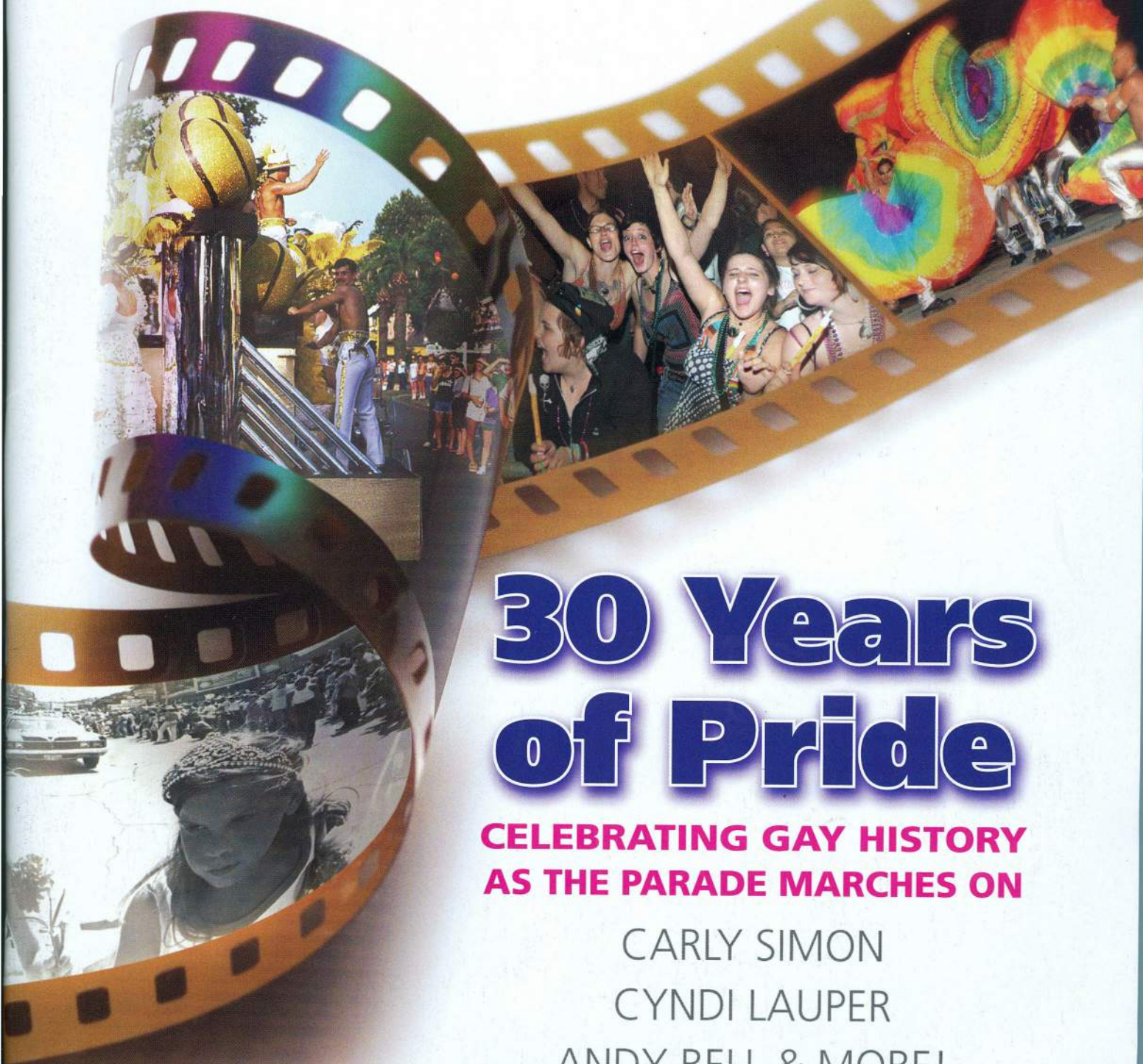


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JUNE 2008



30 Years of Pride

**CELEBRATING GAY HISTORY
AS THE PARADE MARCHES ON**

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30 Years of Pride

By David Fagan and Skip Teauxmelou

Photos by Dalton DeHart, Blase DiStefano, and Fred Paez



Talk of the town: Sissy Farenthold, the well-known Texas political figure, delivers the keynote address at Houston Town Meeting I in 1978. "We are none of us free unless we are all free," she tells the crowd at the AstroArena.

In 1967, Muhammed Ali is indicted for refusing induction into the army, The U.S. Supreme Court declares all state laws prohibiting interracial marriage unconstitutional, Britain's parliament decriminalizes homosexuality, and a group of women in Houston, Texas, who call themselves The Tumblebugs, are raising money to hire powerhouse attorney Percy Foreman to defend their female friends who have been arrested for wearing fly-front pants in public. Five years later, Texas' first Pride →

parade is held in Dallas, and three years after that the South's oldest GLBT civil rights organization is founded in Houston. When it comes to the gay movement of the '60s and '70s, people tend to think in terms of New York City and San Francisco, the cities that drew the headlines. But other communities, including Houston, were no less active in those days.

The Early Years

The Houston Gay Caucus, the precursor of today's Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Political Caucus (GLBTPC), was founded in 1975, as the first GLBT civil rights organization in the South. In keeping with the spirit of this new politically out organization, its first president was fired from his job for speaking out for gay rights. A year later, Houston's Pride parade was born in the form of a march sponsored by the University of Houston's Gay Activist Alliance. As a commemoration of the Stonewall Rebellion, the march declared that discrimination against the gay community would be met with resistance. (The Stonewall Rebellion in June 1969 resulted from a raid by NYPD at the Stonewall Inn, a neighborhood bar in New York City's Greenwich Village. It is universally viewed as the watershed of the Gay Rights movement and is the event that spawned Pride parades initially in NYC, Chicago, Los Angeles, and, today, throughout the world.)

The logistics of that first parade here in Houston had few similarities to those of today's Pride parades. There were no marching bands or floats, no banners. It was just people—people who had been recruited over the past year, many through the efforts of Ray Hill, one of Houston's

earliest gay activists. Hill targeted the most "obviously gay persons" he could find in Houston's bars (people who never had to come out of the closet because they didn't have to—"you could just tell"), the rationale being that these people had the most to lose—and the most to gain.

The apex of Houston's parade is now at Westheimer and Montrose, the main thoroughfares of Houston's original gay village. But that first Pride parade took to the streets of downtown Houston—and not just any street, but Main Street. The march was permitted by the City of Houston, the required parade-permit fee being waived for the student group sponsor and the necessary insurance being funded by transgender attorney Phyllis Randolph Frye, Dr. Richard O'Brien, and others.

On the Sunday afternoon of the march, a crowd of about 60 men and women gathered in the parking lot of The Exile, a downtown gay bar at 1011 Bell Street (now a parking lot). When the moment to begin the march arrived, they walked the half block to Main, rounded the corner at Simpson's Diner and stepped out onto Main Street, not knowing what to expect. The marchers moved north, down the south half of Main Street, toward Texas Street where the route would turn and then retrace back down



Police protection: The first Pride parade, in 1979, includes HPD officers along the Westheimer route. The crowd is estimated at between 10,000 and 12,000, according to the *Houston Voice*.

Fannin to Bell. Since it was Sunday, there were few people on the sidewalks in downtown Houston, other than those drawn there by this event. And as the marchers progressed down Main, people standing on the sidewalk began to join them. →

30 Years of Pride A Timeline

By David Fagan and Skip Teauxmelou

•**1965**—With financial backing from El Paso-born trans pioneer Reed Erickson, one of the nation's first trans clinics opens in Johns Hopkins Hospital at The University of Texas Medical Branch, with a stated purpose to care for "gender dysphoric" patients.

•**1967**—Rita "Papa Bear" Wanstrum,

owner of the Roaring Sixties (2305 S. Shepherd, now covered by a larger building) founds The Tumblebugs, a group of women who raise money to hire legendary lawyer Percy Foreman to defend those among their number who were arrested during a bar raid, for cross-dressing (fly front pants being illegal dress for females).

•**1972**—The Montrose Gaze, Houston's first gay community center, opens its doors. On June 24 Houstonians travel to Dallas to participate in the first Pride

parade in Texas. Watched by about 3,000 people, 130 participants made the half-hour march from Market Street up Main to Harwood.

•**1973**—In their first effort toward recognition for Houston's GLBT community, representatives of the Houston Gay Political Caucus (HGPC) appear before City Council in an unsuccessful attempt to have the last week in June declared Gay Pride Week.

