

JAN. '20

HOUSTON'S LGBTQ MAGAZINE

# OutSmart

LILLY  
RODDY'S  
**2020**  
ASTRO-  
CAST  
Pg.90

OUT FITNESS  
INSTRUCTORS  
GIVE YOU A  
GLIMPSE OF  
THEIR WORKOUT  
ROUTINES. Pg.44

## WELLNESS WARRIORS

FROM THE LEFT:  
JAMES MAI,  
JOHN MICHAEL RACE  
AND PINIJ NALAMPOON

PLUS

HEALTH & BEAUTY

DR. JONATAN GIOIA

+

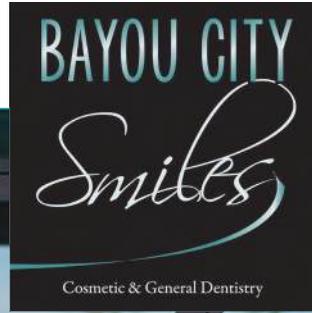
MIA RYAN

+

AMORÉ MONÉT

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF KEEPING HOUSTON SMILING!

# UNCOMPROMISING EXCELLENCE in DENTISTRY



Dr. Marcus de Guzman

Dr. Cynthia Corral

Voted One of the Best Male Dentist!: Marcus de Guzman | Voted Best Female Dentist: Cynthia Corral



## FREE Whitening- for Life!

Veneers, Implants, Esthetic Fillings & Smile Makeover | In House Financing  
Your Dentist is Certified in Oral Conscious Sedation | Most Insurance Accepted

**BAYOU CITY SMILES**  
Cosmetic & General Dentistry  
713.518.1411



Arts District @ Sawyer Yards  
2313 Edwards St., Ste. 150  
Houston, TX 77007

[BAYOUCITYSMILES.COM](http://BAYOUCITYSMILES.COM)

**MAKE YOUR  
SAVINGS**

# WERK

**AS HARD AS YOU**



- PREDICTABLE MONTHLY INCOME
- SECURED BY REAL ESTATE
- RETURNS TYPICALLY OUTPERFORM STOCKS, BONDS, CDS

**DOUG SMITH**  
CEO AND LEAD INVESTOR



**Hawthorne Funds**

**Wealth Preservation and  
Exceptional Returns through  
Investments in Rural Texas Land**

REQUEST A FREE PHONE CONSULTATION AT:

**HAWTHORNEFUNDS.COM**



44



38



28

King and Queen Olympus IV:  
Frank Wright and Richard West  
at Peggy Stewart Studio, 1974



63



42



52

## 44 COVER STORY

**WORKING IT OUT**  
Three out instructors recount their journeys to fitness

## 28 KREWE OF OLYMPUS CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

Born in New Orleans, the group came of age in Houston

## 36 STANDING FOR EQUALITY

Texas' leading LGBTQ-rights organization appoints Ricardo Martinez as its first Latinx CEO

## 38 A NEW GENERATION OF QUEER ACTIVISTS

UT Health workers Dr. Jonatan Gioia and Mia Ryan transform Houston both on and off the clock

## 40 EMPOWERING HER COMMUNITY

Mia Ryan launches a support group for black transgender women

## 42 PIGMENTS FOR A PURPOSE

Amoré Monét's new lipstick line benefits marginalized communities in Houston

## 50 FRANKLY SPEAKING

Before there was Pete Buttigieg, there was Barney Frank

## 52 HINDSIGHT FROM 2020

The queer decade in review



## 67 ASTROCAST 2020

What does 2020 have in store for you?

## 58 SHINY CROWNS AND SPARKLY GOWNS

ERSICSS celebrates 35 years of supporting the community

## 60 A TROUBLED GENIUS

MFAH showcases Francis Bacon's beautiful and brooding paintings

## 63 A NEW ERA FOR STAGES

REPERTORY THEATRE  
\$35 million facility features three state-of-the-art theaters

## 75 THE COOKIE KING

Houston native Scott French wins Food Network's *Christmas Cookie Challenge*

## 77 CLEVER CONFECTIONER

Van Kuch brings his one-of-a-kind pastries back home

## 83 WEDDING GUIDE

A real-life rom-com: Lily and Virginia Moore's love story is picture-perfect

# NOT ALL PHARMACIES ARE CREATED EQUAL.

**Free delivery, expert staff, online refills—** these are the basics you should expect from your pharmacy. We've got the basics covered, and so much more.

- ♥ **Financial Assistance**
- ♥ **LGBTQ+ Care and Support**
- ♥ **Gender Care**
- ♥ **PrEP and STD Expertise**
- ♥ **Community Education & Awareness**
- ♥ **Personal, Compassionate Care**

**You're more than just a prescription, and that's why we're more than just a pharmacy.**



**Avita**  
PHARMACY

avitapharmacy.com    

**VISIT US ON-SITE AT**

**ST.HOPE**  
FOUNDATION

Primary Medical Care Home

Bellaire Community Health Center  
6800 West Loop South, STE 560 Bellaire, TX 77401

# DEPARTMENTS

## NEWS & COMMENT

- 11 NEWS**
- 20 UNAPOLOGETICALLY TRANS**  
Happy New Year! And a Happy New Decade!
- 22 MONEY SMART**  
New year, new you: resolve to stay physically and financially fit with meal prepping
- 24 WELLNESS**  
Living according to your values
- 26 TIME OUT**  
OUTSMART's readers and recommendations

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

- 79 READ OUT**  
*Ian McKellen: A Biography*
- 86 QUEER QUOTES**  
Whitney Houston, Sam Smith, Claudia López, and the singular 'they'
- 98 WIGGING OUT**  
A hard Knox life

## OUT & ABOUT

- 80 OUT THERE**
- 88 BAR/CLUB GUIDE**
- 94 SIGN OUT**
- 96 SCENE OUT**

## ADVERTISERS INDEX

- 90 ADVERTISERS**
- 92 CLASSIFIED MARKETPLACE**

### ON THE COVER



### WELLNESS WARRIORS

Out fitness instructors give you a glimpse of their workout routines.

From the left: James Mai, John Michael Race, and Pinij NaLampoon

Photography by ASHKAN ROAYAEI  
Art direction by ALEX ROSA

- Board Certified Physicians
- Accept All Private Insurance
  - Open 365 Days A Year
  - 24 Hours A Day
  - 7 Days A Week
- Average Wait Times of Less than 10 Min
- Treatment of adults, children and infants
  - On-Site Testing Laboratory
  - On-Site CT Scan and Ultrasound

# VOTED



# 2 YEARS IN A ROW!

# SignatureCare

## EMERGENCY CENTER

HEIGHTS • BELLAIRE • MONTROSE • MEMORIAL

Visit any of our 9

# HOUSTON LOCATIONS

as well as our Greater Texas facilities



WINDOW/WINDSHIELD REPLACEMENT - PAINT AND BODY WORK

**716 Fairview - RyanAutoGlass.com - 713.552.3602**

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN MONTROSE

**M-F 9am-6pm SAT 9am-4pm**

10% DISCOUNT when mentioned this ad in Outsmart

# INSTANT insight



## HIV

U=U Undetectable = Untransmittable



## HIV / STI

Having an STI puts you at greater risk of getting HIV.



## Syphilis

Recognize the Symptoms. Protect Your Unborn Baby.



## PrEP

Prevents New HIV Infection.



## Chlamydia

Can make it difficult for women to get pregnant.



## Condoms

Consistent and correct use of latex condoms is highly effective in preventing STI's.



## Gonorrhea

Can cause serious complications when untreated.



## Viral Hepatitis A, B, C

Symptoms are similar.



Learn More. Visit Here.

**PensHouston.org**  
*STAY NOTIFIED.*



HOUSTON HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT

HOUSTONHEALTH.ORG



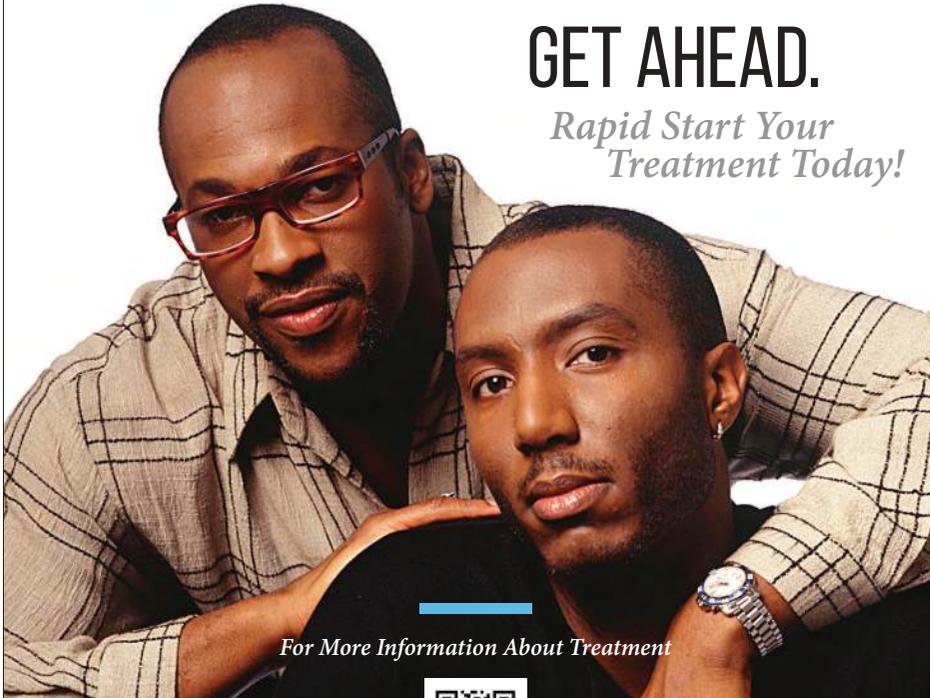
MEDICAL | RESEARCH | DENTAL | PHARMACY | VISION

*"Your Patient  
Centered Health  
Care Home"*



**GET AHEAD.**

*Rapid Start Your  
Treatment Today!*



*For More Information About Treatment*

**713.778.1300**



**OFFERINGHOPE.ORG**

Early antiretroviral treatment improves the health and survival of individuals living with HIV and reduces HIV transmission. If you were recently diagnosed with HIV and ready to commit to therapy, contact St. Hope Foundation and let us help you initiate your treatment. We have (5) convenient locations to serve all of your health needs.

**HOUSTON  
INTEGRATIVE  
HEALTH,  
ACUPUNCTURE  
AND MINDFUL  
MOVEMENT**

716 Chelsea Blvd.  
Houston, Texas 77006  
832-215-2039



*Pain, injury,  
chronic conditions,  
mind-body medicine*

**LANCE  
WESTENDARP  
ND, LAc, BCB,  
CKTP, E-RYT200**

Follow us at [www.facebook.com/drlancehoustonintegrative/](http://www.facebook.com/drlancehoustonintegrative/)

**NOW PUBLISHING IN OUR 26<sup>TH</sup> YEAR!**

**OutSmart**  
Houston's LGBTQ Magazine

**Publisher/Editor-in-Chief** Greg Jeu  
**Associate Publisher** Tom Fricke

**Creative Director** Alex Rosa  
**Entertainment Editor** Blase DiStefano  
**Assistant Editor** Lourdes Zavaleta  
**Copy Editor** Howard Maple

**Web Editor** Lourdes Zavaleta

**Contributing Writers**

Omar Afra, Olivia Flores Alvarez, Rich Arenschioldt, Bill Arning, Susan Bankston, Connor Behrens, Jenny Block, Sam Byrd, Andrew Edmonson, Ste7en Foster, Sarah Gish, David Goldberg, Martin Gonzalez, DL Groover, Marene Gustin, Kim Hogstrom, James Hurst, Lisa Keen, Ryan M. Leach, Don Maines, Zachary McKenzie, Joanna O'Leary, Monica Roberts, Lilly Roddy, Terri Schlichenmeyer, Gregg Shapiro, Janice Stensrude, Henry V. Thiel, Megan Wadding, Brandon Wolf, Grace S. Yung

**Photographers/Illustrators**

Edgardo Aguilar, Angel Albarran, Dalton DeHart, Yvonne Feece, Josseline Martinez, Mark S. McCray, Ashkan Roayae

**Account Executives**

Jack Berger, Joanna Jackson

**National Advertising Representative**

Rivendell Media - 212.242.6863

**OutSmart  
Media Company**

Publishers of OutSmart Magazine  
3406 Audubon Place • Houston, TX 77006  
713.520.7237 • 713.522.3275 Fax

**Subscriptions:** \$30/12 Issues, \$58/24 Issues

**E-mail:** [letters@outsmartmagazine.com](mailto:letters@outsmartmagazine.com)

**Website:** [OutSmartMagazine.com](http://OutSmartMagazine.com)

OUTSMART is published monthly. Estimated readership in Houston and surrounding areas is 60,000. OutSmart Media Company is not responsible for claims and practices of advertisers. The opinions and views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the staff or management of OUTSMART. Inclusion in OUTSMART does not imply sexual orientation. ©2020 by OutSmart Media Company. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited. Unsolicited material is accepted. No manuscript returned without SASE.



The beginning of a new year is the perfect time to reprioritize your life and set some goals.

Since many of us are resolving to improve our wellness, OUTSMART's January issue spotlights community members who are thriving in the field of health and beauty.

If you need assistance adding more exercise into your weekly routine, look no further than our cover stars John Michael Race, James Mai, and Pinij NaLampoon. Writer Sam Byrd chatted with the three openly gay workout gurus about their journeys to fitness and their tips for getting in shape, and photographer Ashkan Roayaee held a photo shoot at his studio in the Heights, under the direction of OUTSMART's Alex Rosa.

Elsewhere in the issue, writer Lourdes Zavaleta introduces us to UT Health researchers and LGBTQ activists Dr. Jonatan

Gioia and Mia Ryan. Writer Connor Behrens interviews makeup artist Amoré Monét about her new lipstick line—and her commitment to helping marginalized communities through her business.

Since we could all use an occasional “cheat day” to make our diet plans a bit easier, we're also featuring two out Houston pastry chefs who are widely recognized for their tasty treats. Writer Marene Gustin talks with Scott French, of Mister French's Gourmet Bakery, and Van Kutch from Koffeteria, a trendy new EaDo eatery.

If you're experiencing post-holiday-event blues, be sure to mark your calendars for two noteworthy celebrations: ERSICSS turns 35 and crowns its new emperor and empress this month, writes Byrd, while Brandon Wolf recounts the history of the Krewe of Olympus, which celebrates its 50th anniversary in early February.

For another trip down memory lane, check out writer Ryan Leach's look back at the queer decade that is coming to an end. As Leach puts it, “The future is inevitable, and the direction we take in 2020 may depend on how clearly we can see our past.”

Our inaugural 2020 issue also includes astrologist Lilly Roddy's annual look at what's ahead for this year. Roddy's 2020 horoscopes are complemented by the Zodiac artwork of Angel Albarran, a Pisces who based all 12 of his illustrations on LGBTQ people he knows.

Finally, don't miss our newest Wiggling Out column at the end of each issue, where Sam Byrd shares his Q&A chats with local drag performers.

We hope you enjoy this edition of OUTSMART!



Greg Jeu  
PUBLISHER

## VACAYA

Enchanted Iceland Cruise - <i>Ponant Le Jacques Cartier</i>	Aug 30 - Sep 6, 2020
<b>*NEW*</b> Lisbon Pride River Cruise - <i>Coisa Amalia Rodriguez</i>	Jun 26 - Jul 5, 2020

## BRAND G VACATIONS

Antarctica Luxury Expedition Group Cruise - <i>World Explorer</i>	Feb 9 - 16, 2020
Amazon Cruise and Machu Picchu Discovery - <i>Galaxy III</i>	Apr 5 - 17, 2020
Amazon Cruise and Machu Picchu Expedition - <i>Delta III</i>	Apr 19 - May 1, 2020
Amsterdam and Rhine River Cruise - <i>AMADEUS Silver III</i>	Jun 15 - 24, 2020
Prague and Danube River - <i>AMADEUS Queen</i>	Aug 14 - 23, 2020
Burgundy & Provence River Cruise - <i>MS Amadeus Provence</i>	Sep 15 - 24, 2020
Royal Clipper Mediterranean Sailing - <i>Royal Clipper</i>	Sep 26 - Oct 3, 2020
<b>*NEW*</b> Jewels of Vietnam and Cambodia - <i>Mekong Jewel</i>	Oct 15 - 27, 2020
<b>*NEW*</b> Africa Safari and Tour	Nov 23 - Dec 3, 2020

## ATLANTIS EVENTS

Oasis Caribbean Cruise - <i>Oasis of the Seas</i>	Jan 19 - 26, 2020
Auckland to Sydney Cruise - <i>Holland America Noordam</i>	Feb 14 - 26, 2020
Southern Caribbean Cruise - <i>Celebrity Summit</i>	Mar 21 - 28, 2020
<b>*NEW*</b> Club Atlantis Cancun	Apr 25 - May 2, 2020
Amsterdam to Barcelona Cruise - <i>Norwegian Jewel</i>	Jul 12 - 22, 2020
Rome to Venice Cruise - <i>Celebrity Constellation</i>	Aug 8 - 17, 2020

## RSVP VACATIONS

RSVP Caribbean Cruise - <i>Holland America Nieuw Statendam</i>	Feb 9 - 16, 2020
----------------------------------------------------------------	------------------



[www.conciergetravel.cc](http://www.conciergetravel.cc)

Contact us toll free: 877.775.9616



**PUERTO VALLARTA**

FEB 16 - 23  
2020

**BEACH CLUB & VILLA VERANO**



starting at \$2,600 pp

**THANK YOU**

OutSmart readers for voting us

- ★ BEST LGBT Cruise or Tour Company
- ★ BEST Local Travel Agency



Hosted Group of LGBT Travelers

# aquafest

5 Nights - 19th Annual

## Halloween Cruise

Oct 30, 2020 - Nov 4, 2020

**VIRGIN VOYAGES - Scarlet Lady**

*Departing Roundtrip from Miami, Florida.*

*Visiting: Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic;*

*The Beach Club on Bimini Island, & 2-days at sea*

from  
**\$1125 pp**

**Book by February 14, 2020**

**& receive up to**

**\$400 Shipboard Credit!**

**More Aquafest Value:** 2 VIP Private Open Bar Cocktail Parties

Private Halloween Contest With \$1000 in Prizes - Guest Celebrity Entertainer

Red, White, and Blue Theme Parties With Costume Prizes - Evening Social Gatherings

Private Optional Excursion in Puerto Plata - Aquafest "A" Team Hosts



More  
Offers:

Kenya, Africa - South Africa - Burgundy/Provence - Christmas Markets

Danube - Egypt - Jordan - India - Japan - Machu Picchu - Amazon - Scandinavia

**(800) 592-9058 - AquafestCruises.com**

# Protesting in the Pews

Local church to protest the United Methodist same-sex marriage ban on January 12.

By LOURDES ZAVALETA

**N**estled in the heart of Montrose, and sporting Pride flags and posters that proclaim queer-friendly messages, Bering Memorial United Methodist Church stands firm on its commitment to fully embrace everyone who walks through its doors.

Church members have sought justice for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities since the early '80s. In response to a controversial United Methodist policy that bans same-sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ clergy, Bering leaders plan to protest by publicly blessing the unions of dozens of LGBTQ couples during its 10:50 a.m. worship service on January 12.

"We're going to make a clear statement denouncing the policy by affirming our LGBTQIA+ couples and their families," says Bering's pastor, Rev. Diane McGehee. "We reject discrimination in the United Methodist Church, and believe it is contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Last February, the United Methodist Church decided at its General Conference to retain an existing church policy that states "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." The Conference's new strategy for punishing LGBTQ-affirming congregations (known as the Traditional Plan) went into effect this month, and strengthens penalties for clergy who are found guilty of performing a same-sex wedding ceremony. A first offense will mean suspension for one year without pay, and clergy who are found guilty a second time will be stripped of their credentials without recourse.

Churches across the country have openly opposed the United Methodist Church's anti-LGBTQ stance, and a split within the denomination is now looming. McGehee explains that until the denomination decides to support queer folks and their committed relationships, her church will not use the term "United



Rev. Diane McGehee will bless dozens of same-sex couples in her Houston church just days after new anti-LGBTQ policies go into effect in the United Methodist denomination.

Methodist" in any of its communications. "We are not proud of that affiliation, so we will not identify ourselves as such," she says.

Due to the national church's property-ownership structure, local LGBTQ-affirming congregations cannot exit the denomination and assume ownership of their buildings until that issue has been litigated. Bering and other LGBTQ-affirming United Methodist churches believe that the denomination can still vote to become inclusive when the policy is revisited at its next General Conference in Minneapolis this May.

"We're hopeful that the United Methodist Church will change its mind," McGehee says. "Other leaders and I have re-filed a different plan, called the Simple Plan, that would remove any discriminatory language from our Book of Discipline. However, if the Traditional Plan is readopted, I believe it will split the church."

If the Traditional Plan passes in May,

churches will have an opportunity to discuss leaving the United Methodist Church at a special session of its Annual Conference in August. Bering has decided it will exit the denomination should this be the case.

"Bering is ready for change," McGehee admits, adding that the congregation has met to examine the issue, and a leadership team is working on making sure Bering becomes LGBTQ-inclusive. "There are many lifelong Methodists who have been hurt by the [denomination's] decision."

Nearly 70 percent of Bering's 500 members identify as LGBTQ. "We have some incredible same-sex couples who are married—including one that has been together for 50 years—along with others who are waiting to get married in [this building]. None of their relationships are being recognized by the denomination, and that's just wrong—especially when you think about the legacy of this church and everything

NEWS CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

## IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®

This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

(bik-TAR-vee)

### MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:**

- ▶ **Worsening of Hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

### ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

**Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:**

- ▶ dofetilide
- ▶ rifampin
- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

### BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

**Tell your healthcare provider if you:**

- ▶ Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- ▶ Have any other health problems.
- ▶ Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:**

- ▶ Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- ▶ BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

**BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:**

- ▶ Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ▶ **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit [www.FDA.gov/medwatch](http://www.FDA.gov/medwatch), or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

**Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.**

### HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

### GET MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- ▶ Go to [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) or call 1-800-GILEAD-5.
- ▶ If you need help paying for your medicine, visit [BIKTARVY.com](http://BIKTARVY.com) for program information.



Get HIV support by downloading a free app at  
**MyDailyCharge.com**

BIKTARVY, the BIKTARVY Logo, DAILY CHARGE, the DAILY CHARGE Logo, KEEP LOVING, LOVE WHAT'S INSIDE, GILEAD, and the GILEAD Logo are trademarks of Gilead Sciences, Inc., or its related companies. Version date: December 2018 © 2019 Gilead Sciences, Inc. All rights reserved. BVYC0102 01/19



**BIKTARVY®**  
bictegravir 50mg/emtricitabine 200mg/  
tenofovir alafenamide 25mg tablets

**LOVE  
WHAT'S  
INSIDE®**

# KEEP LOVING.

Because HIV doesn't change who you are.

BIKTARVY® is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in certain adults. **BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.**

**Ask your healthcare provider if BIKTARVY is right for you.  
To learn more, visit [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).**

Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and visit [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).





**Why would you buy a cake from someone who doesn't want to sell you one?**

Whether you're looking for the butcher, the baker, or the candlestick maker, OUTSMART can help you find equality-minded businesses that appreciate you and provide vital community support.

Support OUTSMART advertisers, so you can have your cake and equality, too.

**OutSmart**

For advertising and subscription info, call 713/520-7237.

News | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

its members have done to help the community.”

Bering was established in 1848 by German-speaking immigrants who were unwanted in other places of worship. The church was originally situated at Milam and McKinney streets in downtown Houston, before moving to Montrose in 1926.

During the yellow-fever epidemics of the late 1800s and the flu pandemic of 1918, the church organized nursing teams. And after many LGBTQ Houstonians moved to Montrose in the 1960s and '70s, the church's administrative board decided to welcome everyone without discrimination or prejudice.

Also in the '70s, Bering set up a temporary homeless shelter on its campus. At the height of the '80s AIDS epidemic, the church launched a support group for people with HIV/AIDS and their loved ones.

A year later, the church founded the Bering Community Service Foundation, a nonprofit volunteer organization, as well as the Bering Dental Clinic, to help meet the medical needs of those living with HIV/AIDS. In 1988, the Bering Care Center became the first adult daycare center in the nation for people with HIV/AIDS. Bering Omega Community Services, the church's partnership with the Omega House hospice, was the predecessor to Avenue

360 Health & Wellness, which now provides healthcare services to underserved populations in Houston.

In 1991, Bering's membership voted to become a part of the Reconciling Ministries Network, a Methodist group that seeks justice for queer people. It is currently one of only a handful of Reconciling congregations in Southeast Texas.

Doubling down on its commitment to LGBTQ folks, Bering has never married a couple—gay or straight—because of the inequalities that still exist within the United Methodist Church. McGehee says that by the end of 2020, Bering plans to become a congregation where no anti-LGBTQ policies exist.

“Bering's leadership team has been working hard since February 2019 to decide the best route for our church, so that we can continue to do our best work going forward,” McGehee says. “It is our intention that by the end of 2020, there will no longer be a limitation on who can participate in this church.”

Following Bering's January 12 worship and mass-affirmation service, there will be a reception featuring food, dancing, and photographs. To RSVP, send an email to [info@beringumc.org](mailto:info@beringumc.org).

For more information about Bering, visit [beringchurch.org](http://beringchurch.org).

2019-20 SEASON

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA

LOVE.  
BETRAYAL.  
SACRIFICE.

VERDI  
**AIDA**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8 | 7:30 P.M.  
WORTHAM THEATER CENTER

Reception in the Grand Foyer before the performance and during intermission

\* Specially priced tickets available for Feb. 8 performance only. Based on availability.

**JOIN HGO'S LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY FOR AN EVENING OF NETWORKING AND ART.**

Purchase your specially priced orchestra ticket for access to the Overture intermission receptions with complimentary refreshments.

**HGO.ORG**  
**713-228-6737**

ENTER PROMO:  
**OVER**  
FOR DISCOUNT  
AT CHECKOUT

**OVERTURE**

HoustonGrandOpera

# LIVABLE LUXURY

Comfortable for every day, yet sophisticated for a special soiree. Create a welcoming space with our classic modern style and luxurious Sunbrella® performance fabrics.

Mitchell Gold  
+ Bob Williams | 

HIGHLAND VILLAGE | [MGBWHOME.COM](http://MGBWHOME.COM)

Sunbrella® is a registered trademark of Glen Raven, Inc.

By LOURDES ZAVALA

# QUEER THINGS to DO



Resolve to stay involved with the help of our weekly planner. Visit [OutSmartMagazine.com](http://OutSmartMagazine.com)



DISCOVERGREEN.COM

**SOCIAL**

**JANUARY 10**

## Rainbow on ICE

Show off your Pride at Discovery Green's ninth annual Rainbow on ICE. The winter LGBTQ celebration features ice skating and a dance party, with music provided by DJ Joe Ross. The night will also be full of entertainment, in-

cluding performances by Houston R&B artist JaeRene and drag queen Blackberri, who will appear as Lizzo and lip-synch to one of her songs. But wait, there's even more—there's also a fashion show featuring designs by Yahaira DeHill, who creates garments entirely

out of recycled materials. Be on the lookout for some clothes that show off old OUTSMART magazine issues (we gave DeHill dozens of our leftover copies, and can't wait to see what she constructs). [tinyurl.com/tze5uy1](http://tinyurl.com/tze5uy1)



**COMMUNITY**

**January 10**

## Sister to Sister Support Group

Founded by transgender activist Mia Ryan, Sister to Sister meets at the Montrose Center every Thursday at 7 p.m. The support group offers a safe space for trans people of all ages to discuss issues with community members and allies. [tinyurl.com/ug4qy9x](http://tinyurl.com/ug4qy9x) SEE PAGE 40

MUSIC  
JANUARY 17

# Big Freedia & The Suffers

The Queen of Bounce Big Freedia teams up with Space City superstars The Suffers for a one-of-a-kind performance at the House of Blues Houston.

Get your tickets online now, because this is a show you don't want to miss.

[tinyurl.com/u97jq2p](http://tinyurl.com/u97jq2p)



Coming to House of Blues: The Suffers and Big Freedia (inset).

**COMMUNITY**

**January 5**  
**PRIDE MARKET**

Every first Sunday of the month, Pearl Bar Houston hosts Pride Market, an event for LGBTQ vendors to showcase and sell their work. Attendees must be over 21, and the market features food, clothes, art, and more.  
[tinyurl.com/rwcvq8e](http://tinyurl.com/rwcvq8e)

**SOCIAL**

**January 5**  
**SUNDAY SERVICE**

ReBar Houston, the city's newest LGBTQ nightclub, hosts this party every Sunday afternoon. Enjoy drink specials, community, and tunes by DJ Marti Frieson and DJ Melle Mel.  
[tinyurl.com/vy4prs2](http://tinyurl.com/vy4prs2)

**COMEDY**

**January 6 and 20**  
**GAY SHAME PARADE**

Join The Secret Group for Gay Shame Parade. The bi-monthly stand-up shows feature "gays, probable gays, and people we wish were gay."  
[tinyurl.com/vh7jplu](http://tinyurl.com/vh7jplu)

**COMMUNITY**

**January 16**  
**LIVING IN COLOR**

Explore the intersectionality of living the LGBTQ African-American experience during The Mahogany Project's Living in Color event. The forum, which occurs bi-monthly at the Montrose Center, provides personal insight on topics such as social issues, mental health, and community engagement.  
[tinyurl.com/t6tbpoq](http://tinyurl.com/t6tbpoq)

**COMMUNITY**

**January 19**  
**SNOW BUNNIES**

Bunnies on the Bayou hosts Snow Bunnies 41 at ReBar Houston. All proceeds will go to the LGBTQ charities being supported by Bunnies on the Bayou this year.  
[tinyurl.com/wkakmnn](http://tinyurl.com/wkakmnn)

**COMMUNITY**

**January 20**  
**DONATION DRIVE AND MLK DAY OF SERVICE**

HRC Houston has partnered with Montrose Grace Place and Bering Open Gate to organize a donation drive for homeless LGBTQ youth. Locations across the city are currently collecting donations, and on MLK Day join HRC Houston at Kindred to sort, pack, and deliver the donated items to beneficiaries.  
[tinyurl.com/s7cfqge](http://tinyurl.com/s7cfqge)

MLK Day

**SOCIAL**

**January 21**  
**D-RAW**

Drink and draw at this monthly social at Ripcord. Hosted by drag artist Barbara Coa, D-raw is themed and features live figure-drawing with a rotating lineup of models.  
[tinyurl.com/rdm93gs](http://tinyurl.com/rdm93gs)

**COMMUNITY**

**January 25**  
**HOUSTON WOMEN'S MARCH**



Show your support for women with Houston Women March On. The annual women's march begins at the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern and proceeds to Houston City Hall for featured speakers, activities, food trucks, and more.  
[tinyurl.com/yx6z6vg8](http://tinyurl.com/yx6z6vg8)

**COMMUNITY**

**January 25**  
**LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL**

Celebrate Lunar New Year 2020 at the Chinese Community Center of Houston. The Year of the Rat event features entertainment, bites, workshops, art exhibits, and more.  
[tinyurl.com/wujtem4](http://tinyurl.com/wujtem4)

**COMMUNITY**

**January 26**  
**PRIDE THEME UNVEILING PARTY**

Pride Houston unveils the theme for its 2020 LGBTQ festival and parade at South Beach Houston. Prior to the unveiling, enjoy food, entertainment, and other surprises.  
[tinyurl.com/t4q4797](http://tinyurl.com/t4q4797)

**COMMUNITY**

**January 28**  
**A SEX-POSITIVE WORKSHOP**

Go to the Montrose Center for Positive Understanding of Sex, Sensuality, and Yourself (PUSSY). This sex-positive workshop series occurs every fourth Tuesday of the month.  
[tinyurl.com/v82kw6j](http://tinyurl.com/v82kw6j)

**SOCIAL**

**January 29**  
**UH SPRING MIXER**

Join the UH LGBTQ Alumni Association for its Spring Mixer at UH. Mix and mingle with other queer alumni while enjoying drinks, video games, and a watch party for the UH vs. East Carolina University men's basketball game.  
[tinyurl.com/v2frob8](http://tinyurl.com/v2frob8)

MORE QUEER THINGS TO DO →

ALLEY THEATRE

# QUIXOTE NUEVO

BY OCTAVIO SOLIS  
ADAPTED FROM DON QUIXOTE BY  
MIGUEL DE CERVANTES  
DIRECTED BY  
KJ SANCHEZ

STARRING  
SESAME STREET'S  
EMILIO DELGADO

JAN. 17 – FEB. 9

ALLEYTHEATRE.ORG



Official Airline of Alley Theatre

THURS., JAN. 30

ActOUT  
LGBTQ Pre-Show Mixer

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

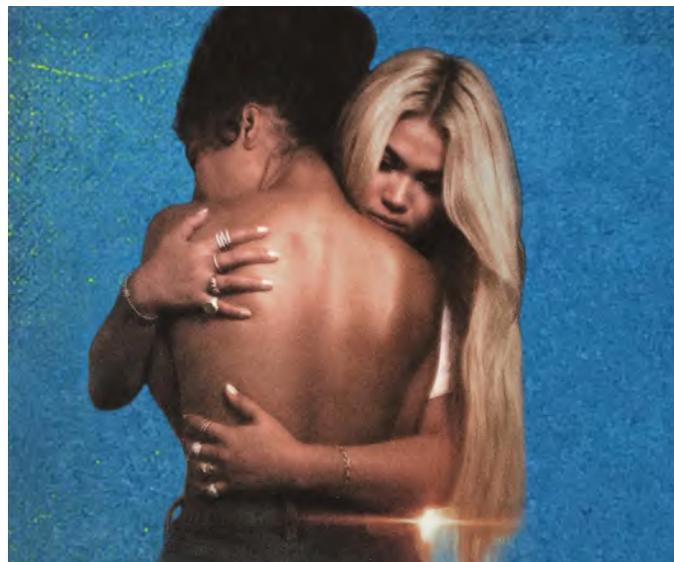
## QUEER THINGS to DO

SAVE the DATES

### MUSIC

February 5

## I'm Too Sensitive for This Tour



Hayley Kiyoko—also known as “Lesbian Jesus”—brings her national tour to Houston’s Revention Music Center one month after receiving The Trevor Project’s Youth Innovator Award for her work in spotlighting marginalized communities. Themed and named after her 2019 EP *I’m Too Sensitive for This S\*\*t*, tickets to the tour are on sale now.

