

OutSmart

Houston's LGBT Magazine
OutSmartMagazine.com

JUNE 2010

Barton Brooks

Builds the Global Family

PLUS

Grand Ol' Dames
Lesbian Life Stories

'Laramie' Returns
A Dramatic Restaging

Backstage Pass
Touring the Tonys

Official 2010
PRIDE
GUIDE

PRIDE 2010

OutSmart is proud to be your Official Pride Guide once again. This year, you'll find a rundown of all the activities surrounding Pride—from official parties to the big parade itself. And we're also giving you an insider's glimpse of those who are making Pride possible all year long. We catch up with two of the parade's Grand Marshals, Mayor Annise Parker and Bravo's Andy Cohen, and also chat up one of the pioneers of Pride, Ray Hill. We practice a little Pride Idol worship, as well as take you behind the glitz to talk with the volunteers who donate considerable time and attention to ensure that Pride goes smoothly. So roll up this special issue, keep it handy, and prepare yourself for one of the biggest Pride celebrations in the country. *Happy Pride Month - from OutSmart.*

57 A Letter from the Mayor

59 A Letter from Pride Houston's President

61 OUTSMART'S GUIDE TO PRIDE

70 Mayor Annise Parker and Ray Hill

75 Andy Cohen and the Grand Marshals

95 The Volunteers of Pride Houston

101 PRIDE IDOL 2010

102 About the Pride Festival and Parade

106 Pride Sponsors

109 Dine with Pride and Pride Fashion

107 A MAP OF MONTROSE



WELCOME!

I am honored to welcome you to the 2010 Houston LGBT Pride Celebration.

Pride not Prejudice was selected by members of Houston's LGBT Community to be the theme of 2010 Pride, and it describes the feeling we all should carry with us each and every day and not just one day of the year. Pride not Prejudice truly acknowledges the need for celebration since the election of Mayor Annise Parker which showed the world that Houston, not just San Francisco or New York, can be proud of the accomplishments of their elected officials, and not be so prejudiced as to vote against someone because of their sexual orientation. By electing the first openly gay mayor to a major metropolitan city, Houston, a city of the South, is the very definition of Pride, NOT Prejudice.

For over 30 years, Pride Houston has been at the heart of the local GLBT community to educate and celebrate the diversity within our city's large population. Every year, Pride Houston works with local sponsors and volunteers to organize and produce a series of events that cater to and promote Houston's ever-growing LGBT community. The Pride Festival and Pride Parade are attended by over 150,000 people every year, making it the second-largest parade in Houston, and the largest gathering of LGBT individuals in the southern United States. Leading up to the LGBT Pride Parade/Festival we celebrate with Pride Idol and Rock the Runway.

It is the organization's goal to create the means by which LGBT persons can celebrate, commemorate, and educate our LGBT population. That is something that I take Pride in!

We have an incredible Pride Festival and Parade this year—with over 100 vendors and sponsors, live entertainment and parade floats and marchers galore. I know I speak for everyone involved with Houston Pride when I extend a very sincere thank you to all our volunteers, board members, sponsors, vendors, donors, and performers. I'd like to encourage each of you not only to attend the parade, but also to visit with all of our vendors and sponsors. It is their sponsorship that allows us to keep the festival admission free.

I invite all of you to come to the 2010 Houston LGBT Pride Celebration on June 26 and to renew your commitment to be your authentic self—to stand up and be proud! I'd also like to encourage you to learn more about the issues facing us and get involved—to speak up and be proud!

Each one of us should face Prejudice in the eye and say that we are Proud to be authentic, I know I am.

Sincerely,

Meghan Stabler

President, Pride Houston



Judy Arfa

CERTIFIED
PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT
Tax • Audit • Quickbooks

Non-Profit Organizations

Meet your compliance obligations and plan for the future!

With over 20 years of accounting experience in the non-profit sector, there's no question why Judy Arfa is the non-profit CPA of Houston.

Judy knows the unique tax laws and complex reporting requirements that affect non-profits.

Ready to assist non-profit organizations with:

- Fraud prevention
- Cash flow management
- Grantor required audits
- Secretary of State & IRS 501(c)(3) application assistance
- IRS returns & representation

Call (713) 240-3315 today to schedule an appointment.

Judy Arfa, CPA • (713) 240-3315
www.arfacpa.com • judy@arfacpa.com



HAVE A BLISSFUL PRIDE!

BLISS
on 19th



home accents
wall decor
frames
specialty cards
barware
lighting
& more!

Distinctive Gifts, Home Decor & More!

235 West 19th Street (in The Heights)
832.673.0099 /www.BlissOn19th.com

Pride Calendar

All gay things to all gay people

by Nancy Ford

There's a reason the gay community celebrates gay pride in June.

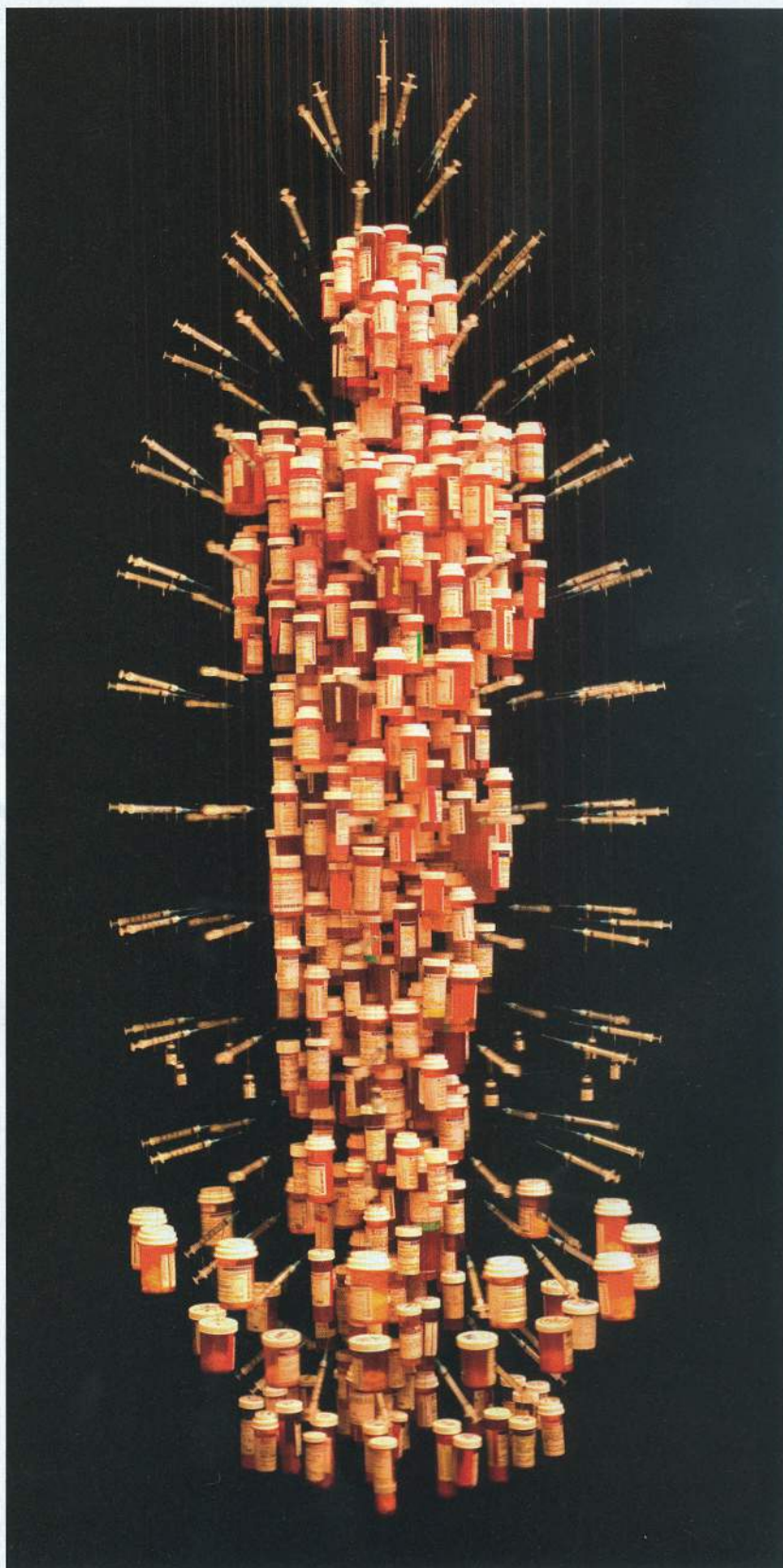
Forty-some years ago, gay, lesbian, and transgender patrons of Stonewall Inn, a New York City nightclub, were regularly harassed by police for little reason other than breathing while queer. On the night of June 28, 1969, fed-up queers fought back, setting fire to trash cans and overturning police cruisers, causing an uproar that lasted for days. And decades.

That rebellion is regarded by most as the beginning of the modern-day fight for LGBT equality and, as such, has since been observed worldwide each June. Not content to wait 'til the end of the month for the Pride Parade and Festival to get its gay on, Houston's LGBT community celebrates all month with a full roster of events diverse enough to please nearly any palate. →



Diverse inspiration: Station Museum of Contemporary Art presents *Because We Are: LGBT Activism through Art*, a special exhibit commemorating Pride and featuring works by Eric Avery, Patricia Cronin, Daniel Goldstein, Slava Mogutin, and David Wojnarowicz. (See June 19.)

PICTURED: *Medicine Man 2* (right) by Daniel Goldstein, and *Being 6* by Zanele Muholi.



Pride Calendar

continued from page 61

Want some laughter with your music? Try Bayou City Performing Arts' concert with Kate Clinton. Need to talk about coming out? Try PFLAG's meeting and book signing with author Daryl Banner. Need a drag fix? Try PWA Holiday Charities' benefit shows. Too young for the bars? Try the HATCH Youth Prom. Want to spend some time in the park with your family? Try Kindred Spirits Foundation's first annual Softball Tournament.

Or, to experience the full spectrum of our rainbow for the ultimate Pride experience, try them all. We dare you!



Rainbow splatter indicates Official Pride Event

JUNE 1

JD Doyle's **Queer Music Heritage Show** focuses on Harvey Milk Music, featuring songs about the slain gay rights leader, including selections from *The Harvey Milk Show*; *Milk*, an opera that debuted in Houston; and even a few songs about Milk's murderer, Dan White (with, of course, the word "Twinkie" in their lyrics). The show airs June 28, 9–11 p.m., on 90.1 KPFT-FM, but is also available at queermusicheritage.com/jun2010.html.

JUNE 2

Dine with Pride aims to promote and increase awareness of LGBT Pride at a different restaurant each Wednesday in June. Benefits Pride Houston. Mo Mong, 1201 Westheimer Rd. • pridehouston.org.

Acoustic rocker and lesbian favorite **Patrice Pike** performs for the happy-hour crowd. 6–8 p.m. at McGonigels Mucky Duck, 2425 Norfolk St. • mcgonigels.com • 713/528-5999.

