



## Ad to Run Oct. 16 in the *Post*

Houston's first proactive gay and lesbian "message" ad will appear this Sunday, October 16, in the *Houston Post*.

The ad is the first in a series of major Agora media projects designed to educate people about lesbians, gay men, and their families.

Other Houston gay and lesbian organizations have run event-related ads in mainstream publications. Agora President Bart Loeser believes, however, the Agora ad is the community's first purely "message" ad designed mainly for straights.

The ad was generously underwritten, in part, by a grant from the John S. Kellett Foundation of Houston. Photographer L.A. Clever donated her professional services.

**The Agora meets at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 24, at the AIDS Foundation, 3202 Wesleyan. For more information, call 522-9837.**



Photo by L.A. Clever

# Can You Find the Gay Man or Lesbian in This Ad?

About 1 in 10 people is lesbian or gay. Most live quietly in neighborhoods all over the Houston area.

Gays and lesbians vote, pay taxes, and are concerned about crime, education, and opportunities for *all* people...just like you. Their contributions play a vital role in making our world a better place.

Perhaps they *are* like you – except they happen to be gay or lesbian.

Answer: All are Gay or Lesbian.

This ad paid for by members and supporters of the Agora, a non-profit organization dedicated to presenting accurate portrayals of gays, lesbians and their families in the media. Box 66043, Houston 77266-6403.

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AGORA



# Palomo, Parker, Carpenter and Halloran to Lead Agora Proactive Workshop Nov. 3

Activism comes in many forms — marching, writing letters, organizing, or just being yourself. With growing visibility and media support, there has never been a better time for gays and lesbians to get involved to strengthen the movement for equal rights and battle an organized (and dangerous) Religious Right.

As a follow-up to National Coming Out Day, the Agora will sponsor a panel of community media experts, who will chart a proactive course for gay and lesbian activism in Houston.

"Proactivism in the '90s" is scheduled for 6:45-8:45 p.m. Thursday, November 3, at the Montrose Library, 4100 Montrose.

The panel includes openly gay *Houston Post* columnist Juan Palomo; community leader

Annise Parker; political activist and *Out Smart* columnist Dale Carpenter; and Jim Halloran, co-founder of Project Leap, dedicated to training new leaders in the struggle for representation by the HIV community as well as for the gay/lesbian/bisexual community.

Speakers will discuss how Houston's civil rights movement can go on the offensive through proactive endeavors rather than get bogged down in reactive responses. Specific opportunities for involvement in the Houston movement also will be discussed.

The workshop is free and open to the public. For more information about the workshop, please contact Agora president Bart Loeser at (713) 623-6796.

## Calendar

Friday, Oct. 21

**JOANN LOULAN**, well-known lesbian sex educator-author, will speak at the monthly LIB meeting. 6 p.m. Rice University Hamman Hall, 529-0077.

Saturday, Nov. 12

**AN EVENING WITH BILL COSBY** benefits Bering Community Service Foundation. 8 p.m. Arena Theatre. Tickets, \$50- \$200. Call the box office (988-1020), Ticketmaster (629-3700) or Bering (529-6071).

**Business  
Card Ads  
\$15**

Mail to: The Agora  
P.O. Box 66403  
Houston, TX 77266  
(522-9837)

**In a  
perfect  
world  
we  
wouldn't  
need to run  
this ad**

**B**ut the world is far from perfect. For gays and lesbians every day is a challenge to change negative perceptions, deal with misinformation, and attempt to have some control over how we are portrayed in the media. It is with that goal in mind that The Agora was formed. In Greek, *agora* means "marketplace." In Houston, The Agora is made up of people—mostly gay or lesbian, but some who are not—who have come together to provide education, accurate information, and positive portrayals of gays and lesbians and their families. If you would like to be a part of this growing organization of people from all walks of life, visit our regular meeting. Dues, if you decide to join, are \$25 a year. Come join us.

*Yes, I want to help the Agora present  
accurate images of gays and lesbians in the media!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Membership (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_



In this column, readers exchange ideas with other readers and our editor in a public forum. Writers must sign all letters and furnish their full name and address for verification. TWT will withhold name upon request. Please keep letters brief. TWT does not print letters sent to other gay and lesbian publications. Address all letters to **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, THIS WEEK IN TEXAS, 3300 REAGAN STREET, DALLAS, TX 75219** or **811 WESTHEIMER, SUITE 106, HOUSTON, TX 77006**.



## Why He Resigned from The Agora

Dear TWT:

When I first put forth the name "Agora" for this group, I anticipated a strong organization that would act as a gay think tank, where the members would write and discuss various positions to take on issues of social justice and cultural integrity for the Houston gay/lesbian community. I felt that people would think well of a group that thought well of itself, and that good public relations for gay and lesbian people would accrue from the respect The Agora would gain.

Since last February, I've been suggesting ideals and goals for the group: commitments to quality and meaning, to foresight and responsibility, to extension to as many different communities as possible. I've also stressed a vigorous pragmatism in response to The Agora's limited resources. Eduardo Castro and I produced a welcome brochure, three press releases and three newsletters that are written, edited and designed well. We tried to make these things the best quality we could, not merely adequate. The vision I had for The Agora could have been boiled down to two words: brains and guts.