[tinyurl.com/uz6cbct](http://tinyurl.com/uz6cbct)

### TALK

February 15

## Movimento 2020 Presidential Forum

Jolt Action, a Latinx civic-engagement organization led by openly gay Houstonian Antonio Arellano, hosts the Movimiento 2020 Presidential Forum at San Jacinto College. The youth-led forum will question the Democratic presidential candidates about issues such as healthcare, immigration, racial equity, gun control, and more.

[tinyurl.com/rmbbk7k](http://tinyurl.com/rmbbk7k)

### COMMUNITY

February 23 & 24

## Decadent Desserts & Dancing

Go to Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon for Decadent Desserts and Dancing. LGBTQ Houston’s most delicious event benefits AssistHers, a group that provides resources for vulnerable women in the community.

[tinyurl.com/v87eksa](http://tinyurl.com/v87eksa)



Submit your events at [calendar@outsmartmagazine.com](mailto:calendar@outsmartmagazine.com)

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

# ALEGRIA

IN A NEW LIGHT™

FEB 29 - APR 12

UNDER THE BIG TOP  
SAM HOUSTON RACE PARK

[cirquedusoleil.com/alegria](http://cirquedusoleil.com/alegria)

OFFICIAL PARTNERS

**aggreko**



AIR CANADA

CHAMPAGNE

*Nicolas Feuillatte*  
FRANCE



VILLA MARIA  
NEW ZEALAND

By MONICA ROBERTS

# Happy New Year!

## And a Happy New Decade!



JEREMY FAIN  
TOP PRODUCER

Your Friend • Your Family  
YOUR REALTOR



GREENWOOD KING  
PROPERTIES

LUXURY  
PORTFOLIO  
INTERNATIONAL

jfain@greenwoodking.com

713.677.4337

**H**appy New Year, and welcome to a new decade—the 2020s! It's going to be interesting to see how this year, and eventually the decade, gets recorded in the history books.

The one day I'm breathlessly anticipating this year is November 3, 2020. In case you're wondering, that's Election Day—the day I pray we kick Dolt 45 to the curb and make him an impeached one-term president. If you aren't registered to vote, now is the time to make that happen. You have until October to do it. Make it happen. The human rights and democracy you save may be your own.

I'll be getting 2020 started the same way I closed out the 2010s, by getting another award for my 20-plus years of work to advance the human rights of transgender Americans.

When the Creating Change Conference kicks off in Dallas on January 15, I'll be in the house to receive the Susan J. Hyde Award for Longevity in the Movement at the opening plenary for #CC20. Already working on my speech for it.

I'm also looking forward to the ninth annual Black Trans Advocacy Conference in Dallas. It starts the day after my birthday and runs May 5–10. That will be my extended birthday week, and I'm looking forward to seeing my trans fam around the country coming to Dallas.

As a sports junkie, I'll definitely be watching the Summer Olympics when they convene in Tokyo starting on July 24 and running through August 9.

Another 2020 date I'm anticipating is in October, when my high-school class will be celebrating our 40-year reunion. We usually do a three-day weekend for it, and in case

you're wondering, yes I have won the 'Most Changed Award' twice, in 2000 and 2010. I'm retired from being considered for it because of those dual wins.

My 2000 Most Changed Award win at our 20th reunion was in large part due to my transition. The 2010 award was a surprise. I was down to my high-school weight of 175 pounds after I moved back to Texas a mere five months before our reunion happened.

Ever since our 35th reunion, my class has been getting together for events such as game nights and parties during the year. For 2020, we're planning a casino trip and a reunion cruise.

And sadly, we are increasingly having to come together to say goodbye to our classmates at their funerals.

New Year's Day offers all of us a chance to hit the reset button in our lives and focus on making the necessary corrections to ensure a better outcome in the New Year.

In the run-up to January 1, we can evaluate what went right and what went wrong in the previous year. When we come to the end of a decade, that focus can be expanded to what we did or didn't do throughout the decade, and what we can do to make the next decade better for everyone.

My hope and prayer for all of you reading this is that the upcoming new year, and the decade of the 2020s, is a far better and more prosperous one for you than the 2010s were.

Happy New Year, and Happy New Decade!

*Monica Roberts, a native Houstonian, is the founding editor of the GLAAD award-winning blog TransGriot. Her ongoing mission is to educate people on the lives of transgender people and fight for everyone's human rights.*

# THE EYE GALLERY

HAPPY NEW YEAR,  
TO YOU HOUSTON!

WELCOME TO  
THE YEAR OF  
2020 VISION



[EYEGALLERYHOUSTON.COM](http://EYEGALLERYHOUSTON.COM)

1806 WESTHEIMER RD - RIVER OAKS

1700 POST OAK BLVD - POST OAK (NEXT TO WHOLE FOODS)  
POST OAK LOCATION NOW OPEN SUNDAYS!

713.523.1279

713.622.7470

# New Year, New You

Resolve to stay physically and financially fit with meal prepping.

**A**t some point in nearly everyone's life, we vow to lose weight, eat right, and get (or stay) physically fit. In fact, exercising more and losing weight are the top two New Year's resolutions. But while these are noble goals, sticking with them can be difficult—particularly without good habits or some kind of system in place.

One way to accomplish a healthier lifestyle without having to spend a lot of time is by meal prepping. Meal prepping is the concept of preparing several meals or dishes ahead of time so you can enjoy them throughout the week.

By having pre-prepared meals on hand, you can accomplish several important goals: better nutrition, reduced portion sizes, and avoiding less-healthy options like frozen dinners or fast food. In addition, believe it or not, eating healthier meals can also help you become more financially fit!

## Convenient Meal-Prepping Options

Putting a system in place to prepare several meals at once can save you both time and money. This can begin with making a shopping list before heading to the grocery store. By sticking strictly to your list, you can avoid buying “impulse” items that are oftentimes more costly and less healthy.

One of the more cost-effective ways to prep your meals ahead of time is to purchase items in bulk. But make sure that you only purchase what you think you'll use, even if you have to freeze a portion for later use. Otherwise, you could end up wasting food and the money you spent on it. Alternatively, you could split the goods with a neighbor or friend to save money on bulk purchases.

Some people find it hard to meal prep because they get tired of eating the same meal for several days. To reduce or avoid monotony, you could jazz things up a bit by adding different spices and/or side dishes to go along with your main course.

If you don't particularly like to cook (or simply don't have the time to shop and prepare several meals ahead of time), you could consider one of the many meal-prep services that will send everything you need to prepare several meals directly to your door.



Here are some of the popular meal delivery services:

- **Hello Fresh** offers up to 20 different recipe choices each week, with no weekly or monthly contract commitment.
- **Green Chef** specializes in USDA-certified organic ingredients, and most meals can be cooked in just 30 minutes or less.
- **Home Chef** uses simplicity as their mantra, and can help you produce home-cooked meals even if cooking isn't your forte.
- **Blue Apron** offers chef-designed recipes that feature balanced Mediterranean meals and quick one-pan dinners that are fast and easy to prepare.
- **Healthy Gourmet** has no minimum-order requirements, so you can try out this service without having to make a long-term commitment.

These meal-prep services allow you to choose from a wide variety of meals, and many also cater to special diets such as Keto-friendly, paleo, vegan, and gluten-free. Everything is shipped directly to your door, eliminating the need for you to spend time at the grocery store

searching for a long list of ingredients. And because many of the meal-prepping services send you only the amount of ingredients you need for specific dishes, going this route can also help you reduce waste.

It's important to note that the meal-prep services listed above are not the same as ordering takeout from a local restaurant and having it delivered by UberEats. That can be much more expensive and less healthy, depending on the restaurant you order from.

## Additional Benefits

In addition to the tasty and convenient meal options you'll enjoy, going the route of meal prepping can also have financial benefits. For example, you won't have to purchase entire containers of ingredients and risk having your leftovers go bad. With most (or all) of the ingredients in pre-measured packages, you could also end up running your dishwasher less frequently, saving you money on your water and electric bills.

Meal prepping and eating at home more often can help you to avoid going out to dinner, which can add up. While going out to eat every night can be more convenient than cooking, it can also be very expensive. Even

CONTINUED ON PAGE 73

# GLORIA'S

RESTAURANTS



Come try our Award Winning  
SUNDAY BRUNCH 11am-3pm!



WINNER  
BEST BRUNCH



COME FALL IN LOVE WITH US!

FINALIST  
BEST MEXICAN

## GLORIA'S HOUSTON

2616 LOUISIANA ST.  
SUITE 101 • HOUSTON, TX  
OPEN SUN-THU: 11AM-10PM  
AND FRI-SAT: 11AM-2AM

WWW.GLORIASCUISINE.COM

Stay In-The-Loop With

# ANDY WEBER

Resident of Montrose since 1983

Consistent TOP Producer,  
John Daugherty, Realtors

If you wish to be In-The-Loop,  
whether selling, buying, or just  
looking around,

Voted One of the Best Realtors  
in Houston 8 years in a row  
- OutSmart Readers' Choice 2012-2019



CALL ANDY NOW!

713.724.4306

CELL

713.561.6653

DIRECT

andyw@ johndaugherty.com

JOHNDAUGHERTY.COM  
520 Post Oak Blvd., Houston, TX 77027 713.626.3930

LEADINGESTATES

LEADING REAL ESTATE COMPANIES

LUXURY REAL ESTATE.COM

LUXURY FURNITURE

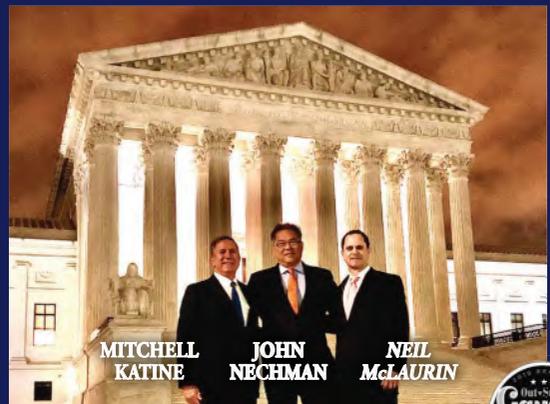
REGENTS

MAYFAIR OFFICE.CO.UK



Lawyers You Know, A Firm You Can Trust

## Katine & Nechman LLP is proud to introduce its new firm KATINE NECHMAN McLAURIN LLP



MITCHELL  
KATINE

JOHN  
NECHMAN

NEIL  
McLAURIN



## IMMIGRATION Same-Sex Marriage Green Cards to Asylum

17 years of helping LGBTQ couples and individuals  
find solutions for all immigration needs

Real Estate Disputes • Homeowner Association Law • Immigration  
Criminal Law • Family Law • Adoptions • Insurance and Disability Claims  
HIV/LGBTQ Law • Estate Documents • Employment Law

KATINE NECHMAN McLAURIN LLP

1834 Southmore Blvd. | Houston, TX 77004

713-808-1000 | info@lawknm.com | www.lawknm.com

# Living According to Your Values

What is motivating you to make changes in 2020?

If you're reading this, congratulations—you made it through 2019! Perhaps the past year tested your resolve, challenged you personally or professionally, or forced you into the discomfort of change and growth. Or maybe the year was marked by stagnation, you struggled to break old patterns, or you felt a nagging sense that more forward movement is needed in your life. Or the year could have been your best yet, crowned by successes that you'd always dreamed of, and that you hope will continue.

Regardless of what 2019 brought, as 2020 stretches boldly before us it's natural to feel self-reflective, hopeful, and even cautious about what the new year will bring.

New Year's resolutions represent one way of acknowledging this milestone passage of time with promises to ourselves to think, do, and be better. From losing weight to gaining financial stability, it's common to contemplate shedding all of the things that didn't work for us last year so we can step into the possibility and promise of the new year.

## Making Change that Sticks

Surveys suggest that approximately half of Americans will create some kind of New Year's resolution. The most common resolutions include changing health habits like smoking or diet and exercise, saving money, or getting organized. Unfortunately, less than 10 percent of people who make New Year's resolutions are able to keep them for the entire year. In fact, some studies suggest that most people ignore their resolutions by the second week of January. Not only are people unsuccessful in achieving their desired goal, they also begin the year by dragging the same old guilt and shame along for the ride.

Rather than creating resolutions to change multiple areas of your life, it may be more helpful to simply commit to living in a manner that is consistent with one's values.

## What Do I Value?

Begin by asking yourself, "What are the things in life that are truly most important to me?" These are your values.



Some values might immediately spring to mind. For example, some people prioritize having a positive, healthy relationship with their family. For others, creating and maintaining a feeling of safety and security is of utmost importance. Still others say they value friendships and time spent with others. When medical illness has been a part of one's life, either personally or as a caregiver, it's common to value health in both body and mind.

Values can change over time, and the relative importance of a particular value can go up or down based upon where you are in your life. Values also differ from person to person, so it's important to not judge the value system of others since we don't know everything about their history or experience—factors that greatly influence our perception of ourselves and the world.

## Where Can I Make Changes?

The secret to making lasting change lies in our ability to first identify those things which are most important to us. From there, we can begin to identify goals which are in line with our own personal value system.

Ask yourself, "In what area(s) can I work toward living in a manner that's more consistent with my values?"

It's often easiest to identify those places where change is needed by noticing where we experience the most discomfort. Perhaps you have been seeking more connection with others, but you find it difficult to make time

or you worry about being misunderstood or disappointed. Maybe you would like to finally get involved in that organization you've been meaning to join, or you plan on spending less time on social-media or hookup apps. Or you might like to consume less alcohol, stop smoking, or stop using drugs.

While these are certainly reasonable goals to set, focusing solely on the outcome prevents you from examining the motivating factors behind your desire for change.

For example, when you identify that your primary value is spending time with friends and family, and acknowledge that using social media cuts into that time, you reinforce the reasoning behind your desire to put down your smartphone. Also, rather than just giving up social-media time, which is enjoyable and rewarding in its own right, you can give yourself the gift of spending time with others and living according to your values.

## Creating Achievable Goals

Goal-setting can be challenging. Say you value financial security, but are feeling far from secure. While the goal of "saving money" is certainly reasonable, the lack of a specific plan makes it difficult to know how to proceed. How much should you save, and over what amount of time? Do you pay down debt or create a savings cushion? What should you do about credit cards? Frankly, setting goals like this can take the wind out of our sails before we even get started.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 73

**NOW OFFERING  
SAME-DAY PrEP!**

**One pill.  
Once a day.  
Prevent HIV.**



### **GET TESTED**

Know your status! Testing is the only way to know if you have HIV. No matter what your test results are, you can take steps to help protect your health. FREE, FAST and CONFIDENTIAL HIV testing is available at Legacy.

Visit:  
[legacycommunityhealth.org/gettested](https://legacycommunityhealth.org/gettested)  
to learn how easy it is to get tested!

### **GET SAME-DAY PrEP**

Legacy Montrose now offers **SAME-DAY PrEP**. Stop in Legacy Montrose, Monday to Friday, to learn about same-day PrEP for the prevention of HIV. PrEP is an FDA-approved medication that, when taken once daily, offers people who do not have HIV a powerful way to protect themselves. PrEP significantly reduces the risk of contracting HIV.

Stop in Legacy Montrose today to learn if PrEP is right for you or call (713) 814 3300 to learn more.

### **GET TREATMENT**

Starting and staying on treatment can help a person with HIV live a longer and healthier life. Treatment also lowers the amount of virus in an individual's system which helps prevent the spread of HIV to others.

Legacy has been providing expert care to people living with HIV for almost 40 years and we're ready to care for you too!



**Legacy Community Health - Montrose**

1415 California Street, Houston, TX 77006 | (713) 814 3300



New Construction, Renovations,  
Weekly Maintenance & Repairs



WHETHER YOU WANT  
SOMETHING SIMPLE OR EXOTIC

We have the talent and experience  
to achieve your design and budget!



**VENTURE**  
POOL COMPANY

Family Owned & Operated since 1999

713.462.0762 | [venturepoolco.com](http://venturepoolco.com)

## TIME OUT

with OutSmart

## TimeOut in Iceland



Tim Gonzalez and Shaun Young took  
OUTSMART to Reykjavik, Iceland.

## Show Us Your OutSmart

### GOING OUT OF TOWN?

Take OUTSMART along. Snap a high-res pic of yourself  
with the magazine and send it to us.

Send to: [Letters@OUTSMARTMAGAZINE.COM](mailto:Letters@OUTSMARTMAGAZINE.COM).

Tag us on Facebook, or on Instagram #OutSmartTimeOut

**BARBER JACKSON PLLC**  
TEXAS ESTATE PLANNING LAWYERS

## WHAT IF?

...WHAT  
HAPPENS  
WHEN  
SOMETHING  
HAPPENS?  
Trusts, Wills, Probate  
Legal Planning

“PLANNING  
WITH PURPOSE”  
Christopher J. Barber  
Attorney-at-Law  
Houston, Texas

CALL TODAY FOR FREE INITIAL PLANNING SESSION!

281-464-LAWS (5297)  
2014 Bissonnet St.  
[TexasLegalPlanning.com](http://TexasLegalPlanning.com)

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR



Check out these fabulous  
events co-sponsored by  
OUTSMART and our  
marketing partners.

### Jan. 25-Feb 9: Galveston Restaurant Week 2020

benefiting Access  
Care of Coastal Texas.  
INFO:  
[GalvestonRestaurantWeek.com](http://GalvestonRestaurantWeek.com)

### Jan. 30: ActOut at the Alley

pre-show LGBTQ mixer  
before the performance  
of *Quixote Nuevo*.  
INFO: [AlleyTheatre.org](http://AlleyTheatre.org)

## Save the Date

**Feb. 27: Out@TUTS Night**  
presents *Once on This Island* After  
the curtain goes down, the party  
continues. Mingle with members of  
the cast and crew and sing a few  
show tunes. INFO [tuts.com/out](http://tuts.com/out)

## Be social! Connect with us!



@outsmarthouston



/outsmartmagazine



@outsmartmagazine

WINNER! 2018 TONY AWARD® FOR BEST REVIVAL OF A MUSICAL

# ONCE ON THIS ISLAND THE MUSICAL



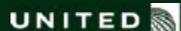
OUT@TUTS AFTERPARTY



THURSDAY, FEB. 27

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS AT THE HOBBY CENTER  
FEB. 18 – MARCH 1 • TUTS.COM

SEASON SPONSORS



OUT@TUTS SPONSORS



# Krewe of Olympus Celebrates 50 Years

Born in New Orleans, the group came of age in Houston.

By BRANDON WOLF | Photo by ALEX ROSA



**H**ouston's Krewe of Olympus, once again set to celebrate the season of Mardi Gras, will hold their 50th-anniversary ball on February 1. The Krewe is well known for their rhinestones, sequins, and feathers—and also for their campy humor, friendly camaraderie, and community philanthropy.

The Krewe of Olympus was born in New Orleans in 1970, but moved to Houston in 1992. Every year for the past 49 years, the group has hosted an annual black-tie ball, and they are now in the final stages of preparation for their 2020 ball to celebrate five decades as a community organization.

## The Mardi Gras Tradition

Mardi Gras (literally translated as “Fat Tuesday”) is now a festive season that begins on Epiphany, the twelfth night after Christmas, and ends on Shrove Tuesday, the day before the beginning of Lent. It is a festive celebration before the 40-day Lenten period that leads up to Easter. During Lent, many Christians enter a period of fasting and giving up luxuries so that they might better understand the trials that Jesus faced before his death on Good Friday.

In Anglican and Catholic nations, Mardi Gras evolved into a season of celebration known as Carnival. Although Carnival originated with the faithful, the good times soon expanded to encompass neighbors and friends. Feasts like Shrove Tuesday eventually became public celebrations with various names and traditions throughout Europe and the Americas.

In 1857, the Krewe of Comus held the first New Orleans Mardi Gras ball. The balls soon became a New Orleans tradition as dozens of krewes sprang up. These balls were mostly reserved for the wealthy who could afford to organize such lavish events. The black-tie affairs eventually became a means for debutante daughters to be introduced to high society. New Orleans is now famous for its Mardi Gras parades and costume balls featuring Medieval outfits and mythological characters and animals.

## Gay Men and Mardi Gras

In the 1950s, gay bars began to spring up in the bohemian French Quarter of New Orleans. Shrove Tuesday was the one day of the year that gay men could appear “in costume” on the street—and thus in drag—without being arrested. Gay men took advantage of this, dressing with irreverent flamboyance at costume parties in gay bars that usually spilled out onto the streets. Sadly, this public celebration abruptly ended in 1958 when a brutal gay-bashing incident stunned the community.

Gay men in New Orleans soon decided that it was safer to celebrate Mardi Gras in private homes. The Krewe of Yuga was formed that year, and they staged their first unofficial “KY” krewe ball. The group lasted for five years, and closed after a vice squad raided their annual ball. A group of younger gay men then formed the Krewe of Petronius, which became an official New Orleans Mardi Gras krewe. By 1970, seven gay krewes had been organized.

New Orleans' straight society balls were grand but rather predictable events—no match for the ambitious creativity on display at the gay balls. The straight krewes tended to design a few themed outfits and dress everyone on stage with those designs in various colors.

Since gay krewes had no debutante daughters to feature at their balls, they focused instead on creating lavish costumes with rhinestones, sequins, and feathers. Gay men employed by department stores had window-dressing props and an array of designer apparel available to them. By the 1980s, invitations to the gay krewe balls had become social prizes, often scored when gay hairdressers invited a few lucky clients. New Orleans' gay designers are now in great demand to provide costumes and props for straight balls and parade floats.

While Mardi Gras is usually associated with parades, only the largest krewes can afford to stage them. The majority of the krewes just have annual balls to celebrate Mardi Gras.

Most of the Mardi Gras balls are invitation-only affairs, and krewe members each get a specified number of ball invitations to distribute. Those who accept the invitations are

expected to show up in black-tie evening wear.

For Houston's Krewe of Olympus, the annual process starts with the officer elections in March. One of the elected officers is the ball captain who makes all of the major decisions about the upcoming ball—the theme, the choice of king and queen, and the presentation of theme-oriented costumes by the members. Groups of members are designated to perform the musical numbers in costume.

In a past example, Lawn Ornaments was the 1989 Olympus ball theme, so costume presentations included “Gazing Balls,” “White Trash,” “Curb Your Dog,” “Whirligigs,” “Chimes,” and “Flamingoes.” The ball with a Can't Stop the Music theme featured songs ranging from Mitch Miller and Lawrence Welk to Cass Elliot, Vicki Sue Robinson, and Lady Gaga.

The choice of king and queen is kept secret until the day of the ball. Olympus members have a special party before the ball, where the new king and queen are announced—a very emotional moment for the Olympus krewe.

The ball is a glittering production complete with colored spotlights sweeping the floor. Guests are taken through a fast-paced show that features a range of presentations and choruses. For a group of non-professional entertainers, the balls are amazingly entertaining and well executed. Members encourage guests not to “overthink” the ball themes as they sit back and enjoy the fun and the spectacle. Everything comes from hearts filled with love.

Balls typically begin with the returning king and queen being presented, and they preside over the events of the evening. The ball captain is presented, and then members make their costumed appearances. The lavish and campy costumes reveal how much hard work goes in to the annual events. For the 2009 ball with a Wings theme, one member wore a huge costume that was a Tiki Room bar complete with parrots singing in unison.

Chorus numbers fill the interludes between the costume presentations, and range from *The Sound of Music's* Von Trapp children to a marching band playing “Seventy-Six Trombones” from *The Music Man*. Because there is no charge for admission, Olympus krewe →



Husbands Bill (left) and Ben Jones-Walters brought the Krewe of Olympus to Houston in 1991 after losing many New Orleans members to AIDS. They are now co-captains of the group's 50th-anniversary celebration.



Pinball Wizard John Weinland in 1994 (l-r clockwise), Olympus I Queen Gene Cheatham and King Nick Donnvan in 1971, and cowboys riding flamingos in 2002.

members perform a special fundraising chorus in costume while walking into the audience to collect donations for the beneficiaries of the ball. At other points in the evening, members come out to the floor and throw beads.

The climax of the ball is the announcement and presentation of the new king and queen, who enter the stage wearing grand outfits with huge trains. Representatives from other community organizations are announced as they enter bearing gifts for the new royalty. An open call then allows any guest to come forward and greet the new royal couple.

Since all krewe members are backstage or onstage during the entire ball, a video of the event is made so that members can have a special party to watch the video and enjoy the show from the guests' perspective.

Krewe of Olympus members stay busy throughout the year preparing for their annual balls. The organization also holds numerous social events, often to raise operating funds for the next ball. Twelfth Night and Fais Do Do events are now regular annual fundraisers. The Pride festival and parade are also regular events for the prize-winning Olympus krewe. Their Pride parade float features the reigning King and Queen Olympus.

## The 1970s

The story of the Krewe of Olympus' founding

is told by author Howard Philips in his 2017 book *Unveiling the Muse: The Lost History of Gay Carnival in New Orleans*. The first decade of Olympus history is one of boldness and grand balls.

Philips notes that by 1970, some members of the established House of Petronius became restless and started the Krewe of Olympus as a competing gay krewe. The men organized the first Olympus ball in 1971.

Olympus was started by Lou Bernard, George Wilson, and Nick Donovan. Their goal was to embody a new type of high-quality krewe with great theatricality and professionalism. A small meeting was held at Tony Moran's restaurant on Bourbon Street, and from that meeting the Krewe of Olympus emerged. Many of the first Olympus members were window dressers and others who worked in the creative arts.

The organization was made up of about twenty gay men. The first officers elected were Pat Hamberg as president, Gene Cheatham as secretary, and George Wilson as lieutenant. Jamie Greenleaf agreed to serve as ball captain for the first ball. Greenleaf once said, "If something is worth being done, it is worth being overdone." After announcing at the age of twelve that he wanted to become a costume designer, Greenleaf's mother eventually sent him to Paris to study under the

legendary designer Erté.

The Olympus name refers to the fabled mountain of the Greek gods, and is also a nod to the fictional name of the New Orleans Carnival ball in the 1938 Bette Davis film *Jezebel*. In the film, Davis' character wears a red dress to the ball at a time when proper unmarried women were expected to wear white.

For their first ball in 1971, the Krewe of Olympus chose the large auditorium in Saint Bernard Parish where the manager was a closeted gay man. The ball had a Camelot theme based on the Broadway play. Apollo King I was Nick Donovan, and Apollo Queen I was Gene Cheatham.

The evening set a new standard for New Orleans' gay krewes. Philips says that guests described the night as "sheer magic—a splendid moment that took your breath away." When guests entered the auditorium, they saw a magical forest ahead of them. When the program began, Greenleaf (dressed as Merlin the magician) split the forest in half, revealing a storybook castle that stretched across the stage. The outfit worn by Queen Olympus I is estimated to have weighed 80 pounds, mostly because of its glass jewels.

The 1972 ball theme was Red, White and Blue. That same year, Ben Jones moved from Houston to New Orleans and became general manager of the Bourbon Pub, a gay bar on Bourbon Street.

George Wilson captained the 1973 ball titled An Evening of Enchantment. Queen Olympus III Rodney Dugas is featured on the cover of Philips' book.

In 1974, Jones joined the Olympus krewe. By 1977, he had been selected as Queen Olympus VII. In 1978 he met Bill Walters, a title clerk at an automobile agency, who joined the krewe after moving from Mississippi to live with Jones in New Orleans. The two have been life partners ever since, and continued as members of Olympus through the past five decades. They now use the last name Jones-Walters.

In 1975, the Olympus king and queen outfits patterned after the Court of Louis XIV were later displayed at D.H. Holmes Department store, where one of the Krewe members worked.

The Jones-Walters team remembers the New Orleans social climate in 1970, when being gay was still illegal and bar raids were a regular occurrence. "[In spite of all the danger], a group of people decided to create and present a gay Mardi Gras ball that was glamorous and upscale. They even had the nerve to present the first ball at what was then the St. Bernard Civic Center in Chalmette, a suburb east of New Orleans that, at least then, was not gay-friendly. →

# mistr

## TRUVADA<sup>®</sup> FOR NADA ...and free STI testing too.

No needles, no doctor's office, no paperwork, no hassle. Consult online with a doctor, do the required labs and full STI testing from the privacy of your home and enjoy the convenience of free monthly delivery. Medication, doctor consultation and testing at no cost to you\*. Yep...zero, nada, zilch.

Get started now at [heymistr.com/afh](http://heymistr.com/afh)



\*Supported by AIDS Foundation Houston and available to those residing in Houston and surrounding areas.

**AIDS**  
FOUNDATION  
HOUSTON



A costume from the French Quarter's Mardi Gras Day in 1997 (top l-r, clockwise), 12th Night at Cadillac Bar in 2018, Fais Do Do at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church in 2017, and a social event at the Lovett Inn in 1996.

“The [production numbers at the] first few balls had to be filmed at dress rehearsal the night before the ball. If someone in the audience had been seen at a gay ball, even in a recording, they would have been fired from their job.

“This venue was built to present straight Mardi Gras balls and other public events. It seats over 2,500, and we filled it each year. Most gay krewes followed Olympus to the venue, due to it being so perfect for a Mardi Gras ball.

“Olympus started by presenting costumes of feathers and rhinestones, which surpassed most other balls. Olympus also entertained the guests with the costume presentations. The norm in straight balls is that a costume comes out and walks around and goes to the side to stand. Then another one, looking much the same, comes out and does the same thing. Olympus brought out costumes with dancing, and entertained the audience.

“This took a lot of work. Many work sessions and dance rehearsals were involved. One important factor was that the entire membership gathered to work on costumes. Everybody worked on everybody's costume. It made for great camaraderie and friendships. We had members who were professional costumers and dancers. This made for fantastic costume presentations, and we all learned a lot.”

All of the Olympus balls were held at the St. Bernard Civic Center. For a krewe with only around 35 members, it is notable that they could pack the venue with 2,500 attendees for several years.

## The 1980s

While the second decade began with enthusiasm for even more spectacular Olympus balls, the organization was severely impacted as AIDS began to devastate the gay community. The involvement of the krewe's Houston members kept the organization alive during those difficult years. Ball attendance at the St. Bernard Civic Center dropped throughout the decade, averaging around 2,000 guests.

In 1980, the Jones-Walters moved to Houston but also kept an apartment in New Orleans for several years. The two introduced several people in Houston to the Krewe of Olympus. Many people were interested in joining because Houston had no gay Mardi Gras krewes.

The 1980 ball was themed Anniversary Retrospective, and was staged in both New Orleans and Houston.

“The first half of the 1980s was much the same as the 1970s,” the Jones-Walters recall. “The second half had some changes. One was that we had the first out-of-town captains. The first such captain was Bill Walters, who by then was living in Houston. He organized Olympus XVI with a World War II theme. While people from Houston had attended and supported the Krewe as guests all along, this was the beginning of Houston being involved in the Krewe.

“As the decade progressed, Olympus was losing members to AIDS. We lost a lot of good people. This was when gay krewes first started collecting for various charities to help with the crisis.

“Another change in the '80s was gender. Many members believed gender didn't matter, and that an interest in presenting a gay ball was the thing. So we voluntarily opened the door to women. Olympus has had members of all races since the beginning, [so race] has never been of any consequence.”

## Rebuilding in the 1990s

The third decade for Olympus found the group with only three members left after the ravages of AIDS—the Jones-Walters, and one other member from Houston. A decision was made to move Olympus to Houston in an effort to save it. “The Krewe had lost so many members both to AIDS and a slow economy that the end was inevitable,” the Jones-Walters explain. They had already been living in Houston for many years, and talked to people here about reestablishing the Krewe of Olympus in Houston.

In 1991, the theme for Olympus XXI was “Olympus Goes West,” signaling the planned move from New Orleans to Houston. “The royalty for the last ball were the Yellow Roses of Texas, and at the very end of the ball it was announced that the Krewe was moving.”

After the Olympus Krewe relocated to Houston, many new people from the Houston community joined up, helping to repopulate the organization. 1992 was the first year that the Krewe of Olympus held its annual ball in Houston. The venue was the Ramada Inn-Pinemont, and the Mardi Gras theme was chosen as a way to educate Houston guests about Mardi Gras traditions. Legend has it that a group of goat-ropers in an adjoining room became more interested in the spectacular Olympus costumes than they were in their own event.

In 1993, the ball moved downtown to a health club's basketball court in the 601 Travis Street building. In 1994, the Krewe used the Tower Theater in the heart of Montrose. In 1995, Olympus began a long sweep of years using the Hornberger Conference Center as its ball location.

Judy Reeves, curator of the Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History (GCAM), remembers designing the artwork for the 1997 Pride and Prejudice ball. “That was exciting! To walk into that ballroom and see my personal artwork covering the whole wall was awesome—on the cups and doubloons, too! I was the Statue of Liberty in that ball, complete with a pedestal that pulled around the floor, and then opened so I could come down the steps and walk around throwing Barbie-type dolls that looked like the statue. That was my favorite costume ever—or maybe it was in 1998 when I walked out of a pyramid wearing my headpiece of lighted crystals for a new-age religion.”

