

volume 1, issue 2
april/may 2004

hers. magazine

**Featuring Some of
Houston's Best
Women-Owned
Businesses**

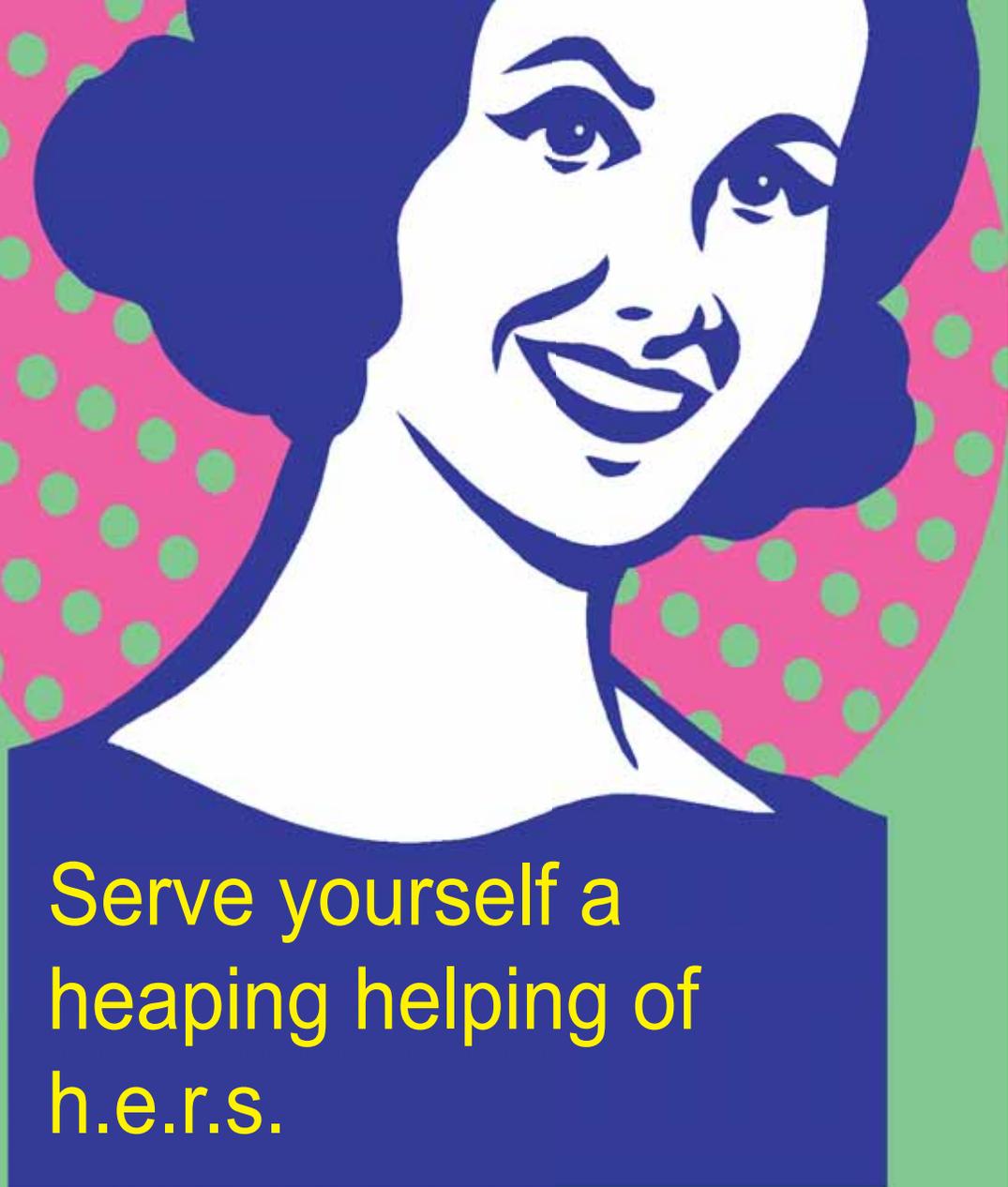
**Introducing
"Ask Lola"
and Pet Q&A**

**Get Involved With
LGRL Equality
Knocks**



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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the entire staff, those of the people featured in articles or the advertisers.



Letter from the editor

Decency-schmecency. Welcome to 1954. I'm so happy that our current administration has set us back 50 years. In our world, society as a whole is supposed to evolve with each passing year, not revert back to a world where men ruled, women obeyed, anything fun was locked up in a chastity belt, and homosexuality was a disease.

They must be afraid of our nipples. That's it. All the women of the world may go crazy one day and expose our nipples therefore ruining the impressionable minds of children. But we can't turn on the TV without seeing a commercial for a penis performance enhancer. Personally, I'm more offended by Mike Ditka talking about his erection, than I am a one-second nipple shot. I wonder how many children watching the Super bowl (assuming that their little attention spans let them watch a 4 hour game) were shocked about the nipple and how many asked "Mommy, what's an erection?" Sex is a no-no on TV and radio, but violence is accepted with open arms.

People in other countries are laughing at us. Is this what we aspired to be? Our forefathers are probably rolling in their graves over the civil liberties being taken from us or denied completely. Taking people like Howard Stern and Bubba the Love Sponge off the air isn't going to change our country. All it does is piss off the people who listen to their shows, leaving them hungry for more lewdness, which they will find somewhere else.

