

The Fort Worth Ally

News for our community

Volume I issue II

November 2, 2001

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TGRA Rodeo Next Weekend

By Steve Geer
Dallas, Texas

The Texas Gay Rodeo Association (TGRA), will be holding its 18th annual rodeo next weekend at Fairpark in Dallas.

Chris Toland, candidate for Mr. TGRA 2002, will represent Fort Worth at next week's event. Rodeo organizers are expecting over 3,000 spectators and more contestants than last year's rodeo in Fort Worth.

(See Rodeo on page 3)



It's Time To Press Our Advantage!

By David Reed
Fort Worth, Texas

The gay community has come a long way in the past few years. The discussion about gays in the military brought the subject of gay life into the homes of the nation almost every night for six months in 1993. This constant dialogue over the place of gay people in an important institution of American life helped ordinary Americans become more comfortable with gay people. While AIDS revealed the ubiquity of gay people, the military conversation normalized gay lives.

The Ellen Degeneres coming out episode (preceded by Ellen's own coming out) was another important event helping the prevailing society become more accepting of it's gay members. (See Alliance on page 5)

New Trial Ordered in Gay Estate Case

By Paul Queary,
Olympia, Wash. (AP)

Gays may be entitled to the estates of partners who die without wills, the Washington Supreme Court ruled Thursday.

The decision came as the justices ordered a new trial for Frank Vasquez, who is claiming the \$230,000 estate of his longtime partner. A lower court had found the claim invalid because same-sex marriage is illegal in Washington.

"Equitable claims are not dependent on the 'legality' of the relationship between the parties, nor are they limited by the gender or sexual orientation of the parties,"

(See Estate on page 3)

**The Ft.
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Announcements!

The RAP Program

The RAP program provides a fun opportunity to meet new people, have a good time and socialize in a safe, laid-back atmosphere. Also, there are opportunities for group members to determine the topics of discussion. Meditation techniques, esteem building, safe or tantric sex are all potential discussion topics. For more information, or to get involved, contact Elizabeth McCarthy at the Prevention Project of AIDS Outreach Center at 817-336-1994 ext 253.

College-Age Gay Men s Group

The college-age gay mens social support and skills building group meets Friday nights from 7-9pm. For more information call DeeJay or Memie at 817-332-7722.

Humanities for HIV+ Individuals

Each Tuesday night the Health Education Learning Project sponsors a humanities-based forum incorporation of the arts, music, philosophy, history and logic. This is a fun and interactive group for people wanting to begin celebrating life once again! For more information call Gretchen at 817-332-7722.

Aids Interfaith is a volunteer-centered organization that is committed to mobilizing people of faith to demonstrate God's love through active compassion to people affected by AIDS. Contact Christian Piatt at 817-870-4800 ext 31.

The Ft. Worth Ally

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The Fort Worth Ally, a publication of GA Enterprises, is published every Friday. Estimated readership 15,000. Subscription rates are \$39.00 (26 weeks), and \$78 (52 weeks). Advertising deadlines are Friday noon (week before publication) for make-ready ads, Monday noon for classified advertising and calendar items, and Tuesday noon the week of publication for camera-ready ads. The Ft. Worth Ally is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced in whole or part except by permission obtained by contacting The Ft. Worth Ally directly. Views expressed in letters to the editor and other submissions and contributions are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the owners or management of The Ft. Worth Ally. The Ft. Worth Ally, reserves the right to edit or reject any material submitted for publication. Unsolicited submissions cannot be returned. The Ft. Worth Ally is not responsible for damages due to typographical errors except for the cost of revising and replacing advertisements containing the error. Advertisements designed and created by The Ft. Worth Ally, for the advertiser remain the property of The Ft. Worth Ally. Advertisements and designs can be released for a \$275 licensing fee. The Ft. Worth Ally cannot be responsible for claims made by advertisers, but readers are requested to report any fraudulent or deceptive advertising. The use of the name or likeness of a person or entity in The Ft. Worth Ally in advertising or editorial content does not imply any particular sexual orientation or political affiliation. Copyright 2001 GA Enterprises, INC.