JUNE 3

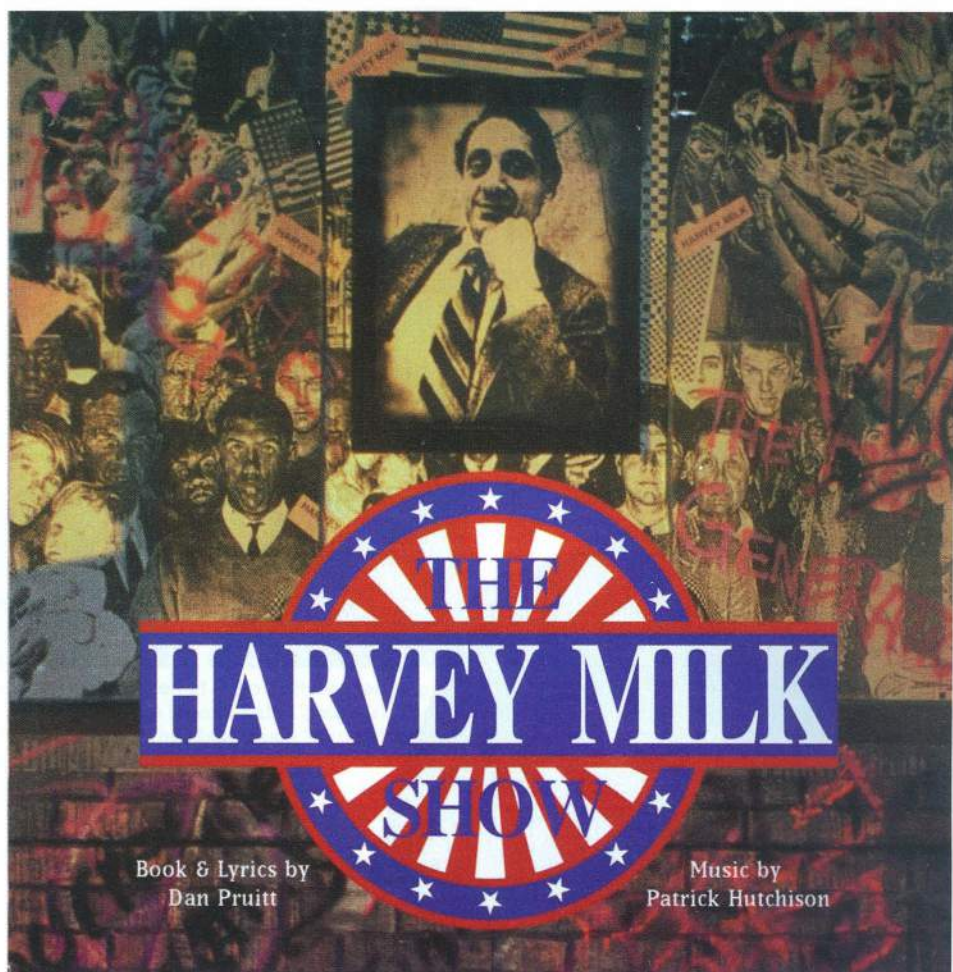
Pride Idol, Houston's LGBT singing competition, returns for a fourth year with judges Ernie Manouse, Miss Money, and Joey Guerra, and host Tye Blue. 10 p.m. at Meteor Houston, 2306 Genesee St. • pridehouston.org.

JUNE 4

Revenge of the Village Idiots features local entertainers. Benefits PWA Holiday Charities. 10 p.m. at Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos St. • pwaholidaycharities.org.

JUNE 5

Montrose Softball League presents its annual drag fundraiser, Jocks in Dresses. South Beach, 810 Pacific St. • montrosesoftballleague.com.



Out on record: songs from the original score of *The Harvey Milk Show*, an original musical by Dan Pruitt and Patrick Hutchison, is just one source for JD Doyle's "Harvey Milk Music," the June theme of Doyle's *Queer Music Heritage Show* on KPFT-FM 90.1. (See June 1.)

Lesbian Health Initiative–Houston's Spring Rainbow Health Fair offers an extensive panel of blood screenings for only \$25 for LGBT women. The fair also offers information about taxes, living wills, and related legal matters, as well as assorted health and wellness education, with free mammograms and Pap smears available by appointment. 8:15 a.m.–2 p.m. Legacy Community Health Services. To schedule appointments, call 713/426-3356 or log on to lihihouston.org.

The women of **Kindred Spirits Foundation** continue their yearlong 30th-anniversary celebration with their first annual Softball Tournament. Bring the family and sunscreen for all-day food, fun, and softball watching. 9 a.m. at Memorial Park Fields 4 and 5 • kindredspirithouston.org.

First Saturday Queer Bingo. Benefits Houston GLBT Community Center. 4–6 p.m. at One's A Meal Restaurant, 815 Westheimer Rd. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.


Houston GLBT Community Center, Houston Transgender Unity Committee and Transgender Foundation of America, Q-Fest, and SWAMP present **Prodigal Sons**, a quirky documentary by transgender filmmaker Kimberly Reed. A speakers' panel follows the film. 8 p.m. at Rice University Media Center, Rice Campus Entrance 8 • tgctr.org.

JUNE 6

PFLAG Houston discusses Coming Out Across the Generations, with author/musician Daryl Banner selling and signing copies of his new book, *Psychology of Want*. 2 p.m. at St. Paul's United Methodist Church's Jones Building, 5501 Main St. • pflaghouston.org.

Formerly of *The L Word*, **Leisha Hailey** plays the Free Press Summer Fest 2010's main stage with her alt-rock duo, Uh Huh Her. 2:20 p.m. at Eleanor Tinsley Park, downtown • freepresssummerfest.com.


Mr. & Miss Tony's Corner Pocket, a pageant determining who represents the bar in the coming year. Benefits PWA →



wanna go home with
ME
tonight?
i'm the designated driver

IT'S THE ONE PICKUP LINE THAT ALWAYS WORKS.

Budweiser thanks the 148 million American adults who have been a designated driver or gone home with one.* It's an essential part of every night out. And it's not going unnoticed. Go to our page on Facebook and help us show some love to the designated driver.



RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS*
LEARN MORE AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BUDESIGNATEDDRIVER
*PROJECTION BASED UPON SURVEY CONDUCTED BY OPINION RESEARCH CORPORATION CARAVAN 2009
©2009 Anheuser-Busch, Inc., Budweiser® Beer, St. Louis, MO

OPEN & AFFIRMING

UCC CHURCHES OF HOUSTON

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!



www.ucchoustonona.info
www.plymouthunited.org



www.bethelhouston.org
www.fcc-houston.org

"Open and Affirming" means that our churches have publicly declared that "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered (LGBT) people are welcome in our full life and ministry including membership, leadership, employment, and more."

Pride Calendar

continued from previous page

Holiday Charities. 8 p.m. at the bar, 817 W. Dallas St. • pwaholidaycharities.org.

JUNE 8

Pride Parade Mandatory Meeting. A representative from each entry, including wheel monitors, must attend. 7 p.m. at LGBT Cultural Center, 401 Branard St. • pridehouston.org.

JUNE 9

Dine with Pride. Bocados, 1312 W. Alabama St. • pridehouston.org. (See June 2.)

Acoustic rocker and lesbian favorite, **Patrice Pike.** (See June 2.)

JUNE 10

Pride Idol. (See June 3.)

JUNE 11

HATCH's 18th Annual Prom, themed "Unmasked: A Masquerade Ball for All!" welcomes LGBT youth and their supporters who may not have had the opportunity to "gaily" experience their own high school proms. The dress code includes everything from tuxedos and formal gowns, T-shirts and shorts or jeans, to costume and drag. Features a buffet, raffle, and dancing to Your DJ. *OutSmart's* Nancy Ford emcees. Free for youth, ages 13–20; \$25 for ages 21 and older. Benefits HATCH. 7 p.m.–midnight at GLBT Cultural Center, 401 Branard St. • hatchyouth.org • 713/529-3590.

JUNE 12

PWA Holiday Charities presents Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue, a June wedding-themed fundraiser. Benefits PWA Holiday Charities. 8:30 p.m. at Tony's Corner Pocket, 817 W. Dallas St. • pwaholidaycharities.org.

JUNE 16

Dine with Pride. Benefits Pride Houston. Niko Niko's, 2520 Montrose Blvd. • pridehouston.org. (See June 2.)

Out to Win 2010 fundraiser kicks off Houston Stonewall Young Democrats' Capital Campaign. \$100 to \$5,000 sponsorships are available. 5:30–7:30 p.m. Downtown Club, One Shell Plaza, 91 Louisiana, 49th Floor. houstonstonewall.org/.

Luck of the Draw 9: The Musical. DiverseWorks' 2010 Summer Auction "gleefully"



LEPNER: DALTON DEWART; CLINTON: COURTESY KATE CLINTON

"Let's Misbehave!": Dr. Linus Lerner (l) conducts the men and women of Bayou City Performing Arts in a special night of comedy and music headlined by stand-up legend Kate Clinton (r). The concert, with whimsical selections like "Every Sperm Is Sacred," "The Masochism Tango," "The Homomotion," and more, benefits Kindred Spirits Foundation. (See June 19.)

offers works by local and national artists and music by the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts Choir. Benefits DiverseWorks Art Space. 6:30 p.m. 1117 E. Frwy. • diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445.

JUNE 17

Alley Theatre ActOUT. LGBT and supportive patrons of the theater enjoy pre-performance mixers with music, socializing, complimentary cocktails, and appetizers prior to the performance of *Boeing-Boeing*, Marc Camoletti's non-stop comedy. 6 p.m.

at Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/220-5700.

Jill Carroll, Ph.D., presents **World Religions: Understanding Diversity and Claiming Oneness**—exploring structural similarities, central beliefs, and practices of several major world religions. 7–9:30 p.m. at ManKind Project Houston Program Center, 6950 W. 43rd St. • mkphouston.org.



Pride Idol. (See June 3.)

JUNE 17–19

After much wailing and gnashing of teeth based on some of the theater's board members' fear of "perceived negative image," Tyler Civic Theatre and Project Tag present **The Laramie Project**. 7:30 p.m. 400 Rose Park Drive in Tyler • tylercivictheatre.com • 903/592-0561.

JUNE 18

Art Show and Sale presented by Te-Jui Fu and Nurturing Artists Guild. June 18–19; artists' reception, June 18, 6 p.m. Benefits the Houston GLBT Community Center. Xpressit Art Gallery, Houston Galleria 3, 5015 Westheimer Rd., Suite 3480 • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Tyler Civic Theatre and Project Tag present **The Laramie Project**. (See June 17–19.)

JUNE 19

Waking Up in Vegas Casino Night. Come as your favorite Las Vegas dude or diva. \$35 benefits Krewe of Olympus. 7–9 p.m. at Bering and James Gallery, 805 Rhode Place, Suite 500 • mardigrastexas.com.

Because We Are: LGBT Activism through Art, an exhibition exploring LGBT issues and struggles featuring works by Eric Avery, Patricia Cronin, Daniel Goldstein, Slava Mogutin, and David Wojnarowicz. 7 p.m. at Station Museum of Contemporary Art, 1502 Alabama St. • stationmuseum.com • 713/529-6900. Exhibit runs through Oct. 17. (See page 61.)

Tyler Civic Theatre and Project Tag present **The Laramie Project**. (See June 17–19.)

Under the direction of Dr. Linus Lerner, Bayou City Performing Arts celebrates Pride month in a big, bawdy way with **Let's Misbehave**, a joint concert with legendary lesbian comedian Kate Clinton. Both the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston and Bayou City Women's Chorus perform selections in addition to Kate's full comedy set. Benefits Kindred Spirits Foundation. 7:30 p.m. at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • bayoucityperformingarts.org • kindredspirits-houston.org. →



Family affair: *Prodigal Sons*, a documentary by filmmaker Kimberly Reed, is about the high school reunion of Reed (r) and her brother, Marc McKerrow. (See June 5.)

COURTESY FIRST RUN FEATURES

Welcome to Creative Life

Join us for explorations into a palpable sense of the sacred in daily life • metaphysics that's accessible and real • a welcoming, diverse community of seekers and finders. Stay proud.

June Celebrations

9:30 and 11am Sundays • 7pm Wednesdays
with founding minister Jesse Jennings

13 Moons of Truth for women
3rd Tuesdays (June 15) • 6:30pm

Forrest Yoga

Thursdays • 9:30am • \$15

A Course in Miracles discussion
Thursdays • 7pm

Jami Lula guest musician

Sunday, June 20 • 9:30 & 11am

Teachings of Abraham discussion
3rd Sundays (June 20) • 6pm

Glorious 4th Dinner & Dance
Saturday night, July 3 • tickets \$15



CREATIVE LIFE SPIRITUAL CENTER

Teaching and living the Science of Mind for 25 years
5326 Spring-Stuebner Road in Spring, Texas
exit 70A westbound from I-45, or take Gosling
south from The Woodlands

creativelife.org • info@creativelife.org
E-mail us to receive our weekly event updates!

