

Houston's LGBT Magazine
Now Publishing in Our 16th Year

OutSmart

June 2009

'09 The
Official Guide
PRIDE
HOUSTON

Annise Parker

Next Stop, the Mayor's Office?

Everett Evans • Houston's LGBT History
Transgender Archives • Sex, Lies, & Pills
The Tony Awards • Pride Idol

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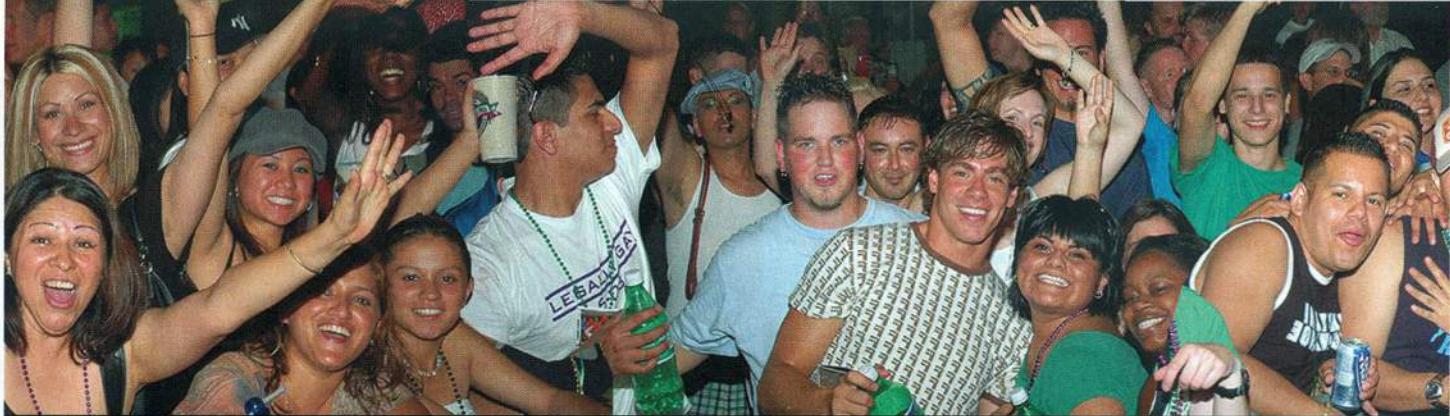
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PRIDE
HOUSTON

OUT4JUSTICE²⁰⁰⁹

The Official 2009
OutSmart
Pride Guide



Contents

65**WELCOME**

The 31st Annual
Houston Pride Parade

79**Male Grand Marshal**

James Knapp

85**Female Grand Marshal**

Fiona Dawson

89**Honorary
Grand Marshal**

Linda & Mike Bratsen

91**Grand Marshal
Organization**

Legacy Community
Health Services

WELCOME TO PRIDE

Celebrating 40 years since the famed Stonewall Rebellion in New York City when queers fiercely resisted harassment by New York City police, Pride Houston has adopted as its 2009 theme, Out 4 Justice. The snappy, superhero-looking logo, designed by Michael Hobley, David Wuensch, and TracyLynn Tessmer, reminds us of the courage it took—and takes—to be an out and open gay man, lesbian, or bisexual or transgendered person.

Here in the official *OutSmart* and Pride Houston 2009 Pride Guide, you'll find stories of just a few of those courageous people, as well as tips to get the most out of your Pride experience, and dozens of very cool Pride-sanctioned and other out-and-proud events.



Events Calendar

67

History of Pride

71

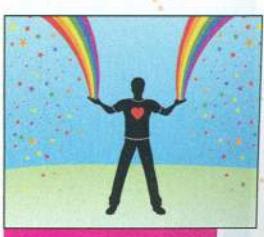
Pride Idol

95

Parade Festival

96

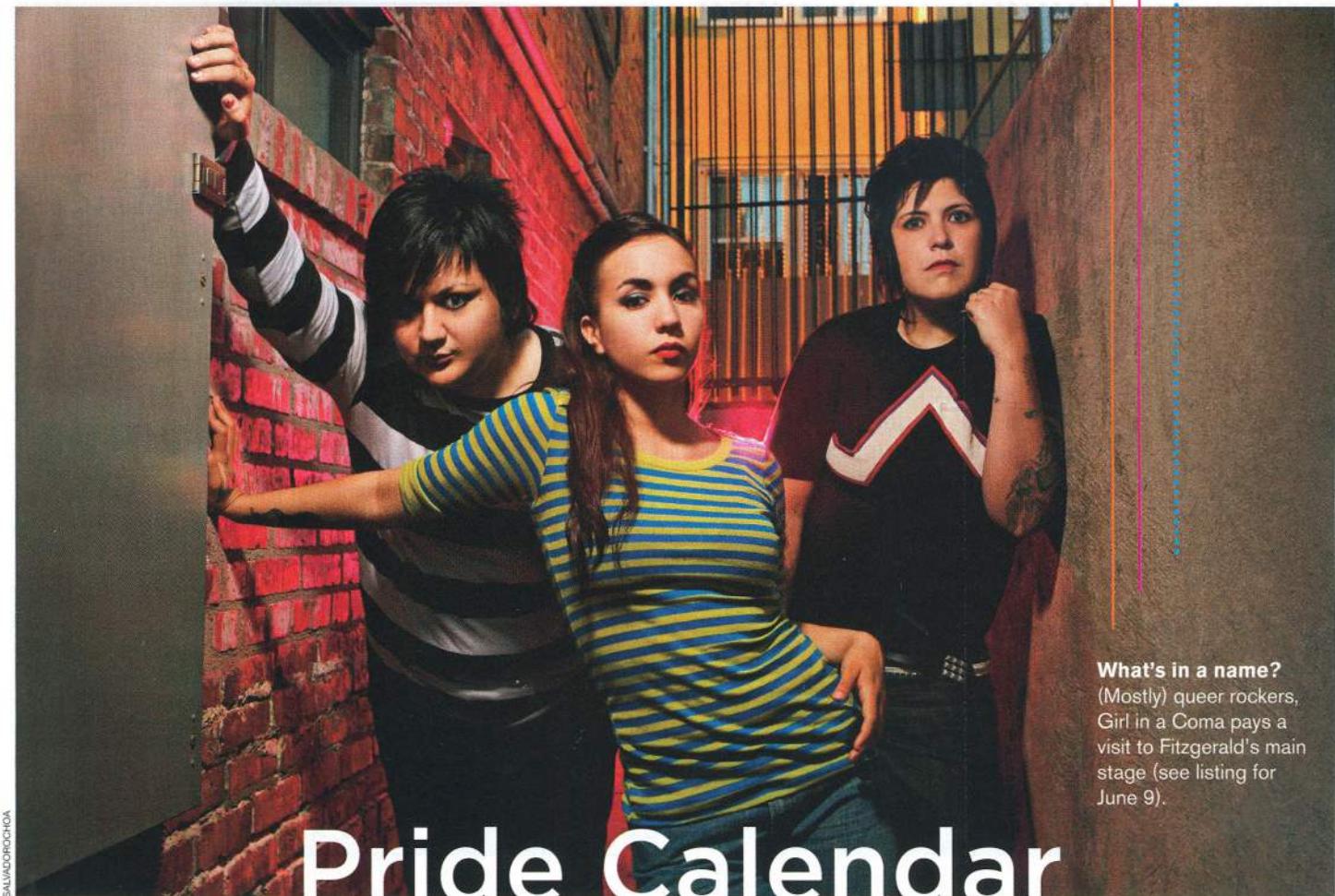
Map of Festival

99

Sponsors

101

OutSmart JUNE 2009 65



Pride Calendar

What's in a name?
(Mostly) queer rockers, Girl in a Coma pays a visit to Fitzgerald's main stage (see listing for June 9).

On the national front, the opposition to gay marriage is crumbling, state by state. We've got the most gay-friendly president at the helm in decades. Locally, we have our first real out candidate for mayor who, if she wins, would become the first openly gay mayor of a top-five American city, truly living up to the song's claim, "this land is your land/this land is our land." Which, come to think of it, could then be belted out by one of our very own Pride Idols (PrIdols, for those of you who need a shorthand for tweeting).

Well, there's no better way to celebrate all this good gay fortune than with the 2009 Pride Month.

For the 31st year in a row, Houston is putting on a stellar Pride parade, and its 12th anniversary as the nation's premiere nocturnal one. There are a myriad of very cool Pride-sanctioned (and other out-loud-and-proud) events to let your rainbow freak flag fly. We've compiled this list of places to go and things to do just for you, so keep this commemorative issue of *OutSmart* handy, as this is the *Official 2009 Pride Guide*. We should all be proud of ourselves. Happy Pride Month. —compiled by Nancy Ford and Steven Foster

JUNE 3

Dine with Pride, Dinner 1

Why is the LGBT festival free while all city-sponsored fests shake you down with a wallet-wilting cover charge? Because the Pride Committee hosts fundraisers to keep it that way. This year, Pride is working with local Montrose restaurants for a series of fundraising fetes. Four generous eateries will donate a portion of their night to Pride Houston. For information on the restaurant location, go to PrideHouston.org.