•**1975**—Pokey Anderson, Keith McGee, Bill

Buie, and Hugh Crell found the South's first GLBT civil rights organization, the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus (HGLPC), the successor to the HGPC. On June 30 the caucus holds a press conference, led by Pokey Anderson, Jerry Miller, Rev. Robert Hall, and Ray Hill, to publicly announce its formation and declare its intent to solidify Houston's gay vote and screen candidates for endorsement. Ray Hill also announces that 1975 will be the last quiet celebration of the Stonewall anniversary in Houston. The first president of the caucus is Gary Van →

Soon a chant began among the marchers, "Off of the sidewalk! Into the street!" And as more people stepped off the curb, the marching crowd grew to an estimated 300 to 400.

The march was brief—the numbers few by today's standards—but with each step taken down Main Street, those participants in Houston's first Pride parade left their footprints on the history, culture, and politics of the City of Houston. One of the participants at that first march was New Orleans native Larry Bagneris, who had seen how the parades of Mardi Gras forged a community identity in his hometown. He expressed his opinion on what a Pride parade should look like and what it might accomplish and found himself spearheading the planning for the Houston Gay Pride Parade.

The parade planned for 1977 was cancelled because of inadequate funding. Had it not been for the emergence of Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" campaign, that might have been the end of Houston's effort at visibility for the near future. On June 16, 1977, nine days after her successful campaign to repeal a Dade County, Florida, ordinance banning discrimination against gay men and lesbians, Bryant was to come to Houston to perform at the State Bar of Texas banquet.

Gary Van Ooteghem of the Gay Political Caucus, Ray Hill of the Houston Human Rights League, and the Reverend Jeri Harvey of the Metropolitan Community Church quickly organized a candlelight protest. Besides carrying candles, many marchers wore black armbands with inverted pink triangles. The marchers gathered for a rally in the parking lot of the Depository II bar on McGowen, then headed downtown at 8 p.m. Informed of the protest march, the City refused to grant a parade permit, which meant the marchers would be confined to the sidewalks, mingling with other pedestrians, stopping for traffic lights, and pausing to "look both ways." The Houston Police Department prepared for 300 marchers, but by the end of the night more than 4,000 gays,

lesbians, and their supporters had joined the protest, marching around the downtown Hyatt Regency Hotel, where the banquet was being held, and ultimately to a protest rally at City Hall.

The protest was peaceful, though vocal, and as the sheer size of the demonstration became evident, HPD sent word to the protest organizers for the marchers to take to the street. Soon the streets were a mass of demonstrators singing songs and chanting "Equal Rights Now." As each wave arrived at the Hyatt, the volume swelled with such

intensity that the sound could be heard in the banquet room where Bryant was to appear. Houston's gay community had made its presence and voice heard.

The noisy demonstration was covered not only by local and state press, but was also broadcast live on NBC national radio via hookup through Houston station KPRC. The air was electrified with a sense of purpose and solidarity, and a sense of community was born in Houston, reflected a few weeks later in the first Gay Pride Rally held in Cherryhurst Park.



On the mic: Ginny Apuzzo of the National Gay Task Force (the organization incorporated Lesbian into its name in 1985) chairs Town Meeting I.

The following year, in June of 1978, Houston saw its first official Gay Pride Week coordinated by the Houston GLPC with a full schedule of political and social events. The main event was Town Meeting I, held on June 25 in the AstroArena (a hall adjacent to the Astrodome in what is now Reliant Park). The meeting came at the end of National Gay Pride Week and was chaired by Ginny Apuzzo of the National Gay Task Force. Keynote speaker was former Texas State Representative, gubernatorial candidate, and later vice-presidential candidate Sissy Farenthold, whose words spoke directly to the meeting's resolutions regarding civil rights, health, and safety for the gay community: "We are none of us free unless we all are free. We cannot open

the door to some minorities while denying access to others."

More than 4,500 people attended Town Meeting I, which, according to the *Houston Chronicle*, was "the first such politically oriented homosexual meeting in the United States." The stated purpose was to address the concerns of Houston's gay community as outlined in 13 propositions voted upon by those attending. The resolutions addressed job security, police action against gays, health care, and repeal of the Texas sodomy statute. The resolutions, as passed by Town Meeting I, resulted in the creation of many organizations, including the Montrose Counseling Center, the Montrose Activity Center, the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, the Hispanic Caucus, and the Montrose Sports Association. →

Ooteghem, who is fired from his job as City Controller after his August 1 appearance before the Harris County Commissioners' Court to speak out in favor of gay rights.

•1976—On June 20, Houston's first Pride "parade" is an informal march sponsored by the University of Houston's Gay Activist Alliance to commemorate the Stonewall Rebellion.

•1977—Plans for a Mardi-Gras-style parade are cancelled for lack of funds. On June 16, 4,000 gays, lesbians, and equal-rights

supporters march through downtown Houston toward a City Hall protest rally, along the way circling the Hyatt Regency Hotel, where gay-bashing chanteuse Anita Bryant is performing at a State Bar of Texas banquet.

•1978—Still no parade, but the June 25 Town Meeting I is the centerpiece of Houston's first official Gay Pride Week. The meeting results in the creation of many organizations including the Montrose Counseling Center, the Montrose Activity Center, the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, the Hispanic Caucus, and the Montrose Sports Association.

•1979—With the support of HGLPC, between 10,000 and 12,000 spectators gather on July 1 to watch Houston's first official Pride parade. The parade's theme, "United We Stand," reflects the emerging solidarity within the gay community. The Parade Committee chooses as the first Grand Marshal Thelma Hansel, the openly proud mother of a gay son and his lover.

•1980—HPD continues their pre-Pride Week tradition of gay bar raids. The 1980 raid at Mary's results in 61 arrests, including two lesbian bystanders who are outside the

bar. A few days later, many of those arrested were proudly sporting "Mary's Fairies Out of Jail" T-shirts. The first Pride Guide, with a schedule of events, political editorials, and historical information about Houston's gay community, is published. Several Houston City officials ride in convertibles in the parade. Mary's Grand Prize float depicts an HPD officer beating someone, and many marchers wear black arm bands in memory of Fred Paez, killed earlier that year by an off-duty policeman. Barely a month later, on August 12, due to the extraordinary work of Phyllis Randolph Frye, Houston's →

Pride Parade Becomes 'Official'



Loud and proud: Larry Bagneris (with bullhorn), who directed the first Houston parade in 1979, rallies participants prior to the 1980 parade.

Riding the momentum of Town Meeting I, and the organizational structures that grew from it, the Houston GLPC supported the organization of Houston's first official Pride parade, coordinated by the Parade Committee under the direction of Larry Bagneris. In a move that became the cornerstone of subsequent parade organization, Larry held open community meetings to plan the parade, and from these came the concept of Grand Marshal and the development of parade themes and merchandise.

Held on Sunday, July 1, 1979, the first parade reflected the solidarity of Houston's emerging gay community in its theme, United We Stand. In addition to floats, many of them simple flatbed trucks or pickups festooned by the sponsoring organization, several of the gay bars also sponsored

entries. The Parade Committee chose as the first Grand Marshal Thelma Hansel, aka "Disco Grandma" as she was known in the community (because of her love of the evening drag shows at the Old Plantation, which she often attended with her son) for being openly proud and accepting of her gay son and his lover.

According to the *Houston Voice*, the crowd lining Westheimer for the first parade was estimated between 10,000 and 12,000. The event was covered by Houston newspapers and television stations. A rally followed at Spotts Park, where 5,000 people enjoyed music, speeches, dancing, and fireworks. Among the speakers were Midge Costanza, former aide to President Jimmy Carter; Harry Britt, the San Francisco supervisor who replaced slain supervisor Harvey Milk; and Jean O'Leary,

co-executive director of the National Gay Task Force.

By 1980 Houston's Pride Week had grown to a 10-day celebration. Then, in 1997, parade organizers decided to foil Houston's summer heat and founded the nation's first night-time parade. The format for the main body of today's Pride Week, with a light-up-the-night parade and daily events—some serious, some frivolous, and others downright saucy—had taken form.

Each parade has reflected that year's political atmosphere as it affected Houston's GLBT community. And more than once, dramatic events unfolded in the days immediately preceding or following the parade. In 1980, Mary's float, depicting a police officer delivering a beating, so perfectly mirrored that year's tensions that it was awarded the Grand Prize. 1988's Honorary Grand Marshals, both of whom did not appear and could not have appeared in the parade, came from that year's headlines: slain San Francisco public official Harvey Milk and severely disabled accident survivor Sharon Kowalski, whose lesbian lover began a long legal battle to gain custody of Sharon.