Have you seen Buchanan's lately?

The Bungalow gift shop

Just reopened in 2010,
has new covered porches
all around, an Orchid
Shop, a totally
remodeled
interior with wide
open spaces, new
displays and lots of new
gift items, home décor, jewelry,
accessories and... well, you just have
to see it!



Outside, the
Buchanan's you
know and love is
totally restocked for
spring!



611 East 11th Street, 713.861.5702
buchanansplants.com, Open 7 days, 9-6

Pride Calendar

continued from previous page

JUNE 19-20

As many as 100 amateur players are expected to cue up for the **Independent Billiard League of Houston's** 14th Annual Billiard Open Fundraising Tournament and Raffle, sponsored by Lucas Hybrid Cues American National Tour and American CueSports Alliance. \$30-\$35 to play. Benefits Pet Patrol. Slick Willie's Montrose, 1200 Westheimer Rd. • hbo.iblhouston.com.

JUNE 20

Celebrate Father's Day with **Daddy of Montrose** contest. Benefits PWA Holiday Charities. 5 p.m. at Michael's Outpost, 1419 Richmond Ave. • pwa.holidaycharities.org.

Independent Billiard League of Houston's 14th Annual Billiard Open Fundraising Tournament and Raffle. (See June 19-20.)

Affirming Ministerial Alliance, which includes all major denominations in the Montrose area, presents the annual Pride Interfaith Service. 7 p.m. at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh Dr. • 713/528-3269.

JUNE 23

Dine with Pride. Lorenzo's, 4412 Washington Ave. (See June 2.)

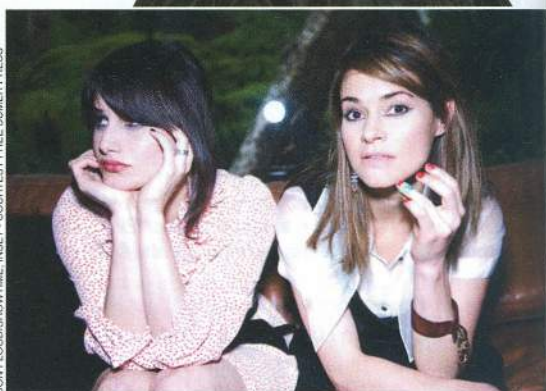
JUNE 24

Presented by Theatre New West and Holocaust Museum Houston, **The Laramie Project** interviews the townsfolk of Laramie, Wyoming, following the murder of Matthew Shepard. June 24-July 24. Matthew Shepard Foundation founder and Matthew's mother, Judy Shepard, addresses the audience prior to the play, and signs copies of her book, *The Meaning of Matthew: My Son's Murder in Laramie and a World Transformed*, July 10. Shepard also addresses Holocaust Museum Houston's Max Kaplan Summer Institute for Educators on July 8. Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. • theatrenewwest.com • 713/522-2204. (See page 38.)

Houston GLBT Community Center awards the first John Lawrence and Tyrone Garner Scholarship. The scholarship commemorates the U.S. Supreme Court's *Lawrence v. Texas* decision in 2003 overturning sodomy laws in the United States. 7 p.m. at the Center, 3400 Montrose Blvd. Suite 207 • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.



DON FLOOD/SHOWTIME. INSET: COURTESY FREE SUMMER PRESS



Alice in Houstonland: pictured here in her signature role as Alice Pieszecki in *The L Word*, Leisha Hailey plays the downtown Free Summer Fest 2010 with Camila Gray (inset, left) under the moniker of her alt-rock duo, Uh Huh Her. (See June 6.)

Southern Country Houston celebrates Pride Not Prejudice with a buffet and free dance lessons. No dance partner required. 8 p.m. at Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos St. • southerncountryhouston.com.

Pride Idol finals. (See June 3.)

JUNE 25

Lambda Legal's Houston Lawrence Celebration Breakfast honors the first recipient of the Houston GLBT Community Center John Lawrence and Tyrone Garner Scholarship. 7:30-9:30 a.m. at Plaza Club, 1 Shell Plaza • dcoleman@lambdalegal.org.

Auntie Shameka! A "ghetto fabulous" parody of *Auntie Mame*. Presented by Vincent Victoria and Larry Banks Productions.

Through July 18 at Midtown Art Center, 3414 La Branch St. • vincentvictoria productions.com • 281/989-2347.

Don't Hide Your Pride party and show celebrates Pride Not Prejudice. Benefits PWA Holiday Charities. 7 p.m. at Tony's Corner Pocket, 817 W. Dallas St. • pwa holidaycharities.org.

Rainbow Night at the Ensemble Theater presents *Five Guys Named Moe*, featuring Louis Jordan's greatest hits. 8 p.m. at the theater, 3535 Main St. • ensemblehouston.com • 713/520-0055.

Pride Houston Fashion Show and After Party. 9 p.m. at Guava Lamp, 570 Waugh Dr. • pridehouston.org.

JUNE 26

Auntie Shameka! (See June 25.)

Houston LGBT Pride Festival offers a wide variety of exhibitors, artists, and fun. Performers include Chris Watson Band, Melissa Savcic, Glenn Bryant, Fluff the Kat, L.A. Santiago, Ariel Aparicio and The Hired Guns, The Product, and Steven Binko. Additionally, the festival offers two special-interest tents. The LGBT History & Art Exhibit is sponsored by Charles Botts Memorial Archives and Library, Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History, Houston Area Rainbow of Collective History, and Transgender Foundation of America Archive. Walgreen's Health & Wellness Pavilion Testing provides services and interaction on a one-on-one basis, enabling many with financial and time constraints to get the help they need. Noon-7 p.m. Westheimer Street between Commonwealth and Yoakum • pridehouston.org.

Houston LGBT Pride Parade, with the theme Pride Not Prejudice, proceeds east on Westheimer Road between Dunlavy and Crocker Streets. 8:45-11 p.m. • pridehouston.org.

JUNE 27

After Hours, KPFT 90.1 FM's legendary radio show with Jim Carper, Chris Arasin, and others, annually airs the dishiest post-Pride Parade rundown. June 27 (and every Sunday morning), 1-4 a.m. Episodes are also downloadable on iTunes and archived online • kpft.org.

Openly gay saxophonist **Dave Koz** performs with Jonathan Butler and special guest percussionist Sheila E. at House of Blues, 1204 Caroline St. • houseofblues.com. →



WORKHART HOME SERVICES
Complete Home & Office Cleaning
713.376.5031
workhart.net

It's a Great Time to Buy!

Todd Partridge "Your Gayborhood Specialist for 14 Years"



Lovett Place Condos
40% Sold

Now Occupied:
510 Lovett Boulevard.com
\$200s-\$400s
Open Sat/Sun 1-5pm
Furnished Models
Rooftop Deck
Gas Cooking
Gym

Better Homes
REAL ESTATE
ANDERSON PROPERTIES

It's a Great Time to Sell!

toddpartridge.com suzanne anderson properties



Todd Partridge...
Voted Top Realtor by Outsmart Readers
Two Years in a Row!

Ask Todd Partridge
How to Get the Most Money
for Your Home
713.824.5454



The Chelsea Grill

Your
Neighborhood
Grill with **PRIDE!**



TIME TO CELEBRATE!
OUR FULL SERVICE BAR
IS NOW OPEN!

4621 Montrose Blvd 713.942.9857 www.chelseagrill.com



Great sax: out saxophonist Dave Koz blows into House of Blues with special guests Jonathan Butler and Shelia E. (See June 27.)

Pride Calendar

continued from page 67

Auntie Shameka! at Midtown Art Center. (See June 25.)

JUNE 28

JD Doyle's **Queer Music Heritage Show** focuses on Harvey Milk Music, featuring songs about the slain gay rights leader. 9-11 p.m. on 90.1 KPFT-FM • queermusicheritage.com/jun2010.html. (See June 1.)

JUNE 30

Watch your friends turn green with envy when you see **Wicked**, Broadway Across America's production of the award-winning musical prequel to *The Wizard of Oz*. Through July 25 at Hobby Center, 800 Bagby St. • broadwayacrossamerica.com • 800/982-ARTS.

University of Houston's LGBT Resource Center celebrates its grand opening with special guest, Houston City Councilmember Sue Lovell. 6:30 p.m. at University Center, Room 279C • facebook.com/UH.LGBT.RC.

JULY 1

Houston Women's Music Festival veteran **Suzanna Choffel** performs with her band. 7:30 p.m. at McGonigel's Mucky Duck, 2425 Norfolk St. • mcgonigels.com • 713/528-5999.

JULY 10

Pride in the Park. The Houston Astros plays the St. Louis Cardinals with Bayou City Performing Arts singing the National Anthem. Benefits select LGBT charities. 6:05 p.m. See their Facebook page for more information. ■

TAKE THE TEST...
... TAKE CONTROL

**National
HIV TESTING Day**

Free Rapid HIV Testing

**Friday, June 25
9:00 am-6:00 pm**

Legacy
Community Health Services

215 Westheimer
Houston, TX 77006
(713) 830-3000

legacycommunityhealth.org

**Celebrating
PRIDE
in Our Various
Lifestyles**

BDSM/Kink • Swingers • Pagan
Polyamorous • Body Modified
(Piercings/Tattoos)

**Denis "Woodja"
Flanigan, M.S., L.P.A.**

Psychotherapist, Career Counselor,
Individual, & Relationship Counseling

Voted One of the Best
Mental Health Therapists
2009 OUTSMART Readers' Choice Awards

www.DWoodjaFlanigan.com • 713.589.9804
2600 Southwest Freeway, Suite 409 • Houston, TX 77098
Supervised by Elizabeth Maynard, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist

The MAYOR

OUTSMART sits down for a brief chat with Mayor and Honorary Community Grand Marshal **ANNISE PARKER** and OutSmart Pride Achievement Award winner **RAY HILL** to discuss Pride, the past, and their personal present. **STEVEN FOSTER** talks with the local legends.



DALTON DEHART

Touch (rainbow) pearls and wave: City of Houston Mayor Annise D. Parker leads the Houston Pride Parade as the first Honorary Community Grand Marshal.

OUTSMART: Do you remember your first Pride Parade?

ANNISE PARKER: I have been with the Pride Parade from the very beginning when it was held downtown. In fact, there were a few years that I accompanied Ray Hill in providing the online commentary. Actually, in the early days, it was more of a march than a parade.

RAY HILL: My first Pride "event" was not a parade but a news conference the last week in June 1975, called to announce that this was to be the last quiet Pride Week in Houston. The following year, 1976, we held a march downtown, and in 1977 Anita Bryant came to Houston to our warm welcome.

How have you seen the crowd change in the years since you first participated in Pride?

AP: Of course the parade is not only bigger now, but it has also grown into a much more family-friendly neighborhood event. Its draw goes well beyond the GLBT community, making it more of a city parade. [And moving it] to the evening hours gave it a completely different feel.

RH: In 1976, the only people to come downtown to see us was us. We shouted, "Off the sidewalks, into the street." The march began with 60 people and ended with about 200. I counted.

Do you think the younger generation has a real grasp of the struggle gays and lesbians have gone through? Or are Stonewall riots, Reagan-era AIDS denial, and the like unfathomable to them in the post-Will & Grace and Ellen era?

RH: I have yet to decide [if this lack of awareness] is a bad thing. If they do not know the fear their ancestors knew, how is that bad?

Annise?

AP: Unfathomable. Not that it is any easier to be young and different, but it is easier, and there are many more resources.

Ray, you outspoke really an

RH: I do seriously justice or

What gives

RH: If you LGBT community, that hood, that No other has move had the exploit in ments die

Speaking been on of talking

RH: Little grow at the decades. the-absur

You're w

RH: A Co single-ch personali teenage E young ga bum/anti organizer about 30

What's o surprised

RH: Priso percent an if you are

Do you th will ever

RH: Exec anachron without a rid us of i the tree."