News

Estate (cont. from page 1)

Justice Charles Johnson wrote in the unanimous decision. Vasquez, 64, shared a house, business and financial assets with Robert Schwerzler until Schwerzler died without a will in 1995.

Vasquez claimed the estate, which consisted mainly of the house, and was challenged by Schwerzler's siblings. The siblings said they never saw the men display affection, that Vasquez was apparently a housekeeper, and that he did not accompany Schwerzler on trips.

"They literally wanted to put Mr. Vasquez out on the street with nothing," said Terry Barnett, Vasquez's attorney. Vasquez is illiterate and disabled because of a childhood head injury, according to court records.

Ross Taylor, an attorney for Schwerzler's siblings, said he hopes to disprove Vasquez's version of the relationship at the trial, thus avoiding the question of whether he is entitled to the estate. "My clients do not think their brother was a homosexual," Taylor said.

A trial judge ruled that Vasquez was entitled to the property under a legal concept that protects the interests of unmarried people in long-term relationships. An appeals court reversed the decision, saying the concept does not apply to same-sex couples because they cannot legally marry.

The state's highest court rejected that conclusion but ordered a new trial because some facts of the case are in dispute. "It's a tremendous affirmation of one of the most basic principles," said Jenny Pizer of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a gay rights organization.

Rodeo (cont. from page 1)

The activities start next Friday with a kickoff dance being held at the Radisson at 9pm. The rodeo will start the following morning at 9am with the Grand Entrance at noon. The Baptist Woman of Austin will be entertaining after the Grand Entrance. This year's grand marshalls will be Gary Miller and Alan Pierce, owners of the Round Up Saloon in Dallas.

Contestants will compete in 13 events which are grouped into 3 categories. The winner must have the highest average for both days.

According to Jim Gadiant, vice-president of the Dallas chapter of TGRA, all the proceeds raised during the rodeo will be given to local charities throughout the metroplex.

Gadiant also stated that there will be off-duty police officers and rodeo security staff to ensure the public's safety.

Ticket prices are \$15 per day or 2 tickets for \$25. Tickets can be purchased Friday night at the kickoff dance or they can be purchased at the rodeo box office located at the entrance.



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Artwork courtesy of Gregory Story

The Blue and the Gay

D.C. Officer Links His 2 Communities

By David A. Fahrenthold
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The police radio is quiet on this Friday night it's only about 9 p.m. but the beeper is beeping. For Sgt. Brett A. Parson, of the D.C. police, this is how most of the emergencies come in.

The number on the pager is that of Chaos, a gay bar on 17th Street NW, and 911 is appended to the message. Parson roars around Dupont Circle with his cruiser's lights flashing.

Parson, a nine-year member of the department and a former narcotics and patrol officer, is a brawny cop who this year tackled a drug dealer armed with a sawed-off shotgun. But when he pulls up at Chaos, there's hardly any emergency left.

A patron had argued with the managers about the club's music and apparently tore down some signs. The owners are still mad, but there's no need for an arrest. Parson shushes the angry owners like an old friend. Will you just shut up . . . for a second? he says, mock-angry. It's me!

Parson, 33, is the gay police. Officially, he's the head of the D.C. police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit. But since taking over the job more than four months ago, he has become something more like a small-town sheriff: the Andy Taylor of gay Washington.

Parson has taken the liaison unit into new territory. Once used mainly for public relations, the two-officer unit has begun investigating alleged hate crimes and responding to distress calls from gay clubs and businesses. It's a point of pride that when gay life goes underground at sexually oriented clubs and darkened parks used for sexual rendezvous the officers go, too. For Parson, there has been another kind of transformation as well. The two sides of his life, the proud gay man and the good, tough officer, have merged into one job that he can put all his energy into. I think I'm able to empathize with a gay man more than other officers, he said. I think I can understand what it feels like to not belong.

Like many police forces across the country, the D.C. police department has an awkward history with the gay community. In the 1980s, District police fearful of contracting the virus that causes AIDS sometimes wore rubber gloves when they raided gay clubs or dealt with gay demonstrators

It's been rocky at times, Bob Summersgill, president of the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance, said of relations between police and gay groups.