Just prior to 1984's parade, two buses arrived at Mary's on the corner of Westheimer and Waugh. On board were 58 Ku Klux Klan members from Pasadena, Texas. Under the watchful eye of 600 riot-equipped HPD officers, two helicopters, and numerous police cruisers, the Klan's 16-minute march in Montrose—at a cost to taxpayers of \$80,000—drew an estimated 2,000 spectators, mostly heterosexual concerned Montrose residents. The gay community, encouraged by the GLPC to stay away, largely ignored the event.

That same year, a struggle that was to last 13 years was taking shape in City Council chambers. An overflow crowd, including the KKK and various religious →

city ordinance 28-42.4, criminalizing cross-dressing, is repealed.

•**1981**—The parade celebrates with the theme "We the People."

•**1982**—"A Part of . . . Not Apart From" is this year's theme. Mayor Kathy Whitmire appears at the Rally in Spotts Park, along with other Houston politicians, including City Council members George Greanias, Dale Grocynski, and Jim Greenwood, as well as Lance Lalor (the City Comptroller), Mike Driscoll (Harris County Attorney), and Debra Danburg (State Representative District 79).

•**1983**—Entries celebrate the theme, "Unity through Diversity."

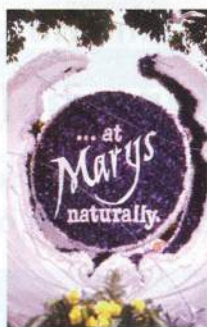
•**1984**—Early in June, City Councilman Anthony Hall's introduction of an amendment to the city's antidiscrimination ordinances to protect gays and lesbians in city employment stirs very vocal opposition. The Ku Klux Klan's June 9 march from Mary's to Numbers brings out riot police, but few observers from the gay community. The amendments are passed 10 days later amid vocal protests from opponents who pack Council chambers. Mayor Kathy Whitmire delivers the first City Proclamation declaring the week Gay

Pride Week. "Unity and More in '84" is the theme for the June 24 parade, which is the largest and most lavish yet. A record 100,000 view 54 entries. In the meantime opponents of the antidiscrimination ordinance obtain the necessary signatures to force a referendum that is set for January.

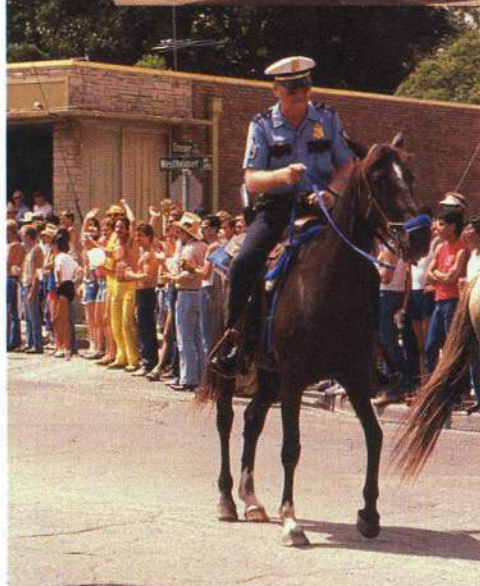
•**1985**—The AIDS crisis has struck deeply in the gay community, spawning fear and increasing negative reaction among Houston's general population. After Councilman Anthony Hall's amendments to antidiscrimination ordinances are defeated by voters at the January 19 referendum, former Mayor

Louie Welch set his sights on winning back the office of mayor and introduces a "Straight Slate" set of candidates for City Council. On June 14 Houston holds the 1985 Pride parade under the banner "Alive With Pride." The crowd is small and the mood guarded. The bright spot of the year is the total defeat of Louie Welch and his "Straight Slate" at the November election.

•**1986**—The parade theme this year is "Liberty Is in Our Grasp." The Parade Committee suffers from internal disagreements, and a climate of intolerance pervades the city. This year's parade is one of the →



They love a parade: Scenes from the parade in 1980 include the Pride Week banner and a mounted patrol. Even in that year, the police department continues its tradition of raiding gay bars just before Pride Week. The 1980 raid on Mary's results in 61 arrests (above, far left, is a picture of part of the Mary's float, which mocks the incident). For several years, a celebration in Spotts Park (below) follows the parade.



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groups, with signs such as "Don't turn Houston into Sodom," continuously interrupted the 90-minute meeting. Despite the ensuing confusion, Counsel passed amendments to existing ordinances, which would extend nondiscrimination protection to gays and lesbians. Although the amendments passed 8-7 with Mayor Kathy Whitmire casting the tie-breaking vote, and 9-6 with Councilman Jim Greenwood adding his support, their passage met swift and well-funded opposition. Within a month the necessary signatures were obtained to force City Council to either rescind the ordinance or call a referendum. The City Council, refusing to reverse its action, set a special election for January of the following year. As Councilwoman Eleanor Tinsley said to the *Houston Chronicle*, "Gays are discriminated against now as Jews, blacks, and women have been in the past . . . it's a civil rights issue, not a moral issue, except that it's immoral to discriminate." →



briefest, lasting only 40 minutes, and the crowd is one of the smallest. On the national scene, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the state of Georgia's sodomy law in the case of *Bowers vs. Hardwick*, and Michael Bowers begins to serve his time for his "crime against nature."

•**1987**—Pride Week begins as it often has in the past . . . with bar raids by the Houston Police Department. On three consecutive nights, officers raid Michael's, Chutes, and the JOE Club, arresting patrons, staff, and male dancers. HGLPC leadership holds a press conference, announcing its intention to meet with Mayor Whitmire and Police Chief Brown and declaring that Houston's

gay community will not be silenced by intimidation. This year the parade becomes the Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. "Come Out and Celebrate" is the theme.

•**1988**—The parade's theme, "Rightfully Proud," recognizes the emerging gay rights movement. This is the first year that "Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride" is printed prominently on parade T-shirts. Honorary Grand Marshals are slain San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected public official (represented at the parade by San Francisco Supervisor Harry Britt), and Sharon Kowalski (represented by an empty wheelchair), the young lesbian whose family separates her from

her lover Karen Thompson after she is profoundly disabled in a 1983 auto accident.

•**1989**—This year's parade, celebrating Stonewall 20, is the largest ever with 60 entries, including the Lone Star Band of Houston and the Oak Lawn Band of Dallas combined as one marching unit. There are 14 big floats, two dozen marching units, two dozen vehicle entries, and walking contingents. The one-hour parade is broadcast live on KPFT-FM, and an airplane sponsored by Mother's Bar flies overhead trailing a streamer that reads "Gay & Proud."

•**1990**—The parade theme, "Look to the Future," encourages the community

to look back on the gains that have been made and to look forward to the challenges ahead. Church groups, families, and—for the first time—corporate sponsors such as Budweiser, in addition to gay organizations and businesses, make up the 75 entries. Honorary Grand Marshals U.S. Congressman Craig Washington and Texas State Representative Debra Danburg give visible evidence of the growing political strength of Houston's gay community. A new spate of violence against the community begins. On July 29, Michael James Burzinski is abducted outside the nightclub Heaven (where South Beach is now) by four youths from Aldine, Texas, and shot in the back of the head. →

Backlash at the Polls and in the Streets

General uneasiness increased in direct proportion to the increase of AIDS and the media coverage of what had been termed "the Gay plague," and the backlash to the City Council's amendments to add gays and lesbians to the city's nondiscrimination ordinances played on the general hysteria.

The months that led up to the referendum in January 1985 saw unprecedented public homophobia. Former Mayor Louie Welch, chairman of the Houston Chamber of Commerce, led the opposition in pushing the referendum with support from the Moral Majority, the Committee for Public Awareness (Councilman John Goodner, chair), Campaign for Houston (Stephen Hotze, chair), the Ku Klux Klan, the Harris County Republican Party, as well as members of Houston's black religious community. Goodner said his Committee for Public Awareness was prepared to spend up to \$400,000 (after the election, the committee reported to the city secretary that it had spent \$101,460).

Support for the ordinances was led by Citizens for a United Houston (Diane Berg, chair) with the backing of the Houston League of Women, the American-Jewish Committee, the Houston Area Women's Center, the American Civil Liberties Union, and several area churches. Berg's Citizens for a United Houston spent "a bit less" than their opponents, and the city budgeted \$350,000 to hold the referendum.

Tension and rhetoric escalated as the January vote drew near, with GLPC President Sue Lovell revealing that the caucus had received death threats, which were also directed at Whitmire and the council members who had supported the ordinance amendments.

When the amendments were defeated at the January 19, 1985, referendum by a whopping 82 percent, Louie Welch →



Remember: In 1983, the Montrose Mining Company entry (above left) reaches to the sky. By 1993, the AIDS crisis is a stark reality in Houston, and the parade increasingly begins to reflect the presence of HIV/AIDS activist and service organizations, including AIDS Foundation Houston, the NAMES Project Houston, and ACT UP, with its call of "Silence = Death."