Membership increased to around 30 during the '90s, and ball attendance was around 300. →

**Fly High Above The Rest.  
Goosehead Insurance.**

*The smarter, simpler way  
to purchase insurance.*



Best Insurance Agent  
Finalist

**Patrick Torma**

Agency Owner

Call 281.723.1294

3420 Rusk St., Ste. 22  
Houston, TX 77003



THANK YOU OUTSMART  
READERS FOR VOTING ME

**Best Male Mental  
Health Therapist 2016-2019**

**Robert Snellgrove, ICSW**  
Counselor | Psychotherapist

4203 Montrose, Suite 240  
Houston, Texas 77006

713.257.0972 [www.robertsnellgrove.com](http://www.robertsnellgrove.com)



*IT'S A DOG'S LIFE*

TWO GREAT LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU:

**Memorial Park** 6434 Washington Ave.

**Galleria Area** 5917 Richmond Ave

713.820.6140



**SERVICES**

- BOARDING** Daycare is included
- GROOMING** All breeds and sizes
- TRAINING** Programs for all dogs
- DOGGY DAY CARE** 6 days a week



**TheDogHousePS.com** FIND US ON [f](#) [i](#) [y](#)

Voted Best Doggie Day Care & Best Pet Grooming Service

YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED TO  
WITNESS THE

**BLESSING**

OF UNIONS



SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2020

BLESSING - 10:50 AM, SANCTUARY

RECEPTION - 12:30 PM, FELLOWSHIP HALL

RSVP TO [INFO@BERINGUMC.ORG](mailto:INFO@BERINGUMC.ORG)



*"Love God; love neighbor. On these two commandments hang  
all the Law and the Prophets." Jesus Christ*

ATTIRE: SEMI-FORMAL

## The 2000s

The fourth decade saw the Olympus krewe building up an active membership of Houstonians and producing many great ball themes. “There were no major changes—the Krewe maintained a large membership and had fun,” the Jones-Walters recall.

Bob Briddick says his favorite moment was being crowned King Olympus XXX at the Fairy Tales ball in 2000. His royal outfit was later displayed in 2015 at the ThroughOut Houston exhibit at the Houston Historical Society.

Andrew Eversole vividly recalls attending his first Krewe ball in 2004. “The theme was Olympus Goes Hollywood, and Clint Harwell played Linda Blair in *The Exorcist*, complete with pea soup. I have nightmares to this day.”

Ray Kroulik says his special memory is of being crowned King Olympus XXXIX in 2009. “It was a wonderful event. The reigning royalty represents the Krewe at dozens of events of other organizations for the year, sometimes having to appear at three or four events each weekend and traveling to events out of town. A lot of work, but it’s the highest honor the Krewe can bestow on a member.”

The balls continued to be held at the Hornberger Conference Center in 2000 and 2001. Then they moved to the George Bush Ballroom in the George R. Brown Convention Center from 2002 until 2007. In 2008 and 2009, the balls were held at the Reliant Center. Membership peaked at about 60, and ball attendance averaged 1,000 guests.

## The 2010s

The fifth decade saw the Krewe of Olympus deeply involved in Houston’s LGBTQ community, building a reputation for spectacular balls and generous contributions to community organizations. “We continued to stage fabulous presentations, bigger costumes, and have a lot of fun,” the Jones-Walters remember.

Clint Harwell says his favorite memories are the different costumes he has presented at various balls, especially Bloody Mary from *Mythology* (2012) and Banjo from *Music* (2013). “The audience response from those presentations has stuck with me,” he says. For his Banjo presentation, Harwell wore a skirt and headdress made of banjos while he dazzled the audience with some snappy tap dancing.

Bill Henry says he smiles at the memories of Krewe members ending various production numbers by successfully surprising the ball captain with a group “moon.”

From 2010 through 2013, the balls were once again staged downtown in the George Bush Ballroom at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Since 2014, the Olympus ball venue has been the NRG Center near the Astrodome. Membership now stands at about

35, with ball attendance averaging 800.

While most of the productions come off perfectly, members know the Olympus motto is “If you lay an egg, stand back and admire it.” Sometimes loose back braces have thrown members off-balance, costume balloons have popped before the presentation, and headdresses have wobbled. Members have their own custom-fitted skullcaps that serve as the foundation for their headdresses. They never use chin straps, so the skullcaps must have a tight fit.

Olympus members make their own costumes, using lots of cardboard and PVC pipe. Sequins and rhinestones are recycled from previous costumes, and each member has their own multi-colored collection of feathers that they often trade with each other. The most important technological advance in the last fifty years for them has been the glue gun, which greatly speeds up the construction process.

Costumes are usually built in sections so they can be transported easily and assembled backstage. The members start working at the ball venue the day before the event, with the stage manager keeping everything organized so the presentations appear seamless to the audience.

## Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Krewe of Olympus members have decades of memories that they recall fondly. Over the past few decades, Houston’s Olympus krewe has donated nearly a million dollars to local LGBTQ organizations. Past beneficiaries include the Hatch/PFLAG Scholarship, Pet Patrol, PWA

Holiday Charities, Q-Patrol, Omega House, and many more. The 2020 beneficiaries will be Texas United Charities, Bering Open Gate, and the Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History.

In 2018, the community showed their admiration for the Krewe of Olympus by awarding them two OUTSMART Gayest & Greatest awards: Favorite LGBTQ Social Organization, and Favorite Local LGBTQ Community Organization.

The 2020 ball theme is Illusions of a Future Past. Fittingly, the Jones-Walters are co-captains of the 50th-anniversary celebration, which will be held in Hall D at the NRG Center. To celebrate the organization’s anniversary, the men are also putting together a special Olympus history display for the event.

Although invitations are required to attend the 2020 Krewe of Olympus Ball, the group says that anyone who would like to attend can receive a free invitation by contacting the organization at [krewe@kreweofolympus.org](mailto:krewe@kreweofolympus.org). All that is required is that guests observe the black-tie dress code.

The Jones-Walters say that things are going well for the Krewe of Olympus. “We shall see how history unveils itself. The biggest issue as we face our future is getting new and younger members. We’re not hurting in membership, but it would be great to find younger and more active members to take on what has already been started and carry us through the next fifty years.”

Laissez les bon temps rouler! ▼

## 50 YEARS OF OLYMPUS BALL THEMES

<b>1971:</b> Camelot	<b>1987:</b> Desert Song	<b>2005:</b> Everything's Bigger in Texas
<b>1972:</b> Red, White and Blue	<b>1988:</b> Just Desserts	<b>2006:</b> Ménage à Deux – It Takes Two
<b>1973:</b> An Evening of Enchantment	<b>1989:</b> Lawn Ornaments	<b>2007:</b> Time Travelers
<b>1974:</b> Gay Bars of America	<b>1990:</b> A Journey of Dreams	<b>2008:</b> Olympus @ the Library
<b>1975:</b> The Court of Louis XIV	<b>1991:</b> Olympus Goes West	<b>2009:</b> Wings
<b>1976:</b> Baubles, Bangles and Boobs	<b>1992:</b> Mardi Gras	<b>2010:</b> Ports of Call
<b>1977:</b> Illuminations	<b>1993:</b> Olde Relics	<b>2011:</b> A Night at the Museum
<b>1978:</b> Xanadu	<b>1994:</b> Toy Ball, Toy Ball, Toy Ball	<b>2012:</b> The Mythology Ball
<b>1979:</b> Olympus Reads the Comics	<b>1995:</b> Silver	<b>2013:</b> Can't Stop the Music
<b>1980:</b> Anniversary Retrospective	<b>1996:</b> One Man's Trash, Another Man's Treasure	<b>2014:</b> Food, Glorious Food
<b>1981:</b> Childhood Fantasy	<b>1997:</b> Pride & Prejudice	<b>2015:</b> It's Magic
<b>1982:</b> Storyville	<b>1998:</b> Hell and Heaven	<b>2016:</b> Olympus on Broadway
<b>1983:</b> Magic	<b>1999:</b> Games People Play	<b>2017:</b> The Seasons
<b>1984:</b> Under the Big Top	<b>2000:</b> Fairy Tales	<b>2018:</b> Cocktail Culture
<b>1985:</b> Space Ball	<b>2001:</b> 2001, an Olympus Space Odyssey	<b>2019:</b> Houston's Gay Past
<b>1986:</b> World War II	<b>2002:</b> Olympus Geographic	<b>2020:</b> Illusions of a Future Past
	<b>2003:</b> Colour	
	<b>2004:</b> Olympus Goes Hollywood	

**50TH  
ANNIVERSARY  
BALL**

Krewe Of Olympus Texas Inc  
Saturday, February 1, 2020  
NRG Center - 1 NRG Park, 77054  
(by invitation only)  
kreweofolympus.org



**HOW DO YOU GET KREWE OF OLYMPUS  
MARDI GRAS BALL INVITATIONS**  
Invitations to the Ball are free and given by the members of the Krewe. If you are interested in receiving an invitation the best way is to contact a Krewe member. If you don't know a member there are two easy ways to get on the request list.  
1) Attend our 12th Night Party on January 11th (see our Facebook page for details)  
2) Send your contact information to krewe@kreweofolympus.org. Remember that the Ball requires strict formal attire (tux or evening gown) in the gender of your choice, no costumes. During the Ball a collection is taken for our charities and we hope you will give generously.  
As noted in Brandon Wolf's article, the 50th Anniversary Ball will be on February 1st at NRG Center.

**Anniversary Ball Get Your Invitations!**



**PSYNERGY**  
Psychological Associates

**CHANGE YOUR MIND AND CHANGE YOUR LIFE.**

**WHOLE-PERSON, STRENGTH-BASED, AND NEUROLOGICALLY- INFORMED  
PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH A FOCUS ON LIFE'S MORE COMPLEX CHALLENGES.**

**PSYNERGY PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES**  
1712 Sunset Blvd. Houston, TX 77005  
713.724.7050 www.psynergypsych.com

**Daniel R. Garza, MD**

**Medication  
Management  
Psychotherapy**

Specializing in:  
Depression · Bipolar  
Anxiety · ADHD Disorders



**BEST  
PSYCHIATRIST**  
OutSmart Readers' Choice 2008-2019

**281.610.8190**  
3131 Eastside St. • Suite 415  
Limited Evening Appointments Available  
Ψ Se Habla Español Ψ  
**DRGarzaMD.com**



**örthotex**<sup>®</sup>  
smile specialists  
Dr. Zane K Haider DMD MS

**Braces or Invisalign**

**\$ 2999**

**Free Consultation**

In-House, No Interest Payment Plans  
\$124 Down / \$125 Month For Braces  
All Insurances Welcome



2540 FM 2920, Spring TX 77388  
11942 Barker Cypress Road, Cypress TX 77433  
info@orthotexsmiles.com - 24 HRS: (281) 937-2540  
**WWW.ORTHOTEXSMILES.COM**



Dr. Zane K Haider DMD MS  
Owner/Orthodontist  
Dr. Zane is the only out  
LGBT orthodontist in  
Greater Houston that  
we know.

**Two locations:  
Spring and Cypress**



# Standing for Equality

Texas' leading LGBTQ-rights organization appoints Ricardo Martinez as its first Latinx CEO.

By MARTIN GONZALEZ

**W**hen Ricardo Martinez left Mexico for the United States on his sixth birthday, he had no idea that he wouldn't see most of his family again for 10 years.

"I remember all of my family coming to say goodbye [to my parents and me], and I didn't fully grasp what was happening," Martinez says. "I thought we were all going out. The concept of moving, when you've only ever experienced one city and one place, is incomprehensible for a child on their sixth birthday."

Martinez, a gay Mexican-American, spent his early childhood in Mexico City before emigrating to New York, where his family moved into his aunt's two-bedroom apartment that housed three other families. When Martinez received the news that he had been named Equality Texas' new CEO in November, he couldn't help but recall his start in America.

"I just didn't know what to say. I was in shock," Martinez admits. "It's humbling when I remember staying up late to help my mom put together pens manually, and seeing her hands blister up and bleed just so we could get an extra \$25. That was my reality, so to have the reality I have now, I'm incredibly grateful for it."

At 37, Martinez is the first Mexican-American to head Equality Texas in its 30 years of operation. Originally a joint effort of the Lesbian/Gay Democrats of Texas (LGDT) and the Texas Gay Task Force (TGTF), Equality Texas was known as the Lesbian/Gay Lobby of Texas (LGRL) from 1986 until 2006, when it officially adopted its current name.



Equality Texas' mission is to secure full equality for LGBTQ Texans through political action, education, community organizing, and collaboration. Martinez is more than ready to carry out those goals, according to Equality Texas Foundation Board Chair Elizabeth Myers.

"Ricardo is a visionary leader who is the true embodiment of the American dream," Myers says. "[After] years of hard work, perseverance, dedication, and exceptional leadership in many different executive positions, he is extremely well-positioned to lead Equality Texas into the future."

Although he holds a bachelor's degree in political science and history from Stony Brook University and a master's degree in nonprofit management from the New School, Martinez says school was not always easy for him.

"I remember being strategic about pretending to be sick and going home, because I couldn't understand people," Martinez says.

"Luckily, I ended up going to an [elementary] school that had an ESL program and teachers who really went above and beyond to make me comfortable and help me grasp the language. After a year or so, I had already started speaking and writing in English."

In between his bachelor's and master's programs, Martinez worked in human resources at a temp agency where most of his clients were nonprofit organizations. It was here that Martinez learned about mission-based organizations and became motivated to further his education.

Through networking at the New School, Martinez was able to land his next two jobs at Public Education Needs Civic Involvement in Learning (PENCIL) and Summer Search. At PENCIL, Martinez helped high-school students develop mock business proposals and gain eligibility for paid internships. He later transitioned to Summer Search, where he helped cultivate leadership skills for students

who had talents in areas other than academics. “I wanted to work with folks that needed me the most,” says Martinez.

After his work with Summer Search, Martinez began working for GLSEN (formerly the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network), eventually moving to Phoenix to chair its local chapter. He concurrently worked with Stand for Children, where he acted as the National Director for Constituent Engagement supporting equal access to education. During this time, he was a part of the movement that helped repeal Arizona’s “No promo homo” law.

“I take very little credit for helping overturn the ‘No promo homo’ law—that was a collaboration between a lot of different organizations,” Martinez says. “That repeal was successful because organizations like GLSEN Phoenix [and others] worked tirelessly for years to develop a community where change was possible.”

Martinez’s experience working with community nonprofits started at the age of 14, when he began volunteering with the Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC) in New York City. 15 years later, Martinez was recognized by the Obama administration for his outstanding leadership within the LGBTQ community.

“Ricardo Martinez has been a proven and

effective leader with local and national LGBTQ organizations,” says Holt Lackey, Equality Texas’ board chair. “He understands that leadership begins with listening, and that real change comes from inclusion and standing united to defend the rights of every Texan.”

As Equality Texas’ new CEO, Martinez hopes to make as many connections with local organizations as possible, citing the Transgender Education Network of Texas (TENT), Planned Parenthood, and the Texas Freedom Network as just a few of the organizations he has already started communicating with.

“[Our] work will continue to focus on our high-impact policy framework, which includes nondiscrimination, family recognition, transgender rights, and LGBTQ youth outreach,” Martinez says. “When we say that we’re trying to ensure equal rights in the hearts and minds of all Texans and the laws for LGBTQ folks, we really mean *all* LGBTQ folks.”

With the recent transitions in leadership at Equality Texas happening under the Trump administration, Martinez’s goal is to ensure his staff and volunteers are safe and that they know they have purpose and clarity in their mission.

“Progress is fragile—it’s like a pendulum, so when we swing too far in one direction, it’s

quite possible you’ll swing in the opposite direction just as quickly, depending on the people who are in positions in power,” Martinez says. “That means we have to both hold the line to protect our rights so we don’t lose any more, and work double-time to make sure we are making some type of progress, even when the landscape is not favorable.”

Now based in Austin, Martinez will soon travel to cities across Texas to meet community leaders and organizations hoping to collaborate with Equality Texas. The organization will also hold their Love Equality event in Dallas on February 8, which will celebrate the progress and power of the LGBTQ community.

“It’s about focusing on [your] personal power. If [someone] believes that they inherently have power—and that connecting with other people compounds that power through collective action—then [they will] always be on the right track,” Martinez says. “Anyone and everyone that is inspired to take action is welcome to do so with Equality Texas, and they know where to find us.”



For more information about how to get involved with Equality Texas, visit [www.equalitytexas.org/](http://www.equalitytexas.org/) or follow them @EqualityTexas on Twitter and Instagram.

## GALVESTON ISLAND



### Joe Tramonte Realty

(409) 765-9837

TramonteRealty.com

MARDI GRAS ROUTE



2112 25th Street  
4/5 3,036sf \$479,900

CLOSE TO UTMB



128 San Marino  
3/2.5/1 2,221sf \$275,000

DOWNTOWN



202 Rosenberg (25th)  
2/2 1,186sf \$239,900

DOWNTOWN



2016 Strand  
2/1 1,364sf \$179,000

COTTAGE



1309 55th Street  
1/1 557sf \$75,000

WATERFRONT



44 Lakeview Drive  
3/2.5/2 1,906sf \$435,000

WE BELIEVE THAT FAMILIES, LIKE BABIES, COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.



Everybody deserves to have their dream of starting a family come true. We’re proud to help.

Contact us to learn more:  
713.512.7900  
[aspirefertility.com](http://aspirefertility.com)

*Inspiring hope.  
Building beautiful families.*

MEDICAL CENTER  
7515 S. Main Street  
Suite 500  
Houston, TX 77030

KATY  
23960 Katy Freeway  
Suite 280  
Katy, TX 77494

THE WOMAN’S  
HOSPITAL OF TEXAS  
7900 Fannin Street  
Suite 2700  
Houston, TX 77054

SUGAR LAND  
7616 Branford Place  
Suite 310  
Sugar Land, TX 77479

CLEAR LAKE  
450 Medical Center  
Boulevard  
Suite 410  
Webster, TX 77598

WILLOWBROOK  
13215 Dotson Road  
Suite 180  
Houston, TX 77070

**aspire**  
FERTILITY  
The Prelude Network





Dr. Jonatan Gioia  
and Mia Ryan

HEALTH + WELLNESS

# A New Generation of Queer Activists

UT Health workers Dr. Jonatan Gioia and Mia Ryan transform Houston both on and off the clock.

By LOURDES ZAVALETA  
Photos by JOSSELINE MARTINEZ

**W**hen openly gay Buenos Aires native Dr. Jonatan Gioia moved to Space City nearly three years ago to work for the Houston HIV/AIDS Research Team (HART) at UT Health, he brought his home country's philosophy on wellness with him.

"I was taught that everyone deserves to be taken care of," Gioia, says, noting that medicine is affordable, hospital visits are free, and quality healthcare is a right in Argentina. "That's why I studied medicine—because I want to help people. I'm so happy to apply those lessons here in Houston, to build a healthier community and to see it thrive."

As a research associate for HPTN 083—a study that tests a new way to take Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), which is currently available only as a pill that must be taken daily—Gioia is helping to make this HIV-prevention drug more accessible to at-risk communities.

Over 1,000 Houstonians were diagnosed with HIV in 2017, according to the latest HIV Surveillance Report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Those most at risk of acquiring HIV are black and Latino men who have sex with men, and transgender people of color ages 13 to 34.

Gioia says that the local HIV epidemic is likely due to the fact that LGBTQ people of color—specifically black trans women—do not always have access to healthcare because of poverty, discrimination, lack of transportation, and more. In response to this, Gioia is

working on an injectable version of PrEP that could be taken as a shot every two months.

If the HPTN 083 study is successful, “It will be a game changer for PrEP,” Gioia says. Along with tackling barriers to access, he believes an injectable version of the antiviral drug would be more user-friendly.

“It can be hard to take a pill every day,” Gioia admits. “Taking a preventative shot once every other month is quick, lasts longer, and offers users relief from the stress of accidentally missing a pill. So far, the participants in our study seem to prefer injectables over pills because it gets taking PrEP out of the way faster.”

Now in its second year of trials, HART’s HPTN 083 study will continue to follow 60 participants in a double-blind trial comparing the effectiveness of PrEP injectables and oral tablets for a total of up to four and a half years. More information about the study can be found online at [hptn.org/research/studies/hptn083](http://hptn.org/research/studies/hptn083).

In addition to his transformative research work at UT Health, Gioia is also a popular activist in Houston’s LGBTQ community. Known for his colorful hair, painted nails, and beaming smile, Gioia serves as the vice president of Impulse Group Houston, an organization dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles for queer people through its community events and campaigns. He is also an ambassador for the City of Houston’s I Am Life campaign, and a member of the HIV Latino Task Force.

Gioia says the purpose of his advocacy, and the advocacy of many emerging LGBTQ leaders, is to serve underrepresented communities and bridge the gap among communities of color. He calls this movement “a new generation of queer activism.”

“I am eternally grateful for the work of the activists who came before me for paving the way and fighting for our rights,” Gioia says. “Now that queer people are being born with more rights, we must honor our elders by continuing to fight against injustices, including the indifference in our own community.”

For Gioia, that means creating safe spaces for LGBTQ people of color to thrive. In October, he led Impulse Group’s #Juntos, the first-ever queer Latinx festival in Houston. The week-long event occurred in various locations across the city, and featured drag performances, community socials, and an art showcase.

“There are so many struggles that queer people still face,” Gioia says. “I want to be invested in tackling those issues with an intersectional approach.”

“I may be a doctor from 9 to 5, but I can throw a party with a purpose on the weekends,” Gioia continues. “Activism is a 24/7 job. I think what defines this era of queer leaders is the fact that we have access to information at all times. We have a responsibility to [keep

moving forward] whenever we can.”

With degrees in both medicine and education, Gioia believes that doctors should serve as teachers in the communities that they serve. After work, he can often be found in Montrose, and encourages everyone to ask him questions about any health concerns they may have.

Next year, Gioia will embark on several new and exciting projects. He encourages OUTSMART readers to be on the lookout for the work of Impulse Group and the HIV Latino Task Force, along with new HART studies on com-

prehensive trans healthcare. The study will benefit from the assistance of internationally known trans activist Mia Ryan, who will serve as a health promoter and outreach worker.

“When I got to Houston, I saw that there was a need for more activism,” Gioia recalls. “I’m thankful that the city has embraced me and trusted me to do what I do. I’m so excited for the work I’ll be a part of in 2020!”



To keep up with Dr. Jonatan Gioia, find him on social media @jonatangio.



“WHAT DEFINES THIS ERA OF QUEER LEADERS IS THE FACT THAT WE HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AT ALL TIMES. WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD WHENEVER WE CAN.”

—Dr. Jonatan Gioia



# Empowering Her Community

Mia Ryan launches a support group for black transgender women.

By **LOURDES ZAVALATA**  
Photo by  **JOSSELINE MARTINEZ**



UT Health outreach worker Mia Ryan faced many challenges before becoming a pioneering transgender activist.

Born in Galveston, she grew up with her family in La Marque, Texas. At the age of 13, Ryan was forced out of her mother and stepfather's home because she was trans.

"Due to being displaced, I was forced to engage in survival sex work," Ryan recalls. "I had to navigate the streets alone."

In 2013, Ryan shared her story with the world on *Houston Beauty*, an Oprah Winfrey Network reality television show that followed the goings-on at Franklin Beauty School, a historic Space City cosmetology institute. Ryan became the show's breakout star, and is still internationally recognized as one of the first trans women to have a recurring storyline on a major network TV show.

However, after the show ended, Ryan's life wasn't picture-perfect. "I was thrust into the limelight, but nothing about my life changed," she admits. "I still dealt with issues of not having the means and finances to make ends meet." However, she remained optimistic.

Ryan stopped working as an escort and moved to Atlanta in 2014 in search of job opportunities. After six months, she again experienced homelessness and moved to Houston a year later.

In Houston, Ryan gained some financial stability and began doing activist work. In 2017, she lobbied against SB 6, a statewide bill that regulated bathroom use for trans Texans. She also assisted University of Houston-Clear Lake professor William T. Hoston in writing his award-winning book *Toxic Silence: Race, Black Gender Identity, and Addressing the Violence against Black Transgender Women in Houston*.

Ryan was pushed further into the world of LGBTQ activism following the murder of Brandi Seals, who was shot to death in December 2017. After a Houston Police Department (HPD) detective misgendered and deadnamed Seals to media outlets, Ryan stepped up to call out both law enforcement and the media outlets for disrespecting victims like Seals in the narratives associated with their murders.

"We are so tired of seeing our sisters sense-

lessly murdered in the streets,” Ryan said during Seals’ vigil. “At this point, we just want peace. And we want respect.” HPD Chief Art Acevedo issued an apology during the same memorial event, which sparked the creation of HPD’s cultural-sensitivity training through the Montrose Center.

Ryan, who was instrumental in working with Seals’ relatives to plan her funeral, helped the family find a trans-affirming pastor to eulogize her during the service. Ryan also worked as the mortuary cosmetologist for the ceremony.

“After preparing Brandi’s body, I had to step away from activism for a bit,” Ryan says. “Seeing a black trans woman in a casket, knowing that her reality was my reality and the reality of so many others, hit really close to home. I had a lot of grief.”

After about a year of mourning, Ryan resumed her trans advocacy work. On November 7, she launched Sister to Sister Support Group, a weekly meeting for black trans women and their allies to meet and discuss their issues. The group meets on Thursdays from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Montrose Center.

“I created the group because I felt like the black trans women lacked spaces where we could fellowship with other community mem-

bers and just decompress,” Ryan says. “There aren’t enough safe spaces in Houston for black trans women to do this.”

Sister to Sister has seen around 10 attendees each week since its launch. During the meetings, Ryan has provided healthcare and housing referrals to attendees looking for assistance.

While the support group is also open to the allies of black trans women, it is hard for members of marginalized communities to build trust with folks who are outsiders, Ryan says. She kindly requests that any allies who want to attend Sister to Sister send her a message

**“I CREATED THE GROUP BECAUSE I FELT LIKE BLACK TRANS WOMEN LACKED SPACES WHERE WE COULD FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND JUST DECOMPRESS. THERE AREN’T ENOUGH SPACES IN HOUSTON FOR BLACK TRANS WOMEN TO DO THIS.”**

—Mia Ryan

on the group’s Facebook page first, because “I want to make sure I’m intentional about who this space is for, and that everyone feels safe.”

Although the support group is only in its beginning phases, Ryan has many plans for Sister to Sister this year. In December, the group partnered with chef Angelina Marie, a trans woman who owns The Dreaming Oven bakery, to host a holiday charity event that benefitted trans children. Going forward, she hopes to see the group continue to uplift trans businesswomen in Houston. “I want to pour even more support into my community.”

Outside of her advocacy work, Ryan is a full-time college student and has an outreach-worker position at UT Health with Dr. Jonatan Gioia. While she had to keep the specifics of what the two are working on under wraps, Ryan says she’s “involved in two projects that will be very beneficial for trans people.”

Keep an eye out for Ryan in 2020. Without a doubt, we’ll be seeing much more of her advocacy work in Houston this year.



For more information about Sister to Sister Support Group, visit [facebook.com/SisterToSisterHOU/](https://facebook.com/SisterToSisterHOU/).

Stay connected with Mia Ryan online at [tinyurl.com/FacebookMiaRyan](https://tinyurl.com/FacebookMiaRyan)

**GIVING YOU THE SCOOP  
FROM INSIDE THE LOOP**



Finalist: Best Real-Estate Agent

**THOMAS PHILLIPS**

t.phillips@kw.com | 832-305-7848

**kw METROPOLITAN**  
KELLERWILLIAMS, REALTY

SOLE AESTHETIC

**NEW YEAR.  
NEW YOU.  
NO PAIN.**

DR. VANESSA T. BARROW, DPM  
AESTHETIC AND REGENERATIVE  
MEDICINE OF THE FOOT AND ANKLE



5959 WEST LOOP SOUTH, SUITE 130 BELLAIRE, TX 77401  
(713)-666-9934 | [SOLEAESTHETICTX.COM](https://soleaestheticTX.com)

BEAUTY

# Pigments for a Purpose

Amoré Monét's new lipstick line benefits marginalized communities in Houston.

By CONNOR BEHRENS

**W**hether she's mixing pigments for clients or perfecting another ideal shade for her lipstick line, Houston native Amoré Monét has come a long way since a friend asked her to apply makeup while sitting in her car.

"An old friend of mine asked me to do her makeup while we were sitting in a parking lot one day," she recalls. "I am pretty sure I actually laughed at her for thinking I could do makeup, but it turned out really great. I will never forget that moment. Blues, greens, and purples—but only on one eye! After that, I never looked back. I was on a path to discovering makeup."

During her ten years as a professional makeup artist and hairstylist in Houston, Monét has appeared in *Runway Houston* magazine shows as well as on A&E and in *Playboy* magazine.

She chose to spotlight lipsticks in her recently launched makeup line (including colors such as "Fresh" and "Sangria") because of their general appeal and power. "I love lipsticks especially," she explains, "because I feel that



**“ART DOESN'T NEED A GENDER TO BE SHOWN, AND I AM GLAD THAT PEOPLE ARE BECOMING MORE COMFORTABLE WITH NOT ONLY SHOWCASING THIS, BUT ACCEPTING IT.”**

is the one item you can just throw on without needing a full face, and it's easy to throw in your purse or bag.”

Seeing and hearing about people's appreciation for her lipstick line has made the entire process worth it, Monét says.

"I have even had people's partners tell me they love the lipstick because it does not come off when they kiss," she notes.

Makeup is art, after all—a beautiful way for people of all genders to express themselves however they see fit.

"You can literally show your creativity on your face," she says. "How awesome is that? Art doesn't need a gender to be shown,



## Perfect Pouts

Mood (l) and Prototype are two shades from Amoré Monét's new lipstick collection.

and I am glad that people are becoming more comfortable with not only showcasing this, but accepting it."

Monét's other career passion is offering styling and makeup services to couples on their wedding day.

"Working with wedding couples in Houston has been such a beautiful experience," she says. "Especially now that people are able to marry in Texas no matter what their gender is. That is huge! I am so fortunate to see couples that have

been together for decades, and are finally able to wed. It is such a blessing to be part of that love and that history. I'm also proud to say that I have worked with some pretty amazing bridal teams that are LGBTQ-friendly."

When it comes to Houston, Monét believes that the city just has a palpable, magnetic presence to it. "Houston is filled with so much culture. This city is so incredibly diverse and beautiful—especially Montrose. The rainbow crosswalks remind me of the culture, history,

and art that Montrose will always be known for. Luckily, Montrose is now being spread out all over Houston as this city becomes more of a melting pot."

When she thinks back on her career path, Monét notes that its highs and lows have all been full of teachable moments. "As far as struggles, I face those daily," she says. "Funding was a huge issue, as I didn't have a lot of money to start, nor did I have investors. I saved up pennies and quarters to start this business."

As the new year begins, Monét will continue to expand her outreach in the fashion world beyond Houston.

"My brand is like my baby, and all I can do is nurture it to the best of my ability and watch it grow," she says. "I am very excited about expanding my products in 2020! I am still going to be focusing on lips, as I feel they are such a prominent and fun feature of the face. A lot more 'lip love' will be involved for 2020!"



For more information on Monét's products, go to [amoremonet.com](http://amoremonet.com). Ten percent of each lipstick sale is donated to a monthly rotation of charitable organizations that benefit the LGBTQ community, youth, and women's rights.




**BARBER SERVICE AVAILABLE**

**515 Westheimer**  
**713.524.7858**  
[HairSalonHouston.com](http://HairSalonHouston.com)

APPOINTMENTS & WALK-INS OK!

Mon. - Fri. 10am - 7pm | Sat. 10am - 5pm  
Sun. Closed

THANK YOU OUTSMART READER'S FOR YOUR SUPPORT!




Get the Central Houston Cadillac Advantage Plan

- COMPLIMENTARY LOANER CARS
- FREE OIL CHANGE
- FREE TIRE ROTATION & FLUID TOP-OFF
- FREE CONCIERGE SERVICES



**WINNER:**  
Best Domestic Auto Dealership  
**RUNNER UP:**  
Most Supportive of the LGBTQ Community

Ask for **TONY McCLELLAND**

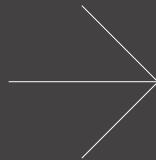
<b>CENTRAL HOUSTON</b> C A D I L L A C <a href="http://CentralHoustonCadillac.com">CentralHoustonCadillac.com</a>	<b>Central Houston Cadillac</b> 2520 Main Street Houston, TX 77002 <a href="http://CentralHoustonCadillac.com">CentralHoustonCadillac.com</a>	<b>Sales</b> 832-981-7590 Mon-Fri 9am-7pm Sat 9am-6pm	<b>Service</b> 832-981-7590 Mon-Fri 7am-6pm Sat 7am-3pm
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------



# WORKING IT OUT

Barry's instructors recount their journeys to fitness.

By **SAM BYRD**  
Photos by  
**ASHKAN ROAYAEI**



It's a new year, which inevitably means that New Year's resolutions are on the brain. Since one of the most popular choices is improving one's health and fitness, **OUTSMART** interviewed three workout gurus from Barry's on West Gray about their journey to fitness.

Openly gay trainers John Michael Race, James Mai, and Pinij NaLampoon are all experts when it comes to getting in shape, and they tell us what it's like to live every day in the fitness industry.

Founded in 1998 in L.A.'s West Hollywood neighborhood, Barry's staff members have spent the last two decades developing group fitness into an art by creating efficient, immersive, and transformative hour-long cardio and strength interval programs. The brand has grown to include nearly 70 studios worldwide, with more than 125,000 customer visits per week. Barry's signature method utilizes the most effective combination of high-intensity interval training by incorporating 25–30 minutes of interval-based cardiovascular routines on treadmills with 25–30 minutes of strength training using free weights, resistance bands, and other methods.

Every class is held in a Barry's "Red Room" where the dimly lit nightclub atmosphere allows participants to lose themselves in the moment, concentrating only on the workout and the thumping beat of the playlist. Each trainer develops their own song set for the workout sessions, creating a unique experience each time a client takes part in a class.

At the end of a grueling class, clients enjoy a fuel bar that offers custom smoothies and nutritional snacks to replenish the body. Other amenities include lavish locker rooms and high-end products to help clients put their best foot forward after working up a good sweat.