The people who took these guys off the air don't even listen to their shows. That's just the way it goes—a bunch of suits in Washington deciding what's best for us. I'd like the freedom to make my own decisions, thank you. Howard Stern never offended me because I never listened to his show. Anyone else can do the same. I wish our Administration had more faith in us to make the right decision, rather than herding us like cattle. I want my freedom of choice back: freedom to choose whom to listen to, whom to marry, and what to do with and to put in my body. Perhaps this election year will grant me that freedom again.

Now that the rant is over, I'd like to mention a few things about this issue. It's our second issue and we're in full swing. This issue features seven women-owned businesses. We would like to thank them for allowing us to invade their space to get to know more about what they do. Please support them and show your love. We are proud to be here and we'd like to continue to serve our community, so support us too!

Peace,



Shaunte Angelo

P.S. I'd like to mention that by appearing in or contributing to this magazine does not make one gay. As I mentioned before, this magazine is for all women (and men can read it too).

Thank you's

I have some people to mention who have helped h.e.r.s. in some way, shape or form.

First of all thanks to Tim, Greg and the gang at Outsmart for being so generous to me.

A big thanks to Nick and Shannon of Chances for not only buying the back page, but for letting us invade their space on Super Bowl and February 8 to promote the magazine.

Thanks to Andy at Meteor for allowing us to have the first launch party there.

To Madalyn for letting us host the Go Girls Rock! show on February 27. We had fun!

Thank you to Theater New West for donating tickets to "The Kathy and Mo Show" for the launch party.

I promised to give a "shout out" to Cara Dubcak and Emerald Pillows for wishing us well at the launch party at Meteor. It was nice of you and we are pleased to be in your company. Check them out at www.emeraldpillows.com.

Last but not least, thanks to my terrific staff for all of their hard work and endurance. And to all of the people who have emailed their support and offered their help--We couldn't do this without you. Please spread the word and support local women!

Please send questions, comments or suggestions to editor@hershouston.com.

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“The Scene”

Featured this month: The h.e.r.s Launch Party at Meteor and Chances, Meteor’s professional womens’ happy hour, GLBT Night at Cabo and the Pride Committee of Houston’s Logo Unveiling.



Photos by Yvonne Feece

Check out www.hershouston.com for more event photographs.



Photos by Yvonne Feece

Local Woman-Owned Businesses

Kathy Hubbard, Hubbard Financial Services

By Joyce Gabiola

Kathy Hubbard owns Hubbard Financial Services, which has been in business since January 1990 and was once operating out of Kathy's home on the 2nd floor. After having developed the bathroom shower into a file room, her partner, newly elected City Controller Annise Parker, told Kathy she couldn't take over the dining room downstairs, too. In 1993 she and Annise bought the building at 2615 Montrose Blvd, and their fear that the cue file would fall through the ceiling ceased.

Hubbard Financial Services provides bookkeeping and tax services for businesses, non-profit organizations and individuals, including people who are being audited by the Internal Revenue Service as well as people with collection problems who are trying to get back in compliance. "My clients will pay the lowest legal tax," asserts Kathy. Her clients also receive the utmost expertise as Kathy possesses years of experience and is an active member in several professional organizations, such as the National Association of Enrolled Agents, the National Association of Accountants and the National Association of Tax Professionals. Certified by the IRS as an Enrolled Agent, she is currently a member of the IRS Advisory Council, a group of 24 people who assemble in Washington, D.C. a few times a year to advise senior IRS officials and the commissioner regarding tax administrative policy.



There are many similar financial businesses available, but most, if not all, of them are not known to accommodate same-sex couples. "I have a lot of gay and lesbian clients who come from Conroe and Timbuktu because I know the [financial and tax] issues that same-sex couples face."

As Kathy's professional presence is widespread, so is her involvement in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community. Hubbard Financial Services has provided pro bono services to small organizations, such as the Montrose Counseling Center, Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, OutVote and H.A.T.C.H (Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals), and has supported local events, such as the Houston Poetry Fest.

Kathy loves her job and people. "I have the opportunity to make a positive effect on people's lives." And she does....

Kathy is busy with tax season, but you can find her at 2615 Montrose, or call her at 713-522-9000.

Kat Mims, Kat's Chow

By Shaunte Angelo



Kat Mims has a story that most would envy. She stepped away from her job as a manager at Starbucks and began using her skills to pay the bills. Kat always enjoyed cooking, so she scraped together enough savings to buy the needed equipment and off she went.

Specializing in food for parties and receptions, Kat's Chow promises not to use processed foods. One can bet she wakes up early in the morning to roast turkey or pork loin, or grill veggies that go into the gourmet boxed lunches she provides for business meetings, seminars and corporate outings.

Cooking isn't Kat's only passion. She is the President of the Board of Directors for Writers in The Schools. This non-profit organization places professional writers in Houston-area schools, hospitals and detention centers. These workshops with the children encourage them to get their own creative juices flowing.

Kat also heads up the Youth Leadership Council. This interfaith group of 10, 11 and 12th graders meets once a month to discuss how they can change the world. They begin changing it locally by doing service projects around the city.

Kat's dream for the future is simple: Be successful enough to be comfortable while still giving back to the community. It's a simple dream for an astonishing woman. She can be reached at 832-372-8691 or by email at kat@katschow.com.

Laura Villagran, Gay and Lesbian Yellow Pages

By Shaunte Angelo

Laura Villagrán is the publisher and CEO of Gay and Lesbian Yellow Pages (GLYP). The company, now in its thirteenth year, began as a resource for the gay and lesbian community in Houston and is now published in over seven cities.