June 3

7 PM, ANGELIKA FILM CENTER

Big-Screen Cabaret

Theatre Under The Stars celebrates its production of the musical masterpiece, *Cabaret*, with a screening of the Oscar-winning film starring Liza Minnelli and Joel Grey. 510 Texas Ave. Tickets: \$6.75–\$9.50. Angelikafilmcenter.com • 713/225-1470

June 4

10 PM, GUAVA LAMP

Houston Pride Idols, Week 3

We're down to the last finalists standing—make that singing—in this local *American Idol* knock-off. Could one be the next Kelly

Clarkson? Or will the winner become the future Ruben Whatshisname? With a contest like this, it really could go either way. But if there's a Susan Boyle in the bunch, it would be well worth your time to head over to Guava Lamp and check out the Pride Idols competition. FYI, the original 5-girl/5-guy contestants, coming in a rainbow of colors, were picked for their talent, not their gender, sexuality, or ethnicity. Kinda crazy how things come together during Pride, ain't it? 570 Waugh Dr. Guava Lamp houston.com • 713/524-3359.

Pride Calendar

continued from page 67

Day
27

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lth.org

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dol.com

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idet.com

June 6

6-9 PM, RICH'S
Jocks in Dresses

Hide the bats. The studs of the Montrose Softball League don frocks for Jocks in Dresses, the league's annual amateur drag fundraiser. Benefits AIDS Foundation Houston. 2401 San Jacinto. Montrosesoftballleague.com.

June 7

5:30 PM, OVATIONS
Caring Cabaret

A different *Cabaret*. Pianist Roger Woest presents his annual *Caring Cabaret*, featuring vocalists Gary Bankston, Patti Barnes, Deborah Boily, Laura Finger Duggan, Terry Jones, Mark and Marla Stonebarger, and Charles Swan. Benefits Covenant House of Houston. 2536 Times Blvd. Tickets: \$50. Ovationsnightclub.com • 713/522-9801.

June 7

7 PM, BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM
Colt 45's Anniversary

Pride in performance. Colt 45's celebrates 33 years of supporting people with HIV/AIDS and breast cancer with an anniversary show and awards ceremony. 2400 Brazos St. BrbHouston.com • 713/528-9192.

June 9

8 PM, FITZGERALD'S
Girl in a Coma

Saving the best for last. Girl in a Coma—that raucous, rocking Texas trio, two-thirds of which are out lesbians—is currently on a national summer tour in support of their new CD, *Trio B.C.* They wrap up visits to seven Lone Star cities with a show in Houston, sharing the stage with Miss Derringer. 2706 White Oak Dr. Fitzlive.com • 713/862-7469.

June 10

Dine with Pride, Dinner 2
TBA

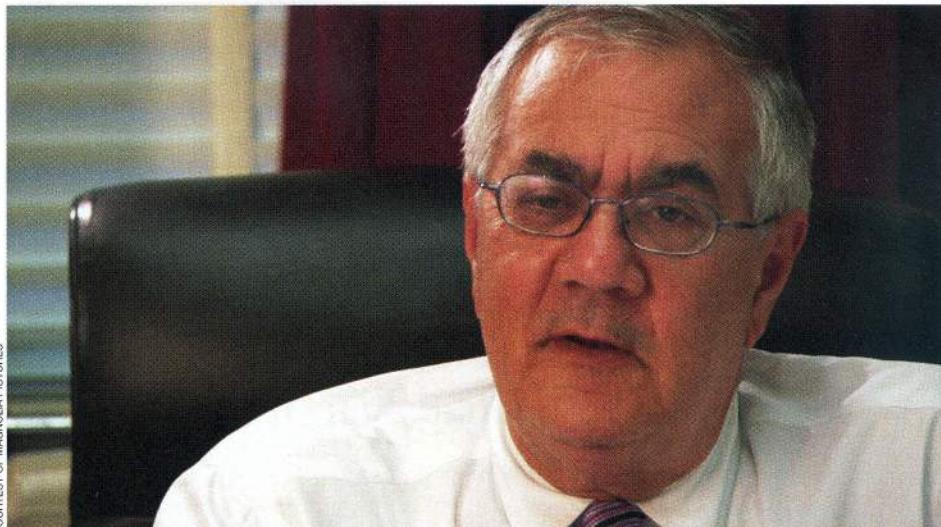
For restaurant location,
go to PrideHouston.org

June 11

10 PM, GUAVA LAMP

Houston Pride Idols, Week 4

If you've been to any of the Pride Idol weeks, you know that omnipresent Ernie Manouse is playing the Simon Cowell role, *Houston Chronicle* music writer and *AI* blogger Joey Guerra is the nice guy, and *Project Runway* Brit brat fashionista Vanessa Riley provides the estrogen. And after sucking down Guava's powerfully potent



COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES

Congressman Barney Frank is interviewed in (though obviously not one of the subjects of) acclaimed filmmaker Kirby Dick's new movie shedding light on the hypocrisy of closeted gay, antigay legislators. *Outrage* opens June 12 at Angelika Film Center.

cocktails, patrons are performing their own Paula Abdul slur and head bob. Now that's entertainment.

June 12

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER
Outrage

Stall talk. *Outrage*, acclaimed filmmaker Kirby Dick's new movie shedding light on the hypocrisy of closeted gay, antigay

legislators, opens today. 510 Texas Ave. Angelikafilmcenter.com • 713/225-1470.

June 12

7 PM, MONTROSE COUNSELING CENTER
HATCH Prom

Prom and circumstance. *OutSmart*'s Nancy Ford emcees "Flashback to the '80s," HATCH's Alternative Prom for youth and *continued on next page*

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Entertaining Angels

the REAL story of Sodom & Gomorrah told in musical drama

SUNDAY, June 21st, 6pm



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COMMUNITYGOSPEL.ORG

The Houston Pet Patrol and the Spay-Neuter Assistance Program would like to thank all of our supporters in the LGBT community!

Happy Pride!



Photos by Brett Chisholm Photography

pet patrol

A PEOPLE PET PARTNERSHIP

Pride Calendar

continued from previous page

adults. (See page 142.) Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Branard St. Hatchyouth.org.

June 12

9 PM, CROCKER BAR AND GEORGE

Which Will Prevail

Simul-shows. ERSICSS celebrates Pride with *Which Will Prevail*, a pair of simultaneous, dueling shows benefiting Legacy Community Health Services. The men perform at Crocker Bar (2312 Crocker), and the women perform at George (617 Fairview). Susan Hayes and Natasha Nikole host. Ersicss.org.

June 13

10 AM, WILLIS, TEXAS

3rd Annual Tranny Q

Pride parade float assembly will begin at 10 a.m. Bring screw guns, staple guns, air compressors, water, and sunscreen. A potluck BBQ dinner will be served at noon. This event is open to the entire LGBT community in honor of Pride Month. Go to Tq.transhouston.com for maps, carpool details, and information on overnight camping and fishing.

June 13

7:30 PM, JONES HALL

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston

Muy caliente! Bayou City Performing Arts artistic director James Knapp says farewell to Houston, conducting Gay Men's Chorus of Houston's 30th anniversary season finale, *La Perla!*, a commissioned show focusing on Latino and Hispanic music. 615 Louisiana St. Tickets: \$22-\$65. Gmch.org.

June 14

7:30 PM, EJ's

Gospel Revival

The glory of pride. ERSICSS board of directors host *Gospel Revival*. Benefits Legacy Community Health Services. 2517 Ralph St. Ersicss.org.

June 17

Dine with Pride, Dinner 3

TBA

For restaurant location, go to Pridehouston.org

June 18

10 PM, GUAVA LAMP

Houston Pride Idols, Week 5

Rumor has it Paula Abdul's supposed to show up because someone called and told her Pfizer was giving out free samples of (insert pharmaceutical here). Okay, you know we're kidding, right? 570 Waugh Dr. GuavaLampHouston.com • 713/524-3359.

June 1

6 PM, ALL

ActOUT

Television theater in music, so cocktails The Farm p.m.; cur 4th Floor AlleyThe

June 1

8 PM, HOE

OUT@TU

Come he explores in *Cabare* post-show reception and crew at Artisti Theatre U Stars. Ho for the Pe Arts; 800 TUTS.com

June 1

8 PM, HOE

Houston

Band of b sisters. C by artisti Jason Ste Houston concludes with the a theme, *Border*, m music fro Japan, C of course, Performin Houston

June 2

6 PM, LA

GLBT W

Exclusive soiree tak Maison in designer blettop to If you're For Pride and pool champagn this—two six VIP bl includes yets to an a four invit PrideHou

June 18

6 PM, ALLEY THEATRE

ACTOUT

Television on stage. LGBT and supportive theater mavens enjoy a mixer with music, socializing, and complimentary cocktails followed by a performance of *The Farnsworth Invention*. Reception, 6 p.m.; curtain, 7:30 p.m. Alley Theatre's 4th Floor Terrace Room, 615 Texas Ave. AlleyTheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

June 18

8 PM, HOBBY CENTER

OUT@TUTS

Come hear the music play. OUT@TUTS explores the decadent world of 1930s Berlin in *Cabaret* with a post-show sing-along reception with cast and crew downstairs at Artista Restaurant. Theatre Under The Stars. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby St. TUTS.com.