The ingredient that binds this experience together is arguably the trainers, who have each travelled different paths that led them to Barry's. Here they share their knowledge and motivational techniques with **OUTSMART** readers.



The road to fitness was a natural fit for John Michael Race, 27, who splits his time between the fitness studio and the hospital.

“I had always known that whatever job or career path I chose, I wanted to be surrounded by people. I didn’t want a job in a cubicle. I just knew that for me, it was going to be most rewarding if I was doing something that benefited other people,” he says.

“My mom is diabetic, legally blind, and has an array of other health hills we’ve had to climb. I thought I’d be a doctor, cure diabetes, and do other ambitious things. I’ve always had a mindset that I would get into health-care, and I had a lot of friends who were becoming nurses.”

Race’s hard work has paid off, and he gets to help people reach their fitness goals. When not working up a sweat in the Red Room, he’s serving his other calling related to health and well-being. “I work part-time as a radiographer in the Medical Center—I call it my ‘serious’ job. Watching someone benefit from the work that I do is extremely rewarding,” he says. And helping people achieve their fitness benchmarks is another iteration of his commitment to serving others.

# Healthy by Nature

**John Michael Race’s** love for helping others inspired his career in wellness.

Keep up with John Michael Race on Instagram @johnmichaelrace



# Fascinated by Fitness

**Pinij NaLampoon's** exercise hobby turned into a lifestyle.

Keep up with Pinij NaLampoon on Instagram @pnalampoon

Pinij NaLampoon, 32, grew up in Atlanta, but as the saying goes, he got to Texas as soon as he could. He is another Barry's founding instructor, and he moonlights with a second job at

SoulCycle. His journey to fitness began as a job that transitioned into a passion.

"Years ago, I got a part-time job with Lululemon. In high school and college, I dabbled in working out, but I didn't consider myself athletic. Lululemon opened me up to sports and the different types of fitness, and I quickly realized I loved it," he said.

Fast-forward to today, and NaLampoon has become a fitness fiend.

"I'm a pretty competitive person, and I like the competitive aspect of sports. When it comes to working out, I enjoy the drive. I love high-intensity workouts and anything that speeds your heart rate up. When you work out, it releases endorphins and makes you feel good. It was changing my body, and I liked that, too. It turned into a lifestyle, which turned into a career."

While NaLampoon spends much of his time in a gym, he says people can always take advantage of a fitness routine at home. "You don't need a bunch of fancy equipment. You can always do good old-fashioned pushups and planks. If you have a chair, do tricep dips. Or go running. If you're traveling, do crunches and sit-ups. And you can also do tons with a resistance band," he explains.

NaLampoon heeds his own advice by doing at least 100 pushups a day. It's a workout in itself, and it can be done anywhere. And when the workout is over, there's still more work to be done in the kitchen. Nutrition is an important part of NaLampoon's regimen.

"When it comes to health and nutrition, stick to good, healthy foods. Stay away from processed foods and sugar. Look at the ingredients, and make sure you exercise regularly. I'm a big proponent of taking care of your body. Different fads and diets come and go, but nothing beats good old-fashioned healthy eating, healthy living, and lifting weights," he says.

As for New Year's resolutions, NaLampoon's aspirations are lofty. He wants to focus on financial responsibility, getting more sleep, taking up piano, archery, and learning French and Japanese.

# Toning Up in the Limelight

**James Mai** found a passion for strength training while working in entertainment.

Keep up with James Mai on Instagram @nashvilleasian



After graduating from Baylor University, James Mai went to work in Nashville's music industry as a publicist. His clientele included well-known names like Dolly

Parton, Kenny Rogers, LeAnn Rimes, and Hank Williams Jr. After his stint in music he turned to modeling and acting, which is when the fitness bug bit.

"At that point, fitness went hand-in-hand with modeling. My body wasn't the best. I would consider myself 'skinny fat,'" Mai admits. "My agent told me to work on it, and that got me into fitness." And he's never looked back.

"Immediately after I left the music industry, I needed something to ground me. My friend

was a fitness-studio manager, and he told me there was a fuel-bar position open. About one-and-a-half years in, I was more comfortable with myself and knew I wanted to be an instructor," he says.

Then, when the chance came to open up the gym in Houston, Mai jumped on it. He's been with Barry's for four years, and plays a triple role: fuel-bar manager, the manager on duty, and a founding instructor. That makes sense, because Mai tries to make the entire trip to the gym an unforgettable experience, from entrance to exit.

"You'll never get the same workout twice. Creating each day's playlist and tailoring the workout helps the client connect with the instructor, and vice versa. I shout their name in

class, and it gives them pep in their step. After you finish, you have a fuel bar with pre-made smoothies, and each cup is individualized. So our whole experience is [geared toward] inclusiveness and uniqueness," he says.

When he's not blasting calories to the beat, the 29-year-old likes to spend time with his family, who own a laundromat. It's an easy way to decompress while getting some quality time with his parents.

He also focuses on his goals for the upcoming year. "In the new year, I'm going to gain 10 pounds of muscle, so that's my goal. I'm also going to push myself out of my comfort zone and get back into finding my creative side. I might take some dance classes to get my creative juices flowing," Mai says.

## COOL DOWN

Even though all three of these gentlemen traveled different paths to reach their fitness goals, they share similar experiences when it comes to their workouts. All three spoke of the close-knit relationships that come from working out together.

“One of my favorite things about Barry’s is the community, and seeing people come back time after time. You see them change. It’s not because they’re necessarily self-driven, but because there’s a great community. We really have been blessed with meeting such great people and becoming friends. It’s a good atmosphere where people can push each other and be competitive, even when they’re not feeling it,” says Race.

The idea of having a healthy body is attractive, but health takes place on the inside as well. Mental health is key for these trainers.

“Barry’s will push you, mentally and physically,” Mai says. Paraphrasing the eternal words of Elle Woods from *Legally Blonde*, he says, “Working out gives you endorphins. Endorphins make you happy. If you work out, you have more energy, you have a brighter side, and you’re connecting with people in the room. When you’re having a bad day, you come in, make friends, and work alongside people. We all take classes together, and we motivate each other.”

It is also a great way to calm down an overactive mind.

“The mental benefits hooked me in the beginning. Committing to a physical-fitness routine was a good way to work through my anxiety. That’s what got me hooked, and what keeps me driven,” Race notes.

And since fitness is an equal-opportunity activity, the men have some advice for women who are looking to get wedding-ready, or maybe just to take inventory of their body.

Race says, “Don’t be afraid of weight training. I think a lot of women are afraid of bulking up or looking too muscular. I’ve heard that they don’t want their shoulders to look too big or muscular, but that’s up to biology. As far as lean muscle mass or increasing metabolism, a lot of women could benefit from weight training.”

Above all else, these experts all agree on the benefits of staying hydrated—one of NaLampoon’s special goals for 2020. “I want to drink more water, I want to travel more, and have an amazing year. These are not things I want to do for a month or two; these are lifestyle changes.”

Having a great year is achievable, one step at a time. Doing something out of the norm can reap huge benefits. After all, “new year, new you” is the phrase that rings clearer than anything else at this time of year. Take a chance on *you*, and start working on the healthy mind and body you deserve.



Barry’s, 1953 West Gray  
(in the River Oaks Shopping Center)  
[barrys.com/studio/houston](http://barrys.com/studio/houston)

# Frankly Speaking

Before there was Pete Buttigieg, there was Barney Frank.

By KIM HOGSTROM

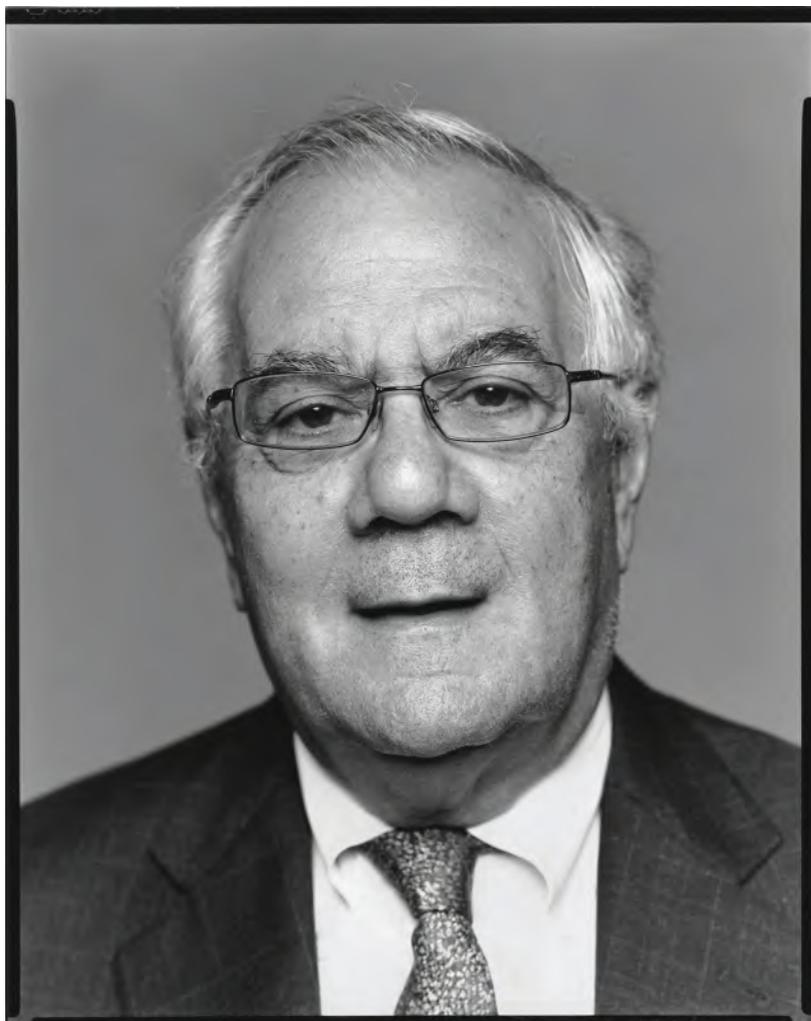
Since the founding of America, with its deep commitment to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” LGBTQ citizens have found very few seats at the public table. Life for these Americans was often lived in the shadows, as the “pursuit of happiness” in broad daylight was simply too dangerous. And a career in public service was unthinkable.

That was then. Today, there is an explosion of fully out LGBTQ political candidates running—and winning—all sorts of races across the country. This progress, however, would not be possible without the many brave LGBTQ politicians who came out in the 1980s or earlier and endured hostile conditions as they chased uncertain outcomes early in their careers. Former Massachusetts congressman Barney Frank and former Houston mayor Annise Parker are two such pioneers who have blazed the trail.

Annise Parker was the first out gay woman to serve as the mayor of a major American city. Since 2017, this quiet and determined activist has served as president of the LGBTQ Victory Fund, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting LGBTQ candidates throughout the United States.

The Victory Fund endorsed 178 candidates in the November 2018 elections, with a whopping 115 of those candidates winning offices. Many Americans first met Mayor Pete Buttigieg by watching his campaign-launching speech at a Victory Fund event, when Mayor Parker introduced him.

But 47 years before America would learn to pronounce *Buttigieg*, a young, gay Boston Democrat named Barney Frank won his first election to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1972.



FACEBOOK

“WHEN THE GLOBE ASKED ME IF I WAS GAY, I SAID ‘YES. SO WHAT?’ DID IT CHANGE ANYTHING?”

—Barney Frank

From childhood, Frank had a fierce desire to work in politics and contribute to society. By 14, he was also well-aware that he was attracted to men, which presented a problem for a politician in the 1970s. His solution was to dive into politics and bury his sexuality.

“I wasn’t even ‘in the closet’ at this time,” Frank told NPR in 2015 regarding his earliest years as a legislator. “I had to *evolve* into the closet. I was in denial,” he stated with his signature honesty and wry sense of humor.

After graduating from Harvard Law School in 1980, Frank was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives serving Massachusetts. He won that first congressional seat with a 52 percent margin, a victory that set the

trend for every one of his subsequent elections.

Thanks to his charisma, earthy integrity, and whip-smart intelligence, Frank soon earned many friends in Washington. Still, only his closest associates knew he was gay, and none of his constituents knew.

In those early years, he worked tirelessly for civil rights, and was the most powerful and effective proponent of LGBTQ rights in Washington. Still closeted at the time, he remains amazed to this day that none of his straight peers ever put two and two together.

OUTSMART spoke with Congressman Barney Frank about his decision to publicly come out in 1987, becoming the first gay man to serve openly in Congress. →

“At this point, there was sort of a stereotype, and I suppose I didn’t reflect it. I had gained some weight, and I smoked cigars. I guess my ‘aspect’ didn’t fit the typecasting,” Frank tells OUTSMART.

“For example, as a state representative, somebody took a picture of me in which I looked a little disheveled, so I put the photo on a campaign poster that said ‘Re-elect Barney Frank. Neatness isn’t everything.’ I have always had a hard time dressing well. During one of my congressional campaigns, someone wrote an article and said I was wearing an ill-fitting suit. I said, ‘No, that’s unfair. It was a well-fitting suit, I just wasn’t the person it fit,’” he says with a laugh.

There was a price to be paid for staying in the closet. Frank spent his busy legislative days with a dark cloud over his head. He was uncomfortable, unfulfilled, and mad at himself most of the time. Then in 1987, he summoned his courage and came out publicly to the *Boston Globe* newspaper. This marked the moment that Barney Frank became the first openly gay congressman in the United States House of Representatives.

Did his constituents abandon him after his confession? Frank’s first election after coming out occurred in 1990. He won with a landslide 66 percent margin.

“I didn’t want it to be a big deal, so when the *Globe* asked me if I was gay, I said ‘Yes. So what?’ Did anything change afterward? My

associates told me I became nicer, easier to get on with. They said I wasn’t as grumpy or as quick to snap. I wasn’t angry all the time,” he explains, his voice booming.

Publicly revealing his sexuality provided Frank with peace, but it also brought challenges in dealing with prejudice. There were congressmen, with whom he had worked for years, who now refused to shower with him in the congressional gym, convinced they would “catch AIDS.” A few attempted to have him removed from Congress, and others tried to have him censured, due to “actions that run counter to the acceptable standards.”

Two Republican senators stood out for their hostility to Frank after his admission. In 1989, Larry Craig led an effort calling for severe punishment of Frank for his involvement in a consensual gay affair. Notably, Craig was eventually arrested in an airport men’s room and charged with soliciting a male undercover police officer for sexual favors. He retired soon after his arrest.

Congressman Mark Foley was unrelenting in his resistance to Frank’s presence in the “People’s House,” and launched a fierce campaign to have Frank censured or shunned. Fortunately, Foley left before he could complete his bigoted crusade. In 2006, Foley was asked to resign from the House by GOP leaders after it was discovered he had been sending racy online messages to young congressional pages—teenage boys—including discussing

sexual acts and masturbation.

### “The Frank Rule”

During his 41 years of public service, Barney Frank has worked tirelessly to advance the interests of human, civil, and LGBTQ rights. Sometimes he did it by sponsoring bold equality legislation. Sometimes he did it in quiet whispers behind closed doors.

Although there were problems with coming out, Frank soon realized that there was power in it, too. When Frank observed closeted gay congressmen or women working against the interests of America’s LGBTQ citizens, he would “have a talk with the individual in a private room with the doors closed. That’s when we’d implement The Frank Rule,” he explains firmly.

“I have always said that everyone has a right to privacy, but *no one* has a right to hypocrisy. I felt no congressman should demonize others for their private behavior, and then go home and do it themselves,” Frank growls.

When asked about The Frank Rule’s implied threat to publicly “out” a politician who used their power to threaten LGBTQ civil rights, Frank is diplomatic. “As I recall, I never really had to do it,” he concludes quietly.

In July 2012, Frank married his longtime partner, James Ready, and settled into a happy union. Once again, Frank was the first member of Congress to marry someone of the same sex while in office. He retired from Congress in 2013 and is now enjoying busy days full of love, family, friends, and the *New York Times* every morning.

### History in the Making

With all the work that has been done to gain equality for America’s LGBTQ citizens, and the strides that continue to this day, we ask again: Is America ready for an LGBTQ president?

“The next time a reporter asks me if America is ready,” Buttigieg stated in his Victory Fund Speech, “I’m going to tell the truth. I’m going to give them the only answer that I can think of that’s honest, and it’s this: I trust my fellow Americans. But at the end of the day, there’s exactly one way to find out for sure.”

At the time of this writing, Buttigieg maintains a steady spot at the top of the polls in the Iowa and New Hampshire primaries, the first two states to weigh in. Does this out gay man—with his porcelain-blue eyes, gracious demeanor, extraterrestrial intelligence, and charming husband—really stand a chance?

We will find out on February 3 in Iowa and February 11 in New Hampshire. Barring unforeseen disasters, this writer (a self-identified politi-holic) predicts Buttigieg will come in first or second in both states.



Former Houston mayor and Victory Fund President Annise Parker (l) with presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg and his husband, Chasten Buttigieg.

DALTON DEHART



For more candidate information, go to [victoryfund.org](http://victoryfund.org).

# HINDSIGHT FROM 2020

## The Queer Decade in Review

By RYAN M. LEACH

**“HINDSIGHT IS 20/20.” THAT CLICHÉ HAS NEVER BEEN MORE APROPOS THAN AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT IN TIME. THE YEAR 2020 WILL DECIDE MANY CRITICAL ISSUES FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE, AND WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THOSE OUTCOMES WILL BE. BUT THE FUTURE IS INEVITABLE, AND THE DIRECTION WE TAKE IN 2020 MAY DEPEND ON HOW CLEARLY WE CAN SEE OUR PAST. CALL YOUR OPHTHAMOLOGIST AND UPDATE THOSE READING GLASSES AS WE LOOK BACK ON THE QUEER DECADE THAT WAS 2010 TO 2019.**



# 2010

### **The Scruff**

dating app is released on July 23.

### **“It Gets Better” is launched.**

Gay writer Dan Savage created the online “It Gets Better” movement in September as a

reaction to the spike in suicides amongst queer youth. In Texas, the death of 13-year-old Asher Brown inspired a gay city-council member, Joel Burns, from Forth Worth to talk about his experiences with anti-LGBTQ bullying. The hope was that young people contemplating suicide might find strength in hearing from openly LGBTQ role models.



### **Lady Gaga’s meat dress.**

Queer performer Lady Gaga created a pop culture moment that will never be forgotten on September 12 when she attended the MTV Video Music Awards in a dress made entirely of meat.

### **Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell is repealed.**

The decade started out with a political bang. On December 22, the ban on LGBTQ troops serving openly in the military, known as Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, was overturned by Congress and signed into law by President Barack Obama. The ban was implemented during the Clinton administration as a compromise to avoid a total ban on LGBTQ troops. For years, many service members were outed and forced to leave their careers because of who they loved. It eventually came down to eight Republican senators who crossed party lines to vote for the repeal, reminding us of a time when party affiliation didn’t always determine how a senator would vote. It was a hopeful beginning to what would become a transformative decade for queer Americans.



# 2011

### **Nikki Araguz’s marriage is nullified in Wharton, Texas.**

Nikki Araguz Loyd, who recently and unexpectedly passed away at the age of 44, was a trailblazer for transgender rights. In August of 2008 she married firefighter Thomas Araguz, who was killed on the job in 2010. The morning after her husband was buried, Nikki learned that two separate lawsuits had been filed by his family in an attempt to take away her spousal benefits. Araguz’s family claimed that Nikki was born male and therefore not female at the time of her marriage to Araguz,

so the marriage should be invalidated. In May, State District Judge Randy Clapp ruled in favor of the family and nullified the marriage. The spousal benefits remained on hold while Nikki fought for them in court. She eventually prevailed in 2015 when another state district judge overturned the prior ruling. Nikki continued to fight on behalf of her community up until her last days. She is survived by her husband, artist William Loyd, their two children, and countless friends who miss her.

### **Texas passes blanket anti-bullying legislation.**

While not exactly a complete win for Texas students, the ultra-conservative Texas State Legislature passed laws in May that were aimed at protecting young people from harmful bullying in schools. The push for the bipartisan legislation came in response to a string of LGBTQ youth suicides across the county and within the state.

**HISD extends protections against discrimination to LGBTQ employees on August 11.**

### **“Gay rights are human rights.”**

In December, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton marked International Human Rights Day in Geneva, Switzerland, proclaiming “gay rights are human rights.” This was a throwback to her U.N. speech in the ‘90s when she said, “Women’s rights are human rights.” Clinton set the stage for the Obama administration, which would prove to be one of the most progressive and LGBTQ-inclusive in American history.



### **Trans golfer Lana Lawless plays in the LPGA.**

Pro golfer Lana Lawless reached a settlement on May 25, 2011 with the Ladies Pro Golfers Association that allowed her to participate in LPGA tournaments going forward. The settlement changed the rules for how women athletes are formally characterized in sports.



### Barack Obama became the first sitting American president to support marriage equality.

On May 9, President Barack Obama said unequivocally, “I think same-sex couples should be able to get married” during an interview with out journalist Robin Roberts, thus bringing the Democratic party and the country to the progressive forefront on an issue that had been a longtime wedge. Obama credited his daughters, Sasha and Malia, for helping influ-

ence his “evolution” on the subject. He would go on to win reelection against Mitt Romney in November of that same year.

Adam Lambert in May becomes the first openly gay singer to top the Billboard charts with his sophomore album, *Trespassing*



### Frank Ocean comes out.

His open letter, published on Tumblr on July 3, was widely acknowledged in the notoriously anti-LGBTQ music industry as a watershed moment that would define the industry going forward. Ocean

wrote: “I don’t know what happens now, and that’s alright. I feel like a free man.”



### PrEP is approved for use in the U.S. by the FDA.

The FDA approved Truvada for use as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in the U.S. on July 16, 2012. The drug has proved to be over 90% effective at preventing the transmission of HIV when used as prescribed. It is changing the way people perceive “safe sex,” and it has helped reduce the stigma of HIV. PrEP has opened up the conversation about HIV prevention and transmission and has made space for the motto U=U (undetectable equals untransmittable), and other fact-based approaches to safer and better sex.

Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin is elected the first openly lesbian U.S. senator on November 7.

### Mary Gonzalez

becomes the first openly pansexual person elected to the Texas House of Representatives.



### Houston Mayor Annise Parker wins third and final term with 57% of the vote.

In her final bid to serve the City of Houston as mayor, Parker won a decisive victory over her opponent, thus beginning her final term as the first openly lesbian mayor of a major American city. Under her executive authority, Parker extended benefits to City employees, prevented discrimination against LGBTQ people by vendors hired by the City, and other important changes. While the defeat of Houston’s civil-rights ordinance was her most significant challenge in her final term, her electoral victories would go down in history as a major step forward for LGBTQ politicians.

### Ten states legalize gay marriage.

Same-sex marriage rang in the new year in Maryland, allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry in the state beginning January 1. Delaware, California, Minnesota, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Hawaii, Illinois, New Mexico, and Utah followed suit.

### NBA Player Jason Collins

comes out as gay in April, making him the first out active player in one of the four major American professional team sports.



New Jersey and California in June pass first legislation in the country banning LGBTQ conversion therapy.

### The Defense of Marriage Act is overturned.

On June 26, the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 split decision, ruled that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was unconstitutional. DOMA denied federal recognition of same-sex marriages while it was law. The lawsuit was brought by New Yorker Edie Windsor, whose marriage to Thea Spyer was recognized in their state in 2008. When Spyer died in 2009,

she left her entire estate to Windsor. When Windsor tried to claim the federal estate-tax exemption for surviving spouses, DOMA barred her from doing so and treated the couple as if they were strangers. Her lawsuit forced the U.S. to recognize marriage equality, at least in the states that offered it. The case set the stage for the Supreme Court’s nationwide LGBTQ marriage equality ruling in 2015.

Putin signs a law in June banning LGBTQ “propaganda” in Russia.



The Advocate magazine in December names Pope Francis their Person of the Year for his religious acceptance of LGBTQ people.



**The Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) passes City Council.**

On May 28, the Houston City Council, in an 11 to 6 vote, passed the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO). Council sat for hours as Houstonians shared stories about the necessity of the law. Although opponents of the ordinance focused primarily on the trans-inclusive aspects of it, HERO actu-

ally extended protections to over 15 different protected classes of people. The victory was short-lived, as opponents of the law quickly forced a ballot initiative for voters to consider. This was only the beginning of a national anti-trans campaign.

The names of the City Council members who voted No on the ordinance were Brenda Stardig, Michael Kubosh, Jack Christie, Dave Martin, Dwight Boykins, and Oliver Pennington—you know, just in case their names pop up on another ballot (say, like for county commissioner or something).

**The Amazon Prime television series *Transparent* premieres in February.**

**Bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst wins Eurovision Song Contest in May.**



**Michael Sam is drafted to the NFL.**

Although his NFL career would

not be long-lived, Michael Sam made history when he became the first openly gay player drafted to the NFL when the St. Louis Rams picked him up in May. He celebrated by kissing his boyfriend on television—another first for the NFL.



**Laverne Cox is nominated for an Emmy.**

In August, Laverne Cox became the first transgender actor nominated for her role as Sophia Burset on the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*. Cox notes that “Sophia is written as a multi-

dimensional character who the audience can really empathize with. And for trans folks out there who need to see representations of people who are like them, that’s really important.” Cox was also nominated in 2017 and 2019.



**Obergefell v. Hodges**

The biggest LGBTQ news of the decade was the June 26 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which extended marriage equality nationwide. The broadly written 5-4 opinion, authored by swing-vote Anthony Kennedy, opened the doors for LGBTQ Americans in states like Texas to finally and legally tie the knot. In the last whimpers of a dying cause, some county clerks (like Harris County’s Stan Stanart) briefly tried to prevent the marriages before finally relenting. For one day, and fittingly in the midst of Pride Week, LGBTQ Americans got a huge win. Although they understood that there were still many battles left to fight for true equality, on this day they were able to say they won. The White House, Houston’s City Hall, and numerous monuments all over the world were lit up in rainbow colors.

**Caitlyn Jenner comes out as transgender.**

For all of her flaws, Caitlyn Jenner did bring her story of transition into the living rooms of Americans in a way that had never been done before in an April 15 interview with Diane Sawyer. Baby Boomers who idolized Jenner during her Olympics prime were forced to have a conversation about what it means to be transgender in America. As it turns out, Americans didn’t truly know her until she said, on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, “Call me Caitlyn.”



**The Texas State Legislature tries to pass a “bathroom bill.” Thanks to House Speaker Joe Strauss, it fails in April.**

**In June, Nyle DiMarco, a deaf model who won *America’s Next Top Model* and *Dancing with the Stars*, comes out as sexually fluid.**

**Houston Pride takes place in Downtown Houston for the first time on June 25.**



**Demi Lovato’s “Cool for the Summer”**

Pop star Demi Lovato dropped hints about her sexuality after releasing her bi-curious single “Cool for the Summer” on July 1. Although she never confirmed being queer, Lovato said, “All of my songs are based off of personal experi-

ences. I don’t think there’s anything wrong with experimentation at all.”

***Fun Home*, based on the award-winning graphic novel by lesbian artist Alison Bechdel, wins the Tony Award for Best Musical in June.**

**Boy Scouts of America lifts their ban on openly gay leaders on July 27.**

**LGBTQ fan favorite Carly Rae Jepsen releases *E • MO • TION* in August.**

**HERO is overturned at the ballot box.**

It was a confluence of circumstances that led to the November 3 overturn of HERO after its passage the previous year. A smear campaign aimed at the transgender community played a large part. Groups like the ironically named Pastors Council and anti-LGBTQ leaders like Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick threw their full weight behind defeating the ordinance. Houstonians’ fears were stoked by the supposed danger of men dressed in women’s clothes lurking in public bathrooms. The political backlash to marriage equality also worked against the ordinance, as well as a pro-HERO campaign that failed to adequately reach out to communities of color. That perfect storm resulted in a trouncing of the ordinance. HERO would not be mentioned again at City Council for the remainder of the decade. One step forward, two steps back.



## The Pulse Nightclub Massacre

Around 2:00 a.m. on June 12, a shooter entered Orlando's packed Pulse Nightclub. He killed 49 people and wounded 53 others, making it the largest terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11, and the deadliest attack on a gay club since 1974's arson attack at the Upstairs Lounge in New Orleans. All over the country, the LGBTQ community mourned the loss of so many LGBTQ siblings. The tragedy became a political football in the tumultuous 2016 election, and politicians offered responses that ranged from consoling to tone deaf and downright despicable. The #WeAreOrlando movement helped people express their grief,

and a candlelight vigil at Houston City Hall attracted hundreds of mourners. The attack sparked discussions on the relevance of gay clubs and how they have historically been vital gathering spots where we organized, commiserated, celebrated, and fell in love. The Pulse Nightclub massacre will never be forgotten, nor will the 49 souls that were taken from us.

**Kate Brown of Oregon becomes the first openly LGBTQ governor in the U.S. in May.**

**Gay writer Garrard Conley's memoir *Boy Erased* is released on May 10. Chronicling his experience in conversion therapy, Conley's book is made into a widely released motion picture in 2018.**



**Sylvester Turner launches the Mayor's LGBTQ Advisory Board.**

Mayor Turner's LGBTQ Advisory Board is made up of 49 LGBTQ Houstonians, a number reflective of the 49 lives lost in the Pulse Nightclub massacre. The inaugural advisory board included members from every faction of Houston's LGBTQ community, and it continues to elevate voices that had never been heard before.

**The California State Board of Education votes unanimously to begin teaching LGBTQ history in classes.**

**Hillary Clinton**

She became the first woman nominated for president by a major party on July 26. She was the first presidential candidate to walk in a Pride parade. Clinton is a professional glass ceiling-breaker, but she fell short when she lost the Electoral College vote to Donald Trump in an astonishing November defeat. The decade would soon take a significant turn for the worse for LGBTQ Americans.



**RuPaul's *Drag Race* goes mainstream.**

In September, the Supermodel of the World won the Emmy for Outstanding Reality TV Show Host for the first time. In 2017, *Drag Race* was moved to VH1, where it was an instant hit. RuPaul has won the Emmy every year since.

**The Navy approves the naming of the U.S.N.S. *Harvey Milk*, a naval fuel ship which began construction in December 2019.**



## Donald Trump becomes president of the United States.

On January 20, the same day that Donald Trump was sworn into office, all mentions of the LGBTQ community were wiped from www.whitehouse.gov. By February, Trump had removed all of the Obama-implemented guidelines for the fair treatment of trans students in schools. In July, Trump put in place a ban on transgender troops in the military, and then he removed LGBTQ-related questions from the 2020 Census. (In 2019, the Log Cabin Republicans, the LGBTQ wing of the Republican party, inexplicably endorsed Trump for re-election in 2020.)

**Lady Gaga headlines the Super Bowl LI halftime show in Houston on February 5.**

**The show *Billions* introduces Taylor, the**

**first non-binary character on a major television series, in February. Non-binary actor Asia Kate Dillon made history again when they were nominated for a Critic's Choice Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Drama Series.**

***Moonlight* wins the Oscar for Best Motion Picture on February 26.**

**OUTSMART adds the "Q"**

The cover of the June 2017 OUTSMART magazine added a Q for "queer" to its "LGBT" subtitle, indicating a more inclusive description of the community it serves. Throughout the country, the LGBT label was expanding as "queer" became the blanket description of choice, replacing the more patriarchal "gay." The complete initialism is more like LGBTQQ-IP2SAA—and just to be safe, many people add a "+" to whatever their preferred queer label is.

**The Texas State Legislature tries and fails to pass a "bathroom bill" in August.**

**Trans pop star Kim Petras releases her first major hit single, "I Don't Want It All" in August.**

**#MeToo and the LGBTQ community**

In 2017 the country was coming to a cultural reckoning with sexual harassment. In an October article published in the New Yorker, gay journalist Ronan Farrow exposed Hollywood executive Harvey Weinstein as the monster

he was. The LGBTQ community was not immune—actor Anthony Rapp revealed that when he was 14, actor Kevin Spacey allegedly made unlawful sexual advances on him while working on Broadway. Spacey lost major roles, and his part in the film *All the Money in the World* was recast and re-shot post-production in order to erase the controversy from the film.

**On October 1, Pride Houston's board voted unanimously to make Lo Roberts president and CEO of the LGBTQ organization.**



**The City of Houston recognizes Intersex Awareness Day on October 26.**

**Nine transgender Americans are elected to office.**

Transgender Americans scored election victories in historic numbers across the country in November. Danica Roem, Andrea Jenkins, Phillippe Cunningham, Lisa Middleton, Stephe Koontz, Gerri Cannon, Tyler Titus, Raven Matherne, and Jacquelyn Ryan were elected to seats ranging from state representative to school board member. Roem received considerable attention for her win over an 11-term Republican incumbent in the Virginia House of Delegates. Jenkins became the first openly transgender black woman ever elected to public office in the United States.



2018

### Houston civil-rights pioneer Ray Hill dies.

Ray Hill passed away in December after enjoying a long life of activism on behalf of the LGBTQ community. As one of the founding fathers of Houston's LGBTQ activist legacy, Hill was a proud thorn in the side of many Houston politicians. He often was the first to raise the alarm when an injustice against the community was being perpetrated. At the time of his death, he had been the longtime subject of a documentary about his life entitled *Loud Mouth Queer!* Ray co-organized the first National March on Washington for Lesbian & Gay Rights in 1979. He was a cofounder of nearly every LGBTQ organization in Houston, as well as a public-radio pioneer, convicted felon, prison-reform activist, writer, performer, speaker, and fearless warrior who never hesitated to serve as a lightning rod for controversy in the interest of advancing civil rights. He was a pain in the ass, and he will be sorely missed.



Hayley Kiyoko

### #20GAYTEEN

Lesbian pop star Hayley Kiyoko released her first album, *Expectations*. In the album, the singer, also known as Lesbian Jesus, showed the world what it was like to be unapologetically queer. It was Kiyoko who coined #20GAYTEEN, a year in which she informed her fans via Instagram on January 1: "It's our year, it's our time. To thrive and let our souls feel alive. #20GayTeen" 2018 was indeed a huge year for queer pop. Troye Sivan released an entire song about bottoming, and Janelle Monáe introduced the world to bisexual lighting and an entire ode to vaginas with her song "Pynk."