Villagrán realized her dream when she had trouble finding a GLBT-friendly doctor in the late Eighties. Her first inclination was to create a directory of anti-gay businesses, but she put a positive spin on the project and now produces a 400 page book published annually.

GLYP has been named one of Hispanic Magazine's Top 100 Fastest-Growing Hispanic-Owned Companies for four years and ranked 44th in 1998. GLYP not only provides a service to the GLBT community, but it also gives back. GLYP donates over \$400,000 annually to various local non-profit groups.



Villagrán would like GLYP to become the link to the gay community (the community source), she would like to publish GLYP in every metro area—worldwide, and become the gay Better Business Bureau. Her goals for the future are lofty, but considering her success thus far, there is little doubt she will attain them.

Laura Villagrán is certainly a powerful woman in the Houston business arena. With her charisma, intelligence and endurance, she is one to be admired.



Lisa and Teresa Biggerstaff, Dacapo's Pastry and Deli

By Joyce Gabiola

While doors opened in 1994, it wasn't until several years ago that sisters, Lisa and Teresa Biggerstaff, became the sole owners of Dacapo's Pastry & Deli. Housed on the corner of Studewood and E. 11th St., Dacapo's is yet another charm in The Heights.

Most people assume that Dacapo's is named after a person, but as Teresa points out, dacapo is a musical direction that means "from the beginning" as to repeat. In Lisa and Teresa's world, life begins ends and repeats with food.

Lisa and Teresa spend their mornings through early evenings creating their original cakes, breads, desserts, soups, sandwiches, etc. for special events, corporate meetings, and the customers that waltz through their doors. Like true chefs, the Biggerstaff sisters have created their own recipes, which are not completely accurate written down in order to preserve the authenticity of their culinary creations. So if you want their secrets, you might have to bribe them with their own desserts to make them talk.

The t-shirt does not lie. Dacapo's offers love at first bite!

Call the Biggerstaff sisters at 713-869-9141, or drop by between 11-6 pm Monday-Friday or 8-3 pm Saturday.

Kathy Griffin, K Griff Investigations

By Joyce Gabiola



A challenging aspect of private investigating is reassuring a client that he or she is not doing anything wrong.

K Griff Investigations, once recognized as one of the top 100 women-owned businesses by the Houston Business Journal, is the largest women-owned, full-service investigations firm in Texas. With a staff of 34 professionals, it provides a wide range of services, the bulk of the business being background checks for healthcare services, apartments and staffing purposes. The other side of the business involves workers compensation and domestic surveillance.

Kathy Griffin, owner of K Griff Investigations, jokes that she has perfected her video skills by majoring in Radio, Television & Film with a minor in Criminal Justice at the University of Texas. Kathy loves her job. "There's never a dull moment because every case is different." She recalls a time when her firm was contracted to expose a husband's affair on national television, which has led to similar projects.

Kathy's father owns Griff's, the Irish pub in the heart of Montrose famous for its annual St. Patrick's Day event. Kathy got her foot in the door to the world of private investigating through the many retired police officers turned PIs that had previously worked for Griff's events. After working under a PI for a few years, Kathy earned her own license and eventually created her investigations firm.

Although a woman in a male-dominated field, Kathy thrives because she is a woman. She asserts that, because women tend to be more compassionate and intuitive than men, women can relate better to both men and women in serious, delicate situations. "They're not perceived as a threat. This is important." According to Kathy, "women are always one step ahead." Spy Kathy on the web at www.kgriffininvestigations.com, or call her at 713-526-7711.

Wabash Antiques & Feed Store

By Joyce Gabiola

You know how some advertisements invite you to "come on down" to a place of business and you'll "be glad that you did?" Well, such is true with Washington Avenue Bric-Brac, Antiques, Sundries and Hardware (better known as Wabash Antiques & Feed Store). Approaching the entrance, you may feel as though a pitcher of cold lemonade is set somewhere on a wooden tray in front of your favorite uncle, who is undoubtedly leaning back in a rocking chair, smoking a pipe, sharing tall tales with your cousins and the neighbor's chickens.

Wabash, owned by Betty Heacker, is perhaps the only place close to any Starbucks in the city that sells a variety of animals and features monthly musical performances. Now that's original. Wabash has knowledgeable employees who share an interest in animals and their care. Wabash will not only search for a desired animal across America, but they will also ensure the animal is given a good home. Customers can be confident in Wabash's services. There's a sense of honesty and commitment in a business that has been operating for over 90 years.

Besides rustic antiques, feed, and livestock, Wabash carries your everyday city slickin' needs: hardware, pets (dogs, bunnies, birds, etc.) and their supplies (cages, nests, medicines and vaccines, toys, etc.), metal garden art, and plants, as well as cold beverages and bottled beer. They boast 200 varieties of culinary, medicinal and potpourri herbs, along with an extensive inventory of fruit and nut trees, berries and habitat plants.



Wabash supports the community through their involvement with organizations like the Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Coalition and surrounding schools and churches. They also offer free classes on various subjects such as crafting, planting and gardening. One Saturday a month, Dog Days of Summer perform during the early afternoon hours, treating the customers, peacocks, pygmy goats and ducks to their unique brand of bluegrass and folk.

So come on down for a visit. You'll be glad you did! You won't particularly know why you'll be glad, but you will be content to have spent a few moments of your life in one of Houston's oldest unusual urban treasures.

Wabash is located at 5701 Washington Ave., or find them online at www.wabashfeed.com.