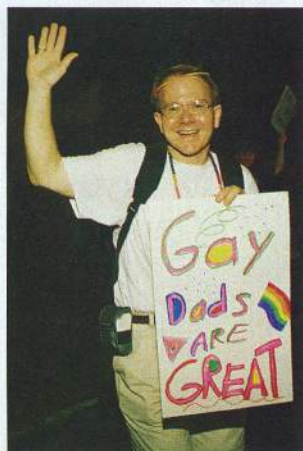
•**1991**—The parade's theme, "Take Pride," urges the community to take stock of its achievements and be rightfully proud of its contributions to society. Pride Week's official poster features the faces of the community—individuals, couples, single parents, seniors, and all the diversity of the gay rainbow. Held under storm-threatening skies, the parade draws the largest crowd in recent history. Even the weather seems to validate the event, as the final float makes its way to the end of the parade route before the rain falls, giving rise to the popularly held notion that "It never rains on our parade." On July 4, homophobic violence again grabs the headlines. Twenty-

seven-year-old Paul Broussard and two of his friends are assaulted by 10 youths from the Woodlands; Broussard's friends escape, but Broussard is viciously beaten and dies. Then, in the wee hours of November 3, Philip W. Smith dies after being shot outside Heaven, and Queer Nation stages a protest outside Houston Police headquarters. Q-Patrol, a community watch group, is formed to patrol bar areas in Montrose and report suspicious activity to police. The year ends on a note of hope when, on December 17, after an eight-year legal struggle, lesbian Karen Thompson gains custody of her disabled partner, Sharon Kowalski.

•**1992**—Jack Valinski, Carol Clark, and Brian Keever incorporate the Pride Committee as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit under the new name Pride Committee of Houston, Inc. It is set to operate as a year-round organization to plan, organize, and manage events in celebration of Gay and Lesbian Pride Week. As one of its first acts, the new board establishes the Founder's Award, which it presents to Larry Bagneris, former president of the Gay Political Caucus and, from its inception until his move back to his native New Orleans, the driving force behind the parade's form and structure. In keeping with the parade's theme, "Pride = Power," and its emphasis

on the volunteerism of the community, the Gay/Lesbian Switchboard of Houston (which has served as a clearinghouse for information about the gay community, its people, organizations and their events for the past decade) is chosen Honorary Grand Marshal and leads more than 80 units, including a group from Texas A&M University. State Representative Debra Danburg, Congressional candidate Ben Reyes, City Councilwoman Shelia Jackson Lee, and Harris County Precinct 1 Constable Jack Abercia appear at the post-parade rally, evidence of the increasing acceptance of gays and the recognition of their political power. →

Day to night: After years of marching, riding, and rolling beneath the often punishing summer sun, Houstonians get some heat relief when the parade switches to the evening in 1997. These pictures from the parades in the '90s include long-time Pride Houston volunteer and former executive director Jack Valinski (at bottom right, on the left).



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announced his mayoral aspirations, entering the race with a "Straight Slate" of candidates for City Council, who sought to unseat council members who had voted for the gay-lesbian amendments to the city's nondiscrimination ordinances. The heated campaign rhetoric drew national attention.

In early October polls showed Whitmire leading Welch and vulnerable on only the one issue—her support for the failed gay rights referendum. Attempting to capitalize on that perceived weakness, Welch attacked Whitmire's support of gay rights and reminded voters of Whitmire's 1983 visits to Montrose gay bars to thank the gay community in her successful re-election campaign that year. Welch commented, "There is no way that you could hog-tie, hobble, and drag me into a gay bar at 2 o'clock in the morning to give them thanks."

Comments of that kind were common in the Welch campaign, a fact that likely contributed to the gaffe on October 24, 1985, which may have doomed any hope Welch had of unseating Whitmire. When he thought his microphone was off, Welch said on live television that one solution to AIDS would be to "shoot the queers." By the next morning, people were wearing T-shirts that said "Louie, Don't Shoot!" In contrast to the enormous support for Welch's version of morality at the January referendum, Welch and his "Straight Slate" were defeated in the November election. The political career of Shoot-the-Queers Louie was a closed chapter. Despite this victory, it was not until 1998 that the results of the 1985 referendum were reversed by Mayor Lee Brown's executive order.

1987's parade was dampened by a frightening statistic: Houston's 1,200 cases of AIDS, the fourth largest in the nation. In 1991, the Q-Patrol, which was formed in response to a rise in hate crimes, including three murders in 1990 and 1991, were responsible for many arrests for antigay activity. Increased cooperation between the gay community and the Houston Police Department evolved. This, and increasing pressure from the gay community, culminated in "Operation Vice Versa" in which officers, posing as homosexuals, found themselves the target of homophobic violence. Five undercover officers were attacked, sprayed with Mace, bludgeoned with a baseball bat and a tree branch. During the decade that followed, relationships between HPD and the gay community continued to improve, until openly gay and lesbian police officers marched as a contingent in the 2001 Gay Pride Parade, →

•**1993**—Houston is the site of a national conference of Southern Baptists, which makes homosexuality a central theme and pledges to defeat politicians who support or tolerate homosexuality. Five city officials attend the parade or other Pride events, but Mayor Bob Lanier does not accept the invitation to join in. The parade's theme, "Out and Proud," takes note of emerging national movements and their grassroots development in Houston. Taking part for the first time are representatives of the Houston NAMES Project, members of Houston's ACT-UP organization, and parents and children from the Houston Chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), which is named 1993 Organizational Grand Marshal.

•**1994**—This year is the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, and Houston's Pride parade acknowledges that milestone in its theme, "HouStoneWall 25," even moving Pride Week celebrations to an earlier date in the month to accommodate the large numbers who will travel to New York for Pride Week there. Parade attendance is estimated as high as 20,000 and now includes large numbers of participants and spectators who are not homosexual. The parade is becoming a neighborhood event in Montrose, as well as a Pride event for the entire city.

•**1995**—Pride Week 1995 successfully markets the week's diverse schedule of events, not only to the gay community but

also to the city, corporate sponsors, and the media. In recognition of Pride festivities, the Houston City Council approves the hanging of pink triangle banners along both sides of Westheimer through Montrose. Noting in its theme that the community had moved from "Silence to Celebration," the Pride Committee gives recognition to the continuing place of the parade in facilitating gay individuals in their journey from invisibility to pride, whether personal, local, national, or global.

•**1996**—The 1995 theme was expanded upon this year under the banner "Pride Knows No Borders," as Candace Gingrich, the outspoken lesbian half-sister of Speaker of the House and gay rights foe Newt Gin-

grich, is named Grand Marshal, a choice that thrusts a national spotlight on Houston's parade and adds Houston's voice to the growing national demand that there be an end to civilly sanctioned discrimination.

•**1997**—The parade goes dark and lights the night. After 20 years of a parade under the intense Texas sun, the Pride Committee works outside the box, and under its aptly chosen theme, "Glowing with Pride," it introduces the nation's first nighttime Pride parade. More than 100 entries—over half of the floats illuminated with all forms of lighting—shine brightly in the night, and a jubilant crowd of 70,000, its goodwill even extending to the group of about 40 →

followed in 2002 by Houston's out firefighters.

If there had been an award for the most spontaneously exuberant parade, the 2003 parade would have won it. All that summer the nation had anticipated the Supreme Court's announcement of its review of *Lawrence vs. Texas*. The case stemmed from an incident at east Houston's Colorado Club Apartments on Normandy Road. Tyrone Garner and John Lawrence had been arrested by Harris County constable officers, who were responding to a "weapons disturbance" statement by neighbor Roger David Nance (which subsequently was determined to be false, and for which he served 15 days in jail for filing a false police report). The officers had entered

the apartment's bedroom, where they saw the two men engaged in "deviant sex" in violation of Texas Penal Code Section 21.06, which penalized oral or anal sex between two men (no mention of such sex between a man and a woman). It was a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of \$500.

The constitutional implications were immediately apparent. Lawrence and Garner were convicted and fined, but were successful in their appeal that overturned the conviction. The two then engaged the help of the American Civil Liberties Union in filing suit against the state of Texas. This was the first case in the nation in which a complaining party had actually been wronged by an existing statute. Earlier cases in Texas had been dismissed or upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as the Texas State Supreme Court. As the Justice's session ran deep into the summer, watchers anxiously waited for the opinion to be handed down. Then, on June 26, just two days before that year's Pride parade, the majority opinion, written by Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, was handed down. It invalidated Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code and recognized homosexual rights to privacy and fundamental rights to equality under the law.

At the City Hall rally in Houston, defendants Tyrone Garner and John Lawrence, their lawyer Mitchell Katine, and the national media were present. From New York to San Francisco, the newspapers picked up the picture of the jubilant embrace of Garner and Lawrence in front of Houston's City Hall. Two days later, still jubilant, they served as Honorary Grand Marshals of the Pride parade.