Adam Rippon

### Out Olympians Adam Rippon, Gus Kenworthy and Brittany Bowe

Adam Rippon became the first openly gay Olympian to represent the United States during the Winter Olympics in February. Skier Gus Kenworthy and speed-skater Brittany Bowe also competed, although Rippon was the first to qualify. Kenworthy gave his boyfriend, Matt Wilkas, a historic post-run kiss caught on camera. The image was broadcast around the world, and firmly made the 2018 Olympics one of the queerest ever.



### Miss Vanjie, Miss Vanjie ... MISS VANJIE!

### Love, Simon

In March, *Love, Simon* became the first wide-release teen rom-com with a gay leading character. The sweet story was based on the teen novel *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, and followed Simon through his public outing and subsequent high-school romance. For a short moment, Simon turned the teen silver screen rainbow.

### OutSmart magazine turns 25 in April.



Danica Roem

### Pose

*Paris Is Burning*, the documentary that showcases the 1980s New York City ballroom scene, is required viewing for LGBTQ people.

Ryan Murphy went a step further and created an entire show around the scene, and appropriately cast trans actors to portray the trans characters. *Pose*, which debuted on June 3, gave viewers a rare window into the lives and struggles of trans women of color. It also proved that trans people can write, produce, direct, and portray their own stories.



### Houston Pride hosts its 40th LGBTQ celebration on June 23.

### India legalizes gay sex on September 6.



### The Rainbow Wave

During the November 2018 midterm elections, a record 399 LGBTQ candidates ran for office at all levels of government, including 22 for Congress and 4 for state governorships. Of the 399 races, 164 ended in victory. For the first time in history there was a double-digit number of LGBTQ representatives in Congress, including bisexual Arizona Senator Kirsten Sinema who narrowly flipped red Arizona to blue. Kansas gained two LGBTQ leaders. In Colorado, Jared Polis became the state's first openly gay governor and Briana Titone became Colorado's first transgender state legislator after she was inspired to run by Danica Roem of Virginia.



## Texas State Legislature's first LGBTQ Caucus is formed

The Texas State Legislature has never been rife with LGBTQ representation. Before Rep. Mary Gonzalez was elected in 2012, it had only one previous member, Rep. Glenn Maxey. But the elections of 2018 changed that when five LGBTQ representatives were sent to the House by voters, thus creating the first substantive LGBTQ Caucus on January 10. The five members are led by Gonzalez, the most senior representative. Erin Zweiner, Celia Israel, Julie Johnson, and Jessica Gonzalez are the other four. Together, they put forward several pieces of legislation that advanced LGBTQ issues. They were even successful in getting committee hearings for some issues that Republicans had categorically blocked for decades.



### Pete Buttigieg

It's pronounced "Boot-Edge-Edge" according to his campaign merch. Mayor Pete, as he is affectionately known on the campaign trail, is the first gay person to launch a viable presidential primary bid on January 23. Hailing from South Bend, Indiana, where he is currently mayor, Buttigieg is a veteran, a Rhodes Scholar, and the youngest candidate in the Democratic primaries at age 37. As he rises in the polls, scrutiny of his candidacy rises with it. However voters may personally feel about his politics, they cannot deny that his campaign is historic for the LGBTQ community and the nation at large. When the decade started, Buttigieg wasn't allowed to serve openly in the military or marry his partner. This presidential race is indicative of the tremendous progress the LGBTQ community has made in a relatively short time.

### Houston Pride Grand Marshals make history.

On April 26, Pride Houston named Mike Webb the first non-binary Pride grand marshal in the world. Harrison Guy became the LGBTQ organization's first black male grand marshal. The honorary grand marshals were four trans



women of color—Atlantis Narcisse, Dee Dee Watters, Ana Andrea Molina, and Monica Roberts.

### World Pride in NYC celebrates 50 years since Stonewall.

### Lil Nas X becomes the first openly gay rapper to win a Country Music Award.



### Angelica Ross and Billy Porter

The two stars from *Pose* made history in 2019. Ross was a series regular, and her character was murdered in an emotional episode that earned high praise for Ross and the series. Ross was quickly cast as Donna Chambers on season nine of *American Horror Story*, which made her the first out trans actor to be the lead in two series. In September, Billy Porter became the first openly gay black man to win an Emmy award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series. His character's storyline also made news for being focused on a black, gay, HIV-positive couple with a significant age difference, touching on an aspect of gay romantic life that is often ignored.

### Two LGBTQ-focused presidential forums take place in September and October. One is broadcast on CNN.

### Harris County acknowledges the 20th annual Transgender Day of Remembrance with a resolution in November.

### PrEP becomes more accessible.

On December 3, the Department of Health and Human Services launched Ready, Set, PrEP, a program to more widely distribute PrEP medication in an effort to prevent HIV infections. One important aspect of the program is the drug's free distribution to people who could not otherwise gain access to it. This major stride in HIV prevention has a goal of eliminating

new transmissions of the virus during this generation.

### Megan Rapinoe named *Sports Illustrated's* Sportsperson of the Year in December.

### Old Dog, Old Tricks

In a last-ditch effort to gain voter support in his bid for Houston mayor, candidate Tony Buzbee sent out a trans-phobic mailer to supporters one day before the runoff election on December 14. The mailer stoked old lies like the cross-dressing bathroom predators myth and the dangers of drag queens reading story books to children. Buzbee had previously tried to court the LGBTQ vote by expressing fake sympathy on their issues and promising a HERO 2.0. This mailer, along with a text from President Donald Trump and a robo-call from Trump Jr., revealed Buzbee's duplicitous true colors. Houstonians who thought that the city had evolved beyond such hateful rhetoric were reminded that they can never sleep as long as there are homophobic politicians who talk out of both sides of their mouth. Buzbee was soundly defeated by Turner by a margin of 14% points.

### Merriam-Webster declared the gender-neutral singular pronoun "they" as its Word of the Year.

### Queer Representation in the Media

Since 2010, queer representation in the media has increased at an astounding rate. There are more out, queer people serving in elected positions. There are at least 99 television characters who are openly queer, according to GLAAD. There are out, queer musicians in practically every genre of music. There are queer leads in award-winning movies. There are queer storylines with actual substance focusing on characters that are often under-represented in mainstream media. Netflix has a series called *Special* focused entirely on a gay disabled man. Showtime is premiering a new show called *Work In Progress* about a suicidal butch lesbian with OCD.



It seems like there are more queer people than ever, but that isn't exactly true. What happened in the 2010s was that more people came out. More people became visible. More people started living authentically. And that has created a tidal wave of "outness" that is reaching LGBTQ kids in the closet (even in rural South Dakota) in a way that it never has. But the fight is never over. In 2020, the LGBTQ community will continue fighting for more, because it's not only how we will survive, but how we will thrive. Here's to hoping we can see clearly in 2020 and beyond.



**Jade Anniversary**  
Members of ERSICSS pictured at a fundraiser at Tony's Corner Pocket.

## Shiny Crowns and Sparkly Gowns

ERSICSS celebrates 35 years of supporting the community.

By SAM BYRD

**T**he traditional gift to give for a 35th anniversary is jade, but the gift ERSICSS gives every year is time and talent to help the community. The group, whose full name is The Empire of the Royal Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star, Inc., is celebrating its 35th-anniversary month with fanfare by inviting the community to be a part of their tradition of service.

ERSICSS' mission statement says the organization sponsors, supports, and promotes community charitable and educational programs and efforts; promotes and recognizes

community leaders; and promotes harmony among people in the community.

"We do everything one dollar at a time—shows, bake sales, car washes, whatever it takes. We are here to educate, promote, and give back," says Falcon, president of the ERSICSS board. "We like to promote the community, and what Houston is. Our realm is Harris County and [the adjacent] counties."

The group can often be seen on the weekends hosting fundraisers and raising awareness for local nonprofits. Members aren't hard to spot—the women are usually dressed in gowns, men are dressed in formal or western

wear, and everyone usually wears a sash and crown. Some of the members perform in drag, but the unifying thread is that all are focused on the philanthropic mission of the organization.

"We consider ourselves a charity that was founded by a drag queen. We are fully diversified. We've had every type of diversity at one point or another for our emperors and empresses, including heterosexual, cisgender [men and women]. We're open and fluid," Falcon notes.

The current emperor and empress are His Most Royal Sovereign and Imperial Majesty J.J. Fulton, Emperor XXXV; and Her Most Royal Sovereign and Imperial Majesty Morgan Fairview, Empress XXXV. The nonprofit groups they supported in 2019 are Omega House Hospice and Hatch Youth's Rapid Rehousing program. Omega House provides a home-like environment where people at the end of life may live fully, receiving compassionate and competent care from professional, volunteer, and family caregivers. Hatch Youth Rapid Rehousing provides case management and rent for young adults ages 18–24.

The group also participates in direct fundraisers for other nonprofits throughout the year.

The reign of Empress and Emperor XXXV is coming to an end, and when the new royal court is announced, ERSICSS will select this year's charity partners.

Voting for next year's royal court will take place January 6 from 6 to 9 p.m., and January 11 from noon to 6 p.m. at JR's Bar & Grill, 808 Pacific. Anyone with a 77- - - zip code on an official picture ID card will be allowed to vote.

"[The empress and emperor are elected] based on who the community feels is best for the position. It's rare for a community to get to choose the leadership of an organization. The candidates promote, they do shows, they bust their butts for two months trying to get the community's vote," Falcon says.

The results of the vote will be announced as part of Coronation 36, Northern Lights: A Winter Odyssey. Those planning to attend the January 16-19 events must appear in full regalia, formal western, formal leather, or themed attire. Planned events include an in-town show, an out-of-town show, a bus tour, the coronation, and a victory brunch and party. The January 18 coronation (the "crown jewel" of the week) takes place at Sheraton Brookhollow, 3000 North Loop W., with several other

events taking place at Neon Boots Dance Hall & Saloon, 11410 Hempstead Road.

Once the new Emperor and Empress are announced, it's back to the grind—ERSICSS isn't planning any other hoopla for the organization's anniversary outside of this month's coronation ceremony.

"It's so much work. When the new emperor and empress step in, they'll realize it's almost a full-time job because they travel, promote, mentor, and put in the work," Falcon says. "I'm proud of everyone who's been a part of this court. They're a hardworking corps of people who have their hearts and minds in the right spot."

For all of the hours put into the job, the payoff is quite nice. Falcon estimates the group raises anywhere from \$58,000 to \$70,000 per year, and the group is nearing the \$2 million mark for donations during the past 35 years.

While the main focus for ERSICSS is raising money for other nonprofits, they have also established their own gift-giving entities with the Kimberly Anne O'Neil Believe in a Dream Scholarship and the Jonathan Smith Emergency Fund. These are geared toward LGBTQ students and people facing unexpected

financial need, respectively.

"We leaned toward creating some of our own funds because we don't get to see the results of the money we raise; we give it to others. We wanted a little bit of a pat on the back at the coronation, to show that we're giving some of our own money," Falcon explains.

Falcon is proud of the organization's endurance, noting that its members' sustained participation speaks to the values of the group. "What's exciting about our organization is the longevity of some of our members. Not too many organizations get to say they have people from 33 years ago who are still members. Empress III is still playing. Empress VI just came back. Emperor I should be coming to this coronation. That says a lot about who we are. Most people join an organization for a few years and then disappear. We don't. We stay."

**What:** Voting for the 2020 Empress and Emperor of ERSICSS

**When:** Jan. 6 (6 to 9 p.m.)

and Jan. 11 (noon to 6 p.m.)

**Where:** JR's Bar & Grill, 808 Pacific

**Info and tickets:** ersicss.org

(the \$65 coronation dinner is January 18)

## LET'S GET SOCIAL



/outsmartmagazine



@outsmarthouston



@outsmartmagazine



#outsmartmagazine

**OutSmart**

outsmartmagazine.com



EMPOWERING,  
MOTIVATING, AND  
ADVOCATING FOR  
OUR CLIENTS  
TO UNLOCK  
THEIR PHYSICAL  
POTENTIALS

**Dr. Roy Rivera, Jr.**  
PT, PhD, DPT, MCHES

946 N. Shepherd Dr.  
Suite A  
Houston, TX 77008  
713.868.2766

**We accept most major  
health insurances**



Voted Best  
Physical Therapist

**Crom**   
Rehabilitation

Orthopedic & Sports Medicine  
Physical Therapy

**cromrehab.com**



FRANCIS BACON, SELF-PORTRAIT, 1971, OIL ON CANVAS, CENTRE POMPIDOU, MUSÉE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE-CENTRE DE CREATION INDUSTRIELLE, PARIS. © THE ESTATE OF FRANCIS BACON. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. / DACS, LONDON / ARS, NY 2019

## A Troubled Genius

MFAH showcases Francis Bacon's beautiful and brooding paintings.

By BILL ARNING

**T**he summer of 2019's Stonewall 50 observance caused galleries and museums around the world to turn the volume up on their usual gay content. I made it my mission to see as many of these exhibitions as I could. Arriving in London on my way to install my own Texas Queers show at

The Horsehed (a wild alternative arts space outside of Manchester), I knew I had to get to Kiss My Genders at the Haywood Gallery on the Thames. That show was excellent, but all of my most plugged-in queer arts friends said the best Stonewall show was the Gagosian's commercial gallery exhibit of Francis Bacon's paintings, teasingly titled *Couplings*. I knew well that Bacon was gay, fairly out (even in the

1950s), and a brilliant, challenging painter. In fact, he was the painter I loved most as a teenager. I had a framed poster for one of his NYC Marlborough Gallery shows in my '70s teenage bedroom, well before I could articulate his dystopic brilliance. But Bacon for Pride?

Bacon's romantic biography is violent and tragic, at least as negative as the very heterosexual womanizer Picasso (who is currently demonized by a generation of young art historians due to his treatment of the women in his life). But loving Picasso seems like an easy experience compared to a drunken, naked tussle with Bacon. Take Peter Lacy, the fighter pilot who Bacon claimed was the love of his life. He drank himself to death in Tangiers, after having beaten up Bacon on multiple occasions (which Bacon apparently enjoyed, and claimed deepened his ardour for Lacy).

Then in the Bacon biopic *Love Is the Devil*, we see the gorgeous Daniel Craig playing George Dyer, Bacon's muse and lover who committed suicide on the night of Bacon's retrospective opening in Paris. (The idea that Dyer was back at his hotel dying as Bacon was being feted has been proved false—he had died two days earlier; Bacon just kept it a secret.) Yet Bacon's efforts to make that dramatic tale burn bright were successful for a few decades. But you can't blame either the cinematic or the real Dyer for feeling desperate. Knowing how many gay men endure unending trauma with their alcoholic relationships, seeing a Bacon exhibition aimed at elevating our sense of gay pride seemed an awkward fit, at best.

Yet, when I walked in to the Gagosian exhibit, I understood my friends' wild enthusiasm. In 1955, Bacon created and exhibited a painting of two men having sex with an animal power, reminding us that every time we commit sodomy we have the potential to connect with a dark, animalistic queer spirit. When that power takes over our bodies and souls, we connect to Bacchanalian rites going back to time immemorial. While Bacon did not return to the theme of entwined male bodies until the mid-1960s (after English sodomy laws were struck down), his masculine world remains intoxicatingly erotic 50 years later.

Any gay art lover who doesn't get to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, this spring to see the exhibit Francis Bacon: Late Paintings deserves to lose their gay card and never have passionate sex again. These works are not for those with delicate sensitivities. They are as harsh as they are beautiful. An updated version of an exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Houston show starts with a late-1960s portrait of Bacon's lover George Dyer. (Bacon promoted another questionable story that the two met when Dyer was burglarizing Bacon's home, also seen in the biopic.) Dyer's link to crime, even if he was not good at it, gives

**THESE WORKS  
ARE NOT FOR  
THOSE WITH  
DELICATE  
SENSITIVITIES.  
THEY ARE AS  
HARSH AS THEY  
ARE BEAUTIFUL.**

a sense of what Bacon found compelling in a lover.

MFAH curator Alison de Lima Green, a beloved Houston treasure, points to the outpouring of Bacon's best work in response to the trauma surrounding Dyer as a way to understand Bacon's heartbreaking genius and the explicit memorializing seen in the huge triptych *In Memory of George Dyer*, 1971. The paintings will make viewers wonder how Bacon could go on for another twenty years.

Anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide will see the triptych's central panel with the figure opening a staircase door and wonder, "Could anyone have prevented this?"

Unlike most Bacon museum surveys, the MFAH show will start in the year of Dyer's suicide when Bacon is already one of the most successful artists the world had known. He could have just coasted by repeating himself, but these paintings from his last two decades are typified by startling formal experiment. The palette of some of the works in the MFAH exhibit will surprise those who know Bacon as the brooding master of dark fury. While the working-class, rough-trade lads he most desired are less visible than in other shows, Bacon's deep engagement with the art of painting—and the masters of the form, from Velasquez to Picasso—is highly evident. Bacon even went outside of his comfort zone to try his hand at the female nude, and thereby wrestle with Picasso's overwhelming genius. Bacon's recently rediscovered final work, *Study of a Bull*, 1991, has a startling clarity and challenges Picasso's ownership of the bull motif in painting.

The final romantic relationship in Bacon's long life is visible in a 1991 triptych in which José Capelo, a Spanish banker 40 years

younger than Bacon, is shown on the left panel while Bacon's face is acres away on the far right. Bacon was smitten enough to give Capelo a number of his paintings, in addition to a large sum of money.

Capelo ended up in the newspapers again when those paintings were stolen from his Madrid apartment, but then recovered. Although Capelo denies that "lovers" is the right term for their relationship, it appears to have been a mainly positive relationship when compared to the violently drunken lovers Bacon had in his earlier life. Alison de Lima Green is happy that this Capelo triptych (from New York's Museum of Modern Art) will be in Houston. "Bacon really was a romantic. He flew to Spain to see Capelo against doctor's orders."

Bacon's genius (as well as his love life, in all its erotic, dark frenzy) will be on view at MFAH from February 23 through May 25. I am recommending the show as a first-date destination for all of my most complicated single gay friends. If their dates can handle these paintings, they can handle my friends!

**What:** *Francis Bacon: Late Paintings*

**When:** February 23–May 25

**Where:** Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

**Info:** mfah.org



**SERVING OUR  
COMMUNITY IN  
A SAFE & CARING  
ENVIRONMENT.**

**Denis "Woodja"  
Flanigan, Ph. D.**  
*Licensed psychologist*

Psychotherapy, Career Counseling,  
Individual, & Relationship  
Counseling



**Voted Best  
Psychologist**  
2011–2019  
OutSmart Readers'  
Choice Awards

Specializing in individuals,  
couples, & family relational  
issues to regain your  
direction, sense of meaning,  
and your happiness.

**HELPING YOU REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL!**

2211 Norfolk St., Suite 206, Houston, TX 77098  
www.Houston-Psychologist.com | 713-589-9804

For mental health news, and information, you can follow me at  
www.facebook.com/Flanigan.psychotherapy



**MEET ME AT THE CLUB**

**THE CLUB** HOUSTON  
Good. Clean. Fun.

<b>S</b> sunday	<b>T</b> tuesday	<b>W</b> wednesday	<b>F</b> friday
<b>Free Buffet 1pm</b>	<b>Half priced ROOMS</b> 4pm-11:45pm	<b>Half priced LOCKERS</b> 4pm-11:45pm	<b>Half priced ROOMS</b> 4pm-7:45pm

*Happy Hour*

always open • steam • sauna • whirlpool • huge outdoor pool & patio • private  
dressing rooms • lockers • full gym • guest membership available • 18+ only

**DAILY SPECIALS**  
**Social Media ONLY**

**#clubhouston**

A PRIVATE MENS CLUB  
2205 Fannin Street • Houston • (713)659-4998 • theclubs.com

Back in the **HEART**  
of Montrose!



Voted Best or Finalist  
Massage Therapist  
2002-2019!



**Tom Zeppelin, LMT**  
**ZeppelinMassage.com**  
**713.542.0426**

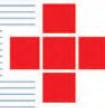
**Expert Emergency Care...**  
We care for our community



- Average Wait Time of 10 Minutes or Less
- Treatment by Board Certified Emergency Physicians
- Lab, CT Scan, & X-Ray Results in Minutes



Voted one of  
the Best Urgent or  
Emergency Care Center



**elite care**

24 HOUR EMERGENCY CENTER

**713.527.4400 | EliteCareEmergency.com**

2500 Rice Blvd., Houston, TX 77005 [Rice Village Location]

**JM Professional Services LLC**  
**PRIVATE PRACTICE**

Qualified Substance  
Abuse Professionals



Voted One  
of the  
Best Mental  
Health  
Therapists

- Personal & Workplace
- SAP Evaluations
- Drug & Alcohol Abuse

**JEFFREY MYLES**

NCAC I, SAP, LAP-C

713.447.2164 | JMylesSAP@gmail.com

**REAL ESTATE DONE RIGHT**  
CALL NOW FOR YOUR LOCAL REAL ESTATE NEEDS



**CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS**

713.855.4419

CALL ME FOR DETAILS!



**GARY GREENE**



**STUNNING  
MONTROSE HOME!**

**2136 KIPLING - \$1,080,000 \* 4,201 SQ. FT.**  
3 bed, 3 full 2-1/2 baths, 2 garage



STAGE

For four decades, Stages has presented plays focused on queer lives, including the world premiere of *Balls* in 2017. The acclaimed production dramatized the Battle of the Sexes tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs at Houston's Astrodome in 1973.

# A New Era for Stages Repertory Theatre

\$35 million facility features three state-of-the-art theaters.

By ANDREW EDMONSON

**ON** Saturday, January 18, Stages Repertory Theatre will leap boldly into a golden new decade when it unveils *The Gordy*, its new \$35 million campus with three intimate, state-of-the-art theaters.

For a company that began its life in the late 1970s in the damp basement of a brewery, it is almost a miracle that the theater has arrived at this point after weathering so many budgetary challenges over the years.

In 2006, when Stages was facing tough financial times, artistic director Kenn McLaughlin lamented in an interview with the *Houston Chronicle* about the company's seeming inability to break through the glass ceiling that separates midsize companies from downtown giants like Houston Grand Opera and the Alley Theatre.

Fourteen years later, Stages has broken through that glass ceiling with a vengeance. An initial feasibility study predicted that the company could raise \$15 million. Stages roared past that goal, raising \$35 million. It has enlisted several heavy-hitters from the

city's old-guard philanthropic elite, while also cultivating new donors from the theater's subscription base who were willing to step up and make significant seven-figure gifts.

The sleek new complex is located in the 800 block of Rosine, just two blocks south of Stages' current location in North Montrose. Designed by the Gensler architecture firm, the 66,850 square-foot facility is comprised of three theatrical spaces that will give Stages one more theater than at its former Allen Parkway location.

The Sterling Stage is a 251-seat thrust theater with two seating levels. The Lester and Sue Smith Stage is a 223-seat arena theater with two seating levels. And the Rochelle and Max Levit Stage features a 134-seat black-box theater. The U.K.-based Charcoal Blue firm provided the acoustical design. While Stages grows its total number of seats, it retains the trademark intimacy that has characterized the experience of attending a Stages play for the past four decades.

Broadway legend Chita Rivera will chris-

ten the new complex at a special sold-out gala performance on Friday evening, January 17. The next day, the theater debuts to the public with an open house at 2:00 pm.

Stages's great leap forward has come under the aegis of two dynamic gay leaders: managing director Mark Folkes, and Kenn McLaughlin, who is the company's longest-serving artistic director, celebrating his twentieth anniversary with the company this year.

## 1970s Cutting-Edge Theater

Stages was founded in an era of enormous creative energy that gave birth to several pillars of the Houston theater establishment. In 1975, George Hawkins founded The Ensemble Theater to bring the stories of the African-American experience to Houston audiences. That same year, a group of students who had worked together at Rice University founded a collective that eventually evolved into Main Street Theater, led by artistic director Rebecca Greene Udden for over four decades. →

In 1978, Ted Swindley, a gay 26-year-old graduate student in the theater program at the University of Houston, looked around the city's theatrical landscape and saw no other company doing the challenging, cutting-edge work that excited him. He founded Stages in the basement of the historic Magnolia Ballroom. A key focus of his new endeavor was to employ Houston theater artists.

With grit and moxie, Stages began mounting vibrant productions of contemporary playwrights like Marsha Norman, Christopher Durang, Jules Feiffer, and Jack Heifner. The *Houston Chronicle* would eventually declare that Stages was Houston's equivalent of New York City's off-Broadway theaters, in recognition of its daring productions of new plays.

But it was an uphill climb for Swindley. "It was very hard to start a theater," he remembers. "We started at the lowest circumstances. We worked hard."

Swindley juggled three or four part-time jobs in order to pursue his dream. When the dishwashing machine in the Chinese restaurant above the theater leaked, Swindley would hang a tarp above the center section of audience seats to minimize the water damage. During one early performance when a raccoon wandered onstage, the actors froze briefly but eventually carried on.

The theater did have its champions. "Our landlord, Bart Truxillo, was really wonderful to us," Swindley remembers. He also credits Houston philanthropist Mimi Kilgore for her staunch support during the early years.

## A Turning Point in 1983

A turning point for the company came in 1983 when Swindley decided to stage *Bent*, a wrenching drama depicting the way gay men were targeted by the Nazis during the Holocaust. The play climaxes in a deeply moving love scene between two men in a concentration camp.

"When I decided to do *Bent*, I said, 'This is a test,'" Swindley recalls. "This will let me know if the city will support us, or if we will be picketed by people from evangelical churches. It could go either way. It was extremely risky.

"We had an opening date, and we didn't have enough money to open it. I went to the 11 actors in the cast and said, 'We've got two choices. I can suspend rehearsals, or we can continue rehearsals until we can find enough money to open.' Everyone in the cast wanted to continue rehearsing.

"It was the first major hit that we had at Stages," he continues. "Every performance was completely sold out, and there was a waiting list. At that point, I knew that we were on the



In 2002, openly gay artistic director Rob Bundy staged a powerful production of *The Laramie Project*, which dramatized the impact of the murder of Matthew Shepard on a community.

right path. There *was* an audience for new, socially challenging work. It was a mountain-top experience. I was thrilled to have the gay community behind us, but the audience was actually very mixed."

In 1983, Swindley also staged a gender-bending production of Oscar Wilde's comedic classic *The Importance of Being Earnest*. On most nights the cast gave a traditional interpretation of the work, but on some nights the cast switched roles and performed the parts of the opposite gender, with Swindley taking on the role of the dowager Lady Bracknell.

The laughter came to an abrupt halt in 1985, when Swindley arrived one day to find his theater doors padlocked. The fire marshal

had shut the primitive basement theater down for exceeding occupancy restrictions.

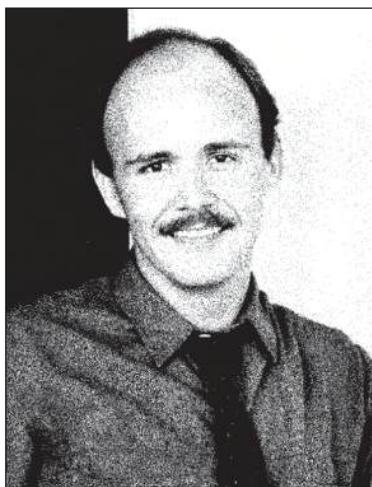
## A New Home in Montrose

Bill Neuhaus, a Stages board member, came to the rescue by helping to broker a deal for Stages to rent a property at 3201 Allen Parkway. The space had formerly been occupied by Star Engraving Center, which manufactured high school and college rings. It would serve as Stages's home for the next 34 years.

Swindley continued to stage queer-themed works such as Charles Bush's satiric *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* (starring beloved Stages actress Sally Edmundson), Christopher Durang's *Beyond Therapy*, and *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You* (which became a big hit for the company). Stages has also produced musicals including a 25th-anniversary production of *Hair* and Stephen Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures*.

Swindley's skills as a dramatist paid off in 1988 when he put together a two-person play with little rehearsal time. Houston was still reeling from the oil bust, and Stages' prospects looked grim. "The theatre was about to close. I had to think of something that would sell tickets," Swindley recalls. "I took a great risk on Patsy Cline, whom I knew little about. The story of the show came about from me asking the question 'Did Patsy ever play in Houston?'" The resulting production, *Always...Patsy Cline*, has emerged as one of the most popular works that Stages has ever produced.

"It was one of the first jukebox musicals," says Swindley. It went on to be performed across the U.S., playing off-Broadway and touring Britain, Canada, and Australia. Stages has revived the work regularly over the last



### FOUNDING FATHER

Ted Swindley founded Stages in 1978 in the basement of the Magnolia Ballroom, and led the company until 1990.



Managing Director Mark Folkes has guided Stages through a period of explosive growth, including a doubling of its budget to \$4.1 million.



Artistic director Kenn McLaughlin, who has led Stages for twenty years, will direct the inaugural production of *The Fantasticks*, opening *The Gordy* January 24 - March 15.

three decades to adoring audiences and strong box office.

Swindley left Stages in 1990 to care for a sick family member. The theater faltered for a period in the 1990s until Rob Bundy, an openly gay man, arrived from New York City as artistic director in 1996. Over the next decade, he expanded the company's audience, raised the caliber of productions, and continued to stage premieres. A highlight of his tenure was Moisés Kaufman's *Laramie Project* in 2002, which chronicled the murder of Matthew Shepard. The powerful production was a collaboration with the gay theater group Unhinged Productions.

Kenn Laughlin arrived in 2000, serving first as managing director and then assuming the role of producing artistic director after Bundy's departure in 2006. Under his leadership, the company has thrived. He has directed over 25 shows and launched box-office smashes such as *The Marvelous Wonderettes*, the *Late Nite Catechism* series, and *The Great American Trailer Park Musical*. Laughlin has continued Stages's tradition of staging groundbreaking new work focused on the queer experience. In 2017, in collaboration with One Year Lease Theater Company, the company presented the world premiere of *Balls*, a mesmerizing, marvelously theatrical dramatization of the legendary "Battle of the Sexes" 1973 tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs in the Astrodome.

### Preparing for a New Era

In 2015, Mark Folkes joined Stages as managing director, bringing significant fundraising, marketing, and strategic-planning experience from his past positions at the Houston Symphony and Planned Parenthood.

In February 2016, Stages's board ratified a five-year strategic plan focused on transfor-

mational growth, including expanded artistic, educational, and community-engagement initiatives as well as major improvements in facilities infrastructure, financial stability, and human resources.

Isla and Tommy Reckling agreed to serve as honorary chairs for the capital campaign, and made the first major gift of \$500,000. An additional \$2.5 million gift from the Sterling-Turner Foundation brought their total contribution to \$3 million. The largest theater in the complex will be named for Isla's mother, noted Houston philanthropist Carroll Sterling Masterson.

Russell and Glenda Gordy, who have been season ticket holders for decades, made a historic gift of \$5 million, the largest in Stages's history. The new Stages campus on Rosine Street will bear their name.

In February 2019, Lester and Sue Smith announced a \$2.5 million gift to the campaign, allowing Stages to fully fund *The Gordy* complex with a 223-seat arena theater that will bear their name.

### A Transformed Culture

As the capital campaign shifted into high gear, the company also experienced explosive audience growth. Total subscription and single-ticket revenue has tripled over the last five years. Attendance has increased by 50% during the same period, from 45,000 in 2014 to 67,000 in 2019. The company's budget has grown from \$2.1 million in 2014 to \$4.1 million in 2019. To help staff the expanded facility, the company has hired 11 new employees, bringing total full-time staff to 34.

As the company began to plan for its new facility, it went through a rigorous process focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Under the guidance of consultants from artEquity and Theater Communications Group, a key

focus has been on expanding the diversity of Stages's audience. For example, in addition to traditional restrooms segregated by sex, the new complex will include an "all user" gender-neutral restroom.

"We're able to deliver a different level of patron experience in *The Gordy*," says Stages veteran Lise Bohn, the company's resource development and communications director. "The work on equity, diversity, and inclusion is a journey, and that lens has transformed the culture of our organization at every level."

### New Theater, Classic Production

To inaugurate *The Gordy*, Stages is returning to a work that is a cherished part of its history. *The Fantasticks*, running January 24–March 15 on the Sterling Stage, is the longest-running musical in history. Composer Harvey Schmidt and librettist Tom Jones are both Texans. Stages presented *The Fantasticks* in 1978 as part of its inaugural season, and again in the late 1980s when it moved to 3201 Allen Parkway.

Fittingly, the production, which the company calls "the perfect Valentine to the theatre and the eternal power of love," will be directed by Artistic Director McLaughlin.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *Water by the Spoonful* will open the Lester and Sue Smith Stage February 7–23. In the play, an Iraq War veteran and former addict finds solace in an online chat room as he struggles to reconnect with his mother—herself a former heroin addict. The company calls the play "an uplifting and heartfelt meditation on broken lives, forgiveness, and the strength to carry on."

Founding director Ted Swindley received an advance preview of *The Gordy*, and is very pleased. "It is my wildest dream," he says. "It is what I wanted the theater to be when we started in 1978." Managing director Mark Folkes echoes that sentiment as he prepares to unveil the new complex. "Our world has transformed," he says.