And the Elder STATESMAN

Ray, you're known for being, well . . . outspoken. What's been making you really angry lately?

RH: I do not do anger. I never did. I get seriously purposeful about addressing injustice or bullying, but anger is not useful.

What gives you hope?

RH: If you had seen the changes [in the LGBT community] in my conscious adulthood, that is the source of a lot of hope. No other movement in recorded history has moved so far in so short a time. But we had the development of modern media to exploit in our efforts that previous movements did not have.

Speaking of media, *The Prison Show* has been on the air for 30 years. That's a lot of talking. How do you keep it fresh?

RH: Little did I know that prisons would grow at the rate they did in the last three decades. My show has become theater-of-the-absurd as a result.

You're working on a play right now.

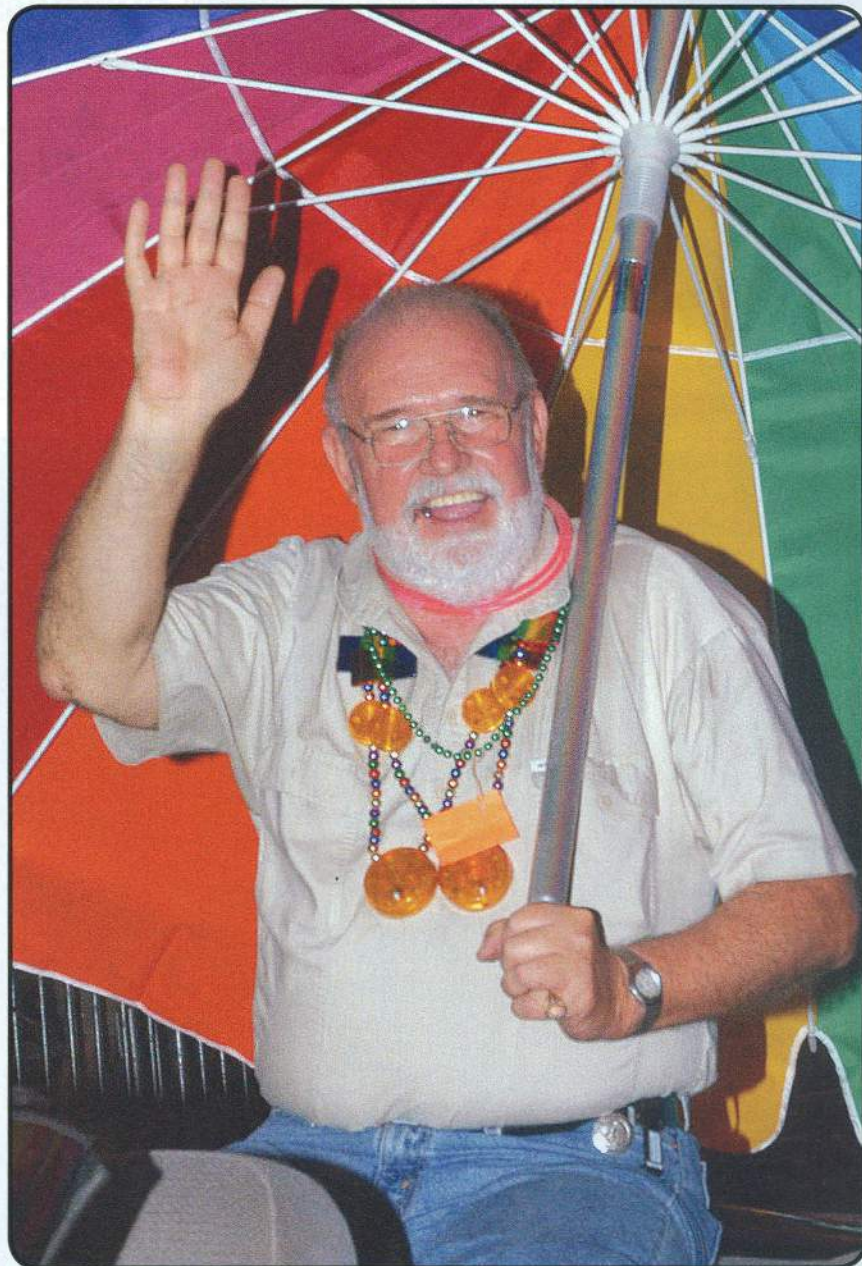
RH: *A Conversation with Myself* is a single-character performance with seven personalities: a kid exploring the woods; a teenage Baptist evangelist; an emerging young gay guy looking for love; a college bum/anti-war activist; a convict; a political organizer; and a radio show host. All in about 30 minutes. It is a challenge.

What's one thing people would be surprised to know about prison?

RH: Prison life is 98 percent boredom, 1.8 percent amusing, and .2 percent terror. But if you are there, it is just another way to live.

Do you think capital punishment in Texas will ever be a thing of the past?

RH: Executions are the most significant anachronism in American society. Even without an organized reform movement to rid us of it, it will fall "like ripe fruit from the tree."



Taste his rainbow: Ray Hill is indisputably the "Godfather of Gay Houston."



Stan Ford
Funeral Director
713-443-3333

Independent & Affordable | sford713@me.com

StanFordTributes.com

Funerals • Cremations • Monuments
Life Insurance • Memorials

ALLEN DAVE FUNERAL DIRECTORS
& CREMATION TRIBUTE CENTER

Aging parents and loved ones feel more secure with valuable answers to end of life questions.

Call Stan Ford Today for Answers You Can Trust!



Diversity of Staff - Solidarity of Purpose

The Mayor and the Elder Statesman

continued from previous page

Annise, what's a typical mayoral day like?

AP: Meetings, meetings, meetings, some public events, meetings, meetings, meetings!

How often do you and Rick Perry talk on the phone?

AP: We talk about every other month. He even stopped by my office recently. We would talk a lot more if there were to be a hurricane. Otherwise, there's not much reason for us to talk.

Did Sarah Palin send you an "atta girl" note after you won the election? You know, woman to woman?

AP: No, I did not hear from Ms. Palin. But Senator Hutchison and other Texas GOP leaders were quite gracious following my win.

Admit it. You're a rock star now. Do you have any rock star-like riders in your appearance contract? "No brown M&Ms in the candy dish . . . Hotel rooms must be all-white with white flowers . . ."

AP: I'm just happy to show up.

What's one thing you miss about pre-mayoral life?

AP: Going out without security . . . being able to be anonymous in the city.

You were in the Art Car Parade recently with Dan Aykroyd. Did hanging out with him make you feel more like a Ghostbuster or a Blues Brother?

AP: Blues Brother. Mr. Aykroyd is a very nice, laid-back Canadian, not at all like the wild and crazy guy he has played in movies and comedy acts.

Now you're a Grand Marshal in the Pride Parade. And, God love 'em, that parade takes forever. It's a long time to be keeping up the smile and the Miss America wave. What's your pre-parade workout to avoid carpal tunnel, or worse, some kind of charlie horse of the cheeks?

AP: Since I have to do it every day, it's not a big deal. By the time I get to the Pride Parade, I will have had such a workout that it will be no problem at all.

Ray, what are your thoughts on being a gay icon?

RH: What I see are the fruits of my lifetime of effort. I am the gay ex-convict who grew up to be what his parents wanted him to be. And my community grew up to be what I had dreamed it would be.

Steven Foster also interviews Andy Cohen in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

Take PRIDE in your business



OutBusinesses.com
GLBT-Owned and GLBT-Friendly Businesses

New Online Directory!

Advertise Today and enter code "OSJUN10" and get 75% off your first month!
Promotion expires 6/30/10

514, 516, & ~~518~~ 18th St.



Nestled on a lovely Houston Heights tree lined street are Loyd Russel Homes' W. 18th Street Villas: 514 and 516. Walk through the wrought iron gate onto the porch and you can already see the amazing attention to detail they put into the design and execution of their custom homes. Through the beautiful front door into a tiled entry and a living room that features hardwood floors, a fireplace, and incredible built-ins.



Past the living room you will see a custom painted formal dining area and wet bar with wine chiller, the kitchen with stainless steel appliances and an abundance of natural light. Upstairs you will find three bedrooms, all with private baths. The master bedroom features a coffered ceiling and balcony along with a luxurious master bath with a 6 ft Jacuzzi, large shower, double sinks, and natural stone granite.



Walking out the back door to the 2 car detached garage you will find an additional bedroom with a full bath. You are close to the 19th Street Shops and the new Hike & Bike Trail. You get that small town feeling AND the luxury of being minutes away from Downtown. \$589,600.



Kenneth J. Zarella Realtor®

Direct 713.203.3533 • Fax 713.513.5942
kzarella@kw.com • www.KennethZarella.com

THE METROPOLITAN
KELLEN WILLIAMS

550 Post Oak Blvd. #350
Houston, TX 77027

Suit-turned-star Andy Cohen is behind some of the most popular, and often rainbow-colored, programming on television. And while far from Shakespeare, Cohen consistently shakes down big ratings for Bravo. In June, the 'Watch What Happens Live' host adds another gig to his ever-expanding résumé—Celebrity Grand Marshal for Houston's annual Pride Parade

BRAVO'S BARD

2010 Honorary Pride Marshal
Andy Cohen

by Steven Foster

It's surprising it hasn't happened earlier. Programming Executive is the television industry's most coveted position, attracting egos so enormous they should come with their own Nielsen rating, or at least viewer warning. But no suit has ever moved from the boardroom to the living room before. Ever. Much less attracted more viewers than shows they themselves

have greenlit. Yet, in a shockingly short time, Bravo's Andy Cohen has done exactly that. Sure, you can blame him for the repetitive manic horror of glorified personal shopper Rachel Zoe, or for transforming anal-retentive realtors and screaming housewives into TV hardly-stars. Or you might praise him for the consistent deliciousness that is *Top Chef*, or for introduc-

ing us to Jackie Warner, one of the most complex and gorgeous lesbians on television. But whether you think his programming sensibility is as lofty as Sundance, or so lowest-common-denominator that it makes E! look like PBS, you cannot deny his surprising fame—fame usually reserved for those working *in* the scenes, not behind them. For Cohen is now a →

AJ's Landscaping and Design, Inc.

pick your new
vacation spot



in your own home

Landscape Architects & Contractors
www.ajslandscaping.com | 713.957.0449

green is good.

good for our planet...
good for our body.

ruggles



green

no hormones. no gluten. just flavor.



2311 West Alabama, Houston 77098
713 533 0777 Open 11 am to 10 pm daily |
Visit www.rugglesgreen.com

Bravo's Bard

continued from previous page

star himself, host of his own dishy, boozy, sometimes fabulous talk show *Watch What Happens Live*. And in June he'll be starring as the Celebrity Grand Marshal of Houston's Pride Parade.

Like any celebrity—or, to use the more grating term Cohen & Co. uses for its own stars, “Bravolebrity” (note to Bravo: Stop it. *Now.*), Cohen can be cloying at times. His eyes bulge with *I'm-on-TV!* giddiness, the spray tan makes George Hamilton appear albino, and when he gushes over a guest, you find yourself looking for waders. What saves Cohen, and gives him an undeniable charm, is that he is doing *exactly* what most people would do in the same situation: being giddy because they're on TV, primping like it's a prom, and kind of freaking out that, yes, Sarah Jessica Parker is having a cocktail with you in your living room. But Cohen is not most people. He has a cadre of assistants (before even speaking with Cohen, the tally hit three), a Manhattan office most aspiring Jerry Zuckers would kill for, and an iPhone that has practically every hot star on speed dial. Still, Cohen is both accessible and affable. It's easy to see why celebs fall for him, dropping by (as Neil Patrick Harris did recently) or calling in to his show (as Anderson Cooper does) just to say Hi. This month, Cohen drops by Houston to say Hi to us.

Steven Foster: You got your start at CBS, right?

Andy Cohen: I was there for 10 years, dude. I was producing.

Then you were at Trio.

Yeah, I was at a small cable channel called Trio for about four years, and I've been at Bravo for just about six years. I think this year is my sixth anniversary.