June 19

8 PM, HOBBY CENTER

Houston Pride Band

Band of brothers and sisters. Conducted by artistic director Jason Stephens, the Houston Pride Band concludes the season with the continuing theme, *Beyond Fences: Music without Borders*, featuring music from England, Japan, Chile, and, of course, the USA. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts' Zilkha Hall, 800 Bagby St. Houstonprideband.org.

June 20

6 PM, LA MAISON ON REVERE

GLBT Wine Tasting

Exclusive to Friends of Pride, this wine soiree takes place at the swanky new La Maison in River Oaks. Members snack on designer hors d'oeuvres and move from tabletop to tabletop sampling prime vintages. If you're not a FOP, why should you care? For Pride next year. Grab a few friends and pool your cash and buy the \$750 champagne package which includes—get this—two on-site festival parking passes, six VIP bleacher seats for the parade that includes your own personal waiter, six tickets to an exclusive pre-Parade reception, four invites to the wine party, and more. PrideHouston.org

June 20

7:30-10:30 PM, BISTRO CALAIS

Jerry Atwood and Rick Comeaux

Greenway cabaret. Legendary piano bar darlings Jerry Atwood and Rick Comeaux perform favorite show tunes, ballads, and more in the musical dining room the third Saturday of each month (this month, June 20). Check the website for appearances by Sharon Montgomery, Tommie Lee Bradley, and other local favorites. 2811 Bammel Ln. Reservations: BistroCalais.com • 713/529-1314.

June 20

1 PM, COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHURCH

The Bible and Modern Humanity

Holy man. The Reverend Samuel Kader, renowned author and international leader



Taste the rainbow. The Houston Flyboys flag troupe shows its colors in Pride Houston's 1997 GLBT Pride Parade, the first to be held after dark.

in the Community Gospel Church denomination, conducts *Everything you were afraid to ask*, but really need to know*, a four-hour seminar addressing what the Bible really says about homosexuality and how it relates to modern humanity. Free. 608 Aurora St. CommunityGospel.org • 713/880-2245.

June 21

11 AM, COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHURCH

Reverend Samuel Kader

From the pulpit. The Reverend Samuel Kader addresses the congregation following his June 20 workshop (see previous entry). 608 Aurora St. CommunityGospel.org • 713/880-2245.

June 20-21

10 AM, SLICK WILLIE'S FAMILY POOL HALL

13th Annual Houston Billiard Open

Don't scratch. Experienced pool players and amateurs alike are welcomed at the

Independent Billiard League of Houston's 13th Annual Houston Billiard Open. The event is the final stop of the prestigious ACS/J. Pechauer Cues All American Tour. "The \$500 added money purse provides us nationwide promotion with regional focus, and this alliance promises to increase player participation," says IBL representative Greg Killips. Registration, 10 a.m.; play, 11 a.m. 1200 Westheimer. Tickets: \$30-\$35. IBLHouston.com.

June 21

8:30 AM-10:50 AM,

BERING UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Interfaith Service

One of Pride's most endearing characteristics is its inherent inclusiveness. The

colors of the rainbow, while separate, form one unifying image. Why not celebrate that spiritual diversity and unity by joining others in worship? If you haven't been to church in awhile, do yourself, your spirit, and your psyche a favor and join Bering's interfaith service. God loves you. And in whatever form you envision God, He/She would love to see you. BeringUMC.org

June 21

6 PM, COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHURCH

Entertaining Angels

Hospitality (sweet). Community Gospel

Church presents its annual Pride celebration, *Entertaining Angels*, a musical drama revealing the real story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Free. 608 Aurora St. CommunityGospel.org • 713/880-2245.

June 24

Dine with Pride, Dinner 4

TBA

For restaurant location, go to PrideHouston.org

June 25

10 PM, GUAVA LAMP

Houston Pride Idols, Week 6

Someone's going to have their PrIdol dream come true. Will there be a Kris Allen-style upset? Or will the contestant with the most buzz actually win the top prize? Find out tonight at this, the big Pride Idol finale. 570 Waugh Dr. GuavaLampHouston.com • 713/524-3359.

continued on next page

Pride Calendar

continued from previous page

June 25

5:30 PM, BAYOU CITY BAR & GRILL

Author Book Signing

Author, author. Local author B. Alan Bourgeois signs copies of *GAPH 2: The Readers*, a sequel to his successful *God's Army to Purge Homosexuality*. 2409-A Grant St. Bayoucitybar.com • 713/522-2867.

June 26

10 PM, METEOR

Pride Fashion

Sponsored by Male UWear, this runway extravaganza gives you the chance to gawk at, and plan, your perfect outfit for the Pride Parade—skivvies. We all know it's about a thousand degrees in Houston, so less in this case really is more. More comfortable, that is. Swimsuits are also on display, so if it rains (a definite possibility), you won't mind getting your new fashion statement a little soaked. But don't worry. Even if you don't have the perfect gym body to pull off something skimpy, there are plenty of other hot fashions to peruse. Meteor, 2306 Genesee. Meteorlounge.com • 713/521-0123.

June 26

8 PM, TONY'S CORNER POCKET

Stonewall 40

Without the brick throwing, PWA Holiday Charities presents Stonewall 40, celebrating 40 years of LGBT Pride, with all community entertainers invited to perform. Benefits PAW Holiday Charities and Legacy Community Health Services' medication and insurance assistance programs. PWAHC.org. Tony's Corner Pocket 817 W. Dallas St. Tonyscornerpocketbar.com.

June 27

11 AM-7 PM, WESTHEIMER & YOAKUM

Houston Pride Festival

A now-standard Pride accompaniment, the Pride Festival is basically a drink and food recharge zone for those who aim to make Pride an all-day affair. However, this year, there are a couple of events worth special mention. The Walgreen's Health & Wellness Pavilion hosts HIV/STD testing, along with cancer screening information, nutrition information, and Men's & Women's Wellness education. The Stonewall Legal Advice Tent allows you the chance to speak privately with probate and family law experts, and various legal eagles on LGBT rights. Community Street offers pro-LGBT exhibitors, food courts, pet adoptions, and the Pride Oasis "cool zone" (thank you, Bud Lite!). For the little ones, the Family Space & Kid's Zone boasts inflatable games, a rock wall, Wii station, face painting, and specifically family-friendly exhibitors.

June 27

6 PM, BERING OMEGA FLOAT

Tailgate Party

Pride party. Bering Omega Community Services hosts a tailgate party before the Pride parade begins. Check location of their float on the official parade lineup. Beringumc.org • 713/526-1017.

June 27

8-11 PM

Houston Pride Parade

It's hot. It's sweaty. It's fun and it's funky. And thank God it's at night. It's the 31st annual Pride parade. Expect the usual eye-popping floats from the big brand names, although in this economy, even that's up in the air. Although safe betters can reasonably bank on Charles Armstrong providing some glitz, they can also expect plenty of walking contingents. But the PFLAG group gets the loudest hoots and hollers, with or without the added pizzazz of bead-tossing. And while we have your attention, please, please, everyone, put your trash in the provided bins. It's inexcusable that we throw a party and afterwards it looks like we trashed the place. And to you parade organizers: take a note from the Art Car Parade and get those floats *moving*. We love our funky parade, but to have a 10-minute lagtime between motorcades is a real buzzkill. Get those floats rolling and crack that whip! (We're supposed to be good at that, remember?) Pridehouston.org

June 27

HIV Testing

Get tested. June 27 is National HIV Testing Day. Call AIDS Foundation Houston for a list of testing locations. AIDSFoundation-Houston.org • 713/623-6796.

June 27

4 PM-4 AM, CLUB ADAM AND EDEN

Daylong Pride Party

All-Day Pride. Club Adam and Eden present a daylong Pride Party for those who prefer to parade their stuff closer to the Gulf. 522 NASA parkway in Webster. Clubadam.net • 281/554-3336.

June 28

9 & 11 AM, RESURRECTION MCC

Day-After Services

Worshiping with pride. Resurrection MCC conducts its annual "day after the parade" Pride services. ResurrectionMCC.org • 713/861-9149. ■



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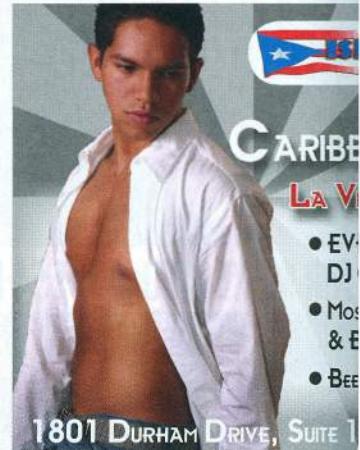
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History of Pride

Pride Houston has been an active organization since 1978, lending an active hand in the fight for equality in a time when basic rights were virtually unheard of. Since the first Pride parade in 1979 with the brazen theme "United We Stand," Pride Houston has been at the core of the LGBT movement for united equality.