The city and the gay community have both come far, much . . . or perhaps, most . . . of it directly or indirectly through the parade. As it has in the past, its look and its route may change but the parade remains a constant, a moment of community celebration—its purpose to celebrate individual pride, commemorate the community's achievements and struggles, and educate society for the liberation of all people.

All that and a parade, too. ■

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Special Thanks to Larry Criscione of the Charles Botts Memorial Library and Archives and Judy Reeves of the Gulf Coast Archives and Museum for their encouragement and support.



Marching on: Scenes from 21st-century parades include a reminder (at right) that elaborate costumes and exuberant queerness still have their place. In 2004, Mayor Bill White and his wife, Andrea White (above right), surprise the crowd when they choose to take the parade route on foot—the first mayor and spouse to walk in the Pride parade.



protesters from Heritage Baptist Church in Mount Enterprise, Texas, and Grace Baptist Church in Houston. The contrast couldn't have been greater: the protesters behind barricades set up by the Houston Police Department, the gays in the middle of the street, "Glowing With Pride."

•1998—Newly elected Mayor Lee Brown makes good on a campaign promise to issue an executive order reversing the referendum of 1985.

•1999—A record-breaking crowd of 100,000 watches as Westheimer glows with the light reflected off a disco that measures 8 1/2 feet across. An idea envisioned by Lee Harrington, the disco ball is made possible by funding from Jim "Mattress Mac" McIngvale who rides in the parade on a float with diva Martha Wash.

•2001—A contingent of gay and lesbian HPD officers march for the first time.

•2002—The Houston Fire Department participates for the first time.

•2003—On June 26, just two days before the Pride parade, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down their decision in *Lawrence vs. Texas*, declaring invalid Texas' sodomy statute and recognizing homosexual rights to privacy and fundamental rights to equality under the law. Garner and Lawrence are named Pride Parade's Honorary Grand Marshals. T-shirts announcing "legally gay" are sprinkled among the rejoicing parade goers.

•2004—Grand marshals Sonna Alton, Jerry Simoneaux, Sue and Jim Null, and Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas lead the parade with its theme "Pride as Big as

Texas." Houston Mayor Bill White surprises the parade audience by opting to walk the route instead of waving to constituents from a convertible.

•2005—Grand marshals Weldon Hickey, Deb Murphy, Dennis and Evelyn Schave, and Bayou City Boys Club lead the parade with its theme "Equal Rights! No More! No Less!" The Pride Festival, comprised of multiple commercial and nonprofit vendor booths, is headlined by pop singer Sophie B. Hawkins.

•2006—Grammy-nominated headliner Taylor Dayne entertains the Pride Festival crowd before grand marshals Phyllis Randolph Frye, Ray Ramirez, Rev. Marilyn Meeker-Williams, and Bunnies on the Bayou lead the Pride parade, themed "Say It Out Loud!"

•2007—Long-term Pride Houston operative, Jack Valinski, resigns as the organization's executive director amid internal conflict, but is overwhelmingly elected male grand marshal, leading the Pride parade with Maria Gonzalez, Texas State Representative Garnet Coleman, and Imperial Court of Houston. The theme is "Lone Star Pride."

•2008—Following an unsuccessful 2007 push to move traditional Pride festivities to a downtown location in September, Houston's GLBT Pride Parade stays in Montrose in June to celebrate its 30th anniversary with the theme "We Are Family." Kelly McCann, Dalton DeHart, Julie Eberly, and AIDS Foundation Houston are grand marshals. ■

Additional reporting 2004–2008 by Nancy Ford.

NATURAL BORN LEADERS

***Dalton DeHart, Kelly McCann, Julie Eberly,
and AIDS Foundation Houston to marshal
2008 GLBT Pride Parade***

by Nancy Ford
Photos by Christopher Bown



FROM LEFT:
Kelly McCann,
Dalton DeHart,
and Julie Eberly.

When Houston's first official Gay Pride Parade rolled down Westheimer Road in June 1979, "Disco Grandma" Thelma Hansel led the festivities as the parade's grand marshal. Every June since, deserving individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of gay duty have been chosen to lead Houston's annual GLBT Pride Parade, this year on June 28 beginning at 8:45 p.m. Pride Houston distinguishes its parade grand marshals in four categories representing men, women, organizations, and a supportive ally from the straight community. Following a month-long round of community voting, Pride Houston announced this year's four grand marshals at a reception held March 24 at Café Adobe. →

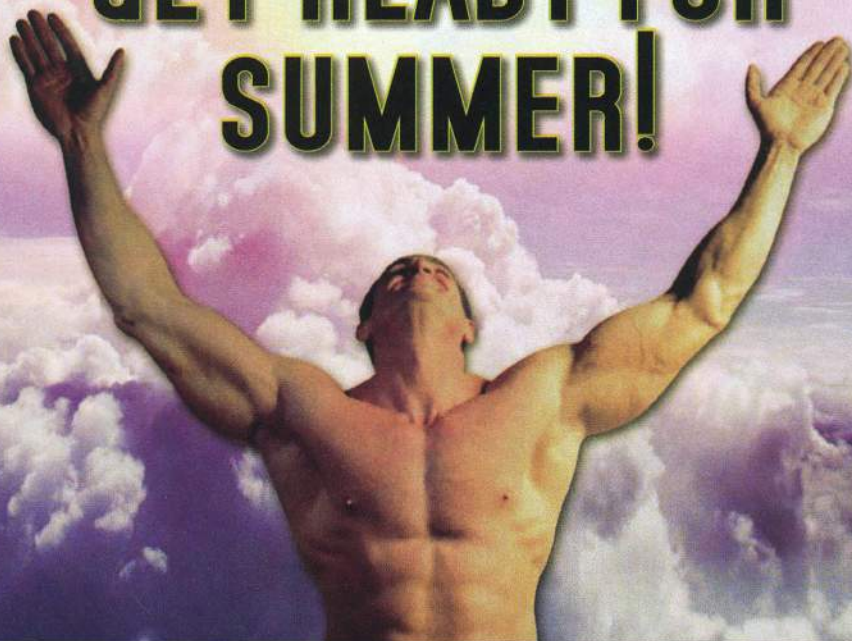
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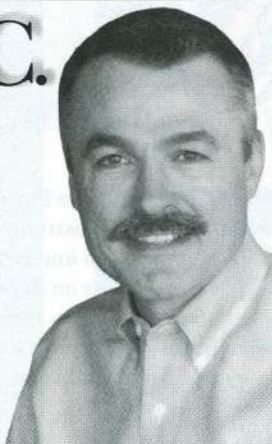
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Natural Born Leaders continued from previous page

DALTON DEHART

Male Grand Marshal

It's unlikely there could be a more appropriate year for Dalton DeHart to lead Houston's GLBT Pride Parade than on its 30th anniversary: 2008 also marks the 30th year since DeHart began taking pictures of Houston's community events and milestones.

The indefatigable DeHart says he is looking forward to celebrating the power of 30 years of the community's dedication to pride and visibility.



Dalton DeHart

"Of course, as with all of the events that I photograph, I am looking forward to seeing all of the people and entries in the parade as well as the people on the sideline, since it is people that provide me with the energy to do what I do."

DeHart is not just the gay community's "family photographer." In 2006, he retired from San Jacinto College with not only the school's 2006 Teacher of the Year award, but also the Minnie Stevens Piper Professorship award—the highest honor that a person in a college or a university can achieve.

"But being elected grand marshal is one of the most significant events in my life, since it is the people who make that happen," he adds.

A dependable and recognizable mainstay of Houston's gay community, DeHart recalls an incident from one of his earliest Pride parades.

"I heard someone from the sideline yell, 'Dr. DeHart.' Rather shocked, I rushed to the sideline to find one of my students who

was so delighted that I was taking photos. He also said, 'This is my first parade.'

"I encouraged him to attend other parades and events in the Montrose area so that I could take additional photos of him."

Being one of the Pride Parade's grand marshals does not mean DeHart intends to take the night off from shooting the event.

"If I could not take photos, I would feel that I was riding without one of my best friends—my camera," he says.

Ever faithful to that best friend, DeHart says he intends to take photos before the parade begins.

"Then I'll run back and get on the float, take photos from the float, jump off the float as it turns off Westheimer, go back down the route, taking photos of the remaining entries. I will also have friends taking photos of the parade from the ground level as the parade makes its way down the street."

DeHart's collection of photographs of our community has grown over the past three decades to fill dozens of albums, many of which are featured in the GLBT History Tent exhibit, returning to this year's Pride Festival. Anyone who has interest in the community needs but look at DeHart's images to come away with a better appreciation of the thousands and thousands of individuals and events that have contributed to our history.