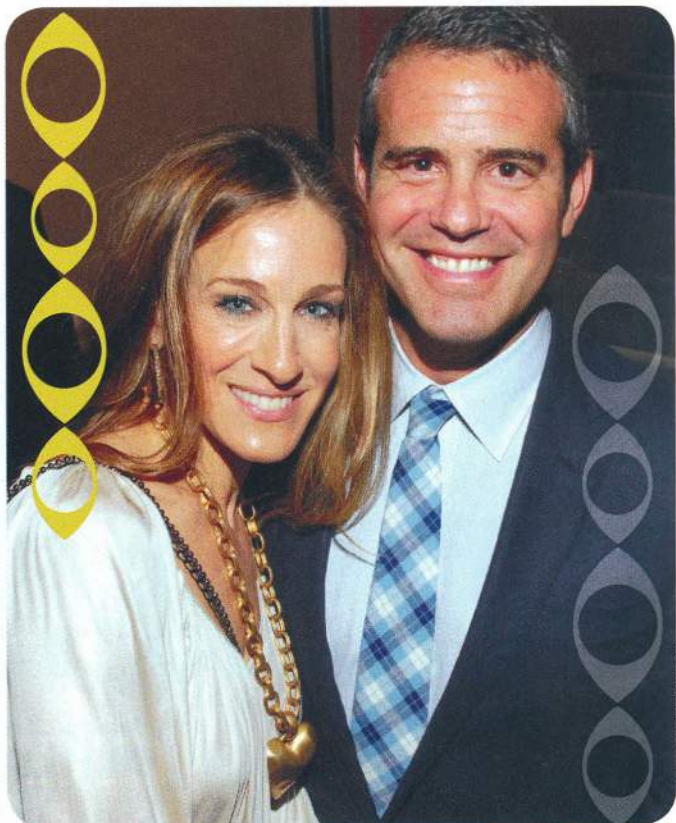
Trio was a class act. Miss it.

Trio was awesome. I'm so glad you know what that is. A lot of people don't know what that was.

Brilliant But Cancelled [a series that resurrected favorite, failed TV series from other networks] was a fantastic concept.

We wound up being brilliant but cancelled. [Both laugh]

So Trio went down, and then came the Bravo offer.



Sex and the Pretties: Sarah Jessica Parker snuggles up to Andy Cohen in New York City for Bravo TV's *Work of Art: The Next Great Artist* screening event.

That's right. Trio was owned by Universal, and then Universal and NBC merged, and my boss went over to Bravo and brought me with her.

Bravo's created some influential television. What shows have you been responsible for from the get-go?

Top Chef. All the *Housewives*. *Flipping Out*. *Rachel Zoe*. *Workout*. Basically everything over the last four or five years.

The loss of *Project Runway* to Lifetime hit Bravo really hard, and then *Runway* stumbled badly on its new network. That had to give you a little satisfaction.

and you know
t know what

series that
TV series
a fantastic
it cancelled.

came the



up to Andy
e Next Great

y Universal,
merged, and
l brought me

ntial televi-
een respon-

ipping Out.
y everything

ay to Life-
l, and then
on its new
you a little

Look, you never enjoy losing your flagship show. And I was very gratified that we had our best year ever after we lost it. What it told all of us was that we have great bench strength. And we've got a number of shows that just do phenomenally well for us that people are passionate about and engaged by. [One of Cohen's assistants enters his office bringing flowers.] Oh, that's gorgeous. Do we know who they're from?

Dude, open the card.

I am. I'm going to open it right now. Well, I'll tell you who they're *not* from. A boy. I guarantee it.

Are you single?

[Reading the card.] Oh, that's nice. That's really nice.

Who are they from?

I can't say. Wow, these are great. Uh... what was the question? I'm single, yes.

Is there anything groundbreaking coming up in Bravo's future?

Is there anything *not* groundbreaking coming up in Bravo's future? [Laughs] I'm kidding. I'm really excited about about *Work of Art*, which is going to be on Wednesday nights. And you know this is the show that we're producing with the folks who produced *Top Chef* and Sarah Jessica Parker's production company, and it's the search for the next great artist. We're gonna do for art what we did for food and fashion. So that should be great. We have a huge summer on Bravo. I'm really excited about the next season of *Top Chef*. I am very excited about *Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-List*. This new season of *The Real Housewives of New Jersey*, Bethenny's new show *Bethenny Getting Married?* She's so fun and entertaining to watch. Really excited about that show.

Let's talk about another show. Your show.
Yeah, let's!

Greenlit for another 22 episodes. Niiice.
Yeah, *niiice*.

And this all began because you were blogging scoop from the set of a really crappy show, right?

I was e-mailing kind of dishy e-mails to my boss from the set, and she said, "You should start blogging on bravotv.com." And then she said, "You should do a live show online and let's see what that looks like. A live, interactive show." So we did it—about 40 episodes. And it was really fun and people really dug it, and I had thought that that was over. Then almost exactly a year ago, Lauren [Zalaznick, Bravo's president] →

"Feel Like Being a Queen For a Day? Let Us Take You in Style!"

LIMOUSINE RENTALS



Parties
Business Events
Weddings/Unions
Airport Transportation

713/266-6677



Houston's First & Oldest Gay Owned Limousine Company!

"Proudly Serving Houston's GLBT Community for 21 years"

Counseling and Cognitive Therapy Classes

Individual • Family • Couples • Group Therapy

Focusing on individual growth, issues in relationships, management of depression and anxiety as well as substance abuse, anger management, and social anxiety/ODC issues.

Classes with Grover Shaunty, MSW, weekly in evenings or weekends.

"Defining feelings, a conceptual model for understanding emotional arousal."



Glenda Hall Speegle, LCSW, LPC

THE SHAUNTY CENTER for Mental Health

520 Sul Ross • Houston, Texas 77006
713-524-8705

Grover C. Shaunty, MSW

Eye Contact

2055 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77098
www.EyeContact.com / 713-520-6600



Gold & Wood • Ray Ban • Tom Ford • Chrome Hearts
Lindberg • ic! Berlin • OGA • Prodesign • Face a Face
Mont Blanc • Oliver Peoples • Alain Mikli • John Varvatos

Houston's premier destination for beautiful eyewear since 1995.

Voted "Best Place" to buy eyewear by *OutSmart* readers three years in a row.

We are your one-stop eye health solution. Our team of doctors and staff are dedicated to providing you the best eye care available.

1802 Broadway, Suite 206
Galveston, Texas
(409) 765-9837
(800) 765-4030
www.TramonteRealty.com

Galveston Island

"We Have It All!"

Brad Belt
Realtor / Associate
281-300-5209

V.J. Tramonte
Owner / Broker
VJ@TramonteRealty.com
409-771-0931

Tom Schwenk
Realtor / Associate
713-857-2309

**"Thanks for voting
VJ Tramonte,
BEST REAL
ESTATE AGENT
2001-2009!"**
OutSmart Readers' Choice
Awards

WORKHART CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Custom Websites from
\$299.00

713.319.4283
workhart.net

Jeff Riley
Managing Partner

Tara Wikoff
Sales Associate

Doug Nichols
Sales Associate

Proud Supporter of:

MLS: 21603745

RE/MAX CityView

701 Richmond Ave, Ste 200 • 713.248.9843

VIEW YOUR CITY THROUGH THE EYES OF A PROFESSIONAL
Each office independently owned & operated

Bravo's Bard

continued from previous page

and Francis [Berwick] said to me, "Would you want to take your online show on-air and do it on Bravo?" And I said, "Yeah, I'd love it." And it did really well. Now I think we're in our 16th week of our second season, and they've been testing us out at 11 and we've been doing very well at 11. I'm so excited that we actually beat *The Daily Show* last week, which was huge for us.

You shoulda popped a big-ass bottle of champagne for that.
I probably did.

You're a big drinker on your show, aren't ya?
I am. Whiskey. Whiskey's my choice. Maker's Mark.

You seem to know everybody. Sarah Jessica Parker. Anderson Cooper calls you out of the blue. Neal Patrick Harris just shows up.
Yeah, isn't it wild?

How much of the gadfly are you?
Is gadfly a good thing or a bad thing?

Well... let's just call it a good thing, in your case.
Well, good, then I am one.

You get around.
I get around. I've lived in New York for 20 years. I have a lot of friends; I've always been a very social person. What's really cool is that a lot of people that I don't know have come by the Bravo Clubhouse. Like Tracy Ullman, Rashida Jones, Jackie Collins, Patty LaBelle. Jimmy Fallon, who I've met in the hallway a few times, said, "I wanna come and do your show." And he did, and I was just so psyched. In the next few weeks Sarah Jessica's coming back, Jerry Seinfeld's coming on—it's just so fun.

You look like you're having a good time on the show. And this is gonna sound really shitty and I don't mean it to be, but you've gotten to be a much better interviewer.



HEIDI GUTMAN/BRAVO

Oh, that doesn't sound shitty. I mean look—I think when I started it I was decent, and I think I've gotten better.

And people are responding to it.

People come up to me and tell me it's just like being at a friend's house having a cocktail, just hanging out. It's old school to me. It feels kind of "Public Access." And I mean that in a good way.

New York Magazine said you were a throwback, even comparing you to Joe Franklin. That's a high compliment.
Yes, I liked that.

There are a couple of pics floating around the Internet that have gotten you a lot of attention. You and Daniel Craig on the beach...

I'm in so much better shape now! [Laughs]
It took those pictures for me to get in shape.



Sit down and make yourself comfortable: Ricki Lake (c) and RuPaul (r), are among the gay-fabulous guests dropping by to chat with Andy Cohen on Bravo TV's *Watch What Happens Live*.

Jesus! I mean, had I known... If you could have known you were going to be photographed with James Bond, you'd get yourself in better shape.

Well, you redeemed yourself with the Kelly Ripa out-of-the-pool pic.

That was another hilarity. They live down the street from me in the Hamptons and they're just so much fun to be around. We were hanging out and she is obsessed with her iPhone and taking pictures, and she's like, "Here, let me take one of you coming out of the pool." And then we did all these

pictures, and she's like, "Can I tweet this?" And I'm like, "If you're tweeting this, I need photo approval." So she showed it to me and I said, "Alright, tweet it." So she tweeted it and we didn't think anything of it, but then it just kind of got around. It's kind of funny.

When I searched, the pic showed up on hotdaddy.com or something like that.
Oh, God. [Sadly] I guess I am a Daddy.

You're 38—you're not a Daddy.
Sweetie, I'm turning 42 on June 2.

Oh, wow. Happy Birthday.
Awww, thank you!

Last questions: So do we have you to blame for Levi Johnston posing nude?
I take full credit. But I wasn't entirely pleased with the results. He didn't look so good. He's hilarious on the new season of

Kathy Griffin: My Life, by the way.

You were at 30 Rock when Betty White was hosting. That must have been fantastic. Such a great moment.

It was amazing to be there. When she walked from the stage to her dressing room, everyone in the hallways—the entire place—was cheering for her, and she was so moved. She and I did a little skit for *Watch What Happens Live*. I literally went into her dressing room and said, "Here's what we're doing." I sat down, we did it one time, that was it, and she said, "I have no idea what we just did, but I enjoyed it." She was just hilarious.

So have you been practicing your beauty pageant wave for the Houston Pride Parade?

I haven't! I'm throwing out the first pitch at a Cardinals game in St. Louis in two weeks, so practicing on my pitch is what I need to be doing.

Because you throw like a girl?

I do. I need to learn how to throw like a boy.

Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine. He also interviews Mayor Annise Parker and community activist Ray Hill in this issue.

Somewhere over the
RAINBOW
Color Awaits You

PRIDE SPECIAL
Gerber Daisy
Arrangement
\$40.00 and Up

**Village
Greenery
& Flowers**

713.529.4161 • 800.553.0260
2301 University Blvd. at Greenbriar
www.VillageGreeneryFlowers.com

mod
COFFEEHOUSE

OPEN DAILY
7AM-10PM

**Your Community
Coffeehouse**

Organic, Fair Trade Coffee, Espresso,
Smoothies, Lattes, Chai Teas, and Yummy
Goodies baked fresh in our kitchen!