Vicki Fraychinaud & "THE" SHOP

By Joyce Gabiola

In 1974 Vicki Fraychinaud drove Gloria Steinem from the airport to her college campus. She'll tell you all about it, but you have to step into "THE" SHOP, the cute leopard-printed house complete with an enchanting deck in the back, on the corner of Westheimer and Commonwealth.

Upon entering "THE" SHOP, you're eagerly greeted by Vicki's sexy radio talk-show voice. And if you're fortunate, her partner Laura will pour you a glass of Merlot.

After 20 years in corporate America as a claims adjuster, Vicki decided she wanted to do something creative that would have a direct impact on people's lives and the community as a whole. So she became a "therapist," a follicular artist, a hairdresser. As such, Vicki heals people from the outside in. Armed with shears and an open mind, she works with you to reach your hair goals and achieve peace within yourself. At the same time, you are welcome to relax, listen to music, and engage in casual discussions of life's aspects...or not. You are the focus once you're seated in "the chair," which, by the way, is extremely comfortable.

Within 30 minutes to an hour, one could walk away from this salon with not only a new hair-style, but also a sharpened knowledge of politics, history, and current events, as well as a sense of community.

Knowledge is empowering. Empowerment is sexy. Sexy is you at "THE" SHOP. Call Vicki for an appointment at 713-560-7585.



Calendar

By Rebecca Mahaffey and Kristen Kemp

april

- **april 3-4: Fotofest 2004**
The Garden and the Machine, Aurora Picture Show, Houston
- **april 11: Season Finale of The L Word**
Join the girls of h.e.r.s. at Chances for the last show of the season
- **april 15: Indigo Girls**
Verizon Wireless, Houston
- **april 23: Lesbian Movie Night**
Houston GLBT Community Center
- **april 16-25: 37th Annual Worldfest 2004**
Houston International Film & Video Festival, All viewings AMC Meyer Park 16
- **april 17-18, 24-25: Houston International Festival**
Spotlighting Thailand, Reliant Park
- **april 22-26: Southern Womyn's Festival**
Women Only, Dragonhills, 15 miles from Carrollton, GA 904.725.8079
- **april 23-may 2: Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival**
Miami, FL 305.534.9924
- **april 24: Pride Parade Float Planning Workshop**
location & time TBA
- **april 25: March for Women's Lives,**
Washington, DC
- **april 26-may 2: Equality Forum**
Global GLBT event, Philadelphia, PA 215.732.3378
- **april 30-may 1: k.d. lang**
Jones Hall, Houston

may

- **may 1-2: Gay Men's Chorus of Houston**
Silver Lining, featuring VocalEase, Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 713-526-1017
- **may 13-16: Aqua Girl**
Miami Beach, FL 305.572.1841
- **may 15: Pride Parade**
Application Deadline
- **may 16: Melissa Etheridge**
Numbers, Houston, TX
- **may 21-23: 16th Annual Texas Lesbian Conference**
Adam's Mark Hotel-Riverwalk, San Antonio, TX
- **may 28: Lesbian Movie Night**
Houston GLBT Community Center

june

- **june 25: Lesbian Movie Night**
Houston GLBT Community Center



weekly events

monday

Queer Voices, KPFT 90.1, 8-10pm

tuesday

Bingo @ Meteor, LHI monthly meetings (first Tues) 713-603-0023; Lesbian Coming Out Group, GLBT Community Center, 7-9pm

wednesday

"Ladies" Night @ Bocado's, Professional Women's Night @ Meteor (1st & 3rd Wed.); Unofficial ladies night @ W. Alabama Icehouse; Skating hosted by OutSkate Roller Skate Club, Zenith Roller Rink, \$5, 281.933.5818; 3rd Wednesday each month Uncommon Legacy Foundation, Hollywood Cafe, 6:30pm

thursday

Open mic @ Chances, Open mic @ Helios; Montrose Writers Project, last Thursday of month, 10-11am, GLBT Community Center

friday

Lesbian Film Night, last Friday of month, 7-10pm, GLBT Community Center; Midnights @ Landmark River Oaks, specialty viewings, 713.866.8881

saturday

Female performers @ Chances, After Hours; KPFT 90.1, 12am

sunday

Karaoke @ Guava Lamp

Please email your events to thescene@hershouston.com

Beavers Munch on Vietnamese in The Heights

The Beaver Twins

Vietnam Restaurant

It may not seem like much when you drive by, but once you enter the Vietnam Restaurant (maximum occupancy 48) they treat you like family. This restaurant was founded in 1980 by Vietnamese descendants dedicated to making fresh food just like Mom used to make. Artists, bohemians, and an eclectic crowd frequented the original dining hall. In 2003 the owner decided to relocate to the Heights. Framed art adorns the walls; even the menu displays the work of some of the current artists.

We visited with a group of six on a busy Thursday evening. Danny, the owner, and his staff live to please, so the service here is excellent. Jenny, our waiter, was pleasant, helpful and competent. They quickly brought us wine glasses, a corkscrew, and bottle opener for our beer and wine. Since the restaurant is in the dry part of the Heights, it is BYOB. (Cheap daters, this is your joint!)

We began our meal with an appetizer called the Imperial Roll (\$4.95), made up of a golden crispy rice paper roll containing ground pork, diced vermicelli, mushroom and onion. This delightful appetizer comes with 8 rolls and was quite a crowd pleaser. When you dine here, start with this!