KELLY MCCANN

Female Grand Marshal

Kelly McCann serves as female grand marshal for Houston's 2008 GLBT Pride Parade. She says she is particularly



excited to be elected the parade's female grand marshal on its 30th anniversary.

"Being elected grand marshal is a singular honor for me," McCann says. "It stands out because it is an honor that comes from my community, from my GLBT brothers and sisters. And I'm so proud to represent them in this year's parade. I can't wait to round the curve on Westheimer and view the sea of my GLBT brothers and sisters celebrating our culture, our community, and our pride. I know it is going to choke me up."

McCann witnessed her first Pride parade in Houston in 1980, when she was 19. "I had been out for a little over one year," she recalls. "While my girlfriend and I were the first members of our social group to come out at Spring Branch High School, four other friends came out shortly after we did. Together, we six kids from the suburbs—Robert, Kevin, Michelle, Jennifer, Brenda, and I—attended the Sunday afternoon parade."

"I remember how the sight of thousands of gay people lining Westheimer made me feel so happy, so proud, so energized, so awestruck, so much a part of something bigger than myself."

That experience lit an activist's fire in McCann. "It made me want to be a crusader for gay rights, so the seed of my political advocacy was planted there on that day in late June," she says. "I remember feeling grateful for being at the parade, for sharing that experience with the friends I loved the most in world, and for the even deeper bonds between us brought about by our coming out of the closet."

"Oh, we were all so proud!" she continues. "I even remember Robert and I talking about how we would choose to be gay if we hadn't been lucky enough to have been born gay. I still feel that way today, and if Robert was still alive, I know he would, too."

McCann says that first parade instilled within her a belief she still holds today—"that visibility is the key to greater acceptance."

AIDS FOUNDATION HOUSTON

Organization Grand Marshal

AIDS Foundation Houston, one of the nation's first organizations founded to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic in its earliest years, serves as this year's grand marshal representing Houston's prideful organizations.

AFH was founded in 1982 by a group of medical professionals and gay community →

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Natural Born Leaders continued from previous page

activists. As AFH's chief executive officer since 2005, Kelly McCann says she is also looking forward to the significant AFH presence in this year's parade.

"We are, as an organization, so proud to serve and be a part of the gay community. Over the years, we have served thousands of GLBT persons, and we continue to do so today," McCann says. "AFH is committed to serving members of the gay community, and we have developed and operated special prevention and care programs to address the needs of GLBT clients, and have maintained a constant presence within the gay groups, organizations, bars, and other gay gathering places around Houston.

"Our organizational culture is one that respects and values each person," McCann continues, "and we have created an atmosphere within which everyone can feel comfortable and accepted, whether they are a client, a volunteer, or a staff member. Our board of directors is certainly supportive of the GLBT community, and they are comfortable with homosexuals being in leadership positions—they hired a big, ol' lesbian to be the chief executive officer, after all!"

While she doesn't presume to know the sexual orientation or gender identity of each of its 106 employees, McCann estimates that 30 to 40 per cent of AFH staff persons are members of the GLBT community.

"And the heterosexual AFH employees are definitely straight but not narrow," she adds.

JULIE EBERLY

Honorary Grand Marshal

One of those straight-but-not-narrow employees was Julie Eberly, who helps lead Houston's 2008 GLBT Pride Parade as honorary grand marshal.

Before accepting the position earlier this year of vice president of development for Prepared 4 Life, an advocacy group for middle school-aged children, Eberly served in the same capacity for AFH for four years, raising much-needed funds for those living with and affected by HIV.

Eberly's beneficent handiwork has been evident in AFH's Art for Life annual art exhibition, Mukuru Arts for AIDS concert series, the annual World AIDS Day luncheon, Houston's mammoth AIDS Walk, Dining for Life, Cabaret for a Cure, and a zillion other fundraising events.

"It's an honor to stand alongside the GLBT community in solidarity and friend-

ship," Eberly says, adding that the chance to impassion her friends and associates from outside the community about gay equality may be even more significant.

Eberly's passion for the gay community began in 2001. "I was working at Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston at the time and learned about a group of gay Muslims," she says. "I think it was then that I began to understand such a price that some people have to pay for just being who they are! At that time, I decided I would always advocate on behalf of the GLBT community."

Eberly, whose husband Wayne is pastor of Pines Presbyterian Church in Houston, adds that the honor has "opened up so many doors to good and honest conversation with folks that I've told."

Recalling a story from the book *Blue Like Jazz* by Donald Miller, Eberly says



Julie Eberly

she hopes the church's membership responds similarly to her participation in the Pride Parade.

The story tells of a college that held "a wild party" each year, prompting a group of Christians to set up a confession booth there. People were somewhat intrigued and wandered in throughout the evening, but what they found surprised them.

Instead of listening to the "sins" of students, the Christians in that booth confessed to those who entered that they were sorry they had chosen to respond to the partygoers with judgment and disdain instead of love.

"I love that story!" Eberly says. "I hope my friends are alongside me in the parade, and I hope that it would begin to heal the wounds of those that have felt wounded by the church." ■

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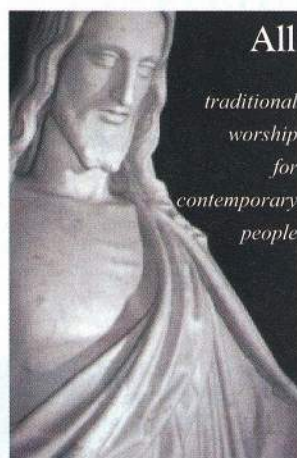
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PRIDE & BEYOND

**Get the most out of the month
with OUTSMART's top entertainment picks**

Compiled by Nancy Ford

THIS MONTH IN HOUSTON,

if you are gay, lesbian, bi, or trans—and you're bored—you're just not trying. Traditionally recognized as Pride month, June is overflowing with events and activities designed to meet the entertainment needs of nearly all segments of our community.

In addition to many events and parties produced by community organizations and entities, official Pride Houston events are scheduled throughout the month, offering a cache of special treats to attendees.

"We are working with the Melissa Etheridge concert that will be August 14 in the Brown Theater at Wortham Center, along with Broadway Across America and a few other non-disclosed upcoming concerts," says Brad Odom, Pride Houston president. "Our door-prize list includes tickets to *Sweeney Todd* and many chances to win Melissa Etheridge tickets."

Odom adds that anyone registering their contact information, including e-mail address, on the Pride Houston website (www.pridehouston.org) or at an official Pride event prior to the end of June, automatically registers for a chance to win a pair of round-trip tickets on Southwest Airlines (winner to be announced July 15). →

Pride & Beyond

continued from previous page

ONGOING

• **STELLA LINK SEVILLE PRIDE PAGEANT**, held in memory of Elmer Shehane who died earlier this year, elects Miss, Mr., and Ms. Gay Pride Houston to raise funds for Montrose Counseling Center's Capitol Campaign. Winners of the pageant were announced in May after press time, but all three winners perform at various neighborhood nightclubs throughout June and the coming year. Details: www.montrosecounselingcenter.com.

• **HOUSTON GLBT HISTORY PROJECT**—displayed by Washington Mutual—features historical memorabilia from RMCC's archives and Gulf Coast Archives and Museum. The project moves to the Pride Festival on June 28. Free admission. 4313 Montrose Blvd. Details: www.gcarn.org.

JUNE 1

• **CARING CABARET**, an evening of entertainment presented by pianist Roger Woest and friends, benefits Bering Omega Community Services. 6 p.m. Ovations Cabaret, 2536 Times Blvd. Tickets: \$50–\$100. Details: Brenda Bailey, 713/341-3762.

• **POSH PAWS**. Cantoni, one of Houston's finest contemporary furniture stores, kicks off Posh Paws,



a program that helps rescue and support animals at risk. In addition to the gala and auction scheduled June 28, events each weekend include an appearance by Radar the weather dog and trainer Jim Burwell. Benefits Homeless Pets Placement League, Homeless & Orphaned Pets Endeavor, and Friends for Life. 7 p.m. Cantoni Houston, 9889 Westheimer Rd. Details: cantoni.com/poshpaws.

JUNE 4

• **THE HOUSTON GLBT POLITICAL CAUCUS** meets to endorse some of the candidates in the upcoming fall election. Houston City Councilmember Wanda Adams sponsors this month's meeting, which begins with a reception. 6:30 p.m. Havens Center, 1827 W. Alabama St. Details: www.hglbtpc.org.