Executive Assistant Police Chief Terrance W. Gainer said he agreed in the summer of 2000 to create the gay liaison unit, with the mission of training other officers and meeting with gay community leaders. The unit was first staffed by two lesbian officers, one of whom Kelly McMurry still serves in the unit. After a year, Gainer said the unit needed to include a man and to have a higher-ranking officer. He picked Parson, who at the time was in the department's major narcotics section. Gainer knew what he was getting: a friendly loudmouth willing to answer questions from gay people and fellow officers, one about the other. Probably what I'd have to do, Gainer recalled thinking, is slow Brett down.

Since then, Gray's family and friends have praised Parson for his handling of the case. They said he even counseled Gray's best friend, at one time talking to him every day. But the icebreaker was what Parson emphasized at the meeting: It mattered that he is gay. It . . . helped them to overcome the fact that he was white, said William Beale, a member of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) who has helped the family. Gray's family is black.

Parson was plugged into the gay scene before taking his current job, but now it is his job to know almost everyone. On a Friday night drive on P Street NW west of Dupont Circle, he waves hello and jokes with a man on the sidewalk and then shows a passenger that he has looked up the man's full name, age and last address. He's a drug dealer, Parson says, whom he hasn't been able to catch yet.

Parson regularly patrols P Street Beach, the wooded area near 23rd and P streets that is traditionally a point for clandestine sexual activity. If he catches anyone walking in or out, he'll warn them that gay men are sometimes robbed and attacked there. He also routinely walks through a health club on 14th Street where sexual rendezvous also happen in the locker room cubicles.

He announces his presence over the public-address system and then walks through, shaking hands and handing out business cards.

Sex in public is illegal in the District, which is why Parson makes his announcement. He is much more interested in other offenses, such as hate crimes and assaults, that some victims are hesitant to report. But, he said, if there were ever a

need to raid such a club, he would want to be the one to do it. It's the same reason why my father wanted to spank me, growing up, Parson said. I know he cares, and I know he's not going to hurt me.

So far, Parson's work has been praised from all corners of the gay community. On the unit block of O Street SE, a grungy strip of gay nightclubs and sex clubs, Parson is a hero. Once, according to club owner Bob Siegel, aggressive panhandlers and muggers would bother his customers, and the police did little.

Since becoming head of the liaison unit, Parson has locked up a few offenders and scared the others away, Siegel said. He cured the block, Siegel said. I don't know why [other police] couldn't do what he did. Gainer said he believes there will always be a need for a gay and lesbian liaison unit. But Parson, for all his success, knows that he doesn't want to do the job forever.

He said as much after handling the Friday night call at Chaos. After calming the club's owners and sending the patron home, Parson reflected. It's a different kind of police work when you get called to a disturbance and 15 minutes later, everybody goes home happy.

I have a lot of other skills . . . I would rather be putting to use, he said later, patrolling in Dupont Circle. In my heart, I really feel like I have a higher calling.

Does he mind being a sheriff? Parson searched for the right metaphor.

I feel like Sylvester Stallone, he said, being cast in the role of Barney Fife.

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Alliance (cont from front page)

The entire season of will she or won't she come out? kept the issue of gay secrecy on people's minds. Then, once Ellen and Anne did come out, they were unavoidable. The results of their three-and-a-half year relationship outlasted the relationship itself.

So, is there still a need for gay advocacy? As you might expect from the President of the Tarrant County Lesbian/Gay Alliance, I answer yes. Although the situation for gay people is far worse in many developing countries (notably those with Islamic majorities), the United States still lags behind most of Western Europe in its implementation of gay equality. Many states, including Texas, still have a sodomy law on the books. Every two years we have to battle the conservatives in the Texas legislature over the definition of marriage and the right to adopt. Since don't ask don't tell is codified as a law (and not merely a military regulation) the military cannot simply ignore it when it is inconvenient.

The Alliance provides that formal interface between the gay community and the prevailing society. We still help new members of the gay community find their way to needed services and unfamiliar meeting places. We still answer the media calls that seek a gay spokesperson. We still help educate politicians about our issues. It's not yet time to rest. It's time to press our advantage.