Their Spring Rolls appetizer (\$4.95) is served in four rolls with a fresh homemade peanut

sauce; other starters include seven different types of soup served in a cup (\$1.95), or a bowl (\$2.95).

Beaver 2 ordered #84, the special vermicelli with charbroiled pork (\$7.95).

These special thin vermicelli noodles are topped with a heaping pile of charbroiled pork along with a plate of sprouts, herbs, lettuce, and fish sauce. The flavor of the grilled pork strips was very satisfying.

The Hot & Chili Curry Shrimp (\$7.95) is described as being *spicy/hot, but don't let this scare you away. This curry is mild, creamy, tasty and served on a bed of caramelized onions.

After tasting the Pepper Pork Simmered in Fish Sauce (#51 for \$6.95), our Asian guest remarked that the dish reminded her of the pork her mother makes back home. The pork was cooked in a clay pot with French onions and fish sauce. This method gives the pork and it's sauce a delightful roasted flavor. The result is a heavenly recreation of "old world" cuisine.



At Vietnam Restaurant there is something for everyone. The menu has a wide range of soups, salads, noodle and vermicelli, rice, vegetarian, seafood, beef, chicken, and pork dishes. We're looking forward to our next visit to try their specialty Lemon Grass Grilled Beef and Chicken cooked over an open fire.

With great prices, large servings, fresh veggies, and moist rice; this crowd of Beavers swam away very pleased. If you have a large party of 5 or more, we recommend calling ahead and making reservations.

Four Stars out of Six!



Beaver 1 decided to dine on one of the Chef's Specialties the Bo Luc Lah (\$8.95). The Vietnamese Beef was cooked to tender perfection served on a bed of romaine lettuce with sautéed onions, tomato, and garlic. The chef marinates chunks of beef in wine and butter, rendering a juicy flavor. This dish goes very well with steamed rice. Stop what you're doing right now and order this!

Vietnam Restaurant
605 West 19th Street
Houston, TX 77006
(832) 618-1668

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Ask Lola

Q: Dear Lola:

My girlfriend and I have been together over 5 years. We love each other very much, but our sex life has become almost non-existent. We want to have sex with each other, but rarely at the same time. I want it at night when she's tired, and she wants it in the morning when I'm running late for work. We want to make our relationship work, but without release or intimacy we act out aggressively towards each other. Please help us!

~Frustrated in Montrose

A: Dear Frustrated:

Your situation is not uncommon as often times the daily grind does get in the way of our sex lives. When relationships first begin it seems like there is no end to the lustful, turn-off-the-ringer-and-stay-in-bed-for-3-days sex. After the sheen wears off you start to grow as a couple, fall in love, build a life together. Sex becomes more of a sign of your love, rather

than the hedonistic act it was in the beginning. It's not as easy for two women to maintain a healthy sex life (at least twice a week) as it may be for two men or a straight couple. Men tend to get aroused more often than women and are more apt to initiate sex. Take my word for it, all couples no matter what their orientation, go through lulls in their sex life.

The key to a healthy relationship is to mix it up. A great resource to start off with is the *Whole Lesbian Sex Book: A Passionate Guide for Us All* by Felice Newman. Heterosexual women and men can benefit from this book as well. She addresses everything from breast play, to S&M, to masturbation. It has received excellent reviews on both BarnesandNoble.com and Amazon.com.

Simply making time for each other every day can do wonders for your sex life, as well as keep you connected. Nina Hartley, adult film star and registered sex therapist, recommends kissing for at least 5 minutes every day. Often times this will lead to more intense foreplay, and BINGO, you're in the sack. A more meditative approach would be to sit in front of your partner and look deeply into her eyes. Forget about your to-do list and swim in her

beauty, the woman that you fell in love with. Breathe in tune with her without speaking then try out that 5 minute kiss.

Next, I would suggest buying a new toy. Let the act of shopping for this new addition to the bedroom stimulate you and engage your imagination while you think about incorporating into bedroom play. Be sure to wash the toy thoroughly before and after each use. Mutual masturbation is also a great option for when she's tired and you're horny.

If toys aren't your thing, try to plan a weekend getaway—even a hotel in the city. Getting away from your house and daily routine will help clear your mind so you can concentrate on each other. Try to arrive early to the hotel and set the mood by adding special touches to the room. Strategically placing that new toy is a nice touch and an excellent hint, too.

If you try all of these suggestions and you still find yourself frustrated, perhaps counseling is your next option. In the meantime, you've got some homework to do. Get to it!

~Lola

Pet Q&A

Michelle Gafford has been a Vet Tech, Zoo volunteer, and has worked for Citizens for Animal Protection. She is currently an animal husbandry technician. We are very pleased to have her on or staff. —Ed.

Q: My dog, Emma is a two year-old Lab mix. Over the past year, she has developed an ear problem. We thought it was ear mites and treated it as so. I called the vet to describe the problem. I told her we were cleaning Emma's ears daily with ear mite cleaner but she still produced a lot of brown gunk. The vet said this was normal for Labs, it wasn't ear mites and continue to clean her ears when necessary with hydrogen peroxide.

We bought a special dog ear cleaner at the store rather than using peroxide. Her left ear has gotten much better, but her right ear has a

bunch of gunk every time. Is that normal? What else we can do?