FREE
WiFi
SPOT

2126 Postoffice St.
Historic Downtown Galveston
www.modcoffeehouse.com
409.765.5659

ANN ROBISON

2010 Honorary Pride Marshal

by Brandon Wolf

"As a teenager, I read every Nancy Drew book," says Dr. Ann Robison, Houston's 2010 Honorary Grand Marshal. "I modeled myself after her. She was a strong young woman who made her own decisions, took care of herself, said what was on her mind, and solved puzzles."

The woman who represents the LGBT community's heterosexual allies during this year's Pride festivities was born in 1956 and raised in the small town of Connoquenessing, Pennsylvania. She was the oldest child, and has a younger brother and sister.

Robison graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology, after changing her major numerous times. "I've always wanted to help people—especially those who have been wronged through discrimination or abuse—and I struggled to find a bachelor's program that would help me find the best way to do that."

At one point, she was enrolled in a pharmacy program, but a tour revealed drug testing on animals that left her sick to her stomach. ...



Celebrating
21 Successful Years
with the Montrose
Counseling Center

ES AWAIT YOU...

door



ESS STEEL APPLIANCES
ROOMS - CUSTOM TILE
ENTER



s & Charges

ate Bar Of Texas
Of Harris County
wyers Association
onable Legal Fees

713.236.0064
wlaw@earthlink.net

Ann Robison continued from page 81

"I got out of pharmacy as quickly as I could," she remembers.

After graduation, Robison worked as a volunteer for six months at the Pittsburgh rape crisis center. Through the connections made there, she ended up running a satellite program for the YWCA for three years. "I worked with a lot of immigrant women in the area—Lebanese, Spanish, Muslim, Asian—from all over the world. We had classes to help them assimilate into the local neighborhoods. But we also had recreational activities—I ended up taking groups to Frank Lloyd Wright's famous Fallingwater house four times."

Robison was married at the time, and moved to Port Arthur in 1981 with her husband who worked in the oil industry. She worked as a sexual assault specialist in Beaumont for four years, and then went to work in Austin where she assumed responsibility for sexual assault programs statewide.

Answering a newspaper ad in 1988, Robison interviewed at the Montrose Counseling Center (MCC), and has been the executive director there for the past 21 years. When she first joined MCC, it was located at 900 Lovett Boulevard. It then moved to 701 Richmond before finally settling in at 401 Branard.

"I think behavioral services need to be separate from other health services," Robison comments. "Otherwise, they get lost in the system because they are not big moneymakers."

Robison says that in the past, insurance companies were not supportive of behavioral services because they felt there wasn't a concrete measure of improvement. "But we now have a parity law that requires [some insurance plans] to treat mental health the same as physical health. This was the work of the late Senator Paul Wellstone."

In addition to her bachelor's degree, Robison earned a master's degree at Lamar University in Beaumont and a doctorate from the University of Texas at their Houston School of Public Health. "But I'm not a good counselor," she admits. "My contribution is to run the agency as best I can."

The task of managing an agency with 70 employees requires reading e-mails at seven o'clock in the morning, and being in the office by eight. Although she tries to leave by five o'clock, she says that her job is an around-the-clock position. "I can get on the computer at home and meet with board members, volunteers, and donors. If I can answer a counselor's question and help them move on with their client, I want to be accessible." That accessibility

even reached to China when she recently vacationed there. Her one guilty pleasure is having lunch alone and reading the latest issue of *Vanity Fair*.

The bulk of MCC funding comes from HIV grants, but Robison has still been able to develop new outreach programs in the areas of anti-violence and senior services. The anti-violence program came into being after Robison learned about a young man who was set on fire in 1995 in the Montrose area because he was perceived as being gay.

The seniors program, known as SPRY, developed as a result of the late Jack Jackson. "In his last months, he needed to be driven to and from dialysis treatments," Robison remembers. "He never would avail himself of MCC's counseling services, but when I took my turn driving him to treatments, we talked in the car about how he was doing emotionally. That was when I became determined to start a program for seniors."

Robison says MCC learned of a senior gay couple who was living under a bridge, and brought them in under the umbrella of MCC's services. "Some people think domestic abuse within the gay community is just two men fighting," she notes. "But we've seen people who have been bitten, battered, stabbed, and shot."

The first floor of MCC is now known as the GLBT Cultural Center, and Robison is proud of the inroads that have been made in providing meeting space for local groups. "We have groups as diverse as gay Catholics, atheists, and leather men."

Robison has been with her partner Greg Gladden for the past 14 years. "We've both been married before, and decided we didn't need that." Gladden is actively involved in the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and was the Texas state president for seven years. "He's all about having fun and I'm all about working, so we offset each other well."

"I've been lucky," Robison says. "The stars aligned to help me do things to help people. And that makes me feel good. It's a great source of fulfillment each day to see the people that we're helping."

Unfortunately, Robison's parents don't share in her sense of pride. "It took years for them to visit me at MCC, and they were very uncomfortable." Robison says her mother once asked her what she had done wrong as a mother because her daughter wasn't a church-going Republican. "I told her it was all those Nancy Drew books she gave me," Robison says with a smile.

Brandon Wolf is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine. He also profiles Gary Wood and Carol Wyatt in this issue.

HE

is

let ALL

• Sunday • June 13th • 6



Please join us
dramatic perfor
dessert rece

For more
www.C

Make sure
and parade



604 W. Alabama, Houston, TX
(tel) 713.520.1484 • 713.520
(fax) 713.520.0161 • AcadianBa



Serving t
Commun
for over
30 years.

GARY WOOD

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY
THROUGH FUNDRAISING

Interview and photo
by Brandon Wolf

"I'm flattered and overwhelmed," says Gary Wood, Houston's 2010 Male Pride Marshal. "I felt honored just to be nominated. I never expected to actually win."

The man who will represent Houston's LGBT community during June of this year was born in 1966 in Huntsville, Alabama. "My father worked for NASA. He focused on the development of rockets, and designed the heating exchange systems for the Mercury and Gemini programs."

When he was two years old, Wood's family moved to Houston. He has a younger sister. An older brother passed away. "I attended Sharpstown High School," he says. "Back then, there was nothing out there—it was like growing up outside of town."

A man who has worked all his life, Wood was hired by Randall's Supermarkets while he was in high school. He started as a sacker and worked his way up to assistant manager. High school was a difficult time for him, however. His older brother was battling cancer and his beloved stepfather was diagnosed with a brain tumor. "I immersed myself in my job," he says. "I wanted to stay distracted."

Following graduation, Wood continued to work for Randall's. He laughs as he recounts his coming out: "I had a really close friend from Randall's, and we did lots of things together. One weekend we rented a condo on Padre Island, playing volleyball on the beach and doing a lot of four-wheeling. My friend was a collegiate wrestler and in great shape. Now and then we'd wrestle. I walked into the bedroom at one point, and he picked me up and threw me on the bed. I bounced off and onto the floor, and it knocked the wind out of me. He was terribly worried, but finally I got my breath back. He leaned down over me and kissed me." →



2010 Honorary Pride Marshal
Gary Wood

Wood's friend introduced him to Houston's gay community and the Montrose nightlife. "The gay community was a playground for me back then," Wood says. As he approached his late 20s, he became more serious and enrolled at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, earning a degree in business. Unlike his high school experience, he was clearly focused and graduated with a 4.0 average.

H-E-B Supermarkets recruited Wood, and he became one of their youngest store directors. He was given the task of building a new store from the ground up—ironically, the one located at Montrose and Westheimer in the space now occupied by a Spec's Liquor store. "They didn't market wisely to their clientele," he says. "The deli was very profitable, but the rest of the store wasn't."

"I immerse myself in whatever I do. I want to leave a legacy of making a difference."

Wood says he didn't have any problem coming out at work, because one day the corporate diversity director was visiting with him and asked if he was gay. "They were very supportive, and were the first big company to enter the Pride Parade. The first year they drove an enormous 18-wheeler down Westheimer, to the delighted applause of parade-goers."

During his early 30s, Wood began to get involved in community activities. He began by joining the GLBT Chamber of Commerce, and went on to work with Halloween Magic, Mystery & Fantasy Ball, and the Krewe of Olympus. He also became very interested in the annual Bunnies on the Bayou event, and helped work a Bunnies tent at the Pride Festival for a number of years. "Each year we had a different humorous theme. One year it was the Foreign Bunny Exchange. I remember we had someone in a burka with bunny ears."

Several years ago, Wood decided it was time for a career change, and became a corporate recruiter for firms specializing in credit risk and marketing analysis. Reflecting on the current economy, he says with a laugh, "They figured out all the analysis they did was wrong, so now they need us to correct it."

Wood met Bryant, his partner of seven years, at a Madonna-rama at South Beach. "That's sort of funny," he says, "because neither of us was really into the bar scene anymore." They lived together in a small bungalow in the Heights, but decided it was time to move when things kept breaking down. "It always cost \$500 to fix, no matter what it was," he laughs.

The couple designed and built a beautiful new home in the Heights and now lives there with their three dachshunds, all of which are "rescue" dogs.

"My partner is a wonderful man and a great second-grade teacher," Wood says with pride. "He is so dedicated, and starts his day at 4:30 in the morning so that he can get to school early. He works in a particularly challenging school and even buys supplies that the children need."

Wood's greatest contribution to the community has been fundraising for Houston Pride. "I met Carol Wyatt and was so impressed with her professionalism that I wanted to get involved. It's great that we will be marshals together this year."

Speaking about Houston Out Party and Outreach United, Wood says, "My partner and I decided to celebrate coming out. Bryant feels very passionate about it. We all have to come out in different ways—personally, professionally, maybe as someone living with HIV. We face a difficult time, and it's emotional. Sometimes it's detrimental. We wanted to celebrate coming out as something positive."

Wood called on friends to help. The first year of the Houston Out Party, 85 people showed up, and they raised \$5,000. The second year, 145 people came and \$10,000 was raised. Last year they had 275 people and brought in \$13,000 in three hours. The funds are donated to local organizations and for scholarships. Wood recently founded a nonprofit organization entitled Outreach United, and hopes to make Houston Out Party a weekend event that attracts a national audience.

"Get involved" is Wood's challenge to the LGBT community. "You can give money or time, or just stand in a crowd and be a number."

Looking back on his accomplishments, Wood says that his life has been determined by his sense of passion. "I immerse myself in whatever I do. I want to leave a legacy of making a difference."

Brandon Wolf is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine. He also profiles Ann Robison and Carol Wyatt in this issue.

UD to be
ai's

sories
belts,

ED &
OR MEN

MA • AND MORE



SA
the Eye
ga

The city's most exclu
1806 B. WESTHEIMER | HO
713.523.1279 | EYEGALLE

bo
cafe

713.529.1099 | 30

ORD
ODLANDS
!
m
5
a
hour &
S
rdy: 3:7pm
ged
ay



ORGANIZING

SOCIAL
NETWORKS

IS HER

CONTRIBUTION

2010 Honorary Pride Marshal
Carol Wyatt

Carol Wyatt is helping the gay community look beyond Montrose and organize in the suburbs

by Brandon Wolf

I remember so many nights sitting in my car outside of a new bar, trying to get up the courage to go inside," says Carol Wyatt, Houston's 2010 Female Pride Marshal. "I would watch the clientele going in and out, trying to figure out if I was going to fit in. It was painful. A lot of what I do for the community today is driven by those early experiences, remembering how difficult it was to put my own social network together. It was so hard to

walk into those bars, wishing that someone would at least recognize my existence."

Wyatt, a native Houstonian, was born in 1956 in Methodist Hospital. Her parents, Peggy and Ray, raised Wyatt and her younger sister in the southwest part of town. Always an athletic person, she loved to play softball, soccer, and flag football. "But when I was in school, there weren't robust interscholastic teams for girls, so I only played at the club level."