JUNE 7

• **THE RAINBOW HEALTH FAIR** for women offers free mammograms and Pap smears (by appointment); HIV and STD, total cholesterol, and blood sugar testing; A1C for diabetics; blood typing; oral screening for cancer; nutrition counseling; and information about living wills and related legal matters, as well as assorted health education and materials. Presented by Lesbian Health Initiative-Houston. 8:15 a.m. 'til 3:15 p.m. Legacy Community Health

Services, 215 Westheimer Rd. Details: 713/426-3356, www.lhihouston.org.

• **TRANNY Q** is an afternoon of barbecue, fun, and games for members and friends of the transgender community. There's no admission charge, but guests are encouraged to bring food for the potluck meal. Noon. Vanity: A Trans-formation Studio, 1442 Yale St. Details: www.transhouston.com, Vanity Wilde at 832/767-3252.

JUNE 10

• **OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT**. Get the rules, regulations, and last-minute information for entries in Pride Houston's 2008 GLBT Pride Parade at this mandatory meeting. 7 p.m. Resurrection MCC, 2025 W. 11th St. Details: www.pridehouston.com.

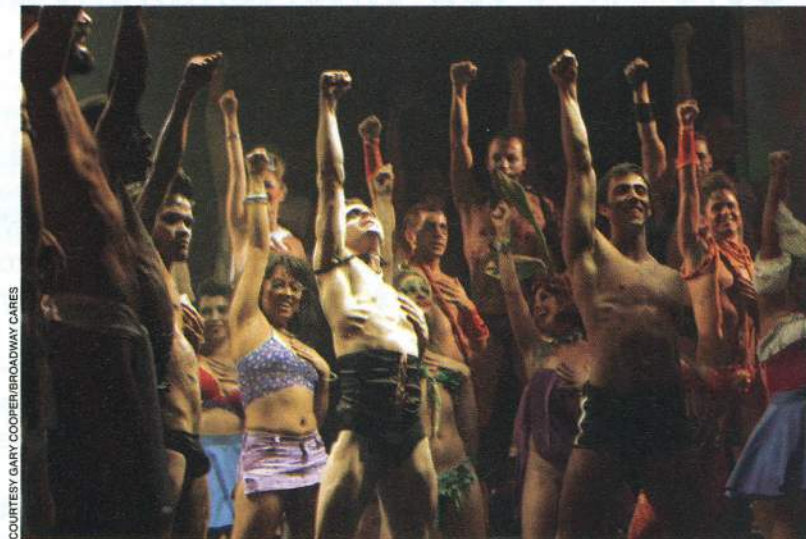
JUNE 11

• **LESLIE JORDAN** (Emmy Award-winning actor, *Will & Grace*, pictured) discusses and signs copies of his new book, *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet* (see ReadOut on page 138 for an excerpt). 5 p.m. Barnes & Noble Bookstore, Town & Country Village, 12850 Memorial Dr. Suite 1600. Details: 713/465-5616. Jordan later performs his show based on the book at Cullen Theatre. 8 p.m. 510 Preston St. Tickets: \$45–\$70. Details: 866/55-TICKETS.



YA GOTTA HAVE A GIMMICK

'Broadway Bares' it all for AIDS Foundation Houston and Pride Houston



COURTESY GARY COOPER/BROADWAY CARES

Barely there: The new *H-Town Strip* show takes its concept from the annual *Broadway Bares* event in New York. Get an idea of what to expect from this photo from the 2007 show, *Broadway Bares XVII: Myth Behavior*.

One of the highlights of any New York theater season is *Broadway Bares*, the annual fundraising extravaganza that blends naughty burlesque spirit and Great White Way razzle-dazzle. Since 1991, some of the hottest male and female bodies of the stage have strutted their finely toned stuff in elaborate production numbers and saucy striptease performances at the always-sold-out performance. In the process, the chorines and chorus boys have raised more

than \$5 million for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Now a Houston theater boy who has returned home from Manhattan is bringing the *Broadway Bares* concept to the Bayou City with a June 29 show called *H-Town Strip*.

"We're using the same type of format, getting the same feel of it," says Casey Burden who is directing the show (and planning to launch a new theater company with business partners later this year).

In keeping with the disco-tinged theme

of the 30th anniversary of Pride, *H-Town Strip* boasts a mirror-ball flair. "My idea is the glamour side of Studio 54," Burden says. He adds that the show includes something sexy for everyone—gay, lesbian, and beyond. "I even want my straight brothers to come."

June 29, 9 p.m. and midnight. RocBar, 530 Texas St. Tickets: \$20–\$25. Benefits Pride Houston and AIDS Foundation Houston (Pride parade grand marshal). Details: 713/529-6979 or www.pridehouston.org. —Tim Brookover

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• **HOUSTON GAY AND LESBIAN PARENTS** meet for an agenda-less, informal dinner for newcomers and long-time members. 6:30 p.m. Buffalo Grille, 3116 Bissonnet. Details: www.hglp.org.

JUNE 12

OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. PRIDE IDOL,



Pride Houston's local version of *American Idol*, continues. Vocalists compete for free production of demo CD, an opportunity to perform at the Pride Festival, and more. Pictured: Charlotte Simmons, last year's winner. 9:30 p.m. Guava Lamp, 570 Waugh Dr. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

JUNE 13

HATCH ALTERNATIVE PROM. Inspired by Pride Houston's 2008 theme, We Are Family, the 16th annual prom transforms the first floor at Montrose Counseling Center, the youth group's new home, into a disco. 1970s attire is recommended but not required. Benefits HATCH. Pictured: HATCH mem-



bers crowned as prom royalty last year. Tickets: \$25 for adults; free for youth ages 13-20. Details: 713/529-3590.

JUNE 14

• **KINDRED SPIRITS' GAME NIGHT OUT.** Join the Houston Comets at their new home, Reliant Arena, when Sheryl Swoopes, now playing for Seattle Storm, returns to face off against her former teammates. Tickets: \$12-\$32; no refunds. A portion of the proceeds helps Kindred Spirits support local women's health programs. 7:30 p.m. Reliant Arena, 1 Reliant Park. Info: Shenita at 713/935-6511, sbenjamin@houston-comets.com.

• **SPACE CITY EMPIRE's** GingerVitus and Chanel Cartier present a Motown Review, featuring community entertainers. Benefits Bering Omega Dental Clinic, Omega House, and Lexy Bowen Community Fund. EJ's, 2517 Ralph St. Details: www.spacecity-empire.org.

JUNE 19

OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. PRIDE IDOL, Pride Houston's local version of *American Idol*, continues. See June 12 for details.

JUNE 20

OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. THE FRIENDS OF PRIDE WINE TASTING & SILENT AUCTION. Contributors are invited to this signature fundraising event, which features wines from around the world. 6-9 p.m. Location TBA on the tickets. Benefits Pride Houston. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

JUNE 21

• **THE INDEPENDENT BILLIARD LEAGUE OF HOUSTON** presents its 12th annual Houston Billiard Open. 10 a.m. Slick Willie's Family Pool Hall, 1200 Westheimer Rd. Tickets: \$20-\$25, with raffle tickets for prizes from local merchants beginning at \$5. Benefits Pet Patrol. Details: www.hbo.ihlouston.com.

• **GAY MEN'S CHORUS OF HOUSTON**, under leadership of artistic director James Knapp, cele- →

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Pride & Beyond

continued from previous page

brates Pride month with a concert featuring singer/songwriter Mike Ator (pictured) performing his composition, "Angel Beside Me." The program, which Ator and GMCH repeats at GALA Festival VIII in Miami in July, also includes Robert Seeley's "Metamorphosis" and GMCH greatest hits. 7 p.m. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. Info: www.bayoucityperformingarts.org.

• **TRUE COLORS**, a music festival founded by Cyndi Lauper (pictured), benefits the Human Rights Campaign and other nonprofit groups through the True Colors Fund. 6 p.m. Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, 2005 Lake Robbins Drive in The Woodlands. See page 65.

JUNE 22

• **THE INDEPENDENT BILLIARD LEAGUE OF HOUSTON'S** 12th Annual Houston Billiard Open concludes. See June 21 for details.

• **THE ANNUAL GLBT INTERFAITH PRIDE SERVICE** calls together clergy and lay people representing various religious traditions to worship. Led by Resurrection MCC pastor Dwayne Johnson, with a reception following. 7 p.m. Resurrection MCC, 2025 W. 11th St. Details: 713/861-9149, www.resurrectionmcc.org.

JUNE 26

• **OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. PRIDE IDOL**, Pride Houston's local version of *American Idol*, concludes. See June 12 for details.