Over the past decades, the local LGBT community has ultimately thrived as the parades get larger and more colorful, and more and more events are added to the list of annual activities. But let us not forget our roots and the history that has brought us to where we are today.

The following is a list of each year's theme and its grand marshals.

1979 United We Stand
Thelma Hansel

1980 Proud to Be
Jim Farmer, Ruth Ravas

1981 We the People
Ray Hill, Rita Wanstrom

1982 A Part Of, Not Apart From
Marion Coleman, Andy Mills

1983 Unity Through Diversity
Marion Pantzer, Walter Strickler

1984 Unity and More in '84
Pokey Anderson, Rick Grossman

1985 Alive with Pride
Terry Clark, Freda Jerrell

1986 Liberty Is in Our Grasp
Tony Bicocchi, Dee Lamb

1987 Come Out & Celebrate Pride
Persons Living With AIDS

1988 Rightfully Proud
Bruce Cook, Eleanor Munger
Sharon Kowalski, Harvey Milk (Hon.)

1989 Stonewall 20
Charles Armstrong, Bettie Naylor

1990 Look to the Future
GM: Walter Carter, Annise Parker
Debra Danburg, Craig Washington (Hon.)

1991 Take Pride
Gene Harrington, Jack Jackson, Linda Morales, Katy Caldwell, Marvin Davis (Hon.)

1992 Pride = Power
Sheri Cohen Darbonne, Brian Keever, Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston (Hon.)

continued on page 77

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Monday - Thursday
11 am - Midnight
Friday/Saturday
11 am - 3 am

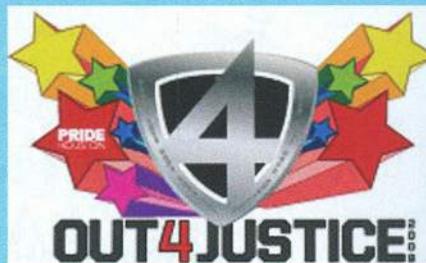
**OUT
4
JUSTICE**
An Interfaith Pride Service

Sunday, June 21, 7:00 PM

**Bering Memorial
United Methodist Church**

1440 Harold Street

713-526-1017



Pride History

continued from page 75

1993 Out & Proud

Brian Bradley, Carolyn Mobley, Adan Rios (Hon.), PFLAG Houston (Org.)

1994 HouStonewall 25

Jay Allen, Cicely Wynne, Claire Koepsel (Hon.), Q-Patrol (Org.)

1995 Silence to Celebration

Suzanne Anderson, Don Gill, Annelia Harrison (Hon.), H.A.T.C.H (Org.)

1996 Pride Knows No Borders

Bill Havard, Jeanette Vaughn, Jack Aberg (Hon.), The Royal, Sovereign, and Imperial Court of the Single Star (Org.)

1997 Glowing with Pride

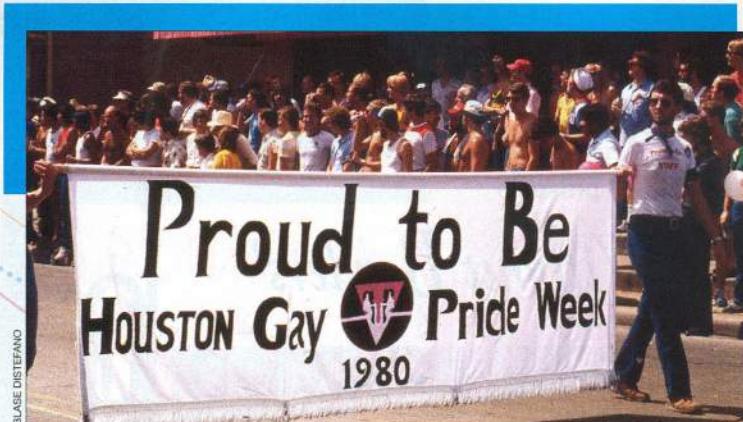
Deborah Bell, Jimmy Carper, Krewe of Olympus (Org.)

1998 Unified, Diversified, Electrified

Bob Bouton, Jackie Doval, Barbara Winston (Hon.), Texas Gay Rodeo Association (Org.)

1999 Pride, Power, & Pizzazz

Sean Carter, Nancy Ford, Colt 45's (Org.)



The age of innocence? In 1980, just prior to the introduction of HIV/AIDS, Houston's gay community proudly took to the streets for its second official Pride parade, led by grand marshals Jim Farmer and Ruth Rivas.

2000 Take Pride, Take Joy, Take Action

Richard Weiderholt, Tori Williams, Don Sinclair (Hon.), People With AIDS Coalition Houston (Org.)

2001 Embrace Diversity

Mitchell Katine, Dalia Stokes, Blake and Gordon Weisser (Hon.), PFLAG Houston (Org.)

2002 Pride Worldwide

Mela Contreras, Rusty Mueller, Irv & Jane Smith (Hon.), Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston (Org.)

2006 Say It Out Loud!

Phyllis Randolph Frye, Ray Ramirez, Rev. Marilyn Meeker-Williams (Hon.), Bunnies on the Bayou (Org.)

2007 Lone Star Pride

Jack Valinski, Maria Gonzalez, Garnet Coleman (Hon.), Imperial Court of Houston (Org.)

2008 30 Year Celebration: We Are Family

Kelly McCann, Dalton DeHart, Julie Eberly (Hon.), AIDS Foundation Houston (Org.)

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Friday, June 26th -METEOR OFFICIAL GAY PRIDE KICK-OFF PARTY

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Saturday, June 27th -SOUTH BEACH

POST- PRIDE PARADE PARTY

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DJ DAVID KNAPP

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meteorhouston.com myspace.com/meteorhouston

810 Pacific Street | 713.529.SOBE (7623)
southbeachtherightclub.com myspace.com/sobeohouston

James Knapp

2009 Pride Grand Marshal

by Donalevan Maines
Photo by Dalton DeHart

James Knapp had just finished unpacking at his new apartment in Boston when he got word that Houston's LGBT community had selected him as the male grand marshal for this year's Pride parade.

Fortunately, Knapp and his partner Jesse ("Jesse, James—we didn't plan it that way," he says) still have their house in Houston, where Knapp will continue as artistic and managing director of the Bayou City Performing Arts (BCPA) until around the time of Pride festivities. On Monday after the parade, Knapp will leave Texas, where he's lived for 23 years, and return to his native New England.

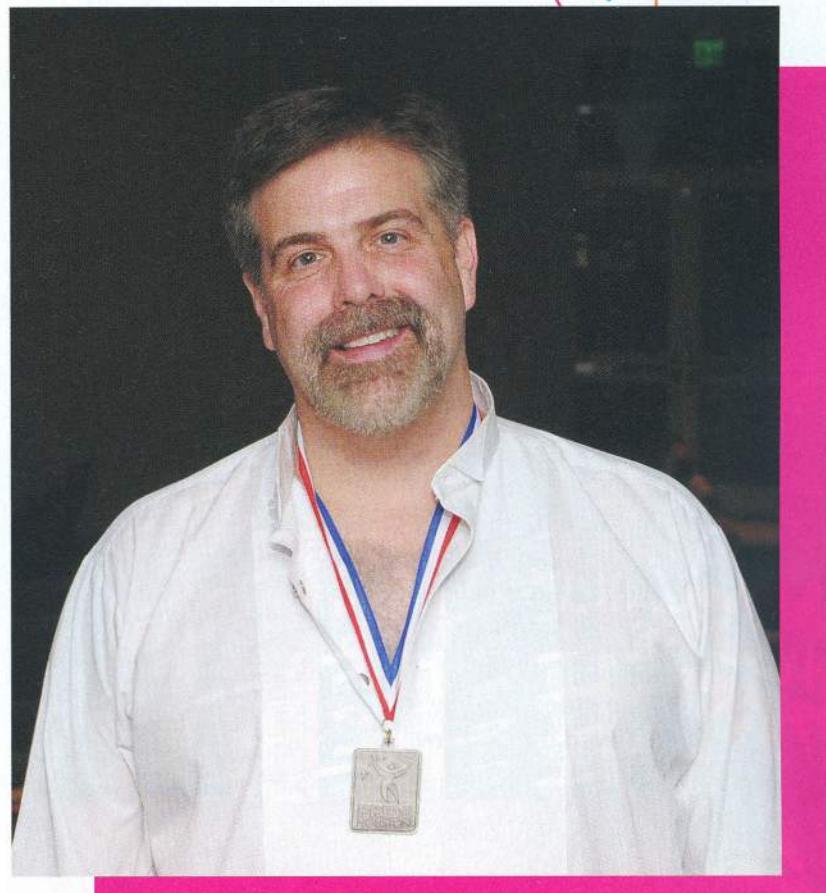
His eyes well with tears as he says, "It's going to be an important night for me, a big night, my last hurrah. I'm having a parade!"