David Reed is the President of the Tarrant County Lesbian-Gay Alliance. His column will appear every other week.



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It Takes the Village, People!

John McDaniel (editorial contributor)

Sometimes in this crazy world, opinions and rhetoric must be set aside and positions re-analyzed from a perspective not thought of before. I'm talking about support. I'm talking about being a cohesive, active, supportive community.

For those of us that have chosen to make Fort Worth our home, for whatever reason that might be, we need to recognize that we are at the cusp of growth, the brink of greatness. Due to conservative leadership, our city has just landed a billion-dollar defense contract. This will ensure employment not only immediately, but also well into the future. Business analysts are calling for each one job that Lockheed will create, two more will be created in the community.

To those of us that already live here, that means job security. For those that will be coming, it means looking for a home. A home doesn't necessarily mean a physical dwelling, but that sense of familiarity when you have been away for a while and just driving into the city limits elicits that sense of right.

For local business people, it means more disposable dollars to be spent. Increased revenues, better bottom lines, and hopefully the dream we all pursue, success. What does this have to do with us? Statistically speaking, there will be gay men and women possibly relocating here. We need to make sure that those people have the opportunity to make Fort Worth a home.

We need to present a united front, not one divided by competition, petty rivalry, and vicious gossip. We need to support our churches, our gay-owned businesses, and our gay-friendly businesses to ensure they are here, after we aren't. We need to provide information, assistance, and uncommon courtesy to those that will someday replace our real or perceived roles in the community.

To do these things requires us to set aside motives derived from selfishness and self-seeking gratification. To put the common good ahead of your own and to realize that in the long run, the small things just don't matter.

John McDaniel is a law student who writes weekly for The Ally.

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Reviews

All reviews are rated on a 1-4 Q-scale. Todd Camp is the artistic director for Q Cinema, Fort Worth's Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. For more information, visit www.qcinema.org.

Things You Can Tell Just By Looking at Her

(2000, PG-13) QQQ

No telling why this star-studded, wonderfully understated examination of women and the issues they face never made it to theaters locally.

The knockout cast - including Glenn Close, Cameron Diaz, Calista Flockhart, Holly Hunter, Kathy Baker and Amy Brenneman - tackle dating, abortion, lesbianism, caregiving, careers, motherhood and more, in a series of seemingly unrelated vignettes that gradually interweave as the stories progress. Men play minor roles, but this feminine tour de force remains a breath of fresh air, losing itself in each entrancing story while never resorting to self-mockery or man-bashing.

Calista Flockhart and Valeria Golino play a lesbian couple whose relationship is touched by disease. The DVD includes the original theatrical trailer and full- and both widescreen formats.



101 Rent Boys: Uncut

(2000, Unrated) QQ1/2

Cinemax originally aired this indie festival favorite from documentarians Randy Barbato and Fenton Bailey (Eyes of Tammy Faye, Party Boys) featuring two years worth of interviews with 101 male hustlers on the West Coast's notorious Santa Monica Boulevard. Paid \$50 each (the payment of which is carefully documented), the hustlers lounge on cheap motel beds and share their hopes, dreams, loves and losses, revealing stories more crushingly depressing than they are titillating (though the uncut DVD offers a little more of the latter). DVD Extras: Directors commentary; additional footage.

Woody's Top 5 Video Rentals:

1. The House of Morecock
2. Queer as Folk
3. No One Sleeps
4. Boyfriends
5. Just One Time



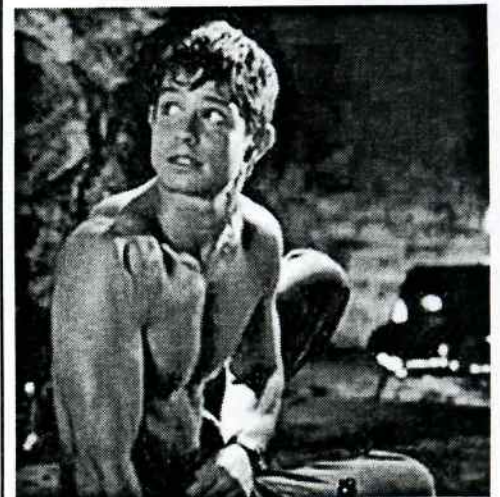
Rites of Passage

(2000, R) QQ1/2

Although just about all of director Victor Salva's films (Clownhouse, Powder and the recent Jeepers Creepers) have had an undercurrent of homoeroticism running through them, Rites is his first to actually deal with the subject up front.