**What:** Stages Repertory Theatre Open House at its new three-theater campus

**Where:** 800 Rosine Street

**When:** Saturday, January 18 at 2:00 pm

**The Fantasticks:** January 24–March 15

**Water by the Spoonful:** February 7–23

**Info:** [www.stagestheatre.com](http://www.stagestheatre.com)

*Andrew Edmonson has written about the arts for the Houston Chronicle, OutSmart, Houston Ballet News, and Playbill. He won the Award of Special Merit from the Texas Chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.*

# LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

THY HOMELESS NEIGHBOR  
 THY JEWISH NEIGHBOR  
 THY BLACK NEIGHBOR

THY GAY NEIGHBOR  
 THY UNDOCUMENTED NEIGHBOR  
 THY WHITE NEIGHBOR

THY TRANSGENDER NEIGHBOR  
 THY CHRISTIAN NEIGHBOR  
 THY HIV+ NEIGHBOR

THY RACIST NEIGHBOR  
 THY ADDICTED NEIGHBOR  
 THY ATHEIST NEIGHBOR

THY IMPRISONED NEIGHBOR  
 THY DISABLED NEIGHBOR  
 THY MUSLIM NEIGHBOR



**SUNDAY WORSHIP 9 & 11 AM**  
 NURSERY AVAILABLE | HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE  
 11 AM - CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAM  
 11 AM - SPANISH & DEAF INTERPRETATION  
 2025 W. 11TH @ TC JESTER, HOUSTON 77008  
 713.861.9149 | WWW.RESURRECTIONMCC.ORG



## OCTAVIO BARRIOS, M.D.

ADULT PRIMARY CARE  
[www.doctorbarrios.com](http://www.doctorbarrios.com)



OCTAVIO BARRIOS, MD

BOARD CERTIFIED  
 AMERICAN BOARD  
 OF FAMILY MEDICINE

BY APPOINTMENT  
 SAME DAY AVAILABLE  
 FOR ACUTE ILLNESS

### Ask us about PrEP Today!

HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

**MOST INSURANCES  
 ACCEPTED**



LUCIA MANGLE ARNOLD,  
 MPAS, PA-C



**BEST PHYSICIAN**  
 2013-2019  
 FINALIST

**Renaissance Family Clinic**  
 517 West Gray St. • 713.942.7546

## QUALITY DENTISTRY ONE PATIENT AT A TIME!



ONE OF THE BEST DENTISTS  
 OutSmart Readers' Choice  
 Awards 2006 – 2019

VOTED AS ONE OF HOUSTON'S  
 TOP DENTISTS  
 2004 – 2019  
 — *H Texas Magazine*



**Cory Logan, D.D.S.**

General & Cosmetic Dentistry

**713.942.8598**

[www.CoryLoganDDS.com](http://www.CoryLoganDDS.com)

530 Waugh Dr. | Houston TX 77019

COOLER in the SUMMER • WARMER in the WINTER

## LIVE in GALVESTON

NEAR  
 by the  
 BEACH!

CLOSE to  
 HOUSTON

HISTORIC  
 HOMES



**3212 AVE Q 1/2, FOUR BLOCKS TO THE BEACH!...\$269,500**

Circa 1921, classic craftsman-style two-story home with four bedrooms, and 2 baths.

Make 2020 your year to invest in property in Galveston!



**David Bowers, Realtor®**



The House Company

**409/763-2800**

David@DavidBowers.com

Sally B. Wallace Preservation Award  
 for Green Revival (solar panels  
 on my 1899 Victorian home)

Thank you for voting me Best Realtor® in Galveston -OutSmart Readers' Choice 2013-15

# ASTROCAST 2020

by **LILLY RODDY**

Illustrations by **ANGEL ALBARRAN**

**M**any dynamic functions are taking place in 2020. We will feel like we are taking two steps forward and one step back. As in 2018 and 2016, both Venus and Mars are going retrograde, along with three Mercury retrogrades. We can make progress, but we will have to stay alert and aware. Venus, the planet of love and money, is retrograde from April 29 through July 8. Mars, planet of action and survival, is retrograde from August 23 through November 30. Mercury retrogrades February 11 through March 3, June 10 through July 20, and October 4 through November 10. We only have a few months where retrogrades don't slow us down. This will limit the number of "good" days available for marriages, surgeries, house closings, and starting new projects. However, we will be focused on taking care of past issues and clearing up leftover projects.

A major planetary conjunction with Saturn and Pluto will grab our attention. When these two planets meet, there are always worldwide governmental shifts, power shifts within all large organizations (including religious institutions), and increased financial pressures. A good example is when Saturn and Pluto were conjoined during the tragic events of September 11, 2001, now forever known simply as 9/11!

We have been in this major overhaul of our government since September of 2017, and that will continue through December 2020. Overall, this planetary influence will continue to impact the nation's chart through the end of 2023. There are still major shifts that will occur. This will have the most impact on the cardinal signs: Aries, Libra, Cancer, and Capricorn.

Also influential are the eclipses in December 2019, January, June/July, and November/December 2020. These will have the strongest impact on the mutable signs: Gemini, Virgo, Pisces, and Sagittarius.

Stay on your toes this year! You will need to be ready to change with the shifting tides. →



Lilly Roddy has been an astrologer for over 35 years. She counsels individuals in personal, business, and financial matters, as well as lecturing on astrology. Her original interest in astrology, like most people's, was to come to a better understanding of who she was and how to make the most of her life. She continues to study all areas of astrology and metaphysics to expand her base of knowledge. Roddy's approach is to bring together a mental, physical, and spiritual combination that has real application in the world. Roddy can be contacted at 713.529.5842 or [lillycath@aol.com](mailto:lillycath@aol.com).



## ARIES

MARCH 21–APRIL 19

This is a big year for decisions around career, long-term security investments, potentially starting your own business, or possibly considering retirement. You will be working to make your boundaries and commitments stronger. You'll be considering eliminating activities, group associations, and partnerships that don't seem fruitful. Some of you may find that the industry that you are in is declining or having to retool. You may feel that you are pushed into difficult decisions, even though these decisions will make your life better in the long run. This may compel you to start your own business so that you feel like you have more control. As this is a time for better boundaries, you are reworking your long-term goals in your personal relationships as well. Relationship issues will come to the surface in September through November of 2020. If your relationship is doing well, this will be a good time to renew bonds. However, if your relationship is struggling, issues will come to the surface that will have to be dealt with. Taking care of your health will be especially important in that same September through



November time frame. Your temper will be especially short during that time. This may also be a time when you have to prove yourself or feel the urge to compete. Friendships and business relationships will also be tested for their viability and genuine support. This can be a time to step into a leadership position within a business or community organization. You will have a strong agenda and be good in a leadership role. However, if you feel that your time and energy is being wasted, you will move on to greener pastures. This is also a great year for you to go back to school, upgrade your skill set, and take a vacation! Pace yourself, as there will be plenty of opportunity for activities to get involved in.



## TAURUS

APRIL 20–MAY 20

This is a year for exploring new passions, personal reinvention, and greater personal freedom to make choices. You may initially experience this as feeling bored or trapped with your work or commitments as the initial urge grows stronger after January 10. On the career front, you are looking to take a step up the ladder, looking for a leadership role in your work or through a community organization. This is also connected to your desire to feel more passionate about the things you dedicate your life to. This is an excellent year to enhance your certification, go back to school, or work to boost the communication system that your company utilizes. Relationships are especially active this year. You are wanting your relationships—both business and personal—to be more dynamic and interesting. Relationships that are too restrictive may have to be redesigned, or may come to an end. You will want to question all your commitments in February, March, May, June, October, and November. These times are open for you to renegotiate goals and expectations of commitment. A sense of obligation will not be strong enough to hold your attention; you need to *want* to be there! Along with your need for greater personal freedom and expression, you will also be paying more attention to how you present yourself to others. Since this is a time of taking on a greater leadership role, you will be more aware of how others respond to you. First impressions will have a stronger impact on the people you encounter this year. For some of you, this will be a time where you will want to get off the grid and find a more peaceful and less demanding way of life. Ultimately, all of you will want to circumvent the blocks and restrictions you have encountered in the past and find that inner passion that makes life worth living.

## GEMINI

MAY 21–JUNE 21

As we enter 2020, the eclipse cycle will begin to affect Gemini and Sagittarius. Eclipses repeat approximately every 18 years. These can be times when new opportunities present themselves seemingly out of the blue. This year, eclipses are in early June, early July, at the end of November, and in mid-December. These are important times to stay on your toes. During May through June, you will be reexamining your career directions, as well as your business and personal relationships. During this phase, you will become more cognizant of reoccurring problems. This presents an opportunity to correct or improve some relationships, while bringing to a close those that are not working. This year you will also be motivated to eliminate or consolidate your debt into something more manageable.



This may be a good time to secure loans for real estate or home improvement. Demands from friendships and group associations can really irritate you from September through November. You may feel that they are demanding too much of you and not taking responsibility for their own actions or choices. Career goals continue to feel nebulous. This past year you explored many different opportunities, but you still kept your options open. You are looking for something that satisfies you more internally, rather than externally or even financially. You may find it harder to be around people who surround themselves with drama or expect you to fix their problems. In the past, these were the people most attracted to you, and you were only too happy to fix their problems. You will need to pace yourself and really focus on things that bring you a sense of personal satisfaction. You won't be able to follow through with the same sense of obligation as you did in the past. Give yourself plenty of time to meditate, daydream, or just sit on your patio without an agenda.

## CANCER

JUNE 22–JULY 22

This continues to be an especially active and busy year! On a personal level, you will be reviewing career goals and reestablishing priorities that better support your long-term plans. For some, this can be a time of creating your own business, being a mentor for someone, or looking at cutting back or retiring. This area of your life will be especially active during June and July, and again in September through November. At this time you may be considering a new leadership role, perhaps because of difficulties with your current boss or business partners. Your relationships are going through a very similar process. On one level, this will be the ideal time to



set new objectives and aspirations for your current business or personal relationships. You will be renewing those bonds and looking for projects that draw you closer together. On the other hand, if you and your partner or business associates are moving in different directions, those relationships may have outlived their usefulness. It may be a good time to explore new relationships that fit the person you are now. For those of you who are single or looking for a new partner, 2020 is an excellent year to expand your base, generate new friends, and expand on potential relationship partners. This is also a very good time to improve your exercise and eating regimen. You will be motivated to detox your system and move toward a cleaner existence. This can show up in what you eat, as well as in the friends and people you choose to have around you. Cancerians are feeling older this year and may need to address the responsibilities that come with aging. In the latter half of the year, you will be wanting to get clarity in your finances. This is an excellent time to take care of past financial problems and relieve yourself of the pressure.



## LEO

JULY 23–AUGUST 22

This year may bring a feeling that things are changing around you and forcing you to adapt—like it or not! You are looking for projects, activities, and new friends that excite your passion and bring zest into your life. Changes in your career and familial responsibilities are indicated; you are looking to reinvent yourself at work and release domestic responsibilities that you always thought were yours. You will question your career direction because you want to feel more satisfied about your work. You will be feeling more limited by what is being expected of you, even though you may be great at it. This may feel especially irritating in February and March, and again in October and November. Use your energy to explore new outlets, rather than complaining about your work or family. This year you are looking to solidify positive relationships and eliminate people who want you to do all the maintenance in the relationship. You will require common goals to give relationships a greater sense of purpose. Relationships that have outlived their usefulness will be eliminated. This can be an excellent time to find a new business partner. You are becoming clear about your expectations, and are willing to verbalize them.

Health aspects are improving, and you are more open to positive changes in eating and exercise habits. Changes and shifts in your office environment could manifest as better working conditions, new office equipment, or just enjoying relationships with coworkers. Friendships will be tested in late spring and early summer. You may feel that some of your friends are letting you down and not following through. You may be hearing from old friends or ex-lovers whom you haven't heard from in a while. You have a tendency this year to be too quick to judge. Give yourself extra time to make decisions. After those decisions are made, you won't go back.

## VIRGO

AUGUST 23–SEPTEMBER 22

Your spiritual pilgrimage continues, and you persist in questioning the viability of your core beliefs. Last year opened you to fresh ideas, new social situations, and expanding your views—both culturally and historically. This year you will be exploring ways to utilize and bring to fruition the concepts that inspired you last year. You are in a more creative cycle, and you will feel more compelled to apply that energy, rather than just daydream about it. On a very personal level, this is a time when your inner child has awakened and needs nourishment. You will want your creativity to have a practical application. If you have children, you will see them mature as you pay more attention to yourself and sustain your own inner child. This year's energies are supportive of taking a hobby and turning it into a vocation. It's also a good year for promoting your services or projects, or even for looking for a better-paying position. Writing, publishing, filmmaking, or other creative avenues are open to you. Relationships are always unique and different with Virgos. You need emotional closeness and yet some physical distance in order to create the right balance for you. You are more



than ready to adapt to new situations, but there should be more stability in your relationship in 2020. You will be reviewing your own health and exercise routines for most of the year. This is an especially good year to focus on chronic issues and find some relief. You are likely to be successful with any exercise or diet program you start. Your career comes under review in May and June. This is an excellent time to take care of existing projects and not start anything new. Relationships with coworkers and colleagues will have to be revisited. You are more in touch with the flow this year, and that should make for easier navigation. →



## LIBRA

SEPTEMBER 23–OCTOBER 23

For the last couple of years there have been huge changes and significant turmoil surrounding your family and your inner sense of security. This has created problems with stability in your work and career arena. You have had to come to terms with what is really important to you. The demands of others had to be weighed against your need for emotional stability. Your home may have needed some major repairs, and external conditions may have forced you to move or relocate. This energy is finally coming to a head in January and February. You should feel your harsh conditions beginning to improve. Although you will see some of this energy return in November and December, it will not be as intense as it has been. In your career, you definitely have a different set of priorities than you had in the past. You are looking for a more balanced life that embraces all parts of you. You are definitely reworking your career path. You may be focusing on what really works for you. Consider retraining to pursue an entirely new path, or downsizing for a simpler life. In your relationships, you are setting new boundaries and are having to be more explicit about your expectations from your partner. You want to make sure that you are both headed in the same direction. There could be a bump in the road from September through October. That is a time when your relationship will need some extra attention. This is a great time for emotional and physical bonding. If you're having problems, this will be the time when those problems surface so that they can be addressed. Finances should improve, but you will still maintain your careful spending. There could be opportunities for loans pertaining to real estate or remodeling. Keep your priorities focused on what's best for you and, we all benefit!

## SCORPIO

OCTOBER 24–NOVEMBER 21

As we enter this new year, you are reassessing your life direction, career interests, and relationship, as well as creating a more comfortable nest for your personal life.

With your career, you reached a peak and now you are looking for new interests to bring back that spark. For some of you, this is a time of new beginnings. You are ready to step forward and do what you can to create security in your life. Others may be exploring a mentoring role, downsizing their lives as they move toward retirement. But all of you Scorpios are improving your boundaries, getting clear about priorities, and creating stability around you. Partnerships fall into this time of reimagining relationships and what represents the ideal for you. This is the time to explore the unique ways relationships can exist. Traditional views on relationships are being expanded to represent the equality of each partner. You and your partner may look for new projects to do together to generate more emotional intimacy in your relation-



ship. Relationships that have a lot of preset expectations may not do well in 2020. You and your partner may need more personal space due to work or family needs. Your overall finances look better as you will find it easier to make decisions and be clear about your goals. You will be reexamining some of your finances in May and June to find a better way to capitalize on your resources. In the latter part of the year, September through November, pay attention to your health. This would be an excellent time to start or resume any kind of exercise or health regimen. You will be particularly reflective prior to your birthday in 2020. This will begin a time of some very important decision-making for you. This is a good year to get organized and get clear about your priorities.

## SAGITTARIUS

NOVEMBER 22–DECEMBER 21

With last year being so busy and filled with so many different ideas and opportunities, you are looking to make this year a lot more positive and profitable. In your career, you'll be wanting to do something that really aligns with your nature, helps to make you feel fulfilled, and satisfies an internal yearning. You will be able to manifest these energies and make money with your new projects more directly. Home and family have been elusive aspects in your life, especially last year. You may be looking to recreate that sense of family with new people in your life.



You may also be working on stabilizing your home's foundation and dealing with water problems. You will want a home that offers you a sense of retreat from the harsh realities of your day-to-day life. Finances should be better this entire year, but you will still be cautious about how and where you spend your money. This is a good year for you to invest in long-term stable assets. Avoid investment schemes that seem too good to be true—because they are. You are working to make your daily life more effective and efficient. You will value your time more and will not be happy with people who take advantage of your generous nature. Relationships could hit a bumpy patch in May and June. If you are having problems in some of your relationships, consider this an advantage. This will be a time when those problems come to the surface, and you will have an opportunity to address them out in the open. You may feel that there is some deception going on, or that the truth is being withheld to spare your feelings. Take advantage of this time to see more clearly.

## AQUARIUS JANUARY 20–FEBRUARY 18



## CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22–JANUARY 19

Since 2008, you have been under some of the most difficult planetary aspects that you may encounter in your lifetime. The culmination of this process reaches a peak in mid-January, though you will still be experiencing this energy through the end of the year. This has been a trying time where the forces around you affected your work, your relationships, your sense of purpose, your confidence, and your spark. You will be slowly rebuilding as more opportunities appear this year. Yet the sense of loss and foreboding continues to be active in your sign through January 2021. In your career, you may have had to change your goals, experience downsizing, mergers with other companies, and major changes to your industry. You may have had to retire, start your own business, or reeducate yourself in an entirely different field. You should see less of this crazy energy in 2020, but it is still lurking in the shadows. You will be focused on recreating stability in your life. One area that you will be very focused on is improving your finances. You will be re-examining your investments and possibly putting yourself on a budget to make sure that you have full control of your financial picture. You may have some problems with coworkers and work schedules in May and June. People are willing to talk and negotiate, but the changes may affect you directly. There is also some turmoil in your family that shows up between September and November. This could be as simple as you wanting to do some remodeling around the house, or as difficult as dealing with major health factors for older members of your family. This is a time of rebuilding in your life. You may feel that you are taking two steps forward and one step back throughout this whole year, but you are still making progress. This is a more positive year for you.

This year you are looking to make your life more effective and efficient with the time that you have. This will be an important year of focusing on boundaries, setting career goals, having more stability in your relationships, and satisfying your needs first and not putting others ahead of you. Career activity is very strong for you this year and next year. This can be a time when you are pushing for a leadership position, starting your own business, or cutting back and moving toward retirement while looking for new projects to take their place. You will be more clear and direct about how you feel as you perfect ways to keep people from taking advantage of you. If you are having problems with your boss, this may be a strong indicator for you to look elsewhere where your talents can be appreciated. This is a time to strengthen your relationship by working on common goals or projects that bring you closer together. If your partner isn't willing to share the responsibility and the load, you will be looking for other people to share your time with. This applies to both business and personal rela-



tionships. You will be working on yourself this year—improving your appearance, your health, and who you share your resources with. This is a super year to start an exercise and eating plan. You are more willing to make a commitment to yourself and to follow through on all of your plans this year. There could be some problems with work and coworkers in June and July. Management may not be sure of the direction it's taking, and that will cause confusion about what the right approach is. Stay flexible during this time and allow the solution to surface in July. You will be goal oriented, and you should be able to accomplish what you set out to do this year.

## PISCES FEBRUARY 19–MARCH 20

You continue to be in a place where you are looking to make your life, your work, and your relationships more fulfilling and more balanced. You may have stepped away from many of your friends and organizations while you focused on elements of your life that are personally satisfying. Opportunities for new career activities, creating new friendships, and increased spiritual awareness are all part of the upcoming year. You are going to be much more active in your community and with friends. This is a great year for you to take a leadership role in a community organization, or to take up a cause with others to improve your surroundings and make your environment much safer. This could turn into a career opportunity as the year progresses.



Relationships are mostly stable, except during May and June, when old problems may reemerge so they can be addressed. This is not a particularly angry or vengeful energy, but one that seeks harmony and compromise so both people benefit. This would be a good time to reexamine long-term goals in all of your relationships, just to make sure. As always, if your relationship partners aren't willing to put in the work, this could be a time for serious negotiations and possibly ending the relationships that aren't working. Finances may emerge as a problem from September through December. This would be a good time for you to stop avoiding the problem, and direct your energies to alleviating debt. You may have to spend money on an emergency situation, despite your best efforts to keep your finances under control. This should be a better year for you overall. You should have more social activities centered around fun, instead of just being connected to activities that have a purpose. You are actually achieving balance and harmony in your life this year. ■

No Drama  
...Just Results

Debbie Levine

TOP PRODUCER  
2001-2019



Voted one of the  
BEST FEMALE REAL ESTATE AGENT  
7 years in a row.

Outsmart Readers'  
Choice 2013-2019

GREENWOOD KING  
PROPERTIES

dlevine@greenwoodking.com

713.942.6857

# REACHING FOR THE STARS

Digital artist Angel Albarran

By MARENE GUSTIN | Photo by JENNIFER CRISPIN



This month, we welcome digital artist Angel Albarran to the pages of OutSmart as the illustrator for Lilly Roddy's 2020 horoscope columns.

"OUTSMART contacted me out of the blue," Albarran says. The 27-year-old digital artist also has an interest in astrology. "Being a Pisces means I'm very aware of myself," he explains. "I don't follow my horoscope day-to-day, but I do take it into account. I did a star chart for myself, and it was pretty accurate."

The native Houstonian describes his OUTSMART horoscope illustrations as being very ethereal, but not too serious. "I like the idea of not taking yourself too seriously. All 12 illustrations are based on people I know in the LGBTQ community."

Albarran was always interested in art, and when he was younger he wanted to be a painter.

"But as I grew up, I started looking at signs and marketing art and thinking about how I could improve them." He graduated from The Art Institute of Houston in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in graphic design, and is currently a digital artist and manager of the graphics team at Skyline Art Services.

The company specializes in multimedia art displays for public spaces around the country, and particularly for hospitals. If you've been to the University of Texas Medical Branch Health Education Center in Galveston, you've seen their work.

"We make hospitals cool, [so they are] hap-

pier places for the patients," Albarran says. "I love working there; it truly is a gift."

But he's still very interested in marketing, branding, and package design. In 2016, he created a "Heroine Addict" T-shirt featuring stylized versions of Wonder Woman, Shrek, and Samus Arán for Houston Gaymers, the local LGBTQ gaming group.

And every November since 2012, Albarran takes part in Via Colori, the street chalk-art festival that supports the Center for Hearing and Speech. That Houston nonprofit teaches deaf children to listen and speak without using sign language.

But chalk art is just one of his hobbies. According to his bio, he is also obsessed with trivia about things that were relevant 20 years ago, including all things Pokémon and Mean Girls.

Albarran was married last September to a man who is passionate about photography. They support each other's art, and they also enjoy traveling and their five-year-old rescue dog named Benson. "He's a pit bull-Dalmatian mix," he says. "He has spots on his back. It's not something you see very often."

Albarran is excited about the new year because he'll be working on a mural design, a billboard in Houston, and graphics for a trade show, among a lot of other projects.



For a sampling of Albarran's work, visit his Instagram page at [instagram.com/lillyput360](https://www.instagram.com/lillyput360).

a no-frills meal for you and your partner can cost upwards of \$40 or \$50, especially when you add in the cost of tips and transportation. Doing this five nights a week could cost you thousands of dollars throughout the years.

- \$50 meal x 5 nights per week = \$250 per week
- \$250 per week x 52 weeks per year = \$13,000 a year
- \$13,000 x 20 years = \$260,000

And adding a couple of drinks to your tab could more than double this amount. Imagine what an additional \$260,000 or more could do for you in retirement!

There are several ways that you can help yourself become financially fit, too, with the money you save from prepping your meals, such as:

- Paying down debt
- Building up an emergency fund
- Increasing your savings and/or investment accounts.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of prepping healthy meals ahead of time is becoming a healthier you! Not only will you feel better and have more energy when you eat right, but you could also reduce healthcare costs both now and in the future.

As we get older, we tend to spend more on healthcare services and medications. According to a recent study, a couple retiring today can expect to spend roughly \$285,000 in out-of-pocket healthcare costs—a figure that doesn't even include long-term care. So by taking steps to ensure better health down the road, you could keep more money in savings and spend less at the doctor's office and the pharmacy.

### Making a Healthy Plan

Putting all of the pieces in place for a healthy physical and financial lifestyle can initially seem overwhelming. Old habits can be hard to break, and new ones may be difficult to stick to, at least at first.

But just like financial and retirement planning, you can change your habits over time—and even automate the process to make it easier. Once you start to see the results, it will all seem worthwhile.

Working with an experienced financial advisor can help you to allocate and diversify your savings and investment dollars, so that over time you can work toward your short- and long-term objectives.

*Grace S. Yung, CFP, is a certified financial planner practitioner with experience in helping domestic partners plan their finances since 1994. She is a principal at Midtown Financial Group LLC in Houston and was recognized as a "Five-Star Wealth Manager" in the September 2017 issue of Texas Monthly. Yung can be reached at grace.yung@lpl.com.*

Rather than picking multiple goals (or goals within larger goals), focus on a single area where you can make gradual change. Abrupt, cold-turkey methods can sometimes work, but the vast majority of us respond best to altering one aspect of a particular behavior, gaining some mastery, and then adding to it. As with most things in life, we build on past successes.

With this in mind, perhaps your journey toward financial stability means you start with paying down one credit card, or saving a set \$50 per month. Depending on how this goes, you can adjust your original goal to account for new knowledge. If it's not working, you regroup and begin saving only \$25 per month. If you've met your goal, then you might start paying down two credit cards at a time, or save more money. Each successful experience should reveal additional changes you can make that might be helpful in the future. Regardless of the outcome (whether it's \$5 or \$500 saved), you're living according to your values, and that is the definition of success.

While it may be tempting to count calories and track weight loss in pounds, you could be kinder to yourself by paying attention to the feeling you have after exercising, or the boost in vitality you feel after making healthier dietary decisions.

### You're Not Alone

Identify people and resources that can support you in making change. If you're focused on fiscal responsibility, consider working with someone with a knowledge of finances. If your goals are health-related, reach out to someone with expertise in nutrition or fitness. If you would like to reduce alcohol or drug use, consider working with a health professional, counselor, therapist, or mutual-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous. If your value of being connected with others is being hijacked by your time spent on apps and social media, consider trying one of the many apps that track and limit smartphone use. You may even decide to log off of those accounts, delete your social-media or hookup apps, and replace those activities with face-to-face encounters.

Finally, if you slip up on your plan or find yourself returning to old habits, there's no need to wait until the next New Year's Day to do something about it. Gently remind yourself of your values, and know that change is always possible.

*Daryl Shorter, MD, is a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and is board certified in both general and addiction psychiatry. His clinical practice focuses on veteran care, and he lectures widely on LGBTQ mental health. Dr. Shorter can be reached at dr.darylshorter@gmail.com.*

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL OF US TO YOU!





Voted the Best Place to Buy Pet Supplies

Visit one of our 19 Houston locations!

## LOVE KNOWS NO BREED!

Natural Pawz sells only the most organic and Holistic brands out there. Stop into our newest Houston location with full services and training at 208 Westheimer.

# Natural Pawz

208 Westheimer • Houston, TX 77006 • NaturalPawz.com



Voted One of the Best Domestic Dealerships



BEN WEBSTER

815 Houston Ave.

Houston, TX 77007

M: 979.533.4363 | O: 713.331.3057

[www.KnappChevy.com](http://www.KnappChevy.com)

## SKIN Renaissance LASER CENTER



Dermal fillers can take years off, even decades; giving a natural, pleasant, and well rested look. Dr. Barrios added volume to patient's upper & lower cheeks and chin to reverse the signs of aging.

- NON-SURGICAL
- IMMEDIATE LASTING RESULTS
- AFFORDABLE

Botox® • Restylane® • Radiesse®  
Belotero® • Sculptra®

Wrinkles • Rosacea • Facial Sagging  
Acne (active & scars) • Face & Leg Veins  
Laser Hair Removal

Call for your FREE Consultation  
713.942.SKIN (7546)

517 West Gray St. • Between Montrose and Taft

[www.SkinRenaissance.net](http://www.SkinRenaissance.net)

Dr. Octavio Barrios, MD is a Fellow of the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery & American Academy of Aesthetic Medicine Member.



**VOTED ONE OF THE BEST**  
**Dr. Octavio Barrios**  
Best Physician 2005-2019  
**Skin Renaissance**  
Best Skin Care Center 2005-2019

## Dr. B-fit

Weight Loss Clinic

### Your Medical Approach to Weight Loss

PERSONALIZED | COMPREHENSIVE | DOCTOR SUPERVISED



OCTAVIO  
BARRIOS, MD



LUCIA MANGLE  
ARNOLD, MPAS, PA-C

**CALL TODAY!**  
713.942.7546



## Make your statement.

Eyewear is often the first  
thing people notice  
about you.

Eye Contact stocks an  
extensive collection of  
designer frames for  
every occasion.

Let us help you find  
your perfect look.



2055 Westheimer @ Shepherd  
713-520-6600



Dr. Christine Tyler  
Best Eye Doctor 2018

One of the Best Places  
to Buy Eyewear

# The Cookie King

Houston native Scott French wins Food Network's *Christmas Cookie Challenge*.

By MARENE GUSTIN

Images are courtesy of  
FOOD NETWORK

**C**hristmas cookies may be the last thing you want to think about now, but for Houston baker Scott French, they will always be sweet on his mind. French, of Mister French's Gourmet Bakery, won last season's *Christmas Cookie Challenge* show on the Food Network, and a big \$10,000 reward.

Hosted by food truck owner and former NFL player Eddie Jackson, *Christmas Cookie Challenge* had five bakers who entertained viewers for weeks and who possibly inspired some tasty home baking. The judges were Ree Drummond, Vivian Chan, and Dan Langan. French wowed them all in the final episode when the bakers were charged with creating a tableau out of cookies that depicted a story about a mischievous elf—and featured a secret ingredient.

"My ingredient was cayenne pepper," says French. "So I had to come up with a story and a recipe with cayenne pepper. I did a snowman selling [my Mexican wedding cookies as] snowballs. The snowman goes on break and the elf shows up and adds cayenne pepper to the snowballs, and sells them as fireballs. The snowman comes back and sits on the elf!" And French had to do all of this in 90 minutes.

But this wasn't French's first rodeo. Literally. He's competed in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's Best Bites competition



**"I'M PUTTING THE MONEY BACK INTO THE BUSINESS. I'M STARTING A COOKIE CAMP FOR KIDS THIS SUMMER, AND DATE-NIGHT CLASSES WHERE COUPLES HAVE A CATERED DINNER AND THEN BAKE THEIR OWN DESSERTS. FOR A SMALL BUSINESS, \$10,000 IS A BIG HELP."**

—Scott French

twice, and one once with his elaborate cookies. Most of his creations are special orders, and he's produced a 3-D car, a six-foot mask, and a complete replica of a woman's mansion, all out of cookies.

The 47-year-old was born in Montana and raised in Alaska. He has a master's degree in architecture, which helps him build his cookie creations that he says resemble elaborate ice sculptures "that don't melt."

French came to Houston with his partner, who was from here and wanted to return to be closer to his family. French designed gas stations for Albertsons, then moved into the food industry as a corporate trainer and menu manager for Pappas Restaurants. He first started baking cookies as Christmas gifts for friends, but when his partner passed away in 2010, →

he used baking as a form of therapy. In 2012, he opened Mister French's Gourmet Bakery and finally gave up his day job. In 2017, he was named one of OUTSMART's Heroes of Harvey after he opened his bakery to feed thousands of first responders.

Although French is well-known for creating cookies for office parties and special events in Houston, he was still shocked when the Food Network called him last year.

"I thought I was being punked! But they were like, 'No, no, go to the website and look at the upcoming shows,'" he recalls. "I filled out the form, and they selected me for the show. We filmed it in February, but it didn't air until December so I couldn't say anything about it for almost a year!" But the wait was worth it for the national exposure and the big payoff.

"I'm putting the money back into the business," French says. "I cut most of my cookies by hand, so I bought a 3-D printer to make my own cookie cutters. And I'm starting a cookie camp for kids this summer, and date-night classes where couples have a catered dinner and then come into the kitchen and bake their own desserts. For a small business, \$10,000 is a big help."

Last year, French moved into a Georgian Colonial home in Montrose. He lives in the



Scott French and Eddie Jackson

back and has his bakery in the front part of the home.

"It's really nice to have a space for consultations," he says. "It's not a walk-in-and-buy shop. Our sales are online, and a lot of the business is special orders for companies and special events. And I want to lease part of the home out for small cocktail parties."

So, what is French's favorite cookie?

"I get asked that a lot!" he says with a laugh. "I love sugar cookies. It took two years to perfect my recipe. But my real favorite is a soft snickerdoodle. The trick is to under-bake just a little. Not enough to be doughy, but just enough to be cake-like."



For more information, visit [misterfrenchs.com](http://misterfrenchs.com)

**IF YOU HAVE ONLY ONE SMILE IN YOU, GIVE IT TO THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE.**

Maya Angelou

**LIFE SMILES**  
by  
RANDY MITCHMORE, DDS

1722 W Alabama Street, Houston, TX 77098  
713.592.9300 | [lifesmiles.us](http://lifesmiles.us)

**FOUNTAINS & STATUARY**

**OPEN 7 DAYS**

- Disappearing Fountains
- Glazed Urns
- Fountains
- Birdbaths
- Decorative Precast Rock Waterfalls
- Fiberglass Garden Ponds
- Bowls
- Tables & Benches
- Pumps & Tubing
- Planters
- Pedestals
- Flower Pots
- Fountain Tops
- Religious Statues
- Concrete Animals, Fish, Birds & Reptiles
- Talavera Style Mexican Pottery
- Various Sized Stepping Stones

**ASK ABOUT**  
Metal Carports  
Gazebos & Yard Buildings

**713.957.3672**  
Just Outside the 610 Loop in Houston!  
11804 Hempstead Rd., Houston, TX 77092  
[fountainsandstatuary@yahoo.com](mailto:fountainsandstatuary@yahoo.com)  
[www.FountainsAndStatuary.com](http://www.FountainsAndStatuary.com)

Finalist BEST GARDENING/NURSERY SUPPLY

**NEW!**  
Pebble Pots  
Handcrafted in Bali

# Clever Confectioner

Van Kuch brings his one-of-a-kind pastries back home.