Knapp's legacy at BCPA will remain here: how the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston blossomed under his leadership since 2001 to more than 100 singers; how its concert audiences grew from less than 300 at local churches to about 1,200 in its new residence the past three years at Jones Hall for the Performing Arts in downtown Houston; how Knapp launched the Bayou City Women's Chorus in 2005, and nurtured it from a dozen singers at its first rehearsal to a choir of more than 50 singers, including lesbians, bisexuals, and heterosexuals; how Knapp combined the voices of both men and women in the LGBT community and its supporters in founding the Bayou City Chorale, premiered at Jones Hall in 2007 with a benefit performance of "Sing for the Cure" for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Knapp's selection as male grand marshal is LGBT Houston's way of tipping its hat to both the success of BCPA choruses and its longtime leader, whose childhood began as Jamie Knapp in a tough Irish-Catholic/Italian-Catholic neighborhood in Rochester, N.Y.

His family went to the American Baptist Church, which Knapp is quick to point out is more liberal, more progressive than Southern Baptists.

"Still, I was always instructed in a faith community, where the subtext was that you



Leaving on a high note: former artistic director of the Bayou City Performing Arts, James Knapp, serves as male grand marshal of Pride Houston's 2009 GLBT Pride Parade before moving to Boston.

can't be a Christian and be gay," he says. "There was the feeling that I had to choose between family and faith and being gay.

"I always knew I was gay," adds Knapp, who is now 50, "but I was too terrified to do anything about it. People didn't even talk about sex. I didn't know there was gay sex. I thought it was fooling around."

Looking back, he recalls what a great role model he had in a proud gay man named Martin May, who was Knapp's high school drama teacher. "Mr. May was not married, so you can imagine the play on words, 'You have a class with Mr. Gay.' But he always stood tall. He wore big pump heels like in *Saturday Night Fever*, he did great work, and his classroom was a haven for all the outcasts and misfits.

"My real eye-opener was going to college" (at Fredonia State University),

he explains. "That's the first time I was confronted with a lot of gay people, being overtly gay, talking about gay sex, and having same-sex relationships.

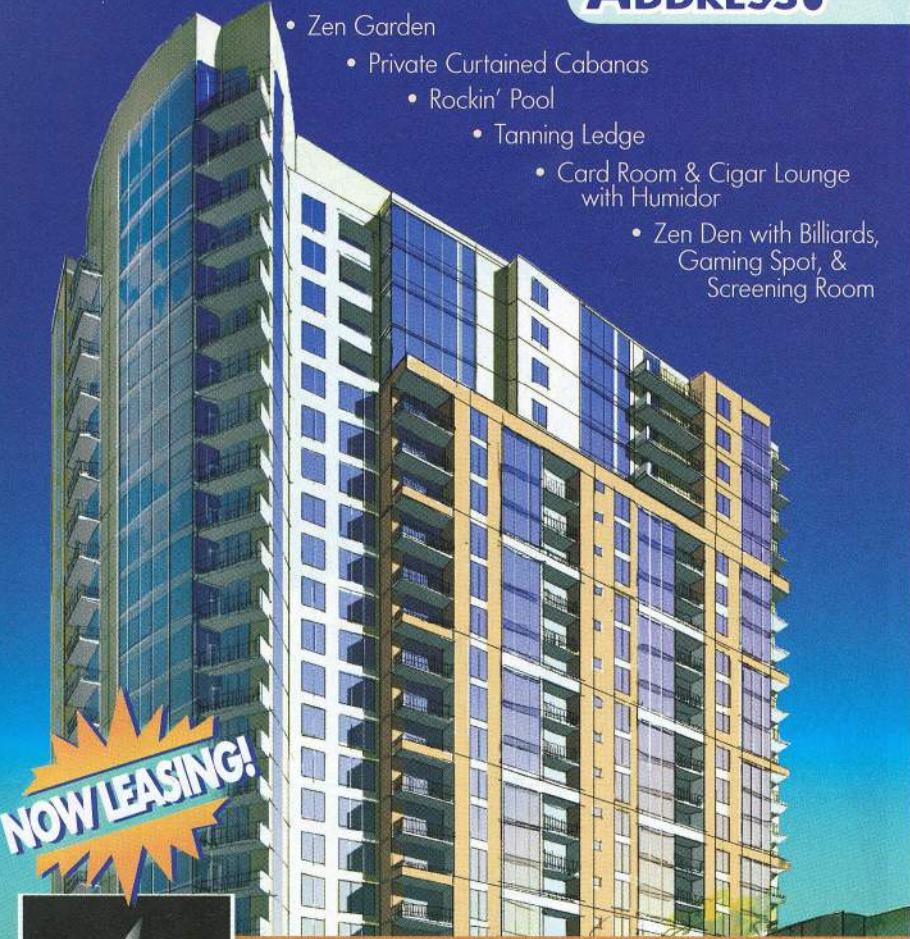
"It kinda freaks you out," he remembers. "What freaks you out about it, is that's who you are. And away from home, you have the time, place, and opportunity to embrace your personhood."

"Then the pivotal moment for me was going to Europe," he says, to study at the Conservatory of Music in Salzburg, Austria. "When I got off the plane, not knowing one person on that continent, I changed my name to James, and I said, 'I'm going to do things differently,' meaning that he was now officially out.

"They just didn't care over there!" he laughs. "They were light years ahead of the United States." →

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James Knapp

continued from previous page

Two years later, a professor encouraged him to pursue his master's degree at the University of Texas at Austin. "Moving from Austria to Texas was like moving from Earth to Mars," he says. "You would think it would cause me to go running back into the closet. But I found Austin to be an oasis of enlightenment, and after living with integrity, I said 'I'm not going back.'"

From Austin, Knapp moved to Chicago for five years, then returned to Texas and spent eight years as minister of music at First United Methodist Church in Sugar Land, a former company town built around the Imperial Sugar plant.

"It was wild. It was just a bunch of pastures," he explains. "The congregation where I worked was 100 years old, and I saw the whole [U.S. 59] corridor go from fields" to its current status as one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation.

Knapp settled into a home in Northfield Subdivision near Braeswood and Fondren for "practical purposes," he says. "It was 15 minutes from work and 20 minutes to downtown."

Living outside of the Montrose gayborhood, he says, "We are pioneers. I think that has a big impact on people. It's a really good experience for [heterosexuals]."

In particular, he says that his next-door neighbors, who are orthodox Jews, "didn't know what to think at first, but now we have dinner together, we have keys to each others' houses, we've been a positive influence."

Likewise, he says, there are a number of fellow "pioneers" in BCPA choirs, LGBT singers who live outside the Houston city limits, in areas that include Pearland, Katy, and the Woodlands.

"Two guys come from Bellville, and because of their courage in living openly as they do out in the country, we have about 15 Bellville groupies," Knapp laughs. "They come to every performance and always join us afterwards when we go out to dinner."

With BCPA members dressed as mermaids and "mer-men" in the Pride parade, chances are that Bellville groupies of the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston will be diving for pearls as the float passes by them.

Knapp says he hopes the male grand marshal convertible he's riding in will be positioned near BCPA's float. Meanwhile, he admits, "I'm absolutely obsessing with what I'm going to wear." ■

Donalevan Maines also writes about theater critic Everett Evans and the Tony Awards in this issue of OutSmart magazine.



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Fiona Dawson

2009 Pride Grand Marshal

by Joyce Gabiola

Photo by Dalton DeHart

It is a huge honor. In true absolute honesty, I feel very humbled and shy, and I actually feel like I want to hide under a rock." Fiona Dawson, known as one of the leading volunteers in our community, is reacting to having been voted as one of the grand marshals for Pride 2009.

Dawson wonders what her classified ad might read if one was to be published. She starts, "Overly committed," and with careful thought, continues, "commitment phobe. . . ." Yes, readers, Ms. Dawson is single; so suit up, strut to the nearest Human Rights Campaign event and smile. However, it is her single status that she believes has a large part to do with her heavy community involvement.

Between her job at BBVA Compass in Corporate Responsibility and Reputation, commitments to the Human Rights Campaign on a national and local level, spending quality time with friends and volunteering for a myriad of other causes, when does Dawson find the time to nurture the world? "I think when you are determined to do something and you set a goal, it's more a case of making the time to make it happen, rather than finding the time."

Before landing in Houston in 2000, Dawson volunteered and worked in Bangladesh and Portugal. The spirit of volunteerism, of giving back to the community, was inspired by her mother, who passed away of pancreatic cancer in 2006. She remembers one of her earliest moments of charity. Along with her mother and siblings, she shoveled snow out of the path of the elderly people who lived behind her family's house. "There were like 11 houses, and we knocked on their doors and asked if they needed milk or bread. We went down to the local shop to buy their milk and bread and walked back with it. Mum just encouraged us to do all of those things."