In a remote lakeside cabin, stoic father Dean Stockwell struggles to resolve differences between his estranged sons - one a successful lawyer (Robert Keith), the other a shunned homosexual (Roswell's Jason Behr). But when a pair of escaped cons begin terrorizing the family, it's quickly revealed that no one is who they seem.

Though there are plot holes big enough to drive an SUV through, Salva gets fine performances from Behr, Stockwell and James Remar as the head convict. The DVD includes commentary from Salva and Behr as well as deleted scenes.



Stage West concluding Collected Stories!

Michael Cook (staff writer)

Director Natalie Gaupp says, The idea of a person's stories being discussed in almost tangible terms (to whom do stories belong? Who may rightfully tend and negotiate them?) tees off a kind of philosophical badminton. Perhaps the most interesting notion may be that there is no proper rejoinder.

The Stage West production has reunited Kathleen Archer (as Ruth) and Dana Schultes (as Lisa); the two previously appeared at Stage West in *Simpatico*. Ms. Archer was also seen in *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, while Ms. Schultes last appeared at Stage West as Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The play has been illustrated in costume by Jane Goodman, with lighting by Michael O'Brien and set by Nelson Robinson and

Stageworks. As an interesting bit of lagniappe, the show has featured original music composed and played by director Gaupp.

Collected Stories concludes its run on Saturday, November 10. The remaining show times are as follows: Thursday at 7:30pm, Friday at 8:00pm, Saturday at 3:00pm and 8:00pm and Sunday at 7:30pm. The ticket prices range from \$18 to \$22 with discounts for students, seniors and groups. For more information call 817-784-9378.

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- That back bartender at Maggies is HOT.
- Thanks Mama!
- Charity Case was awesome.
- We need a coffee shop!
- Michelle you better slow down girl.
- Eric is so fine! He's gonna be mine!
- Joe's such a sweatie!
- Honey, put that thing away!
- Hey old man, quit being so grumpy!
- I hate driving to Dallas!
- That dancer in Arlington has all the right moves.
- What about women's night at the six?

ASK SHANIQUE

Who needs Cleo? Shanique answers reader mail.

My girlfriend seems to be acting weird lately. It's as if one day she is nice and loving and the next day she is cold as ice. She says she loves me, but I don't feel that she does sometimes. Whenever I bring this up she gets upset and says I'm over-reacting. I love her, but this is making me feel like I am on a roller coaster ride. Is it just me?
-confused in Haltom City

Dear Confused,
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Health Perspectives

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(Atlanta) New waves of high-risk sexual behavior threaten to wash out hard-won gains in HIV and AIDS prevention. The risky behavior crosses ethnic and racial lines but minority men and women have the highest infection rates.

The findings, reported here at the CDC's National HIV Prevention Conference, confirm that more and more Americans aren't protecting themselves from HIV when they have sex. Often these are the very people both gay and heterosexual most at risk.

We really are at a very critical point in this epidemic where we can either move forward [with HIV prevention] or risk a resurgence [of AIDS], says Helene D. Gayle, MD, MPH, director of the CDC's HIV prevention division. We have come too far in learning what works to go back. There are too many lives at stake. One of the great successes in public-health history is the profound change in sexual behavior among gay men. Twenty years later, most of these men are still practicing safe sex. Unfortunately, what worked to change their behavior isn't working to change the behavior of younger gay men.

Young men who have sex with men belong to a generation that has not received the intensive interventions of the 1980s. It is not the same epidemic, says Cynthia Gomez, PhD, of the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at the University of California, San Francisco. We cannot simply repeat what we did in the 1980s and expect it to work. If we don't intervene really intensely we will see a significant wave of HIV infection again.