By MARENE GUSTIN

Photo by KEVIN J. MIYAZAKI/PLATE

**H**oustonians who have missed pastry chef Vanarin Kuch's baked goods are in for a sweet treat. The 35-year-old chef, formerly of Bank and Tiny Boxwoods, gained national attention almost a decade ago as a contestant on *Top Chef: Just Desserts* and *Chopped*. After that, he decided to sharpen his skills with stints in New York and Chicago. "I was a self-taught pastry chef," says Kuch, "and I felt I needed to learn more. Plus, I was in my 20s and thought that if I wanted to live in New York City, that was the time to do it."

The time he spent away from Houston also came with an added benefit: he met his husband.

"We met the traditional way," laughs Kuch, "on OkCupid!" He has been married to opera director Andreas Hager for three years now. Both agreed that the plan would always be to move to Houston, where Kuch could open his own eatery.

Of Cambodian heritage, Kuch's family settled in Houston and opened a seafood shop and a doughnut shop in EaDo. And that's where Kuch has opened his very own sweets shop, Koffeteria. Its industrial setting with mid-century furniture from second-hand shops makes for a cozy atmosphere. But of course, the real draw is the pastries.

Even before the shop opened, a photo of Kuch's Hot Cheeto Croissant was streaking across social media. And yes, it's exactly what you think it is—but also stuffed with nacho cheese.

"Houston loves Cheetos," Kuch notes. "That was my lunch when I was in high school here—a bag of Cheetos and a Coke. It's not that we were poor—that's just what



I wanted to eat!"

Other Koffeteria hits include the top-selling Beef Pho Kolache, the Pistachio Baklava Croissant (Kuch's own personal favorite), various chocolate-chip cookies, cinnamon rolls, and the Hot Cheeto Grilled Cheese sandwich. (Yes, he really *does* love those hot Cheetos.)

"Our program also includes coffee roasted by Little Dreamer, and teas by Geva," adds Kuch. "The Salty Cambodian has been a big hit. It's a latte combining sweetened condensed milk with a house-made butter cultured with sourdough starter and topped with Maldon salt. We are also making the Mad Hatter, a whimsical hot chocolate served table-side in a teacup."

Kuch moved home in May of last year, and he says it took about seven months to build out the shop. Koffeteria opened last November, and things were going well until December 19, when someone smashed the glass door and broke in.

"They only took an iPad," he says. "But the next day people came pouring in and bought everything! I was floored by the support. EaDo is a very personal place for me that I remember from my childhood. I always knew I would

come back here, and I could not have expected a better response to the business from the neighborhood. Being here and having my husband help me in the shop on weekends is just an amazing life."

Kuch and his husband also live in EaDo, only a few minutes away from Koffeteria, with Isabella, a Hungarian Boxer, and a cat named Hulot. He says the black cat's former owner was a crackhead, and that the name comes from the hero in his favorite movie, the 1967 French-Italian comedy *Playtime*. Date night for the couple is usually dinner at Nobie's, although they also like Tex-Mex.

"When I was in New York, I really missed those sketchy taco trucks we have here," Kuch admits.

Right now, Koffeteria is only open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays, but later this year they hope to stay open in the evening just for desserts.

"I'd also like to do some pop-up dinners, maybe with Cambodian food," says Kuch. "That would be fun."



Koffeteria, 1110 Hutchins Street, Suite 102, koffeteria.com



**GONZALEZ OLIVIERI LLC**  
IMMIGRATION LAW FIRM, HOUSTON, TEXAS



- RAED GONZALEZ, JD LLM

Serving the LGBTQ community with same sex visa petitions, residency, naturalization, business visas, investor visas, temporary worker visas, representation before immigration courts, appeals to the board of immigration appeals circuit, and supreme court of the U.S.



VOTED THE "BEST MALE ATTORNEY"

GonzalezOlivieriLLC.com  
EvitaLaDeportacion.com

(713) 481-3040  
2200 Southwest Freeway Suite 550  
Houston, TX 77098

THINK SPIRITED  
**st.stephens**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH • SCHOOL



Ideas  
Inspire  
Vision.



Vision  
Enlivens  
Futures.

Savvy. Enterprising. Ready.  
1800 SUL ROSS | HOUSTON TX 77098  
STSTEPHENSHOUSTON.ORG | 713-821-9100



Don't let yourself get bogged down with taxes,  
*Leave your troubles at my door!!*

- 20+ Years Experience
- Monthly & Quarterly Payroll Tax Returns
- Local & State Government Filing
- Arbitration with IRS
- Preparation of Financial Statements to third parties
- General Ledger packages—Quick Books, etc.
- My office or yours!
- Proud member of EPAH



VOTED  
Best Accounting and Bookkeeping Service

**Gary M. Gritz, CPA**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT  
Specializing in Personal & Business Accounting Services

Call (713) 784-3030

230 Westcott, Suite 210 • Houston, Texas 77019  
WWW.GARYMGRITZPC.COM • GGYANKSSS@AOL.COM

Voted One of the Best Psychiatrists  
—OutSmart 2011-2019 Readers' Choice

**B | F | G**  
& ASSOCIATES

High Quality  
Compassionate Care  
Access to Providers via  
Cell Phone 24/7



**Christine Wysong**  
APRN,  
PMHNP, BC

**Barry F. Gritz, M.D.**  
Psychiatrist  
Diplomate of the American Board  
of Psychiatry and Neurology

**Alexis Williams**  
APRN,  
PMHNP, BC

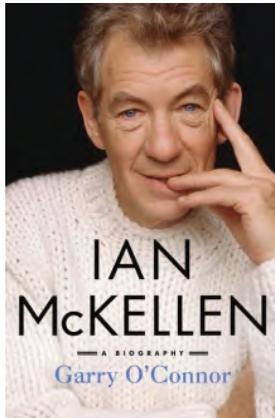
- Saturday Hours
- Male or Female Providers Available
- Centrally Located Office
- Appointments Readily Available

230 Westcott, Suite 210,  
Houston, Texas 77007  
713.869.7400

By TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

# Reel Magic

## A biography of Ian McKellen.



**Ian McKellen:  
A Biography**  
• by Garry O'Connor  
• 2019  
• St. Martin's Press  
(us.macmillan.com)  
• 356 pages  
• \$29.99

**A**ny old stick would do. When you were a child, a stick turned into a makeshift wand is all it took to become a wizard. Add an old towel turned into a cape, and you were ready for serious spell-making. It worked for creative children everywhere, although, as you'll see in *Ian McKellen: A Biography* by Garry O'Connor, sometimes "reel" magic helps, too.

On May 25, 1939, mere months before the beginning of World War II, Ian Murray McKellen made his debut into the world. The only son of parents who lived large, passionate lives, young McKellen grew up securely happy despite the war.

Alas, that ended when his beloved mother died of cancer when McKellen was just 12 years old. As the years passed, he always regretted that she never knew he received his "first gay kiss" at age nine, and that he understood even then that he preferred boys to girls.

Though his original plan was to graduate school and work as a journalist, McKellen was denied the chance and instead opted to attend Cambridge. There, others noticed that he had a great aptitude for Shakespearean acting. As his passion for acting was nurtured, a "most extraordinary explosion of talent happened." His time at Cambridge helped him sharpen his craft, and it was also there that McKellen lost his virginity to another man.

O'Connor says that McKellen is "a slow-progress stickler" and never minded using "modest roles" as stepping-stones; every role he played led to bigger parts on better-known stages in larger venues. In 1964, he landed a small part in a BBC-TV production (his first foray into television) as he continued to eye a career in film—a career that "still eluded [him] until the late 1990s." At that time, he was able to transition from stage to screen, quickly racking

up a Tony, a Golden Globe, a SAG award, and an Oscar nomination.

And then, "a quick perusal of the Marvel Comics caught his fancy."

For readers who are wild about Shakespeare, *Ian McKellen: A Biography* will be a delight. Those who are not, however, may find this book quite tedious.

Author Garry O'Connor, who has known McKellen for decades, explains in his first chapter how this book came about, in opening words that are carefully off-the-cuff. That chumminess feels as if you're eavesdropping in real time on a semi-scripted conversation between two friends.

Get past the account of McKellen's early life, though, and much of the rest of this book is über-deep into theater, with occasional reminders of McKellen's gayness in the narrative. Serious followers of British stage performances will find the former to be irresistible, and the latter will make one feel like a backstage insider. Those who prefer McKellen's later work might find all of this mildly interesting, yet far too detailed until the final section.

And so, there's the lowdown: theater fans will love *Ian McKellen: A Biography*. But if you're just a fan of McKellen's later movie career, this book is okay if you can stick with it.

*Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was three years old, and she lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 11,000 books.*

BUY NEW BUY USED

*Houston*

# CAMERA

*Exchange*

**TURN YOUR CAMERA INTO CASH**  
@ HOUSTON CAMERA EXCHANGE

**THE MOST EXTENSIVE SELECTION OF USED PHOTO GEAR IN THE SOUTHWEST**

**HOUSTON CAMERA EXCHANGE**

**5900 Richmond Ave.**  
(at Fountainview)  
**Houston, TX 77057**

Mon-Fri: 10am-7pm; Sat: 10am-6pm  
**713-789-6901 1-800-CAMERA-5**  
houstoncameraexchange.com

Follow us on @hcehouston

# OUT-THERE

Photos by DALTON DEHART & EDGARDO AGUILAR



FOR MORE  
EVENT PHOTOS,  
PLEASE VISIT  
[TINYURL.COM/  
OSMPHOTOS](http://TINYURL.COM/OSMPHOTOS)





**December 10, 2019**

Hundreds of readers, advertisers, and friends gathered at Alley Theatre for **OutSMART's 2019 holiday party**. The annual event featured bites provided by David Alcorta Catering, drinks, and door prizes. Attendees also made donations to Montrose Grace Place, a drop-in shelter for homeless LGBTQ youth.



**December 3-4, 2019**  
The **Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit** at the Marriott Marquis Houston brought together hundreds of leaders and service providers in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The event allowed attendees to learn new methodologies, refocus strategies, and build relationships to help them better serve thousands of folks who live with HIV/AIDS.





Children's Hope specializes in assisting loving individuals and families with fostering and adoption. Please open your home to one of these children in need.



Adoption/Kinship Care • Foster Care  
Volunteering & Mentoring

806.897.9735 • [childrenhp.org](http://childrenhp.org)



## YOUR HOMETOWN LENDER

The lending power of a full-service banker with the flexibility that comes with decisions made locally.

**BRIAN KEITH RUSSELL**  
RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE  
LOAN ORIGINATOR #284011

KRUSSELL@RSMC.NET  
(713) 299-4981  
(713) 579-7805



[WWW.KRUSSELL.REPUBLICSTATEMORTGAGE.COM](http://WWW.KRUSSELL.REPUBLICSTATEMORTGAGE.COM)



NMLS 62411  
2121 Sage Rd. Suite 140  
Houston, TX 77056

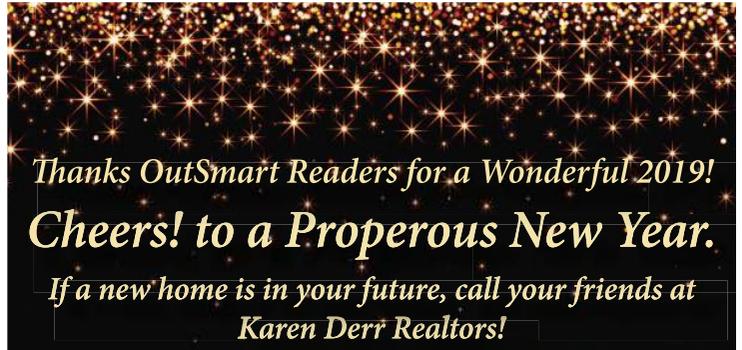


Heights Specialists: Robyn Newburn • Ashley Eddins • Karen Derr

1135 Heights Blvd • Houston TX 77008

(713) 875-7050

@GraciousHomesandLiving • [KarenDerrRealtors.com](http://KarenDerrRealtors.com)



*Thanks OutSmart Readers for a Wonderful 2019!  
Cheers! to a Prosperous New Year.  
If a new home is in your future, call your friends at  
Karen Derr Realtors!*

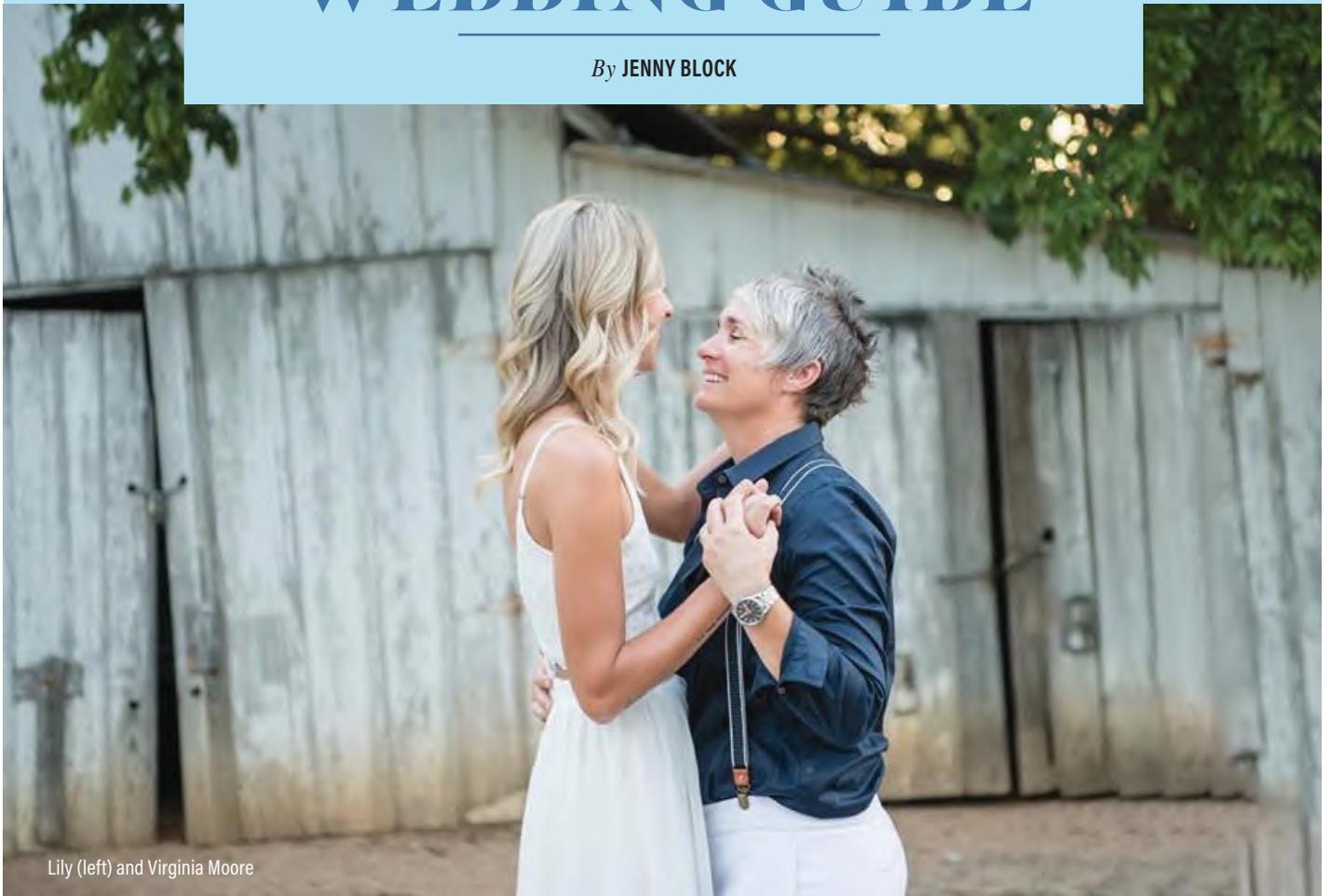


**1307 Riverine Ct • Riverwood on Westview Dr • \$694,000**

Beautiful Home in a small enclave of homes with no H.O.A. zoned to Hunters Creek School Elementary and Memorial High School. Open living and kitchen with breakfast bar. Great for entertaining. Large fenced backyard with bonus side yard is a huge plus. 5 beds, 4.5 baths, 3176 sqft.

# WEDDING GUIDE

By JENNY BLOCK



Lily (left) and Virginia Moore

JESSICA WILLIAMS EVENTS/SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

## A REAL LIFE ROM-COM

Lily and Virginia Moore's love story is picture-perfect.

**T**ruth be told, Virginia Moore and Lily Hatton should never have met. The plot reads like a beloved rom-com. Lily was out on a date, and Virginia should have been in bed, seeing as she had pneumonia. But on January 5, 2019, under a patio heater at Pearl Bar, Virginia and Lily did indeed meet, and nothing has been the same for the two of them since.

39-year-old Virginia is a risk-management specialist at BP, and Lily, 28, is a writer and digital-marketing strategist. The pair had actually seen one another at Pearl months earlier. "Although we were attracted to each other, neither of us had made a move," Lily explains. But that night

in January was different. "I just felt like I knew her. There was something so inexplicably familiar about Virginia, and she's told me the same thing about me." But Lily also admits that talking to Virginia made her incredibly nervous. "That kind of nervous that either makes you talk too much or renders you completely mute. I fell on both sides of that spectrum that night." The native Texans were in constant contact from that night on.

As wild as it might seem, Lily says she knew she wanted to marry Virginia on their very first date. "Virginia and I were sitting in her Jeep, and she asked me if she could kiss me. It was just such a sweet moment." Lily sent her friend Brittany an email the very next day that read, "I'll be sure to send you an invite to our wedding." And she's not one to say things like

that lightly. "Virginia is the first person I ever said 'I love you' to romantically."

Crossing the finish line into marriage was not quite as spontaneous for Virginia. She had been engaged in the past, so she has a harder time trusting people. But when she met Lily, Virginia says, "I had this weird, indescribable pull—after a brief encounter with her, something told me she needs to be in my life." In fact, on the night of their first date a friend texted Virginia, "I just need one word of how it's going." "I am in love" was the reply.

After Virginia found out that one of Lily's favorite rom-coms is *Sleepless in Seattle*, so after only weeks of dating, Virginia fibbed about needing to fly to Boston for work over Valentine's Day, and invited →

## WEDDING GUIDE



JESSICA WILLIAMS EVENTS/SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY



BRITTANI MICHELLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Lily along. Virginia sent a car for Lily with a package on the back seat containing a *Sleepless in Seattle* movie script signed by Meg Ryan, a plane ticket to New York (where they were really going), and directions to their hotel. Once Lily arrived, the desk clerk handed her a note telling Lily to meet Virginia at the top of the Empire State Building. Virginia was waiting on the observation deck holding a sign that said ‘Can we do this couple thing?’ ‘In that moment, I knew I wanted to marry her,’ Virginia remembers.

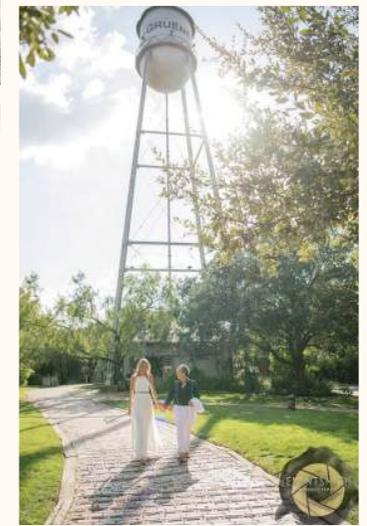
So it was Virginia who later proposed to Lily inside their barn, where Virginia had recreated the Pearl Bar patio scene from the night the two had met—complete with a patio heater and a sound system with “Kiss Me” by Ed Sheeran playing. Virginia proposed with a custom ring she’d had made to look just like the dream ring Lily had pinned on her Pinterest board. “I’ve spent every day of our relationship falling in love with her all over again,” Lily says.

The two initially planned to have a Harris County judge marry them, and then fly to Mexico for a reception. But Virginia didn’t want the wedding ceremony to be simply a “check the box” exercise. Both women are extremely sentimental, so they wanted the date and the ceremony to have special significance for them.

The two chose June 22, 2019, the week of Houston’s Pride celebrations and one year after Mary Chapin Carpenter gave a shout-out to Lily during a concert. Lily had interviewed the singer for an article, and then randomly landed in a Twitter convo with her. “Say yes. Just say yes,” Carpenter said to Lily. So she did—and so did Virginia. The ceremony was held at the Cockrell Butterfly Center in the Museum of Natural Science, with a small group of friends in attendance. The two later held a reception for more friends and family members in Gruene, Texas.



SARAH KUSZELEWICZ PHOTOGRAPHY



JESSICA WILLIAMS EVENTS/SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

On Valentine’s Day, Virginia surprised Lily with a trip to New York, and asked Lily to be her girlfriend at the top of the Empire State Building. Virginia later proposed to Lily in their barn, and the couple married at the Museum of Natural Science during Houston Pride weekend.

The museum ceremony was filled with magical moments, but one moment was particularly spine-tingling. Virginia’s grandmother had passed two months before their wedding, and since the two were unconditionally bonded, Virginia had decided to wear her grandmother’s ring as her wedding ring. As Lily was about to put it on Virginia’s finger, a butterfly that she had watched fly in briefly touched her shoulder. “I could feel that everything leading to this moment was exactly the way the universe planned. I just knew that butterfly was my grandma.”

Virginia is at no loss for words when it comes to talking about how much she adores Lily, whom she describes as “talented as hell”

and “naturally good at everything.” But more than that, Virginia says she is awed by Lily’s commitment to family values. “Her desire to create traditions is far more than I could have ever wished for in a marriage. Even our two sides of the family mesh well.”

The feeling is obviously mutual. Lily describes Virginia as the most genuine and sincere person she knows. “She sees the good in people, and she wants to *be* the good for people. She’s always saying, ‘Everyone has a story.’ She’s my constant silver lining. We haven’t fought a day in the entirety of our relationship and marriage. Not once.”

So, maybe those rom-com plots aren’t just impossible fairy tales after all. ▼

▶ WANT TO TELL YOUR STORY? Email us at [letters@outsartmagazine.com](mailto:letters@outsartmagazine.com)



- Beautiful 10 Story Atrium Hotel
- 290 Recently Renovated Spacious Guestrooms
- 24 Hour State of the Art Fitness Facility
- Over 21,000 square feet of meeting space
- Complimentary Airport Transportation
- Full Service Restaurant and Lobby Bar
- Starbucks Coffee Bar



VOTED BEST LOCAL HOTEL

**Houston Marriott**

South at Hobby Airport  
 9100 Gulf Freeway, Houston TX. 77017  
 Contact: Jill Maxwell - 713.943.4026

# PLAN WISELY. YOU WON'T GET A DO-OVER.

A successful retirement in the future can often depend on having a solid plan now. If your money isn't working as hard as you are, it may be time to act—there are no do-overs in retirement planning. Now is the time to consider developing a strategy that can help you work toward your financial goals. I specialize in providing comprehensive, objective financial guidance with the goal of maximizing every remaining moment of the retirement countdown.

Call today to learn more or to schedule a consultation.



**Galene Financial**  
**Richard Dickson, CFP®, MBA**  
 1700 West Loop S Ste 255  
 Houston, TX. 77027-3029  
 (713) 489-4322 Office  
 (713) 489-3679 Fax  
 rdickson@galenefinancial.com  
 www.galenefinancial.com



Voted Best Financial Planner

Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC.

# DAVID ALCORTA CATERING

CATERING  
 CAKES  
 EVENTS

832.439.0224



Chef David Alcorta



BEST CATERING FIRM  
 BEST WEDDING  
 CAKE BAKERY



dauidalcorta.net  
 david@davidalcorta.net

Best Wedding Event Live Music



# HARMONY STRINGS

PROFESSIONAL STRING QUARTET  
 CONTEMPORARY & CLASSICAL MUSIC



www.harmonystrings.com



Capturing your engagements,  
 weddings, and anniversaries.



Favorite Female  
 Community Photographer

832.876.1053

YvonneFeece.com



Yvonne Feece Photography

ACUPUNCTURE, CUPPING,  
GUA SHA, MOXIBUSTION

## Heart Light



## Acupuncture

### What is acupuncture good for?

- 📍 Anxiety/Depression 📍 Hormone Issues
- 📍 Stress Management 📍 Digestive Issues
- 📍 Pain 📍 And so much more

### Heart Light Acupuncture

For questions about services or to schedule an appointment, please call, text or email.

832.865.1177 • HeartLightAcu@gmail.com

## QUEER QUOTES

Compiled by BLASE DISTEFANO

# The Singular 'They'

(Time.com, 12/13/19, Katy Steinmetz)

On [December 10], Merriam-Webster selected its word of the year: the pronoun *they*.

In 2015, *Washington Post* copy editor Bill Walsh announced that his desk would start allowing this usage of *they*, explaining that it's the best option in a language that famously lacks a gender-neutral third-person singular pronoun:

using *he* seems sexist, using *she* seems patronizing, and "alternating *he* and *she* is silly," he wrote, "as are *he/she*, (*s*)*he*, and attempts at made-up pronouns."

The other [reason] is that singular *they* is being used by individuals—who might identify as transgender, non-binary, agender, intersex, or even cisgender—who don't feel like a gendered

pronoun fits.

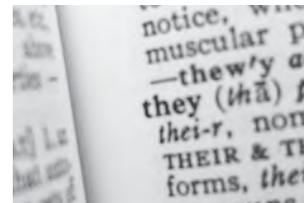
Kirby Conrod, a University of Washington linguist who studies pronoun usage, provides the example of dealing with bad drivers: it's unlikely you'd slam your hand on the wheel and exclaim, "Did you see that? He or she cut me off!"

In research about the accep-

tance of different pronoun usage, Conrod has found that when it comes to people disliking singular *they*, [everyone is] fairly accepting of using singular *they* to refer

to an unknown person, but those over age 35 don't like it when it's used to refer to Mary or John.

"The language is always shifting and normally people aren't aware of it," Conrod says. "This time, people seem really aware of it and have a lot of opinions."



CAGE FREE DAY CARE, BOARDING & GROOMING



THE RUFF-HOUSE.COM



Claudia López  
@ClaudiaLopez



¡Rumbo al momento más feliz de mi vida!

¡Te amo mi Angelica divina! ¡Gracias por existir y por amarme siempre. Te prometo honrarte y amarte toda la vida!

¡Gracias a la vida por este año maravilloso: me gradué del doctorado, gané la Alcaldía y me casé con el amor de mi vida!



👍 70.6K 8:11 PM - Dec 16, 2019



💬 10.3K people are talking about this





# Whitney Houston

(*The Advocate*, Dec 2019/Jan 2020, Zach Stafford)

*Re: speaking with Robyn Crawford, Whitney Houston's best friend.*

**Zach Stafford: Your relationship [with Whitney] was romantic, especially during your teenage years, but you didn't use the words "gay" or "lesbian." How did you talk about your relationship back then?**  
 Robyn Crawford: Whitney did not like labels: "I don't sing black. I don't sing white. I sing." Our love that we experienced, we were intimate

on every level. We weren't ashamed of it, but we were preparing ourselves for the big business, which was huge at that time. One day, we decided—before she recorded her first album—that if people found out about us, they would use it against us. So we made the determination to not be physical any longer. I loved her. It was important for our love to be unconditional and nothing ever changed. We just sacrificed the physical.

## Let's *Not* Get Physical

Whitney Houston (r) and Robyn Crawford in happier times. Crawford recounts her relationship with Houston in the recent memoir *A Song for You: My Life with Whitney Houston*.

# Sam Smith

(*Out*, Nov/Dec 2019, ALOK)

I feel like my voice is genderless, and I've trained it to be that way. If you go into my library of music, I only listen to women. Music was that escape for me. When I was a child, I put in my earphones and I became the woman of my dreams a little bit. I came out when I was 10 years old, and music was my safe space. It was my sanctuary. Even in the playground, I would take myself off and just sit and listen to songs, and they would give me the courage to walk back into those classrooms. And music still plays that role in my life today. I still get bullied, and it's still a sanctuary for me.



## Music First

Sam Smith still gets bullied today. Where is their safe space?

# Claudia López

(Twitter, 12/16/19)

**Bogota's first female and lesbian mayor-elect married her girlfriend, Angélica Lozano. Bogota is the capital of Colombia.**

**For those who don't speak Spanish:**

**On my way to the happiest moment of my life!**

**I love you, my divine Angelica! Thank you for existing and for always loving me. I promise to honor you and love you all your life!**

**Thank you, life, for this marvelous year: I graduated with a doctorate, won the mayoral office, and married the love of my life!**

# BAR & CLUB GUIDE

## HOUSTON

### BACCO WINE GARDEN

Enjoy light snacks, a glass of wine or your favorite cocktail in one of their cozy rooms or outdoor patios. 3611 Montrose Blvd. 346.444.5275 • baccowinebars.com

### BARCODE

Houston's newest bar with happy hours from 11am to 8pm daily, this new neighborhood watering hole is a great place to see drag shows and strippers Tuesdays—Saturdays and karaoke Sundays & Mondays. 817 Fairview St. 713.526.2625 • barcodehouston.net

### BLUR

Multi-level dance club featuring an upstairs lounge and balconies. Ladies enjoy Wet and Wild Wed., 18-year-olds welcome Thurs., Latin night on Sun. Happy hour 8-10pm; free cover before 11pm. 710 Pacific St. blurbar.com.

### BUDDY'S

Buddy's is a modern gay bar with events as diverse as Houston, featuring cocktails, beer, karaoke, pool, DJs, and more! 2409-A Grant St.

### CLUB CRYSTAL

Find many of Inergy's former staff and décor at this two-room Latin/hip-hop club. Sunday evening drag shows rule the roost. 6680 Southwest Frwy, next to Colorado 713.278.2582 • crystaltheclub.com.

### CROCKER BAR

This comfortably remodeled Montrose nightspot also offers karaoke on Tuesdays and Thursdays and extended happy-hour prices throughout the week. 2312 Crocker 713.529.3355.

### GEORGE

Regulars rule at this comfortable neighborhood sports bar. Sports Saturdays and Sundays start at 3pm with dart and pool tournaments. 617 Fairview • 713.528.8102.

### GUAVA LAMP

This trendy and friendly video and cruise bar gets busy during happy hour and stays busy 'til closing. Karaoke on Wed. and Sun. 570 Waugh Dr. • 713.524.3359 guavalamphouston.com

### HAMBURGER MARY'S

Since 1972, Mary has served up amazing food and stellar shows! With the best drag talent in the city, it's been voted "Best Drag Show Bar," "Most Supportive of the LGBTQ Community," "Best Hamburger," "Best Brunch," "Friendliest Staff," and "Best Place to Celebrate" by our readers. Be sure to try the famous Mac & Cheese Balls, or grab a leg glass (as seen on RuPaul's Drag Race)! Reservations recommended for shows. 2409 Grant St. 713.677.0674 • hamburgermarys.com

### EAGLE

Part of the Eagle worldwide family, it's the

definitive home to the man's man. Leather, Bear or Jock, you'll find them here. Voted "Best Community Bar," "Best Men's Bar," "Best Place to Show Your Leather," "Best Happy Hour," and "Best Place to Buy Erotic Playthings" by our readers. Eagle has multiple levels and patios, along with DJs and male dancers—and it's the place to watch sports. Noon-2am every day, 611 Hyde Park Blvd., 713.523.BIRD houstoneagle.com

### JR'S BAR & GRILL

This Montrose standard offers drag and strip shows throughout the week, karaoke Thurs. and Sun., plus pool tables and male dancers. 808 Pacific St. • 713.521.2519 jrbarandgrill.com

### LA GRANJA DISCO Y CANTINA

Houston's newest gay disco. Great drink prices, house DJs nightly. Open at 3pm until 4am on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Mondays. 5505 Pinemont • 713.518.6753 lagranjadisco.com

### MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

Jerry Atwood, Clay Howell, Neil Massey, Steve Wheaton, and Roger Woest take turns at the keys at this comfortable neighborhood piano bar. 1419 Richmond Ave. • 713.520.8446

### NEON BOOTS DANCEHALL & SALOON

Houston's only LGBTQ country dancehall opens Wednesday-Sunday. Wednesday features Steak Night and Bingo. Free dance classes on Thursdays, and karaoke. 11410 Hempstead Hwy • 713.677.0828 neonbootsclub.com

### PEARL BAR

This LGBT-friendly lounge in the Washington corridor features daily highlights like open mic night, steak night, and drink specials. 4216 Washington • pearlhouston.com

### ReBar

A haute nightclub with a celebrated patio that features renowned DJs and entertainers. Opening early October.

### THE RIPCROD

This multi-roomed leather bar boasts a busy patio, especially on the weekends. The Forge shop located inside the club. Saturday nights with DJ Tad Dvorak. 715 Fairview Ave. • 713.521.2792

### RUDYARD'S

The eclectic British pub is known for its craft beers as well as for the burgers. Most weekends you'll find up-and-coming local bands rocking the house. 2010 Waugh Dr. • 713.521.0521 • rudyardspub.com

### TONY'S CORNER POCKET

This comfortable club has one of the friendliest bar staffs in town. Amateur dance contest each Thurs., Fri., & Sat. at 11pm. Opens daily at noon. 817 W. Dallas • 713.571.7870 • tonyscornerpocketbar.com

**EAGLE HOUSTON**

2019 READERS' Choice Awards  
OutSmart Gayest & Greatest 2019

- BEST MEN'S BAR
- BEST HAPPY HOUR
- BEST COMMUNITY BAR
- BEST CLUB FOR DANCING
- BEST PLACE TO TAKE OUT OF TOWN VISITORS
- FAVORITE PLACE TO SHOW OFF YOUR LEATHER
- BEST PLACE TO BUY EROTIC PLAYTHINGS

HOUSTONEAGLE.COM | 611 HYDE PARK | NOON-2A EVERYDAY | 21 & UP

Best Steak Night at a Bar Winner

POP-UP COOKING EVENTS, CATERING & PRIVATE CHEF

**GEORGE SPORTS BAR**  
THURSDAY NIGHTS FREE GRILLIN'

CHEF MICHELE 832.419.0165 | f freegrillin/ | /chefmichelefree

**GEORGE**  
★  
**SPORTS BAR**

All **SVEDKA** Vodka Drinks **\$5.50**

617 Fairview • Houston, Texas • 713.528.8102  
HOURS: Mon-Sat 7am-2am • Sunday 12pm-2am

**MONDAY**  
Dessie's Drag Race 19

**THURSDAY**  
Drag It On 4 with Blackberri

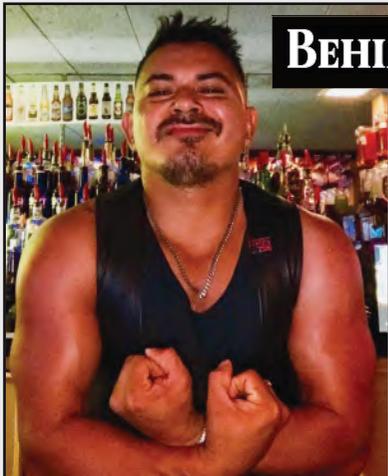
Bottle Service: 346-227-8613

**ReBar** 202 Tuam

**FRIDAY**  
Showgirls hosted by Kara Dion

**SUNDAY**  
Diamantes hosted by Aria Crawford

**SHOWGIRLS** **DIAMANTES**  
A Latin Revue



## BEHIND THE BAR

### J.C. CABALLERO

**Venue:** Neon Boots  
**Shifts:** Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to close

#### What is your favorite shot to make? To drink?

Favorite to make: Mexican Candy—Watermelon Pucker, Tequila, and hot sauce.