At the mention of a *Houston Voice* article published in 2005 where she was quoted as saying she wanted to save the world, Dawson replies, "I want to apply myself to the best of my ability to make positive change in the world, and I think if you can try and live every day as though you're seizing every opportunity there is to do something good, then maybe you're,



Hi, Fi: female grand marshal of Pride Houston's 2009 GLBT Pride Parade, Fiona Dawson, believes even Texas will eventually become more inclusive in its legislation, and works with the Human Rights Campaign to achieve that goal.

quote-unquote, saving the world."

Her reason for remaining in Houston? "It's hot and cheap," she laughs. "Houston has been so good to me. The people here are incredibly embracing, and there are so many great causes to really apply yourself and get involved in. Houston is a great place of opportunity. I think people come and create themselves here."

Dawson, who became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2008, appears to have a lot of faith in the strength of our community to ultimately influence LGBT legislation on a national level. "I think that the more networking we do collectively as a GLBT community and the more people we get involved, we can create a stronger force here in Texas. I'm sure a lot of the nation looks at Texas and thinks there's no way that we can push for GLBT legislation. But here in Houston, we're very powerful and

we can make a difference. We can make a difference on the local level—we've seen that—we can make a difference on the state level, and we can make a difference on the federal level."

In addition to her faith in our community, she expresses faith in President Barack Obama and a "fair-minded house and senate." However, fair-mindedness has come at a time when the nation's crucial concern is the economy. "We're at this juncture where we've put all this time and effort into getting the representation that we need, yet on the other hand, people are so scared about their daily lives and how they're going to make the bills and whether they're going to lose their jobs, that maybe they're too scared to keep on investing and pushing. So what we've seen in the last eight years is more of a defense—defending ourselves →

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Fiona Dawson

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and trying to make sure that nothing passes that takes our rights or limits us. Now we're in a situation where we're in offense and we can go for it, and we can see hate crimes legislation pass. And now with this wonderful movement of marriage equality across the states, we're beginning to see great strides. Yet we're not in a sound financial situation to fully back it up and kick it out in the field. . . . We've got to keep inspired and we've got to keep looking forward. Let's not sit back and watch everything happen, because to do that would be dangerous, and we would lose this opportunity."

Speaking of good causes, Dawson visited the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, on business and learned of their program called Teaching Tolerance, which, according to their website, is dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations, and supporting equitable school experiences for children. "They empower the teachers with tools to talk about bullying at all levels, all dimensions of diversity," Dawson says. The program created an event called Mix It Up at Lunch Day, in which more than 10,000 schools participate. It's a call to action where students simply cross the lines of division by sitting with a group of students with whom they would not normally interact, therefore allowing the opportunity to make new friends and learn about and respect each other's differences. "They did some diversity exercises and training," she says, "and I was so thrilled to see that they included sexual orientation and touched on gender identity."

Implementing tolerance education in schools is absolutely critical, according to Dawson. "As adults, whether we have children or not, it's our responsibility to be role models for younger kids, so that they can learn that diversity is a part of life and it's a value in life. I'm hoping to do some more work with them to see how we can increase the knowledge about that program and its presence and see if it's something that can help teach tolerance in schools.

"I am so, so lucky to have family that loves me and accepts me for who I am. . . . I was very close to my mum all the way up to her death. She's very much a part of me always, every single day, every single moment. There's never a time when I'm not with her or she's with me." Just as Dawson's commitment to nurturing the well-being of the community, and thus the world, is lasting, so exists the giving spirit of her mother within. ■

Joyce Gabiola also writes about Legacy Community Health Services in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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Mike and Linda Bratsen

2009 Pride Honorary Grand Marshal

by Marene Gustin

Photo by Dalton DeHart

Santa Fe, in Galveston County, isn't historically the kinda place you'd want to be out and loud.

The rural town of under 10,000 has a pretty conservative history. From the days when it was known as a sundown town (as in "people of color need to leave town before sundown") to the '80s shrimpers protest against the influx of Vietnamese that spawned the film *Alamo Bay* to the Supreme Court case based on prayer in school, Santa Fe is about as white-bread, redneck as it gets in Texas.

Add to living there parents who own a well-digging company, and it's no wonder Steven Bratsen had a hard time coming out to his parents. Finally, someone else did it for him.

"One of our employees got tired of hearing Steven say he couldn't tell us, so he took me aside one day and told me my son was gay," remembers Linda Bratsen of that day in 2001. "I had absolutely no idea. I was shocked."

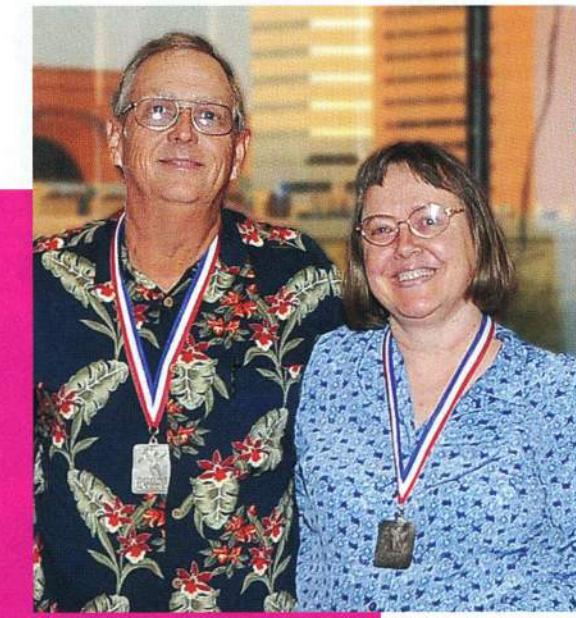
She and her husband Mike were also in unknown territory. They didn't know any gays, barely knew what gays were. At first they took their teenage son to a Methodist preacher for counseling. Linda says Steven was miserable, and she was pretty "torn up" over it all, too.

"I was worried about him," she says, "that some nut was going to hurt him, while he was driving around Santa Fe with a rainbow flag on his truck. And I was worried that he wouldn't be happy, never get married or have a family. And I felt guilty that he felt he couldn't talk to us for so long. I just felt isolated."

Then, the Bratsens found PFLAG.

"It was like a light going on," Linda says.

Sue and Jim Null had asked Steven to bring his folks, and they remember Linda crying through that first meeting. But after that, Mike and Linda became standard-bearers for the cause. Linda marched with Steven in the Pride parade, became PFLAG's librarian (a volunteer post she's



Family affair: for Mike and Linda Bratsen, honorary grand marshals of Pride Houston's 2009 GLBT Pride Parade, involvement with PFLAG is a labor of love.

**...the Bratsens found PFLAG.
"It was like a light going on."**

held for seven years) and served on the board. As a family the Bratsens helped establish the first Gay-Straight Alliance in Santa Fe High School, represented PFLAG at the Texas Counselors Association convention, volunteered for Bunnies on the Bayou, and made some award-winning PFLAG Pride floats.

"Mike knows construction, so one year they asked if he could build the frame," Linda says. "And he said he'd try. It came out so good he does it every year, and then we all help decorate it."

And the woman who remembers getting goose bumps the first time she saw a march is about to get the thrill of her life.

Linda and Jim are going to be this year's honorary pride marshals.

"It's a fantastic honor!" says Linda. "This is an experience Mike and I will never forget!"

And as for Steven, the 27-year-old hotel project manager was ecstatic, says his proud mom.

"Although what Mike and I do isn't just about Steven anymore, it's about the community and making the world a better place. We just want to do as much as we can." ■

Marene Gustin is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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Legacy Community Health Services

2009 Pride Grand Marshal (Organization)

by Joyce Gabiola

Photo by Dalton DeHart

Legacy Community Health Services—we practice medicine, but we've perfected care. Perfection takes time, and with the agency having started in the late 1970s, time has certainly passed. The men and women who have worked nonstop to bring comprehensive health services to our community over the past three decades have left an important legacy, not just in the LGBT community, but in the city as a whole.

Eric Roland, senior director of marketing for Legacy, has himself been a patient since 1996. Roland was diagnosed HIV positive at one of Legacy's locations in 1995, and in 1998, he came to work at Legacy. "I'm one of those people from the hair club—I'm not only a spokesman, I'm also a graduate." Roland is currently a patient of Legacy physician Dr. James Carroll. "It's cool that I not only work here, but I'm also a patient here. I can see it from both sides. It's great care here."

And it is this great care and their impact on the community that has led to Legacy being named the organization grand marshal for Pride 2009. "Being nominated as the grand marshal for the Gay Pride Parade for the first time ever is incredible. It's a great honor for us to have that and to be represented in the Pride parade."