The data:

A CDC study of nearly 3,000 men who have sex with men in six U.S. cities found that nearly half of 23- to 29-year-olds were having unprotected anal sex. Even though they reported a bit less of this behavior, the black men in the study were much more likely to get HIV than the white men studied.

Gay men getting tested for HIV in Seattle reported 17% more receptive anal sex in 1998 than they did four years earlier. Increased unsafe sex was most common among men aged 14-25.

Another Seattle study found that two out of three HIV-positive men reported unprotected anal sex with an HIV-negative partner or a partner whose HIV status was unknown.

In South Miami Beach, more than one in seven young gay men is HIV-positive. These men, too, report high rates of unprotected anal sex.

A CDC study of men in 13 U.S. communities found that nearly one in five men who recently reported unprotected anal sex with other men also had sex with a woman during the same time period.

An Atlanta study of low-income women shows that nearly half have sex with men who don't use condoms. More than four in 10 of the women have sex with men whose behavior puts them at high risk of HIV infection. Even though most of the women know how HIV is transmitted, seven out of 10 didn't think they ran much risk of getting HIV.

We have talked with over 400 women, and 47% identified themselves to be at high HIV risk but they are either not using condoms consistently or not using condoms at all, says Atlanta study leader Elleen M. Yancy, PhD.

Yancy, a researcher at Atlanta's Morehouse School of Medicine, says her team is working to develop culture-specific ways to change this dangerous behavior.

Risk reduction must be geared to the values and beliefs of African-American women, she says. We focus on relationship issues, on communication between men and women. One of the most important issues is that although we tend to focus on women learning to negotiate condom use, women don't wear condoms. So we have to focus on both men's and women's behavior.