After graduation from Westbury High

School, Wyatt earned a degree in advertising at the University of Texas in Austin. Returning to Houston, she began working for Gordon's Jewelers. To supplement her income, she worked part-time at a high-end backpacking store. "I discovered I liked business more than advertising," she says. "So I went full-time at Wilderness Equipment and learned every aspect of personnel, managing, buying, and selling."

Four years later, convinced that she enjoyed selling, Wyatt began working in →

OM
47

ERTY

USTON, 77098

erapistRN.com

therapy
therapist
erapist
Counselor

• Houston Press 2009

Carol Wyatt

continued from page 91

the telecom industry, setting up PBX phone systems for clients. When call centers began to emerge, she entered that field and has remained there ever since, helping clients learn how to provide excellence in customer service.

Recalling her early days as a lesbian, Wyatt says, "I guess I always knew I was different, but I didn't have a name for it. I found my first partner in college, but we were very closeted. Later I discovered that ten percent of my sorority was gay."

When she and her partner split in 1977, Wyatt realized she needed to build her own social network and turned to the lesbian bars. "Probably the first club I went into was Just Marion and Lynn's," she says. "That led me to the Lamppost, Club l'Amour, Twins, and Bacchus. They were pretty much dumps. When Kindred Spirits came along, it was a breath of fresh air."

Wyatt hopes that community organizations will evolve and become more relevant to the younger generation.

Wyatt says that a women's happy hour at the Missouri Street Station (now Riva's) in the 1980s inadvertently propelled her into community service. "There was a professional women's happy hour on Wednesday nights. 200 to 300 well-dressed lesbians showed up. It was wonderful!" But the bar changed hands, and the happy hour evaporated.

Years later, she and several friends were bemoaning the loss of that happy hour. She suggested they try to organize another one. "I started sending out an e-mail blast to about 50 people, working to build up that group. We started meeting at Sonoma and then moved to Meteor." The original list of 50 lesbians grew to over 1,900, which she named Social Notes. Today she has a regular newsletter and a full website.

Her involvement in Social Notes led Pride Houston to ask her to be a parade judge for two years in a row. Eventually, she served on the organization's board for four years—two years as an at-large member, one year as vice-president and then a year as president. "During the year

I was president, I spent an average of 50 to 60 hours per week working on the parade, for five months. I managed 13 standing committees and over 250 volunteers."

With an instinctual talent for social organizing, Wyatt has held a fundraising Christmas party at her home for the last 10 years. "We usually have 350 people and have raised about \$50,000 over the past decade."

In 2009, friends living in the northwest part of Houston asked Wyatt to organize a social networking group for people in their area. "They had the idea, and I had the organizational skills," she says. Named Northwest Corner ("There is life outside the loop."), the network has grown to nearly 500 members and has a website at nwcorner.org. The group hosts public events and smaller special-interest groups such as gaming night, dining out, and biking. They also take part in the AIDS Walk and have joined up with tree-planting volunteers. The group is an excellent example of gay men and lesbians coming together to socialize.

Wyatt feels that the LGBT community still isn't taken seriously on a national level, and believes this is where our focus should be directed. On a local level, she hopes that community organizations will evolve and become more attractive and relevant to the younger generation. "We've moved beyond Montrose into the suburbs," Wyatt points out. "That's why Northwest Corner has filled a social need."

"We can each make a difference by becoming a part of the broader Houston community. We can be good citizens, good neighbors, and good friends." Wyatt also encourages the community to build social networking between gay men and lesbians. At the end of her marshal acceptance speech, she asked people to find someone of the opposite gender in the room that night whom they didn't know, and begin a conversation.

Reflecting on her life, Wyatt says it is characterized by boldness. "I don't hit the mark every day, but I sure strive for it. No guts, no glory. When there is a need to be filled, try something. Your efforts may fail, but you never know until you try."

With a last name that is familiar to Houstonians, Wyatt says there was a rumor going around years ago that she was Oscar Wyatt's daughter. "But I'm actually his socialite wife Lynn—I just dress differently when I attend gay events," she laughs.

Brandon Wolf is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine. He also profiles Gary Wood and Ann Robison in this issue.

Bringing You to

TERRE



1600 West 21st • Shady Acres / Heights
3/2.5/2 • \$342,500 • MLS# 21764199



1110 East 28th • Sunset Heights / Heights
2/1/1 • \$219,900 • MLS# 63708398



6585 Bayou Glen • Woodway / Voss
2/2 • \$169,000 • MLS# 80082324

**COLDWELL
BANKER**

UNITED, REALTORS®

All are welcome
traditional
worship
for
contemporary
people

Worship
Plus
Prayer
Solitude
Study
Service

St. Paul
Senior Ministry
www.stpaul.org

day of
month
hip &
inner

VICE

aments
ity
aptized!

on.org

RS
pcakes

ert
ry

CH!
specially
here
Café!
e!

Though the celebration is officially only a month,
Pride Houston events take many months of planning.

pitching IN



by Steven Foster

Photos by Dalton DeHart and Yvonne Feece

OutSmart takes you behind the scenes to meet some of the volunteers who make Pride possible.



CHARLOTTE JACKSON

(aka "Laura's Mom")

How old are you?

48 years young.

If you don't mind me asking, what's your sexual orientation?

The straightest one at Pride, per the kids I worked with last year.

How did you come to be involved in the Pride organization?

"To live life to the fullest, you have to do something for others that can never be re-

paid." That's a quote my son read to me back in 1997. It is how I try to live my life. I have a daughter who, at 16, asked if I would take her and her girlfriend to Pride. I agreed, with the condition that I could go volunteer. The rest is history.

What's your role on parade day? Are you a whip-cracker for the floats? Pride guide? Bead babe?

Last year, I worked at Volunteer Central all day. Wow, what a great job! This year, I get to do that as well as serve as a "Friend of Pride VIP Assistant." [That job title] is from Frankie [Quijano, volunteer director], who is the bomb. Hard to imagine that he and Sarah what's-her-name are both from Alaska.

What's the best part of Pride for you?

Getting to meet great people who understand that life is what you make it. The folks I met were 99 percent upbeat, successful, and full of love. And the worst? Sadly, the only "ugly" people I saw last year were from churches, who claim to live by the same Bible that I do. My girls were out walking at the festival and

saw people handing out material condemning the festival-goers. One of the girls asked me, "I wonder, do they go to athletic events passing out tracts condemning alcohol, gambling, self gratification, and greed?" Seems like a lot of that happens even at high school games, but these same people support those events. When I am confronted by those folks, I usually just ask, "Is hanging out with honest people more hurtful or more sinful than hanging out with judgmental folks like you?" That tends to shut them up.

What does Pride mean to you?

To me, Pride is an opportunity for people with a common bond to celebrate what they enjoy: living a life where acceptance is a way of life. I met other parents who were more concerned with their children being happy than with worrying about who their child loved. I met successful adults who have not felt love from their families in years, but feel it from this community. I met talented, caring professionals who want to be judged by their character, instead of by their sexual orientation.

continued on page 96

Volunteers

continued from previous page



JASON GALLEGOS

How old are you?

23.

Sexual orientation?

Gay.

How did you come to be involved in the Pride organization?

I started off in Pride as a volunteer with the Special Events Committee helping organize various events throughout the year. It wasn't until recently that I was asked to head up the Parade Committee, and I've been involved with that committee for four months now.

What's your role on parade day? Are you a whip-cracker for the floats? Pride guide? Bead boy?

I guess I would be classified as the "whip-cracker for the floats." Being on the Parade Committee, it is my duty to ensure that the contingents are taken care of from start to finish. Along with many other volunteers, I help the contingents with setup and departure to ensure they have a good time, and I get the message out to the community about what they are trying to portray.

What's the best part of Pride for you?

I would have to say the best part of Pride is the giving back to the community. I sought out this opportunity to help and be more involved with giving back. As a volunteer, I have put many hours and days into ensuring that everything runs smoothly and the parade is enjoyed by everyone who attends. All in all, I would have to say that it is personally satisfying to be part of an organization that cares and is here to help those who need it.

And the worst?

Being part of Pride for almost a year, I have yet to find anything that I would regret. We have a great board that is involved and helps, which is a great thing to have within the organization.

Give us your thoughts on Pride.

I think Pride is a wonderful organization, and one that everyone should be involved in. Being part of an organization that gives back to its

own community brings me great pleasure and helps me reach out to those who have questions and need answers.



WENDY CHOPIN

What's the 411?

39, female, straight, married, three kids.

How did you come to be involved in the Pride organization?

I volunteered at the festival last year, and when Frankie asked for people to help out on the committee, I figured that would be my best chance of getting a better gig this year. It was hot last year!

What's your role on parade day?

Not sure. I will probably be making sure the boys don't get too crazy, I suppose. Actually, I would love to be making the sno-cones for the volunteers.

What's the best part of Pride for you?

The members and volunteers of Pride are so accepting and fun. They accept everyone for who they really are, and make everyone feel wanted. Pride, as a group, faces some real challenges and issues, but knowing that we all feel the same passion about the rights of each individual automatically binds us. What's not to like about people who are being their true selves—even if it is just for an event, a meeting, or maybe just an hour—and who are working for justice?

And the worst?

I live in Sugar Land, and the geographic distance can sometimes make it difficult to attend as many events as I would like.

Can you share with us some of your personal thoughts about Pride?

I think it's a tragedy that a society so hell-bent on teaching its children self-acceptance and the idea that being different [is good]—oftentimes to a fault—becomes so hypocritical when it comes to the GLBT community. I am involved with Pride because, to me, it is so important to teach my children that happiness and quality of life should not have a list of specific criteria. Look, if you are a kind and compassionate person, why should it matter who you are sexually attracted to? This life

is about making the most of your time and talent, and living true to who you really are. My husband feels the same way that I do. He is completely supportive of my involvement. And yes, being one of a handful of straight volunteers does make me feel like an outsider sometimes, but moving outside of your comfort zone is never a bad thing. I suspect that at some point they will stop asking me why I joined Pride!



VENITA "RENE" HOWARD

How old are you?

I'm 39 years of age, and I am a proud, out-of-the-closet lesbian.

How did you come to be involved in the Pride organization?

When I moved here from Atlanta, I wanted to be involved in some Pride activities and also wanted to meet some people. So I went online and found Pride Houston. I said, "Why not sign up?" So I did.

What's your role on parade day?

Well, this year I will be there to motivate and make sure the other volunteers are comfortable in their T-shirts. Hopefully we will all be comfortable, because I'm a big girl.

What's the best part of Pride for you?

Everything. I am a people person and love to have fun. But if I have to say one thing, it would have to be seeing all the people having fun and being who they are. You know, not having to worry about negative stuff. We have too much of that. And the worst? The worst thing would have to be the heat, which is uncontrollable. And they say the darker you are, the hotter you are—so I was pretty hot last year. [Laughs]

Any personal thoughts on Pride?

If you have never experienced Pride, then you are surely missing a treat. No matter if you are gay, bi, lesbian, or straight, it's something for everyone to get involved in. And Pride is not just one day. They have activities all year, and I'm glad for that because I get to see all the people who I met and who are so special to me all year long.

continued on page 98

Volunteers

continued from page 96



THAO CAO

How old are you?

I'm currently 20 years old.

Are you gay, straight, or bi?

Gay.

How did you come to be involved in Pride?

I became involved with the Pride organization [after] finding Pride Houston on Google, because I wanted to make a difference as a member of the GLBT community.

What's your role on parade day?

To direct volunteers to their designated destinations, and to pass out refreshments and name tags to volunteers.

What's the best part of Pride for you?

I would say the best part of the Pride Parade and Festival would be the variety of people I met and befriended, [and seeing] the success that the GLBT community has had in the Houston area.

And the worst?

I would have to say the sun. Its scorching rays make you want to faint from dehydration.



ANDREA (UNDREA) JOHNSON

How old are you?

I am a 23-year-young female who is a lesbian! Gotta love the ladies!

How did you come to be involved in the Pride organization?