Legacy is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) that is recognized nationwide for its comprehensive program for the treatment of people with HIV. Although the agency started as a STD clinic, today it offers healthcare for men, women, and children, including family planning, eye-care services, psychiatry, dermatology, health promotion and community outreach, wellness services—physical therapy, personal training, and nutrition—as well as specialty healthcare for HIV/AIDS. They provide a compassionate, culturally sensitive and judgment-free environment for a diverse clientele.

Legacy's progression has been dramatic and impressive. It was incorporated in 1981 as the Montrose Clinic, founded by two gay doctors who, in the late '70s, saw their gay brothers walking around with gonorrhea, syphilis, or chlamydia, because they didn't want to go to their doctor. For fear of judgment, the alternative was to go untreated. According to Roland, the two doctors started operating a clinic out of their office one night a week, and the legacy grew from there.

HIV hit Houston in about 1982. So according to Roland, it was a natural progression to go from a STD clinic to one treating HIV. "At the time it wasn't called HIV; it was AIDS. Most of the people would come in sick and die." There was no test for it, but the agency created educational programs. One of their first programs was aimed at helping parents, families, and friends deal with someone in their family who had AIDS. Shortly after, the Next Step program was created for people who were newly diagnosed with HIV, who were scared, didn't know what to do, and didn't know what was going to happen. Roland reveals that the program curriculum offered information on how to plan for your funeral, how to budget yourself, and what was going to happen in the hospital. Eventually these issues were no longer part of the program, because most people with HIV were catching it early enough, and Legacy was active in educating them about the disease to keep them healthy.

Roland explains, "Through the years we've expanded, always in response to a need." In the late 1980s a lot of people with HIV/AIDS were getting Cytomegalovirus (CMV) retinitis. It is a virus that is related to the herpes family and causes blindness. Eye doctors didn't understand AIDS or CMV retinitis, or were afraid of people with AIDS, so the agency created their own eye clinic, specifically with the task of conducting CMV screenings. They worked with the University of Houston's eye clinic and school to bring in optometry students to perform the screenings.

It was a natural thing for them to start a primary healthcare clinic for people with HIV, says Roland, which happened



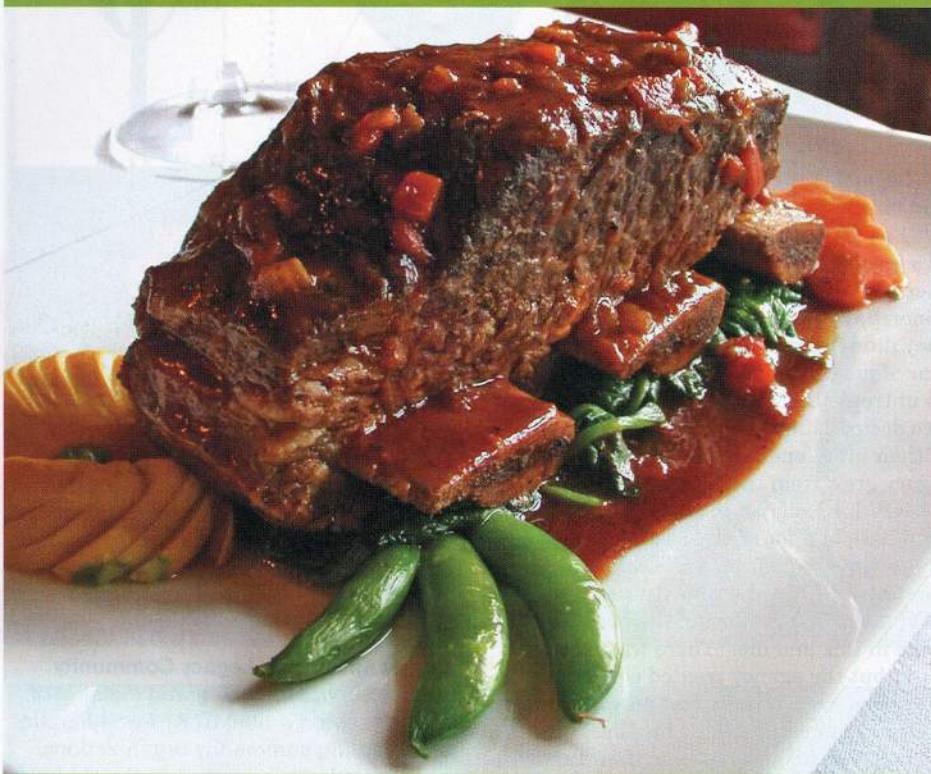
Bigger and better: Legacy Community Health Services, voted grand marshal of Pride Houston's 2009 GLBT Pride Parade representing community organizations, has expanded in response to the changing needs of the community, says Eric Roland, Legacy's senior director of marketing.

Legacy

shortly after they moved into the building at 215 Westheimer in 1994. They keep expanding their programs as they continue to identify needs in the community. They began to offer psychiatric services for HIV-positive clients when they recognized that need; they merged with Body Positive when they saw the need for fitness. "We've created a model of care for someone who is HIV positive and doesn't have health insurance," Roland says. "They come in and they can see a doctor. They can get nutrition, wellness, eye care, psychiatry, dermatology. It is a model that has been talked about around the country as one of the best ways to treat people with HIV."

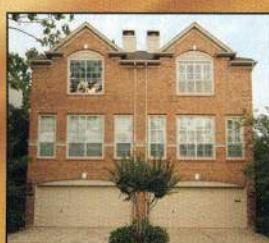
Legacy continued to listen to the community. In response to the medical →

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Legacy Community Health

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needs of the uninsured, the organization researched other agencies around the country, such as Howard Brown Health Center in Chicago and Fenway Community Health Center in Boston. They found that these clinics were becoming federally qualified health centers, which allowed them to provide primary healthcare services not only to HIV patients, but to everyone. In 2004 Legacy started applying to become a FQHC with support from Fenway Clinic, who helped them tremendously during the application process.

In 2005, Walgreens was implemented in Legacy's Westheimer location. Also, while becoming a FQHC, the Montrose Clinic merged with The Assistance Fund to help with overhead costs and to help diversify. "It made sense to bring the two organizations together," states Roland. The boards of The Assistance Fund and Montrose Clinic convened and decided that the new name was going to be "Legacy." "We wanted to honor all those people who built this place and left their legacy to us."

In 2006 Legacy opened a satellite clinic in Houston's Fifth Ward, which was offered to them by the city of Houston. "Oftentimes, I get, 'You're not serving the gay community anymore' or 'You've abandoned the gay community.' Considering when we were Montrose Clinic, really the only people who got services were gay men who had HIV. Now we can see people who absolutely have no ability to pay. That's anyone in the community. So actually, we offer more services than we did before."

Personally, Roland is proud that a clinic, which was started in the gay community, can now go out and serve other communities who have healthcare needs. According to Roland, other organizations have approached Legacy to open a clinic in their organization. "It's incredibly meaningful for other organizations that have been around forever—one of them is a hospital system."

"I am so excited for the future, what this agency is going to do," he says. Legacy is determined to provide dental services within the next couple of years, providing small-scale services at first, which will grow over time. In addition, Legacy hopes to take the same comprehensive model that they created and developed for HIV care and apply it to other diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.

"We've gone through a lot of growth, but we're still there for the community," assures Roland. ■

Joyce Gabiola also writes about Fiona Dawson in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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by Steven Foster
Photos by Dalton DeHart

Idolatry

Get to Know Your Pride Idol Contests!

Those of you who have been following the Pride Idol competition, you know who's still in the running. But here were the first ten songbirds to make the cut.



Ernesto Rodriguez

Cowboy Mouth

While his first purchased musical choice was Matchbox Twenty, handsome Hispanic Rodriguez

is the contest's country crooner. Musical influences track the arena C&W pop of Garth Brooks, George Strait, and fellow Houstonian Clint Black. He's not lacking in confidence, either. His confessed dream is, "Me, on a big stage, backed up by a great band and supported by loads of fans," adding that his vision is "both clear and achievable." Well, he does look pretty nice in a cowboy shirt.



JeanNicole Rivers

Hallelujah Chorus Girl

Rivers is beautiful, no doubt about that. And since she was raised in the church, she's been touched

by an angel in the vocal department. She gives her Creator props for her gift, and claims that singing is, for her, "the deepest form of meditation." That's a very Grammy-winning speech and all, but it's her penchant for Ella Fitzgerald that gives her the big band balladeering that these competitions are made of.



Linda Lambert

Classic Rocker

She may not be the teenybopper of the group, and her musical influences are definitely not the pop ear candy of Lady Gaga or Britney

which, actually, is pretty refreshing. No, Lambert's been raised on a steady diet of Linda Ronstadt, Ann Wilson, Stevie Nicks, and Sheryl Crow. Born in New York, this rock-n-roll belter should make the crowd flick their lighters in salute.



Christopher Plata

Pop Tart

The first album he ever purchased was a Mariah Carey greatest-hits compilation, so you pretty much know

where this guy stands or, rather, kneels. Plata swoons about Mimi, "She is THE diva." And just in case you took his pop roots in question, note his other obvious references in his song psyche: Josh Groban, Michael Buble, and national Idols David Archuleta and Carrie Underwood. You can tell this guy was raised on this stuff.



