along with new announcers' stages, new lighting, and other surprises. 8:45-11 p.m., Westheimer, Woodhead to Whitney. 713/529-6979. ■



The PFLAG/H.A.T.C.H Spring Fling was Apr. 19 at the Warwick Hotel.

1 **Kevin Davidson** (l) with PFLAG scholarship recipient **Laura Springel** (center) and **Joy Villarreal**.

The Transgender Unity Banquet was April 20, at the Hilton.

2 **Vanessa Edwards Foster** (l) and **Mitch Rainey**.

3 **Cristan Williams**, with the C.A.T.S. homeless shelter.

4 A celebration of the life of **Darnell Mure** was held May 9, at the Garden in the Heights. **Robert Cornelius** holds his picture.

5 **Ray Olachia** of the Mental Health Association of Greater Houston at their May 1 gala at the Westin Galleria, with **Sherri Hosang**.

Houston Splash was April 30-May 6.

6 (l-r) **Shanta Jackson**, **Jonita Stegall**, **Shronda Scott**, May 5 at Stewart Beach.

## OUT IN HOUSTON

7 **Hasan Murry** (l) and **Tony Villalpando**.

8 The Texas Gay Rodeo Association presented checks to community groups: (l-r) **Sean Carter** (Colt 45's & Stone Soup), **Ken Mingus & Michael Jobin** from TGRA, **David Sawyer** (Paw Prints), and **Fred Walters** (Houston Buyers' Club), May 5, at the Brazos River Bottom.

9 **AssistHers and an Uncommon Legacy** held a progressive dinner May 3.

10 **Frank Stagg** (r) served dessert. With **Gustavo Ruiz**.

11 **Tori Williams** (l) with **Tracy Gary**.

12 A group of Uncommon women.

13 The Gay & Lesbian Film Fest was the subject of the May 7 GLBT Chamber meeting at the Holiday Select. **Glen Fillmore** (r) brought his visiting mother, **Pam** (2nd from left). Here with Film Fest

14 **VP Ernie Manouse** and **Debbie Ratliff**.

15 Mother of Montrose 2002 **Earth Quake** (**Tony Wadford**, right), with **Lloyd Powell**.

16 **Deborah Boille**—with **Randall Jobe**—performed for the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston "Silent Moon" fundraiser May 3, at the Warwick Hotel.

17 (l-r) The 5th Anniversary Masters of Leather contest was held April 14, at Pacific Street. Master of Leather 2002 **Buz Lawson**, Mistress of Leather 2002 **Billie Rendahl-Mink**, and founder/producer **J.R. Ewing**.

18 Two fundraisers for the PWA Coalition.

19 **Jackie Cayton** (l) and **Angela Blanchard** held a fundraiser Apr. 27, here with **Dave Detcher**.

20 (l-r) Musician **Charlie Pacheo**, the "Castro Cowboy," **Alice Sarmiento**,

and **Allen Cole** Apr. 28, Michael's Outpost.

21 **Episcopal lesbian priest Rev. Dr. Carter Heyward** (2nd from right) presented a weekend of "Exploring Justice," May 10-12, sponsored by St. Stephen's Episcopal Church & Brigid's Place. With (l-r) **Rev. Helen Havens**, **Daryl Moore**, & **Muffie Maroney**.

22 Cooks at the ready for the Bering Spring Fling, Apr. 27.

23 **Misty Valdez** at her pre-show benefit at Myra's Cantina in Galveston May 3, raising money for the AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas.

24 EPAH held a progressive dinner Apr. 20.

25 M2M sponsored a fashion show at Mo Mong May 12. Here, model **Joshua Mellen**.

26 The Katz Deli staff launches their "Deli Belly" waitloss program, May 13.



6, 7, 20 - THOMAS CHELENA; 15, 19 - UNCREDITED; ALL OTHERS - DALTON DEHART