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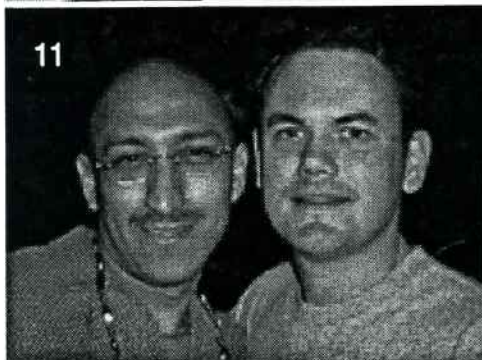
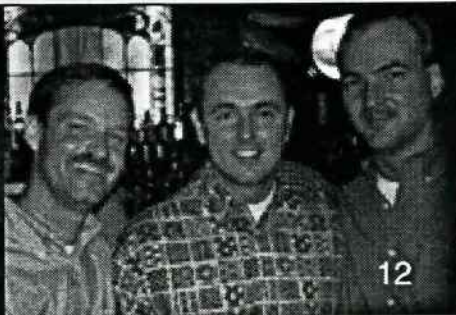
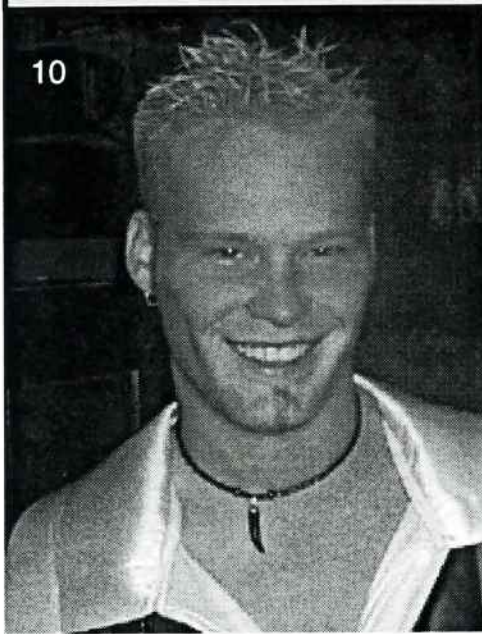
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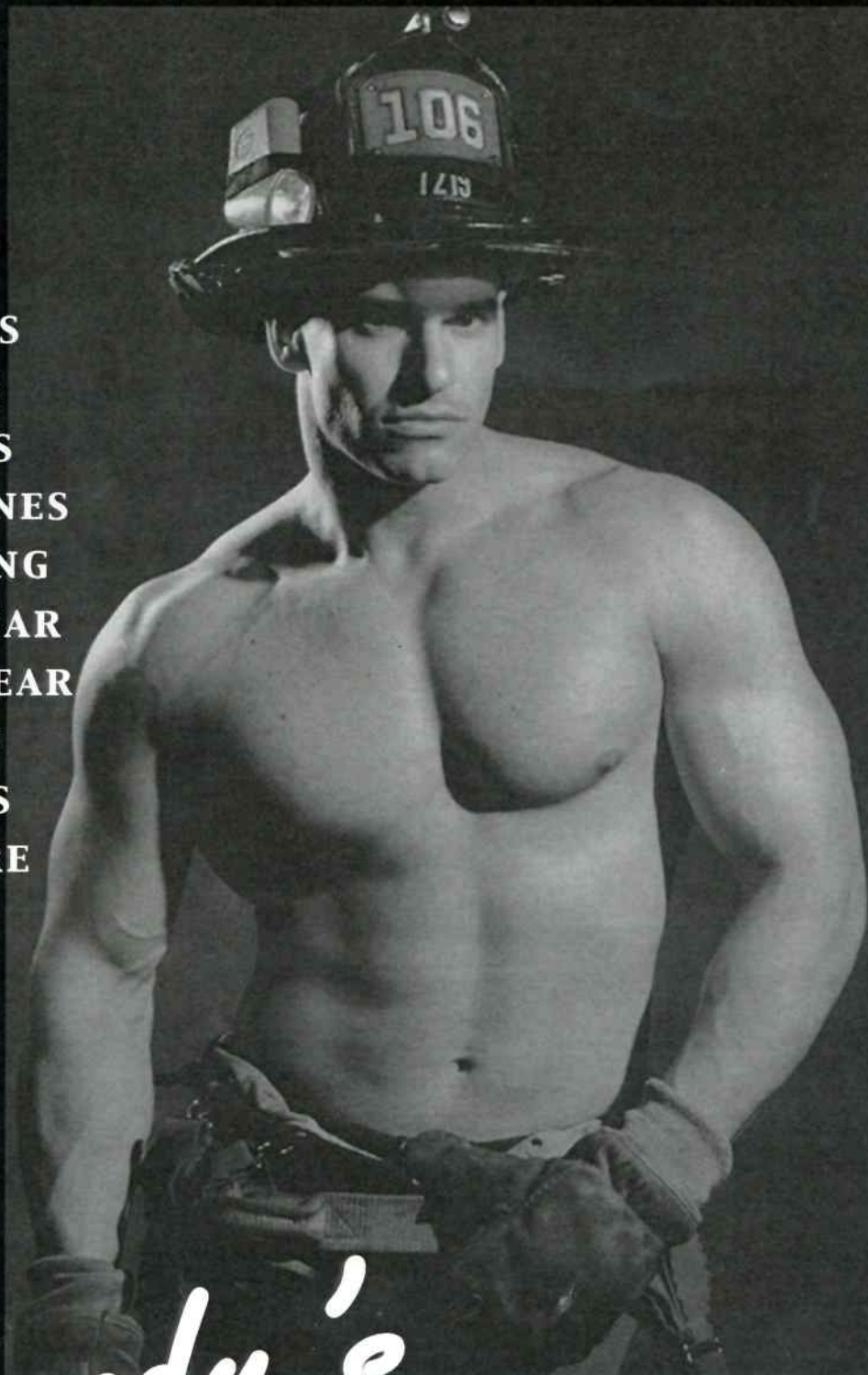
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*Out and About in Tarrant
County*

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3. Frank and John at Maggies.
4. Kimeul at 651 Arlington
5. Joey and Micah at 651 Arlington
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7. Maram and Trishia at 651 FW
8. Mark, Curtis, Troy and Ron 651 FW.
9. Melody Lane and Amber Diva Daniels at 651 FW
10. Kelly (bartender at Maggies)
11. Trey and Daniel at Maggies
12. Gary, Darren, and Alan at 651 FW
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