Hoja Lopez

The Wild Card

Though she might have once had a pension for Spice Girls, this bubbly alt-chick made up for that questionable

choice by immersing herself in decidedly more edgy musical territory. Lopez digs Radiohead, the Smiths, Massive Attack, Björk, Amy Winehouse, and bands even Kurt Loder never heard of. The Idol winner gets a plane ticket. Where's Lopez going? NYC. Why? "I hear they have dirty snow, pickpockets, and Tracy Morgan," she admitted on the *Idol* MySpace page.



AJ Cabrera

The Mainstreamer

Cabrera was big for Britney's first LP. So much so he learned all the dance routines from the videos and performed them with

his sister. So we know what crowd this guy's playing to. In case there was any doubt, Cabrera (like fellow pop worshipper Plata) confesses a dying devotion to all things Underwood.



Shauna Wood

The "Out" sider

The Pride Idol committee famously did not require anyone in the competition be a member of the LGBT family. But of the

group, Wood is the most out and the most proud, saying that if she wins, she's taking her "beautiful wife" to DC with the winning ticket so they can both be in the political epicenter of all the gay marriage legislative battles. But it's her genre-hopping from favorite artist Pink to iconic songbird Lena Horne that gives Wood the vocal chops for the competition.



Ben Montes

Kid Bop

Seriously, Montes looks like he's about 12. But don't let that fool you about the kid's vocal styling. Sure, his first CD might have

been *Heavenly Place* by Jaci Velasquez, but his latest influence? Ella Fitzgerald. Says Montes: "She really used her voice as an instrument, and it was chock-full of emotion. When I listen to her sing anything, it really, really inspires me as a vocalist." Who says the kids of today don't respect their (musical) parents?



Racquel Refuerzo

The Chanteuse

This multicultural—and openly lesbian—beauty is another one of the Idol wannabes who enjoys a diverse

playlist of musical influences. The earlier Disney-fied Refuerzo (she was raised on the *Lion King*, *Beauty & The Beast*, and *Little Mermaid* musicals), complemented her showtune stylings with the likes of alt-fave KT Tunstall, Sara Bareilles, and even a little Billie Holiday thrown in for good measure. That's a nice playlist for any human jukebox.



Anthony Magee

The Crooner

Dark and handsome, Magee is bringing the cool to the competition. While his favorite artist and influence is the Purple One himself,

Magee's musical mojo is juiced more by the likes of Earth Wind and Fire, Marvin Gaye, and Patti Labelle than Prince. His church background gives him the raise-the-roof pipes needed for the sing-off, but if Magee works those come-hither bedroom eyes, the crowd will be his. ■

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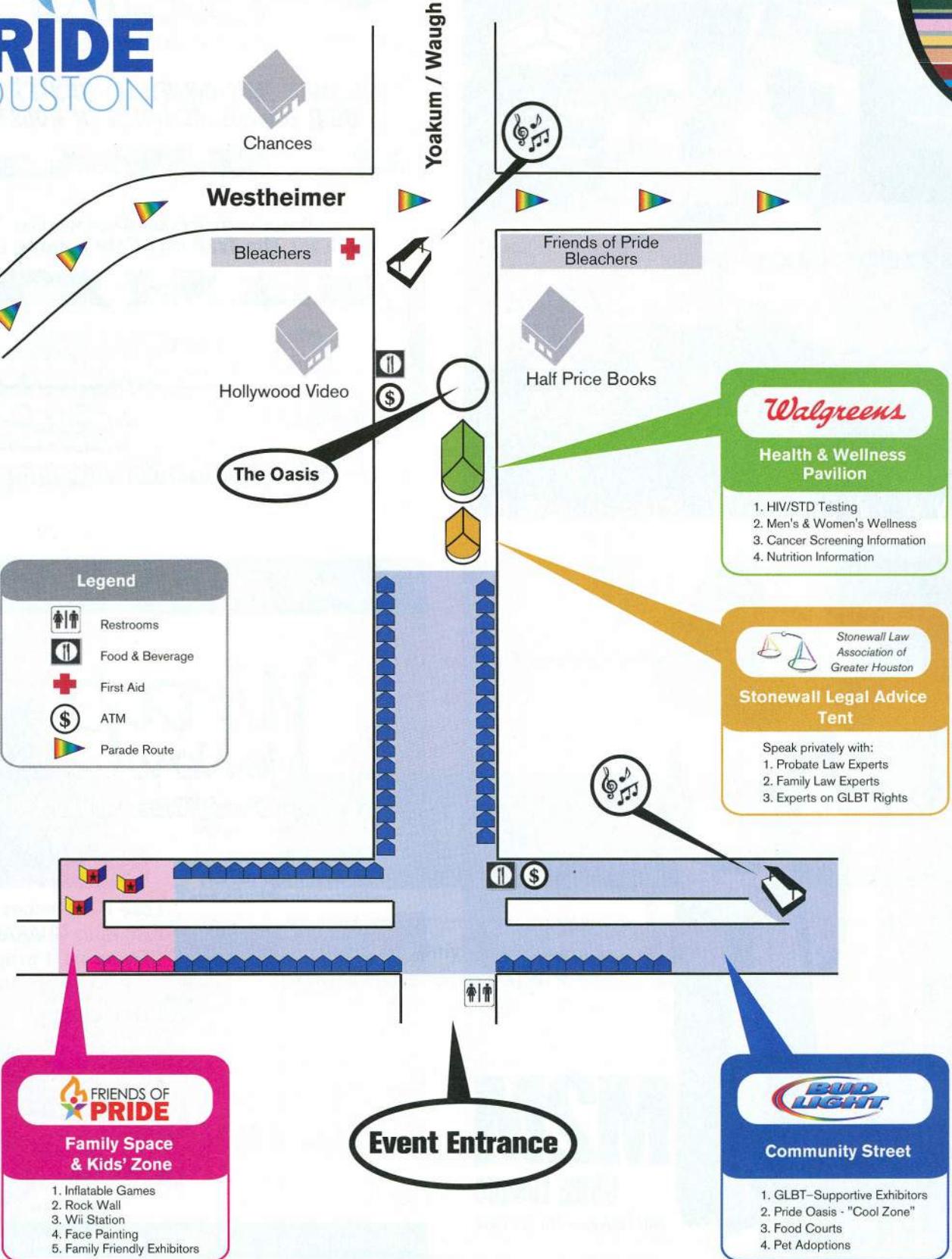
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PRIDE HOUSTON

Pride Houston 2009 Festival & Parade Map

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Photos by Dalton DeHart



Gala Chairs—**Jani Lopez, Meghan Stabler, Blake Beyer, and Michael Pearce** at the HRC 2009 Gala on May 16.



Noel Freeman, friends and supporters at the Noel Freeman for City Council (At-Large Position 4) Reception to launch his campaign on April 30.



D. "Woodja" Flanigan is crowned Mr. Prime Choice 2009 on April 25.



(from left) **Dwayne Johnson, Terri Walker, Sylvia Stewart, Scott Turner Schofield, Melanie Rudd, Cristan Williams, Elaine Decanio, and (kneeling) Darin Quintero, and Lou Weaver** at the Unity Banquet 2009 on May 2.



Dr. Kenneth Lester, Dr. Rod Frazier, and Bobby Lowe at Equality Texas, 81st Legislative Session on May 7.



Members of **Impact Houston** at the May 13 Mixer at The Chocolate Bar.



Tammy Tadlock, Cindy Cuellar, and Jerry Hill at the EPAH – Progressive Dinner 2009 on April 25.



Leon Johnson and Paul Guillory at the "Brothers Speaking Out" Pre-Splash Houston Event on March 29.



Associate Municipal Judge **Sidney Braquet**, Associate Municipal Judge **Tracie Jackson**, Municipal Judge **Barbara Hartle**, **Sue Zoll**, **Phyllis Frye**, and State District Judge **Steven Kirkland** at the "Our Place at the Table" Reception for LGBT Lawyers, Allies and Law Students on May 4.



Beneficiaries plus Bunnies **Sean Carter, Christian Rogers, and Vince Flickinger** at the Bunnies on the Bayou Funds Distribution Party on May 9.



Chris Prada, Joey Guerra, Anthony Magee, [Front] Oscar Esparza, and Racquel Refuerzo at 2009 Pride Idol VIP Reception at House of Blues on May 16.



GLBT Chamber members with Male Uwear Staff at the Chamber's mixer at Male Uwear on May 12.



Houston Helcats Team at the Montrose Softball League 2009 Lone Star Classic on May 25.



Annise Parker, Jim Kovack and Ben Montalbano with 72 fans on May 9.



Shaun Nelson, Lane Lewis, Brandon Webb, and Jordan P. Smith at the Houston Young Stonewall Democrats Meeting on May 11.