• **LAWRENCE VS. TEXAS 5TH ANNIVERSARY**. The



Supreme Court case that determined all sodomy laws unconstitutional originated here in Houston with the arrest of John Lawrence and Tyrone Gardner (pictured on *OutSmart's* October 2003 cover). Houston's GLBT Community Center commemorates the fifth anniversary of the historic decision with a bring-your-own potluck supper celebration, with Lawrence and his attorney, Mitchell Katine, in attendance. That evening, the community center also officially announces the establishment of a fund in Lawrence and Garner's name, designed to award scholarships to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students pursuing higher education. 6:30–9 p.m. Bering & James art gallery, 805 Rhode Place, #500. Donation: \$10. Details: 713/524-3818, www.hglbtcc.org.

JUNE 27

• **OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. PRIDE KICK-OFF PARTY** launches Pride Houston's weekend of festivities with drag performances, a fashion show, and a local DJ. 7 p.m. Club Meteor, 2306 Genesee St. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

• **NOCHE DE GALA**. GALLO, Houston's Latino/a social group, celebrates Pride with Noche de



Gala, a black-tie affair, with music by Avizo Band (pictured). 8 p.m. Greer & Lowdermilk Conference Center, 4225 Interwood N. Parkway. Tickets: \$50–\$1,000. Benefits GALLO's scholarship fund, AIDS Foundation Houston's Camp Hope, Lazarus House, Lexy Bowen Community Fund, and Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: www.gallo.org, 713/658-5198.

• **HOUSTON PRIDE BAND** celebrates 30 years of music, visibility, and pride with a spectacular concert. 7:30 p.m. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts' Zilka Hall. See page 85.

• **I'VE GOT MY PRIDE**. Empire of the Royal, Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star's Christopher Prado presents I've Got My Pride, benefiting Legacy Community Health Services and AssistHers. 8 p.m. Tony's Corner Pocket, 817 W. Dallas St. Details: mrgaypridehou2005@sbcglobal.net.

JUNE 28

• **OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. PRIDE HOUSTON'S 2008 GLBT PRIDE FESTIVAL** offers two entertainment stages, vendor booths, nonprofit organization information, the GLBT History exhibit, and more. 11 a.m.–8 p.m. Free admission. Yoakum and Westheimer in the heart of Montrose. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

• **OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. HOUSTON'S GLBT PRIDE PARADE**, celebrating its 30th anniversary with the theme We Are Family, begins at Dunlavy Street and rolls east down Westheimer Rd. 8:45 p.m. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

• **OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. THE PRIDE AFTER-PARTY** concludes Pride Houston's day-long festivities, with DJ Roland Belmares and a midnight show and photo op with adult video and men's magazine star, Johnny Castle. South Beach, 810 Pacific St. Details: www.pridehouston.org.

• **POSH PAWS**. Cantoni's month-long series of Posh Paws events concludes with a gala and auction featuring 18 polyethylene puppies designed by Eero Aarnio embellished local personalities, and the Posh Paws Pageant (see June 1). 7 p.m. Cantoni Houston, 9889 Westheimer Rd. Details: www.cantoni.com/poshpaws.

JUNE 29

• **OFFICIAL PRIDE HOUSTON EVENT. H-TOWN STRIP** combines the naughtiness of burlesque and the razzle-dazzle of Broadway. 9 p.m. and midnight. RocBar, 530 Texas St. Tickets: \$20–\$25. Benefits Pride Houston and AIDS Foundation Houston (Pride parade grand marshal). Details: 713/529-6979, www.pridehouston.org. See page 94.

• **AFTER HOURS**, KPFT 90.1 FM's legendary radio show with Jim Carper, Chris Arasin, and others, annually airs the rowdiest first-person post-Pride Parade rundown. June 29 (and every Sunday morning), 1–3 a.m. Episodes are also downloadable on iTunes and archived online. Details: www.kpft.org.

• **PATTY LARKIN**, openly gay singer/songwriter, celebrates the release of her 11th CD, *Watch the Sky*, which she wrote, produced, engineered, and edited herself. 6 p.m. Mucky Duck, 2425 Norfolk St. Tickets: \$18. Details: www.pattylarkin.com, 713/528-5999.

JUNE 30

• **FRANK SPINELLI, M.D.**, author of *The Advocate Guide to Gay Men's Health and Wellness*, dispels the myth that gay life ends at 40 with a talk and reception sponsored by Abbott Laboratories and Legacy Community Health Services \$6 p.m. The Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. Details: www.legacycommunityhealth.org. See page 99.

JULY 4

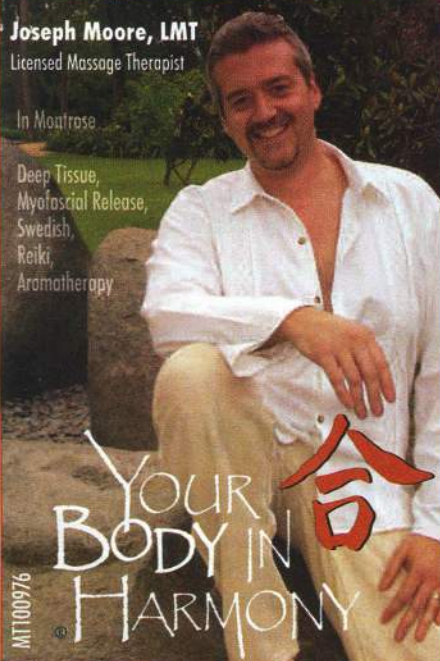
• **THE HOUSTON GLBT POLITICAL CAUCUS** presents "Red, White and BaYOU," a July 4 fundraiser. A pre-event underwriters' cocktail party includes complimentary valet parking, open bar, and hors d'oeuvres. Entertainment includes DJ Chad Guidry, vocalist Kenneth Gayle, and a "special guest," climaxing with fireworks viewed from the balcony. Rocbar/Mosaic, 530 Texas Ave. Tickets: \$50–\$5,000. Details: www.thecaucus.org, 713/521-1000. ■

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OUT IN HOUSTON



1 The crowd at the first Un Soiree Pelouse benefit event, hosted by the Houston GLBT Community Center, included (clockwise from center, front) co-chair **Marc Garcia** (in sailor suit), **Kelley Murry**, **Marc Vanderkolck**, **Phillip Johnson**, **Coy Tow**, **Mark White**, and **Brian Crumby**. Proceeds from the Apr. 22 fundraiser at Rich's support the community center.



2 Representatives of community organizations that received funds from Jungle 16, the annual Bayou City Boys Club weekend of parties, accepted checks at an Apr. 27 reception at the Lovett Inn. The eight beneficiaries included Pet Patrol. Jungle 16 events took place Mar. 20-23.



3 Male UWear owner **Tim Wilde** (l) and **Alec D'Storm** (r) welcomed fashion designer **Andrew Christian**, who made an appearance at the store on Apr. 11.



4 At the launch party for Equality Texas-Houston, **Paul Scott** (l), executive director of the Austin-based rights organization, welcomed **Tirey Counts** (r) and **Tammi Wallace**, one of the founders of Houston Equal Rights Alliance, which merged with Equality Texas to establish the local branch of the statewide group. The Apr. 24 party was held at Saks Fifth Avenue.

5 At a May 4 reception at the Lovett Inn, Bunnies on the Bayou presented checks to representatives of groups that received funds from its yearly Easter event. The nine beneficiaries included Lazarus House.

6 At the May 3 Cocktails, Coward & Company benefit for Main Street Theatre, executive artistic director **Rebecca Greene Udden** (l) joined event director **Joel Sandel** on stage.

7 On Apr. 24, **Raymond Rodriguez** (seated, holding wine bottle) hosted a celebration of life in memory of his late partner, Chris Manuel, at Salud Winery. Salud owner **Brad Odom** (standing, with bottle) welcomed the group.

8 **Anthony Danzey** (l) and **Steve Locke** (second from l) hosted the May 8 Comida y Amigos fundraiser at their residence, which benefited Brazos Abiertos, the Houston-based group that supports HIV education and services in Merida, the capital city of the Yucatan.

9 **Daniella Parker** (l-r), **Judge Steven Kirkland**, **Pat Corrigan**, **Tori Williams**, City Controller **Annisette Parker**, and **Beth Tudor** attended the Kindred Spirits Reunion on Apr. 26. Proceeds from the annual event at the Hornberger Conference Center benefited AssisHers, Bering Support Network, Houston Buyers Club, and Lesbian Health Initiative.

10 Houston Flyboys flagger troupe members and friends who attended a May 4 pool party included (clockwise from lower l) **Fernando Zamora**, **Marco Roberts**, **David Acalal**, **Jeremiah Jones**, **Ben Cunning**, **Elester Stewart**, **Charlie Nguyen**, and **Mike Alberts**.



PHOTOS: 1, PAUL STRICKLIN; 6, MAIN STREET THEATRE; 2-5, 7-10, DALTON DEHART