A: Dear reader

It looks like you're facing a problem that most Lab owners have. If it's a bad bacterial infection, you might be given Baytril-Otic. In my opinion, it is one of the best ways to treat bacteria infested ears. It could also be the result of wax build up, thick or matted hair in the canal, debris, or impaired drainage of the ear. Getting her ears plucked monthly and thoroughly cleaned by your vet, in conjunction with prescribed medication, should help that. The discomfort Emma may be experiencing from an ear infection is often displayed in shaking her head or scratching her ears. Often the infection causes red and inflamed ears with an offensive odor and perhaps some yellow/black discharge. If discomfort is observed, and Emma often tilts her head, this may be a sign of an infection of the middle ear. Since you've been keeping Emma's ears clean, and are still having a problem, go to your vet and request an ear swab to be done.

This procedure will tell you if it's yeast, bacteria, or mites. Since it's a recurring problem, you may have to pay a little extra for stronger medicine to keep it under control. After you treat the ears and get rid of the initial infection, your vet can give you a prescription ear cleaner such as Epi-Otic or Trez-ETA. You'll need to clean Emma's ears every time she gets in any water, this includes baths, swimming, rain, ect. Also do a thorough weekly cleaning. Your vet can show you how to do it yourself. Since she is a Lab, I can almost guarantee a recurrence of the infection, that's just how it goes. Fortunately, you can stop this process altogether, but there is a drawback. There is a surgical procedure called Ear Canal Ablation. This surgery removes the ear canal, therefore, removing the problem. Unfortunately this also means hearing loss, but with recurring infections labs will, more often than not, lose hearing anyway. Between you & your Vet, I hope you can come out with an even compromise. Hope this helps!

~Michelle

Equality Knocks

By Randall Ellis, Executive Director, LGRL of Texas

Did you know that a Federal Marriage Amendment could permanently ban same-sex civil marriage and overturn existing civil unions and domestic partnerships? Did you know that together we can build greater political power? Are you interested in helping to work for marriage equality?

As a supporter of LGBT equality, the answer to all three is YES!

And with that yes, LGRL is FIRED UP about our new Equality Knocks project! Equality Knocks is an effort to identify fair-minded voters who will support the civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Texans at the voting booth. We need voters who will stand with us when it comes to supporting

- safe schools for LGBT youth,
- employment non-discrimination protections, and
- marriage equality for same-sex couples.

The most CRITICAL WORK we do is walking door-to-door talking to registered voters and asking them for their support on these issues. Our goal is to identify 10,000 fair-minded voters in key swing districts across the state by the end of 2004.

Why now?

Marriage is in the news. Recent court victories -- the Lawrence decision overturning sodomy laws and the Massachusetts decision mandating marriage equality for same-sex couples -- have generated a huge backlash from the far right. Rep. Marylin Musgrave, from Colorado, has proposed the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) to prohibit same-sex couples from marrying. Some state legislators also want to amend the Texas Constitution to outlaw same-sex civil marriage, further entrench-

ing their homophobic ideology in our laws. It is urgent that we start NOW to convince Texas legislators to vote against the Federal Marriage Amendment and the Texas Constitutional Amendment banning same-sex civil marriage.

How do we build support for same-sex civil marriage? Why is door-to-door canvassing the answer?

We know, from polling, that a large portion of the general population supports equal rights and responsibilities for same-sex couples. But, that brings up several questions: Do these people vote? Are they aware of the threat of a Constitutional Amendment? Do they communicate their support for same-sex civil marriage to their elected officials? We can't answer these questions unless we actually know who these people are. By going door to door and talking to voters in person, we can identify our supporters. Once we know which voters support our issues, we can then 1) make sure they vote 2) let them know where their elected officials stand on marriage and 3) greatly enhance our grassroots advocacy efforts by encouraging voters to contact their legislators.

How can I help?

We need a HUGE team of volunteers for an effort of this magnitude. But we're confident that our community will step up to deliver the 4,300 total volunteer hours needed to identify 10,000 new supporters. We've already launched two canvasses with the help of 54 volunteers. Together, we identified 470 new supporters!

Here are some of the ways in which you can become a spunky (and very much appreciated) volunteer:

• **Door-to-door Canvasser:** The most critical work we do is walking door-to-door talking to registered voters and asking for their support. Script and training provided. Check out our Canvass Calendar for scheduled walks.

• **Field Team Leader:** Join the team to help carry out the game plan. You will guide in-person volunteer sign-ups, train phone bank recruiters, and facilitate two canvass walks. Training provided.

• **Volunteer recruiter:** Folks always want to help move Equality forward. Your job is to deliver a clear message, either in-person or on the phone, and ask for a specific 2-3 hour portion of their time. If we ask, they will come! Script and training provided.

• **Scout and Cut Turf:** Drive the area we will canvass and note irregularities; parcel out individual walk areas on precinct maps and prepare the clipboards with walk lists. Training provided and hours set at your convenience.

• **Database maintenance:** Help track our progress by entering newly identified supporters in the database. Enter volunteers as we sign them up and track their participation. Training provided and hours set at your convenience.

For more information, or to volunteer, email LGRL at info@lgrl.org, or call them at 512-474-5475. ★

Swing Out Sisters

By Melissa Valenzuela

When thinking about famous women in history, you might consider the glamour of women writers or the savageness of political bitches. You might consider the edginess of sultry risk-takers and the greatness of any female whose identity was defined by what they have done, not by whom they've done.

But even more intriguing are the untold stories of the average Janes, grandmothers of wars and voodoo queens of New Orleans. And in each of their stories, the common precursor for thriving and surviving among many unknown women was ingeniousness. And it's these stories that have to be considered first.