No other vision for The Agora has been put forth except for a vague notion reduced from one-half of the mission statement: "positive portrayals." As far as I can see, "positive portrayals" has come to mean showcasing people who can pass for straight, regular guys and gals; or showing people who own all the accouterments of the paradigmatic heterosexual lifestyle.

The other half of the mission statement calls for education and accurate information about gays and lesbians. But when I bring this up before the leadership or push for any attention to specifically gay cultural elements, then I'm faced with glazed-over eyes and pursed little mouths. I understand this attitude; it's called internalized homophobia...

I'm ashamed of what The Agora is right now: mediocre. I don't want my name and reputation connected to anything that is mediocre. I'm ashamed that The Agora's leadership would rather pass out business cards and spend their time on purely political and bureaucratic maneuvers than get down to goals and objectives and work to counter the hateful rhetoric of the religious right, and the crushing indifference of our so-called "friends" in government and the press....

I wish that this group would abandon the name The Agora and choose one better fitting its current middlebrow goals and low aspirations. For all those who have died and who will die soon, and for all those gay and lesbian people for whom better respect in the media could make for better and healthier lives, I will ask that everyone ignore whatever this organization manufactures, since its mediocrity will only invite ridicule and scorn.

Scott Bodenheimer  
Co-Founder and First Secretary/The Agora  
Houston, TX

## The Agora Responds

Dear TWT:

As a group whose purpose is to promote positive media images of gays and lesbians, The Agora wants to invite everyone to meet us and help us improve our community's media image.

The Agora is less than a year old. We have experienced some growing pains, but there is much work to be done. We welcome everyone's ideas and energy. You can become involved through several committees: Media Relations; Community Outreach/Speakers Bureau; Fund-raising and Grants; Archives and Research; and Membership.

*Out! in Houston* is already airing on the Public Access Channel, with the third show scheduled for February. (Our show even has its own T-shirt—at \$12, they make great holiday gifts.) Through regular news

releases, we inform the local media about the gay and lesbian community. The Agora Community Outreach/Speakers Bureau committee has presented its first workshop on gay and lesbian issues to a church group.

Our recently highly successful fund-raiser will allow us to expand our horizons. We are applying for 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax status and discussing major public relations projects, such as pro-active advertising in the mainstream media.

On behalf of our officers, Denay Hudson and Craig Stephens, and our members, I would like to invite you to our next meeting, at 7:30 p.m. December 20 at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. (We normally meet the fourth Monday of each month.)

Cicely Wynne  
President/The Agora  
Houston, TX

## Support Apple

Dear TWT:

It is important that our community offer support to companies that stand up for human rights.

One way we can do that is by sending words of encouragement to Apple Computer for the company's admirable stand in the Williamson County matter. Readers can write Apple Computer at 20525 Mariani Ave., Cupertino, CA 95014, or call the company at (408)996-1010.

Ron Ozio  
Houston, TX



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Kellett, John Collection  
1 January 2000

#### The Agora folder

May 1, 1989 Austin American - Statesman "Thousands march for gay rights-Crowd estimated at 15,000; speakers urge 'victory or death'" by Dick Stanley and Morgan Montalvo American-Statesman Staff  
May 5, 1989 Montrose Voice Issue 445 "Thousands march demanding end to legal discrimination"  
Jan 5, 1990 Montrose Voice back page by Lobo  
Feb 16, 1990 Montrose Voice back page by Lobo  
1980 Does support for gay civil rights spell political suicide? A close look at some long-held myths Sponsored by The Gay Rights National Lobby and The National Gay Task Force [Houston section starts pg 40]  
Nov 24, 1983 The Advocate, copy of article "In Search of the Average Gay Texan Is There Such a Thing?" by Joe Baker Dallas news correspondent  
Art from series in the LIB newsletter: ABC's of Activism by Annise D. Parker  
Apr 1993 Agora -- Gay/Lesbian March on Washington  
Aug 23, 1993 Agora -- Group to Project Positive Image of Gay/Lesbian Community  
Aug 23, 1993 Agora Volume 1, Issue 3  
Dec 16, 1993 TWT Letters section "Why He Resigned from The Agora" by Scott Bodenheimer Co-founder and first Secty/ The Agora Houston, Tx  
Jan/Feb 1994 Agora Volume 2 No 1 [2 copies]  
Apr 25 Agora April Bulletin by Cicely Wynne, president  
Mar/Apr 1994 Agora newsletter

## partial list of GCAM holdings

May/Jun 1994 Agora newsletter  
Jul/Aug 1994 Agora newsletter  
?? Issue 95 Waging Peace by Marshall K. Kirk and Erastes Pill -- article  
Aug 1979 GPC newsletter  
Undated letter from Upfront from Charles Clinton  
July 11, 1979 Upfront Volume 2, Number 15 Houston Gay Pride Week 1979 Souvenir Issue  
Aug 1979 Civil Liberties in Texas--Tx Civil Liberties Union affiliate of the ACLU -- Voting records of the 1979 Texas Legislature  
Tx Dept. of Health Resources -- VD Answers to the most frequently asked questions about venereal disease  
Tri-fold Agora mail out advertisement  
Tri-fold PFLAG flier advertisement  
What You Need to Know to Ensure Your Good Health--booklet prepared for the community by