I went on the Pride website to find out about the parade, saw they needed volunteers, and signed up.

What's your role on parade day?

I am taking on the role of Parade Dispatcher.

What's the best part of Pride for you?

The best part of Pride for me is networking. I have an interest in people and cultures, so to be in a position where I get to meet new faces and experience new people is always a reward for me!

And the worst?

The worst part is that it's only two days.

Can you give us your thoughts on Pride?

The Houston GLBT community is lucky to have an organization such as Pride Houston. A lot of people aren't aware of the organization and the resources that they offer. It is a wonderful organization to be a part of, to raise awareness for, and to support. I'm glad to be a part of it, and encourage everyone to get active and to always show pride—not prejudice.



PAUL ALLEN

How old are you?

26.

Are you gay, bisexual, or straight?

Gay.

How did you come to be involved in the Pride organization?

I was looking for a way to meet more gay people [that didn't involve going to bars]. I also like getting involved in the community.

What's your role on parade day?

Paul Allen: My big role is to go around and make sure all the volunteers are happy, and that all their needs are being met. I guess I also have to make sure that people are getting the job done, and not slacking off too much.

What's the best part of Pride for you?

Getting to meet and work with other members of the community.

And the worst?

Fundraising.

Any other thoughts about Pride?

I think that Pride Houston is a wonderful organization. I think that it helps people come out and be who they are. It also helps people

realize that there are other people out there who are just like them. It involves a lot of hard work and many, many hours, but I really believe it is worth it, and that we are helping people.



AARON PARRISH

How old are you?

26.

What's your sexual orientation?

Gay.

How did you come to be involved in the Pride organization?

I volunteered for the Pride Festival in 2009. I enjoyed it so much that I made it known I wanted to be more involved in 2010.

What's your role on parade day?

I will be handling the festival as the Celebration Chair. It is a big job, but it's going to be fun.

What's the best part of Pride for you?

The best part of Pride is being able to give back to the community. I have also met many great friends and networked with other individuals since getting involved. There is a lot of hard work, but it is fun and it will pay off. I am looking forward to the big weekend. We have a lot of exciting things planned for the parade and festival. I would encourage everyone to come early to the festival to visit the businesses who support our community.

And the worst?

The heat! As a pale white boy, it is going to be rough. Last year I was very red after my short six-hour shift. Let's see what I look like after an entire day in the sun.

Give us your thoughts on Pride.

I would encourage anyone who is looking for volunteer opportunities to contact Pride Houston. Our organization is built on a non-biased philosophy. We do not care about politics, religion, or anything else that may distinguish one individual from another. Pride is about celebrating each person's individuality. Join us today and give back to the community, meet new friends, and have a great time!

Steven Foster is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine. He also interviewed Andy Cohen in this issue.

HOUSTON SINGERS



by Rich Arenschieldt
photo by Dalton DeHart

PRIDE IDOL CONTESTANTS 2010

Top row, from left: Laz Estrada, Aike Jamal, Freddy Cauley, Clay Hardy, Jay Arseno and Alfin Nadjib. Bottom row, from left: Nina Lombardo, Ashley Hennessy, Brittnei Jackson, Jazmine Joseph and Nawale Moufikir.

It's 9:45 p.m. on a Thursday at Meteor, Houston's stylishly retro nightclub. The stage is set, every seat is taken, and fans display huge placards championing their favorite performers. The judges are on the dais, and Montrose's version of homo harmonics, Houston Pride Idol, is about to begin.

The man at the helm of these musical maneuvers is Ernie Manouse, vice president of Pride Houston and one of the judges for the competition. Having hosted Houston's annual Gay Pride celebration for the last decade, the Pride Idol gig was a natural fit for Manouse, who is Houston's Emmy Award-winning media star and host of *InnerVIEWS with Ernie Manouse* on local PBS affiliate Channel 8.

"Last year, the Pride committee asked us if we wanted to manage the Idol show in its entirety," Manouse said. "We saw this as an opportunity to expand this event, and did so by relocating it to Meteor. This allowed us to get the contest in front of a larger audience in a venue where the sound system, staging, and audience space are great. Currently the competition is in its second week, and there has been tremendous interest locally and throughout the state."

In a process similar to that of its network namesake, open auditions, where

contestants perform a preliminary audition, are held each spring. Judges choose the finalists, whose ranks are thinned on successive Thursday evenings leading up to the June Pride celebration. During those evenings, the contestants perform for the audience and are critiqued by the judges. The audience is then asked to text in their favorites—input that accounts for 25 percent of their total score. The winner receives a surprisingly substantial prize package that includes, cash, sponsored performances, recording time, and a vacation cruise.

"Idol is in its fourth year," Manouse said. "I came in as a judge around the time the show began." Manouse shares his responsibilities with two other judges, Joey Guerra, award-winning critic from the *Houston Chronicle*, and local music producer and Internet radio host Miss Money.

The judging for Pride Idol is a somewhat kinder, gentler version of the critiquing that occurs on the gargantuanly popular network version. However, Manouse admits to being "the Simon Cowell of the panel. I think of myself as trying to give the participants honest feedback. Being from a media background, I look at the total presentation offered onstage."

Most of the time, the judges seem to recognize many of the same attributes or

IDOLIZE PRIDE

in Performance Competition

deficits that contestants possess. However, according to Manouse, no particular outcome is guaranteed. "Singers can perform well one week and then fall apart the next." Fellow judge Guerra concurs: "One of the difficult aspects of this is that sometimes contestants go home for the wrong reasons. This competition doesn't always reward the best talent; if someone has a bad night, they're done. If they make a bad song selection, they may be eliminated. Also, even if the judges score a singer favorably, if the audience score is low, that percentage is so significant that it can make or break a performer."

Guest judge Miss Money offers the most upbeat assessment of Pride Idol: "I love seeing new young talent. A lot of these singers are from the GLBT community and they are trying to find their own way in the world, musically and otherwise. Here, they can find complete acceptance and support."

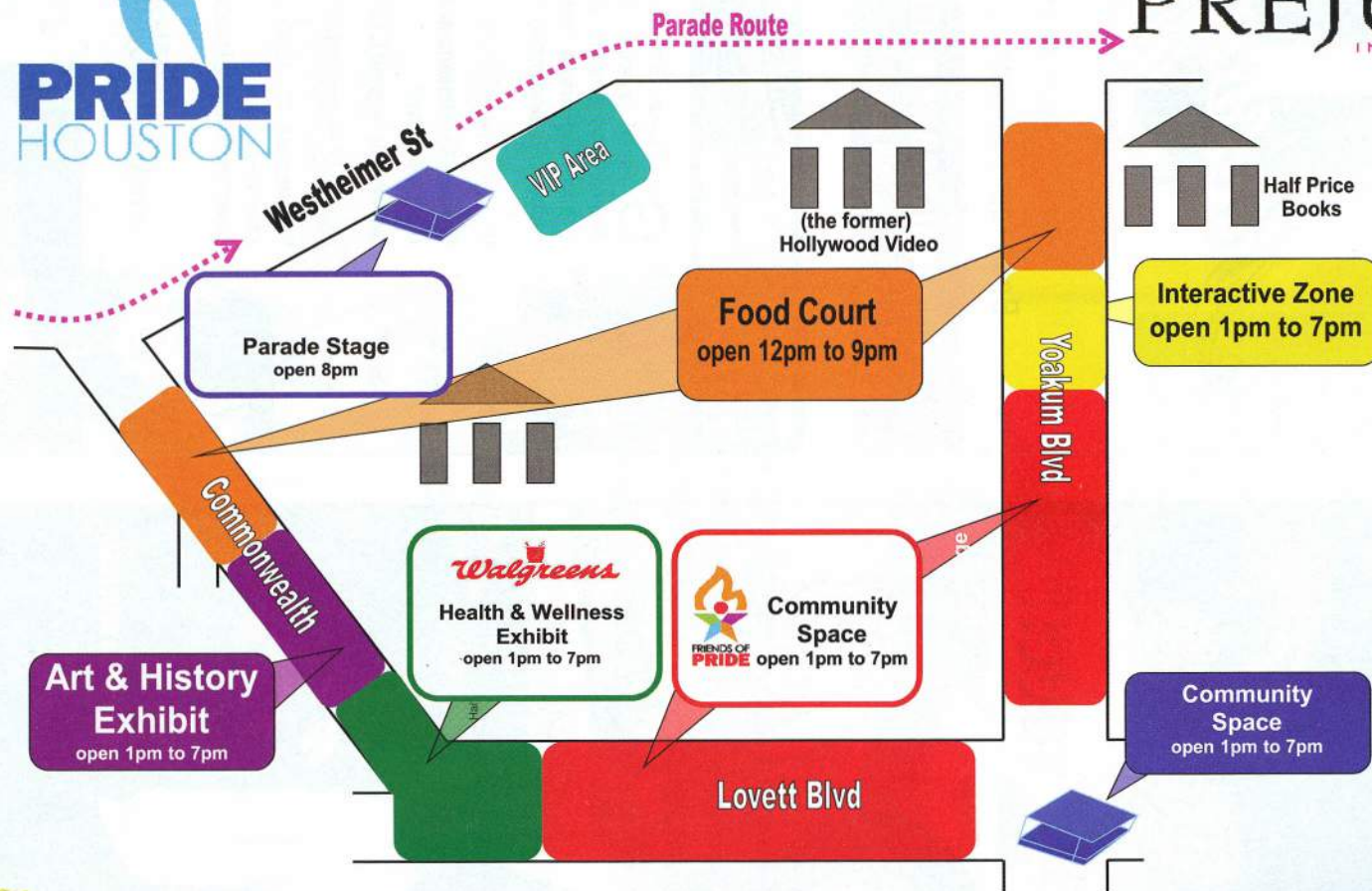
In spite of the competitive aspect of the evening, those involved really try to keep it from getting too serious. Tye Blue, the show's lanky and gregarious host, serves as emcee and ego booster to the singers. "I try to keep up the pace of the show, keep it light and fun, and foster an encouraging atmosphere throughout the evening."

Given Pride Idol's success, Manouse is looking toward the future. "We are packing them in every Thursday. If we outgrow our current space, we can move right down the street to South Beach. But at this time, Meteor is an excellent location for us."

**Meteor: 2306 Genesee Street,
713/521-0123 • meteorhouston.com**

For more information on the Houston Pride Idol competition, visit houstonpride.org and click on Events.

Rich Arenschieldt profiled Holland Taylor in the May issue of *OutSmart* magazine.



Map provided by Pride Houston

PRIDE **NOT** PREJUDICE

THE 2010 LGBT CELEBRATION



FESTIVAL
1pm — 8pm

PRIDE Houston
www.pridehouston.org
June 26, 2010

PARADE
8:45pm — 11pm

Photos by Dalton DeHart



Judge **Barbara Hartle** and partner **Vallarie Fisher** with grandchildren **Dylan** and **Kyra** at Hartle's swearing-in by Mayor Annise Parker, May 5.



Terry E. Allen, **Eric Edwards**, **Laura Gray**, **Dane Babbitt**, **Phillip Duggins**, **Keslie Wells**, and **Adam Delka** at the Masquerade Theatre, April 10.



Honorary Chairs **Brian Hlavinka** and **Tammi Wallace** at the "Wonka"-themed Soirée Pelouse III, May 16.



Saks Fifth Avenue honored the Dianas on April 9, with Diana Foundation members **Brandon Wolf**, **John Heinzerling**, **Terry Zmyslo**, and **Brian Teichman** attending.



Johan Everstijn, **Shelley D. Smith**, **Tina Berry**, and **Roland Strobel** at Act Out, featuring Harvey, at the Alley Theatre, April 29.



Clint Langford, **Michael Fernandes**, **Stephanie Johnson**, **Paul Pettie**, and **Matthew Jones** at the Houston Business Journal's "40 Under 40" celebration, May 20.



Misty Blue (bottom row, second from left) and her AIDS Walk team at Riva's during AIDS Foundation Houston's Dining Out for Life, April 29.