Consider Bostonian Katherine O'Grady who was not a crusader for women's rights or the maker of some useless invention. In 1939, at the young age of 21, she merely made blankets and socks at a wool mill during World War II. It was her service to the war effort. She was among thousands of women who obligingly did their "duty," while their husbands were shipped to the darkness of the front lines. She never made newspaper headlines or received an award for her long hours of work. She just survived for herself and her nine-month-old baby on \$27 a week. But her fortune of liberation broke the structure of her sheltered life that had existed before the war. She was provided with opportunity and independence, as well as sorrow and fear of growing up prematurely. But paying for her own expenses and caring for her child made O'Grady feel insurmountably wealthy, even with \$1 in her pocket.

Because of the many years of oppression, women always had to find the means to be wealthy—even if it meant breaking the law. Consider Cassie Chadwick's ingeniousness to con her way through any situation. This woman was smart, albeit dishonest and corrupt. She was smart enough to connive the most dishonest of men in her life.

Born Elizabeth Bigley in Eastwood, Ontario, in 1857, Chadwick's mark in the judicial system began at age 22 when she was arrested for forgery. She escaped conviction on reasons of insanity and moved to Cleveland where she assumed many identities. Her occupations also varied from fortuneteller, thief, and conspirator. Her masquerades eventually led to a 9-1/2-year sentence in the Toledo state penitentiary.

Four years after being paroled, her criminal activities were heightened when she claimed to be the illegitimate daughter of a wealthy entrepreneur. She borrowed millions of dollars from Cleveland banks by forging documents and security certificates. When her debts became too heavy, she was exposed as a fraud and was convicted on 7 counts of conspiracy charges. While Chadwick was stealing her way into the pages of history, feminist Victoria Woodhull made her historical investments as the first female stockbroker on Wall Street. She also had a long list of occupations—newspaper publisher, lobbyist, writer, and activist. She was fearless, commanding, and powerful enough to run for President of the United States.

In 1872, tired of the ill advancement of women's rights from male bureaucrats, Woodhull asserted herself in the political arena. She advocated for equal status in the workplace and family. Her hard work culminated in a presidential nomination from the Equal Rights Party, making her the first woman in history to run for President.

Unfortunately, women could not vote at the time, and the double standard of political nuances resulted in a pitiful vote tally that was never recorded. Still Woodhull did not muse her vision for female advancement. Instead, she continued to inspire women across the country, ever so often lashing out at prominent men for their indiscretions and flaying male chauvinists.

However notorious was Woodhull, consider the dedication of lighthouse keeper Barbara Mabrity. Throughout her 38 years as the keeper of the Key West Lighthouse, life for Mabrity was essentially good. But her luxury was not without storms. She weathered through several hurricanes, staying steadfast through high winds to make sure boats and rescue crews were guided by the light. If hurricanes had not confronted her, Mabrity was also challenged by ransacking Indians. But her stint as light keeper was ended after the Civil War. Union politicians forced Mabrity to resign after they became aware of her sympathies to the Confederacy.

But a woman's place in history has not always been marked by her strength and power. Consider the magic and mystic of Marie Laveau, the claimed queen of voodoo. Born a free black woman in 1794 because her father was white, Laveau roamed to New Orleans and dispelled a unique blend of Catholicism and voodoo among the city's despondent people.

The people of New Orleans either loved or feared this imaginative woman. Rumors of her powers spread, and she was known to control lovers, acquaintances and enemies. She even controlled the influence of sex between people. Apparently, other voodoo queens lived in the city. However, they abruptly disappeared. Many believed they were sent away by Laveau's charms.

No matter what the reason for their historical importance, all of these women affected our nation in one way or another. We should celebrate and be inspired by these women and the many since that have walked on the same path towards change. ★

NEWS

Amnesty Pushing Nations to End Gender Violence

By Shauna Curphey

(WOMENSENEWS)--Amnesty International aims to force governments to recognize their complicity in gender-based violence when they fail to create or enforce laws against it.

As the latest step, the London-based human rights organization launched an international campaign in March to raise awareness of violence against women as a human rights violation.

"Amnesty International has been working on holding governments accountable to prevent, punish and investigate violence against women by state and non-state actors," said Sheila Dauer, director of the Women's Human Rights Program at Amnesty International U.S.A., based in New York City. "This campaign will take on that issue."

Amnesty's launch of this campaign builds on its previous work to hold states accountable for violence against women.

During preparations for a year-long campaign against torture in 2001, the organization seized on the U.N. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment--a United Nations human rights treaty--as an opportunity to demonstrate the severity of domestic violence and to urge governments to protect women from its cruelty. Amnesty declared that domestic violence, when combined with state inaction, is torture.

"If you look at what happens in domestic violence and what happens in torture they are convergent," said Dauer.

Amnesty International uses the idea of intentional harm--when combined with discrimination, and with state acquiescence--to draw the connection between torture and domestic violence.

At least 1-in-3 women and girls worldwide has been beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. As recently as six years ago, only 44 countries out of 193 in the world had laws against domestic violence and only 17 countries outlawed marital rape, according to a United Nations Children's Fund report.

Only three nations have legislation that specifically addresses violence against women as a category of criminal activity in itself, according to a 2003 report by the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

Domestic Violence Is Form of Discrimination

Amnesty's decision to define gender violence as torture builds on advances in international law, which hold states accountable for the actions of private individuals. For example, in 1992, the committee that oversees the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women declared that gender-based violence, including violence committed by private individuals, is a form of discrimination that states must take measures to eradicate. That same year, the U.N. Human Rights Committee, which monitors nations' compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, clarified that states must protect everyone from torture, whether inflicted by governments or non-state actors.

10 books every self-proclaimed slacker lesbian should read

- 1 I Could Do Anything If I Only Knew What It Was**
by Barbara Sher with Barbara Smith
- 2 Voyeur**
edited by Charles Melcher & Stephen Diamond
- 3 Down & Dirty Sex Secrets: The New Naughty Guide to Being Great in Bed**
by Tristan Taormino
- 4 Thieves in High Places: They've Stolen Our Country- And It's Time to Take It Back**
by Jim Hightower
- 5 Me Talk Pretty One Day**
by David Sedaris
- 6 The Edge of Tomorrow**
by Isaac Asimov
- 7 Bushwhacked : Life in George W. Bush's America**
by Lou Dubose, Molly Ivins
- 8 The Gift of Fear**
by Gaven De Becker
- 9 Valley of the Dolls**
by Jacqueline Susann
- 10 Understanding Marijuana: A New Look at the Scientific Evidence**
by Mitchell Earleywine, G. Alan Marlatt

List compiled by M.J. Sativa

Whether she lives in Sri Lanka or South Dakota, a woman is far more likely to suffer violence in her home or community than at the hands of her government. In the past two decades, under the rallying cry "women's rights are human rights," activists have been working to extend the reach of human rights law beyond state abuses of power to family members and neighbors who brutalize women.

In 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna declared that governments are duty-bound to stop violence against women. Later that year, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which requires states to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, and punish gender violence. The 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women produced the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which includes the assertion that domestic violence is a human rights violation.

"The fact that anyone characterizes domestic violence as a human rights issue is a success of the women's human rights movement," said LaShawn Jefferson, director of the Women's Rights Division at Human Rights Watch, based in New York City.

Making Words Lead to Action

Though significant in their recognition of women's right to be free from violence, U.N. declarations are not binding agreements.

And while treaties, such as the U.N. Convention Against Torture, are binding on the states that ratify them, the committees that oversee implementation do not have enforcement powers. They do require countries to report on efforts to meet treaty obligations. Amnesty and other human rights groups work through U.N. oversight committees and in the court of public opinion to compel states to match their human rights rhetoric with action to protect women from violence.

"These frameworks are absolutely indispensable to the effectiveness of our work," said Jefferson. "It's an important process that governments step back and publicly comment on the state of women's rights. Otherwise it would just not happen," she added.

Besides advocating that national governments address domestic violence, Amnesty's current campaign will also identify the roles that local governments and parallel authorities--such as tribal elders and religious leaders--play in addressing violence against women in their communities.

In preparation for the campaign, Amnesty International met with organizations working on domestic violence in the United States and abroad. They've found that, for many domestic violence organizations, international law is a new approach to advocacy.

Amnesty's national week of student action to stop violence against women, which began March 29, reflected their commitment to work at both the national and local level. The event focused on the murders of more than 370 young women in the cities of Juarez and Chihuahua Mexico since 1993. Student activities will lobby Congress to pass a resolution on the issue while connecting with local organizations working to end gender violence.

Through this dual approach, aimed at governments on the one hand and grassroots activists on the other, Amnesty aims to bring home the message domestic violence constitutes a pandemic human rights violation--and that it has to stop. ★

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For more information:
Amnesty International
<http://web.amnesty.org>

World Organisation Against Torture
<http://www.omct.org>

Human Rights Watch
<http://www.hrw.org>

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-Dewey & Merrill, Bulletin #404, US Dept Agriculture, 1916.

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-Manahan, Stanley E. Environmental Chemistry, 4th ed.

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-Herrer, Jack, The Emperor Wears No Clothes, 11th ed.

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-<http://www.seattlehempfest.com/facts.php>

www.democracyforamerica.com

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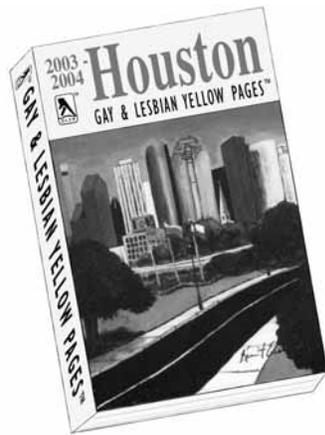
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Focus on Long term couples:
what's their secret?

Sex column:
Examining Texas' sex toy law

Travel: Review of an Olivia cruise,
Preparing for the Michigan
Womyn's Fest

BALANCE: Fashion Reality



Try wearing these with jeans for added color.



Have to wear flats? Try throwing on these instead of flip-flips.



Andy Warhol is one of my favorite artists (second only to Salvador Dali), and Rosenquist isn't too far behind. So even though I'm an avowed minimalist when it comes to most fashion preferences, I'm overjoyed to see designers taking a hint from the great pop artists this season. Finally, color exists in a medium other than frills and peasant blouses. It's so easy yo cheer up your wardrobe with just a few colorful items. . . and you won't even have to spend your vacation fund to do it. There's only one rule of thumb: try to keep your outfit basic, with just one outspoken item. Because no one should ever wear head-to-toe red.



Never underestimate the power of accessories!



Reminds me of the Mae West lips sofa by Salvado Dali.

Liven up denim with a splash of color from a vibrant tank.



Functional and fun!

Instead of shorts, try a mini. Very comfortable!



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