Favorite to drink: Jameson's with a pickle back.

#### Where is your favorite place to drink when not on duty?

I don't usually go out! But I would say Crocker Bar.

#### What is a current bar drink trend you'd like to

#### see end?

I'm cool with all drinks. Some of them I've never heard of, but I am interested in making them for the first time.

#### What are you best known for?

Being down-to-earth and easy-going.

#### What is the best and worst holiday to work?

Best holiday to work is Labor Day, and the worst is Christmas.

#### Biggest tip from one customer? \$300

#### Who are the hardest customers to please?

None—you just need to know there are so many different personalities, and treat everyone with respect.

#### If you weren't a bartender, what career would you choose?

Well, I work as an interior designer during the day. But I wouldn't mind being a professional male dancer, if you know what I mean.

#### Do you have any pets?

Yes, I have two rescue dogs, Milo and Frida.

#### What is the best part about working at Neon Boots?

I love the owners—Debbie, Jim, Fernando, Rodney, and Ron are the best in Houston, indeed!

### VIVIANA'S

Happening weekend-only gay dance club with Latin DJs, singers, talent shows, and Sunday strippers. 4624 Dacoma • 713.681.4104

### BEAUMONT

#### RUMORS BEAUMONT

Now open in the old Orleans Street Pub location. Drag shows with Dessie Love-Blake, Lady Shamu, Kara Dion and more. 650 Orleans • 713.539.5183 rumorsbeaumont.com

### BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION

#### HALO VIDEO BAR

The only LGBT dance club in Bryan/College station, this sleek spot is open Thurs.–Sat. smack in the middle of Aggieland. 121 North Main • 979.823.6174 • halobcs.com

### GALVESTON

#### 23RD ST. STATION

The bar features daily drink specials and the weekend is filled with pulsing music, hot dancers, drag shows, and a Sunday Tea Dance. 1706 23rd St. • 409.621.1808

### ROBERT'S LAFITTE

The Island institution features a private patio with swimming pool. On Sat. and Sun. nights, the Ladies of Lafitte show takes the stage. 2501 Avenue Q (at 25th) • 409.765.9092

### RUMORS BEACH BAR

Drink specials every night and daily day-drinking specials starting at noon. Great drag shows Fri. – Sun. and karaoke Sun. – Thurs. at 8pm. Sunday Drag Bingo. 3102 Seawall Blvd. 409.497.4617 • rumorsbeachbar.com

### SPRING

#### RANCH HILL SALOON

With its two pool tables, 52-inch plasma televisions, and large dance floor, this popular northside spot also offers DJs Thurs.–Sat. 24704 I-45N Suite 103 • 281.298.9035 • ranchhill.com.

#### THE ROOM BAR AND LOUNGE

This bar and video lounge has a laid-back atmosphere. DJs several nights a week. 4915 FM 2920 • 281.907.6866 • roombarspring.com

## Our Family Will Treat You Like “FAMILY!”



**HAMBURGER MARY'S**  
Bar & Grille  
EAT, DRINK, AND BE...MARY!

**Eat, Drink & Be MARY!**

Best Drag Show Bar • Most Supportive of the LGBTQ Community • Best Brunch  
Best Hamburger • Best Place to Celebrate



2409 GRANT ST.

For Hours of Operation and Reservations, please visit:  
713.677.0674 • [HamburgerMarys.com/Houston](http://HamburgerMarys.com/Houston)  
Reservations Strongly Recommended • Yelp Rez available



## SUNDAY FUNDAY

\$2.50 Well Vodka

\$3.00 Shiner Longnecks

\$8.75 Bellini & Mimosa Pitchers



Excludes Some Special Events, Holidays, And Holiday Weekends  
804 & 808 Pacific Street 713-521-2519  
[JRSHOUSTON.COM](http://JRSHOUSTON.COM)

## There's always something going on at TONY'S CORNER POCKET!



Houston's Hottest  
**Male Amateur Strip Contest**  
Headquarters!

817 W. Dallas  
713.571.7870

Voted the Best Place to Watch Male Dancers  
Tues. and Thurs. – Sunday Nights

Nightly Specials – Call for Details  
**Cold Beverages & Hot Guys!**

# BUDDY'S

2409 GRANT ST STE A  
HOUSTON, TX 77006  
BUDDYS.BAR

*Everybuddy's Welcome.*

SUPPORT • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY

Where Everyone  
is Welcome!

Helpline: 713-46P-FLAG  
[www.pflaghouston.org](http://www.pflaghouston.org)

**ACCOMMODATIONS/HOTELS**

**High Point Uptown**  
807 S Post Oak Ln.....855/661-7935  
**Le Méridien Houston Downtown**  
1121 Walker.....346/330-3453  
**L'Emerson Corporate Lodging**  
.....Lemerson.net

**The Post Oak Hotel**  
1600 West Loop South.....844/386-1600  
**South Shore Harbour**  
2500 South Shore Blvd.....281/334-1000

**ACCOUNTANTS/BOOKKEEPERS/ CPAS**

**Gary Gritz, CPA**  
230 Westcott, Ste 210.....713/784-3030

**ACUPUNCTURE**

**Heart Light Acupuncture**  
.....832/865-1177  
**Houston Integrative Health, Acupuncture and Mindful Movement**  
716 Chelsea Blvd.....832/215-2039

**ADOPTION AGENCIES/FOSTER CARE**

**Children's Hope**  
Childrenhp.org.....806/897-9735

**ADVERTISING/MARKETING**

**Ashkan Media**  
.....Ashkanmedia.com

**Mat Hat Maven Creative**  
madhatmaven.com.....832/460-6263  
**OutSmart Magazine**  
3406 Audubon.....713/520-7237

**AIR CONDITIONING/HEATING**

**Newport Air**  
newportair.net.....281/808-8630

**ASTROLOGER**

**Lilly Roddy Astrology**  
.....713/529-5842

**ATTORNEYS/LEGAL SERVICES**

**Christopher Barber/Barber Jackson Law**  
TexasLegalPlanning.com.....281/464-LAWS (5297)  
**Charles Hunter/Hayes Hunter PC**  
.....281/768-4731

**Gonzalez Olivieri LLC**  
gonzalezolivierillc.com.....713/481-3040

**Katine & Nechman LLP**  
1834 Southmore.....713/808-1001

**Dwane Todd Law Firm**  
405 Main St., Ste 602.....713/965-0658

**AUTOMOTIVE REPAIRS**

**Ryan Automotive**  
716 Fairview.....713/522-3602  
**Tech Auto Maintenance**  
37 Waugh Dr.....713/863-8244

**AUTOMOTIVE SALES**

**Central Houston Cadillac/Tony McClelland**  
2520 Main St.....832/981-7590

**Knapp Chevrolet/Ben Webster**  
814 Houston Ave.....979/533-4363

**BAKERIES/CUSTOM CAKES**

**David Alcorta Catering**  
davidalcorta.net.....832/439-0224  
**Dessert Gallery**  
DessertGallery.com.....713-522-9999

**CATERING SERVICES**

**David Alcorta Catering**  
davidalcorta.net.....832/439-0224

**CHURCHES/SPIRITUAL CENTERS**

**Bering United Methodist**  
1440 Harold.....beringumc.org  
**First Christian Church**  
1601 Sunset.....713/526-8125  
**Resurrection MCC**  
2025 W 11th.....713/861-9149  
**St Paul's United Methodist Church**  
5501 Main.....713/528-0527

**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
1805 W. Alabama.....ststephenshouston.org  
**Trinity Episcopal Church**  
1015 Holman St.....www.trinitymidtown.org

**CLEANING SERVICES**

**Dexter's Five Star Service/Bob Samora**  
.....832/252-1961

**COMMUNITY/NONPROFIT**

**AARP**  
.....aarp.org/pride  
**AIDS Foundation Houston**  
Aidshelp.org.....713/623-6796  
**AIDS Healthcare Foundation/Out of the Closet**  
1435 Westheimer.....outofthecloset.org  
**Bering Connect**  
.....713-526-1017, ext.20  
**Diana Foundation**  
.....TheDianaFoundation.org

**EPAH**

.....EPAH.org  
**Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce**  
HoustonLGBTChamber.com.....832-510-3002

**Harris County Sheriff's Office**  
.....hcsjobs.com

**Houston GLBT Political Caucus**  
.....thecaucus.org

**KPFT Radio**  
kpft.org.....713-526-4000

**Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI)**  
401 Branard.....lhihouston.org

**Lesbians Over Age Fifty (L.O.A.F.)**  
lesbiansoverage50.org.....713/907-5378

**MyGayHouston.com**  
.....MyGayHouston.com/discover

**Pet Patrol**  
.....ThePetPatrol.org

**Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast**  
ppgulfcoast.org/lgbtq

**Ryan White Planning Council**  
rwpchouston.org.....713-572-3724

**COMPUTERS/INTERNET/IT SERVICES**

**Copy.com**  
1201-F Westheimer.....713/528-120

**ENTERTAINMENT/NIGHT LIFE**

**Alley Theatre**  
615 Texas Ave.....alleytheatre.org

**Buddy's Bar**  
2406 Grant, Ste A.....buddys.bar

**Cirque du Soleil - Alegria**  
.....877/924-7783

**Galveston Island Convention**  
.....galveston.com

**George Country Sports Bar**  
617 Fairview.....713/528-8102

**Houston Eagle**  
611 Hyde Park.....HoustonEagle.com

**JR's/Santa Fe**  
808 Pacific.....713/521-2519

**La Granja Disco Y Cantina**  
5505 Pinemont Dr.....713/518-6753

**Lake Charles**  
Visitlakecharles.org/greattimes...800/456-7952

**Michael's Outpost**  
1419 Richmond.....713/520-8446

**Midtown Houston**  
.....Midtownhouston.com

**Miller Outdoor Theatre**  
MillerOutdoorTheatre.com.....281/373-3386

**Pearl Bar**  
4216 Washington.....PearlHouston.com

**ReBar**  
202 Tuam.....346/227-8613

**Round Top Festival Institute**  
248 Jaster Rd.....979/249-3129

**Society For The Performing Arts**  
SPAHouston.org.....713/227-4772

**Stages Theatre**  
StagesTheatre.com.....713-527-0123

**Theatre Southwest**  
Theatresouthwest.org.....713/661-9505

**Theatre Under The Stars**  
800 Bagby, Suite 200.....tuts.com/out  
**Tony's Corner Pocket**  
817 W. Dallas.....832/722-7658

**FERTILITY/GYNECOLOGY**

**Aspire Fertility**  
AspireFertility.com.....713/425-3003

**FINANCIAL PLANNING/BANKS**

**Richard Dickson/Galene Financial**  
1700 W Loop S, Ste 255.....713/489-4322

**Grace Yung/Midtown Financial**  
3355 Alabama, Ste 180.....713/355-9833

**FITNESS CLUBS/PERSONAL TRAINERS**

**Club Houston**  
2205 Fannin.....713/659-4998

**FIT**  
Fithouston.com.....713/529-1515

**FOOD/SPECIALTY & SPIRITS**

**DASH Handmaid Vodka**  
.....dashvodka.com

**Deep Eddy Vodka**  
.....deepeddyvodka.com

**Dripping Springs**  
.....drippingspringsvodka.com

**HAIR/NAIL/MAKE-UP SALONS**

**Avila's Salon**  
1830 Southmore Blvd.....832/444-8274

**Green Apple Salon**  
719 W. Gray St.....713/5212-0500

**NU-Cuts Hair Salon**  
515 Westheimer.....713/524-7858

**HEALTH - AGE MANAGEMENT**

**Share Wellness & MediSpa/Dr. John Share**  
4011 Richmond Ave.....713/621-8200

**HEALTH CARE - COUNSELING/THERAPY**

**D. "Woodja" Flanigan, MS, LPA**  
2600 SW Fwy, Ste 409.....713/589-9804

**Denise O'Doherty, LPC, LMFT, LCDC, RN**  
3131 Eastside St., Ste. 435.....713/524-9525

**Dr. Barry F. Gritz, MD**  
230 Westcott, Ste 210.....713/869-7400

**Dr. Daniel Garza, MD**  
3131 Eastside St, Ste 4.....15281/610-8190

**Jeffrey Myles/JM Professional Services**  
.....713/447-2164

**The Montrose Center**  
401 Branard.....713/529-0037

**Psynergy Psychological Associates**  
Dr. Catherine Boswell, Psychologist

**Victoria Jones, MEd, MA, LPC-S**  
Psynergypsych.com.....713/724-7050

**Robert Snellgrove, LMSW-ACP**  
4617 Montrose, Ste C206.....713/522-7014

**Christine Wysong**  
230 Westcott, Ste 210.....713/869-7400

**HEALTH CARE - DENTISTS**

**Bayou City Smiles/Marcus de Guzman, DDS**  
2313 Edwards St., Ste. 150.....713/518-1411

**Bayou City Smiles/ Cynthia Corral, DDS**  
2313 Edwards St., Ste. 150.....713/518-1411

**Cory Logan, DDS**  
530 Waugh Dr.....713/942-8598

**LifeSmiles by Randy Mitchmore, DDS**  
1722 W. Alabama.....713/592-9300

**Orthotex/Dr. Zane Haider, DMD MS**  
Orthotexsmiles.com.....281/937-2540

**Montrose Dental Group/Samuel A. Carrell, DDS**  
620 W Alabama.....713/529-4364

**Montrose Dental Group/Austin T. Faulk, DDS**  
620 W Alabama.....713/529-4364

**Montrose Dental Group/Bruce W. Smith, DDS**  
620 W Alabama.....713/529-4364

**HEALTH CARE/COLON/RECTAL CARE**

**Texas Oncology Surgical Specialists**  
7400 Fannin St., Set 1295.....832/932-1720

**HEALTH CARE-ORTHODONTISTS**

**Orthotex/Dr. Zane Haider, DMD, MS**  
Orthotexsmiles.com.....281/937-2540

2540 FM 2920, Spring.....281/937-2540

11942 Barker Cypress, Cypress...281/937-2540

**HEALTH CARE-EMERGENCY CENTERS**

**Elite Care 24 Hour Emergency Center**  
2500 Rice Blvd.....713/527-4400

**Elite Care League City**  
2530 Gulf Fwy.....281/337-7500

**Elite Care Plano**  
20000 Dallas Pkwy., Ste. 100.....972/378-7878

**Beaumont Emergency Center**  
4004 College St.....409/840-4004

**Kingwood Emergency Hospital**  
Hwy 59 N.....832/777-6165

**Elite Medical Center/Vegas, NV**  
150 E. Harmon Ave.....702/546-0911

**SignatureCare Emergency Centers**  
1007 Westheimer.....281/709-2897

1925 TC Jester.....832/850-4338

1014 Wirt Rd.....832/924-0312

Additional locations.....ercare24.com

**HEALTH CARE-FOOT/ ANKLE SPECIALISTS**

**Sole Aesthetic/Dr. Vanessa T. Barrow**  
Soleaestheticx.com.....713/666-9934

**HEALTH CARE-HIV/STD TESTING**

**Avenue 360**  
Avenue360.org.....713/426-0027

**Legacy Community Health**  
.....LegacyCommunityHealth.org

**HEALTH CARE-OPHTHALMOLOGISTS**

**Houston Eye Associates/Stewart Zuckerbrod, MD**  
5420 Dashwood, Ste 101.....713/668-9118

**HEALTH CARE-OPTOMETRISTS**

**Boutique Eye Care**  
2502 Woodhead.....713/528-2010

**Eye Contact**  
2055 Westheimer.....713/520-6600

**Eye Gallery**  
1806B Westheimer.....713/523-1279

1700 Post Oak Blvd, Ste 110.....713/622-7470

**Eye To Eye**  
432 W. 19th.....713/864-8822

**Montrose Eye Care/ Dr. Paul Lovero**  
520 Waugh Dr.....713/352-0974

**Spectacles on Montrose**  
4317 Montrose, Ste. 2.....713/529-3937

**HEALTH CARE/PHARMACIES**

**Avita Pharmacy**  
AvitaPharmacy.com.....713/489-4362

**Legacy Pharmacy**  
LegacyCommunityHealth.org/services/pharmacy/

**HEALTH-PHYSICAL THERAPY**

**Crom Rehabilitation/Dr. Roy Rivera**  
Cromrehab.com.....713/868-2766

**HEALTH CARE-PHYSICIANS**

**Octavio Barrios, MD**  
507 West Gray.....713/942-7546

7106 Spencer Highway.....281/542-9400

**Steven Becker MD**  
Stevenbeckermd.com.....713/932-1924

**Gordon Crofoot, MD/Crofoot MD**  
3701 Kirby, Ste.1230.....713/526-0005

**Abel Flores, MD/Crofoot MD**  
3701 Kirby, Ste.1230.....713/526-0005

**M. Sandra Scurria, MD**  
6565 West Loop South, Ste 300...281/661-5901

**Derek Smith, AGPCNP-BC/Crofoot MD**  
3701 Kirby, Ste.1230.....713/526-0005

**Maggie White, MPH FNP-BC AAHIVS/ Gordon Crofoot**  
3701 Kirby Dr., Ste.1230.....713/526-0005

**HEALTH CARE-SERVICES**

**Avenue 360**  
Avenue360.org.....713/426-0027

**Harris County Public Health**  
Publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov.713/439-6293

**Houston Health Department**  
.....PensHouston.org

## ADVERTISERS INDEX

**Legacy Community Health**  
LegacyCommunityHealth.org... 832/548-5000  
**Ryan White Planning Council**  
RWPCHouston.org... 713/572-3784  
**St. Hope Foundation**  
offeringhope.org... 713/778-1300  
**UT Hearts**  
..... 713/486-2736

### HEALTH CARE-SKIN CARE

**Heights Dermatology/Alpesh Desai, MD**  
2120 Ashland..... 713/864-2650  
**Skin Renaissance Laser/Octavio Barrios, MD**  
507 West Gray..... 713/942-7546  
**The Skin Renewal Center**  
1512 West Alabama..... 713/533-0800

### HEALTH CARE-WEIGHT LOSS CLINICS

**Dr. B-Fit/ Octavio Barrios, MD**  
517 West Gray..... 713/942-7546

### HOME BUILDERS

**Colina Homes**  
Colinahomes.com..... 281/463-0355

### HOME FURNISHINGS/ACCESSORIES

**Cantoni**  
9889 Westheimer..... cantoni.com  
coda  
355 W 19th..... 713/864-4411  
**Fountains and Statuary**  
11804 Hempstead Rd..... 713/957-3672  
**Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams**  
4091 Westheimer..... 832/397-5130

### INTERIOR DESIGN SERVICES

**Dream by MJS Interiors**  
5120 Woodway Dr., Ste. 4020..... 713/999-1222

### INSURANCE AGENCIES/AGENTS

**Lane Lewis/Farmers Insurance**  
2200 North Loop W, Ste 136..... 713/688-8669  
**Patrick Torma/Goosehead Insurance**  
3420 Rusk, Ste. 22..... 281/723-1294

### INVESTMENTS

**Doug Smith/Hawthorne Funds**  
..... HawthorneFunds.com

### JEWELERS

**Silverlust**  
1338-C Westheimer..... 713/520-5440  
**Tenenbaum Jewelers**  
4310 Westheimer..... 713/629-7444  
**Zadok Master Jewelers**  
1749 Post Oak Blvd..... 713/960-8950

### LANDSCAPING/GARDENING

**Joshua's Native Plants & Antiques**  
502 W. 18th St..... 713/862-7444

### LIFE COACHING

**seEQmore**  
seEQmore.com..... 832/495-1441

### MASSAGE THERAPISTS

**Ryan Fugate, RMT**  
RyanMassageWorks.com..... 713/269-7926  
**Tom Zeppelin/Zeppelin Massage**  
ZeppelinMassage.com..... 713/542-0426

### PERSONAL TRAINERS

**Michael Shallis**  
Body Evolution.com..... 281/881-8599

### PEST CONTROL SERVICES

**Andy's All Star Pest Control**  
..... 713/732-7742

### PET SERVICES & SUPPLIES

**Bayou City Veterinary Hospital**  
4720 Washington..... 713/343-9909  
**The Dog House Pet Salon**  
6434 Washington..... 713/820-6140  
5917 Richmond..... TheDogHousePS.com  
**Midtown Veterinary Hospital**  
MidtownVetHospital.com..... 713-528-4900  
**Natural Pawz**  
208 Westheimer..... naturalpawz.com  
**Pet Patrol**  
..... ThePetPatrol.org

**Spay-Neuter Assistance Program**  
Snapus.org..... 713/862-3863  
**The Ruff - House Cage Free Daycare & Boarding**  
712 Fairview..... 713/521-7877  
**West Alabama Animal Clinic**  
2030 W. Alabama..... 713/528-0818

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

**Dalton DeHart Photography**  
DaltonDehart.com..... 713/622-2202  
**Yvonne Feece Photography**  
yvonnefeece.com..... 832/876-1053

### PHOTOGRAPHY

**Houston Camera Exchange**  
5900 Richmond Ave..... 713/789-6901

### PLUMBING

**U-Plumb-It Plumbing Supply**  
1424 Montrose..... 713-942-2277  
**Village Plumbing & Appliance**  
5403 Kirby..... 713/224-DRIP(3747)

### POOLS & POOL SERVICES

**Venture Pools**  
..... 713/447-9201

### PRINTING/COPY CENTERS

**Copy.com**  
1201-F Westheimer..... 713/528-1201

### PSYCHIC READERS

**Readings by LA**  
readingbyLA.com..... 832/856-2188

### RADIO STATIONS

**Channel Q/95.7 HD2**  
..... Radio.com

### REAL ESTATE-MORTGAGE/TITLE

**J. Friedman Mortgage**  
JFriedmanLoans.com..... 713/785-LOAN (5626)  
**Chicago Title - Inner Loop**  
3700 Buffalo Speedway..... 713/418-7000  
**Keith Russell/Republic State Mortgage**  
2121 Sage Road, Ste 140..... 713/299-4981

### REAL ESTATE-REALTORS

**Tim Anthony/Anthony Upton Properties**  
AnthonyUptonProperties.com... 713/528-0050  
**Brooks Ballard/Engel & Volkers**  
309 Gray..... 713/522-7474  
**David Bowers/The House Company/Galveston**  
David@DavidBowers.com..... 409/763-2800  
**Tina Burgos/Inverness Realty Group**  
TinaSellsHouston.com..... 713/562-3149  
**Jeremy Fain/Greenwood King Properties**  
..... 713/677-4337  
**Karen Derr/Karen Derr Realty**  
karenderr.com..... 713/875-7050  
**Clayton Katz/Compass**  
Compass.com..... 832/512-2180  
**Martha Turner Properties**  
Marthaturner.com..... 713/520-1981  
**Thomas Phillips/KW Memorial**  
t.phillips@kw.com..... 832/305-7848  
**Debbie Levine/Greenwood King Properties**  
..... 713/942-6857  
**Lynette Lew/Better Homes and Gardens**  
LynetteLew.com..... 713/582-2202  
**Danny Pleason/Martha Turner**  
Dannypleason.com..... 832/661-1502  
**Tom Schwenk/Tom's Galveston Real Estate**  
Tomsgalvestonrealestate.com..... 713-857-2309  
**VJ Tramonte/Joe Tramonte Realty**  
1802 Broadway/Galveston..... 409/765-9837  
**B. Kent Turner/Coldwell Banker**  
..... 479/363-6586  
**Calvin Upton/Anthony Upton Properties**  
AnthonyUptonProperties.com... 713/528-0050  
**Andy Weber/John Daugherty Realtors**  
520 Post Oak..... 713/724-4306

### RELOCATIONS SPECIALISTS

**M E Relocation**  
MERelocation.com..... 713/344-0035

### RESTAURANTS/COFFEE/WINE BARS

**Acadian Bakers**  
604 W. Alabama..... 713/520-1484  
**Bollo Houston Wood Fired Pizza**  
2202 W. Alabama St..... 713/677-0391  
**Dessert Gallery**  
DessertGallery.com..... 713-522-9999  
**Free Grillin'/Chef Michele**  
..... 832/419-0165  
**Giacomo's Cibo e Vino**  
3215 Westheimer..... 713/522-1934  
**Gloria's Latin Cuisine**  
2616 Louisiana..... 832/360-1710  
**Hamburger Mary's**  
2409 Grant..... 713/677-0674  
**Indika**  
516 Westheimer..... 713/524-2170  
**Katz's Deli**  
616 Westheimer Rd..... katzsneverkloses.com  
**Khyber Grill**  
2510 Richmond Ave..... 713/942-9424  
**Niko Niko's**  
2520 Montrose..... 713/528-4976  
**Niko Niko's**  
1040 W. Sam Houston Prkwy. N. 832/981-4976  
**The Red Lion Pub & Eating House**  
2316 S. Shepherd Dr..... 281/888-3599  
**Riva's Italian Restaurant**  
1117 Missouri St..... 713/529-3450  
**Urban Eats**  
3414 Washington Ave..... feasturbaneats.com

**SCHOOLS**  
**First Christian School**  
1601 Sunset..... 713/526-8125  
**St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and School**  
1800 Sul Ross..... 713/821-9100

### SPECIALTY RETAIL

**Phoenicia Specialty Foods**  
1001 Austin St..... phoeniciafoods.com

### TRAVEL/TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Aquafest**  
Aquafestcruises.com..... 800/592-9058  
**Concierge Travel, Inc**  
4920 Mimosa..... 713/661-2117  
**Lake Charles**  
Visitlakecharles.org/greattimes. 800/456-7952

### WEDDING SERVICES/BAKERS

**Acadian Bakers**  
604 W. Alabama..... 713/520-1484  
**David Alcorta Catering**  
davidalcorta.net..... 832/439-0224  
**Dessert Gallery**  
DessertGallery.com..... 713-522-9999

### WEDDING SERVICES/CATERERS

**David Alcorta Catering**  
davidalcorta.net..... 832/439-0224  
**Jim Benton of Houston Catering**  
2811 Eastman..... 713/802-2860

### WEDDING SERVICES/PHOTO/VIDEO

**Dalton DeHart Photography**  
DaltonDehart.com..... 713/622-2202  
**Yvonne Feece-Tran Photography**  
yvonnefeece.com..... 832/876-1053

### WEDDING SERVICES/SERVICES

**Bradley David Entertainment**  
204 Marshall St. #5..... 713/487-6076  
**Harmony Strings String Quartet**  
..... www.harmonystings.com

Get listed on this page. For information, call 713/520-7237, ext. 710.

LOOK FOR US ON AIRBNB!

When business or pleasure brings you to Houston, why not make L'Emerson your address?





- All the amenities of home.
- Ideally situated in the Montrose-Midtown area.
- Much more affordable than a downtown hotel room.

Tom Fricke, Proprietor

**210 Emerson Street • Houston, Texas 77006**  
**www.LEmerson.net**

MARKETPLACE CLASSIFIEDS

ACCOMMODATIONS

FullyFurnished Corporate Apartments



www.LEmerson.net

CHURCHES

Living MOSAIC CHURCH

YOU ARE **LOVED**

SUN. 10:00 AM: Worship Service  
WED. 7:00 PM: Bible Study

Living Mosaic Church  
401 Branard : Houston, 77006

COMPUTER SERVICES

Plain Talk



Real help. Gary Joseph Owner

PC HomeTech™  
In-Home Computer Services

832.496.9246  
www.pchometech.com

EMPLOYMENT

**WE ARE HIRING!**

We have immediate openings for experienced advertising executives at OutSmart Media Company.

Salary, commissions, and benefits. A creative, fun environment.

**APPLY TODAY!**

Send your cover letter and resume to employment@outsmartmagazine.com

**OutSmart**  
Houston's LGBTQ Magazine

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**A Sure Cure For Stress: Reiki!**



David Reiki Master & Teacher

houstonreiki.com  
713-240-5508

MASSAGE AND BODYWORK

**Roman Body Massage**

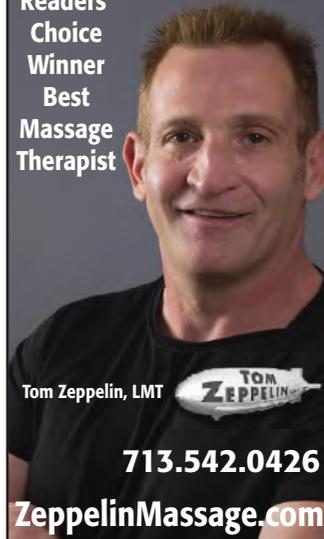


MASCULINE MALE THERAPIST

- Deep Tissue Massage
- Relaxing Swedish
- Sports Stretching
- Galleria Area

Brian, LMT  
Licensed Massage Therapist  
713-806-2199  
www.Romanbody.com

Readers' Choice Winner Best Massage Therapist



Tom Zeppelin, LMT

713.542.0426  
ZeppelinMassage.com

Idle hands are the devil's workshop. Find new clients for your massage business in OutSmart!

SALE OR LEASE

**GALVESTON**

2115 Postoffice \$359,500  
2nd Floor Kress Condo  
2,390 SQ FT (CAD) & 2 car garage  
Downtown Galveston

2328 Ave N 1/2 \$350,000  
Duplex-Very successful Airbnb  
Victorian

3212 Ave Q 1/2 \$269,500  
Circa 1921 4/2 two story  
4 blocks to the beach

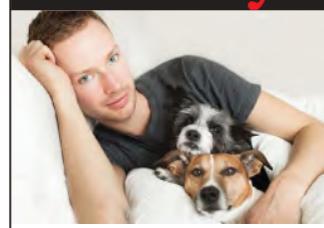
1209 Bowie \$350,000  
Duplex-each with three bedrooms  
Brick, circa 1940

**THE HOUSE COMPANY**  
REAL ESTATE BROKERS

David Bowers  
david@davidbowers.com  
409-763-2800

SERVICES

**Be Sexy.**



Rescued Pets Movement, Inc. (RPM) is a Houston-based nonprofit providing a second chance for thousands of homeless dogs and cats through rehabilitation and transport to forever homes in communities throughout the country that have a need for adoptable pets.

You can help by becoming a temporary foster home partner.

**Rescued Pets Movement**

RescuedPetsMovement.org/Foster-Us

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

TO HELP PET OWNERS WITH HEALTH CHALLENGES  
KEEP THEIR COMPANION PETS



WWW.THEPETPATROL.ORG  
281.733.7696  
PETPATROLPARTNERS@SBCGLOBAL.NET

SERVICES

**Pet Walks & House Sitting**

Call Loyal & Bill  
713-705-6125

BONDED & INSURED BY SCOTTSDALE INSURANCE

Your Pet's Favorite Uncles



**ANDY'S ALL-STAR PEST CONTROL**  
713-732-7742

Complete Pest Control Service  
6 Month Warranty - on Standard Pest Control  
This is Termite Swarming Season  
Call us to Protect your Investment

Call Andy for a free quote



Andy Sassie - Owner  
TPCL# 13558

**Clairvoyant Tarot READINGS by L.A.**

Here is what one client has to say:

"As a professional forecaster myself, I can attest to L.A. Brown's remarkable ability to "see" the future. She's as insightful as she is delightful, whether she's amazing my party guests or giving me a personal reading, L.A. is spot-on with her predictions...and she goes out a lot farther than my 10-day forecast!"

— Frank Billingsley



- Readings
- Romantic Relationships
- Business
- Past Lives
- Mediumship
- Life Coaching
- Party Entertainment

To schedule your reading  
Call (832) 856-2188  
ReadingsbyLA.com

**MARKETPLACE ADVERTISING RATES**

Jan. 15 for the Feb. Issue.

For rates/information  
call 713/520-7237 ext. 710.

projecting archetypal roles from your childhood.

**SAGGITARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**

January is an especially active month for you, with Mars (planet of action and taking life personally) visiting your sign through the middle of next February. This is an excellent time to start new projects, focus on health and exercise, and put yourself first in all situations. Personal relationships can be more problematic, and you will want to express yourself freely without a filter. You are also focused on improving your current financial plan. You may be asking for a raise, increasing your fees, or looking for a promotion at work. You are trying to make better use of your time by the end of the month. Communication with others improves as well!

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**

As the month begins, you are in a period of rest and retreat. Even though you can feel the energy building to push you forward, you are still in "preparation" mode until the process begins to shift by midmonth, and then gets much stronger by the end of January. You are questioning your motivations around your career and looking

for something new to spark your interest. This also affects your sense of obligation around your domestic duties. By the end of the month, you are feeling more energetic and ready to interact with humanity once again. January is a great month to get involved with community projects or professional associations!

**PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20)**

The holidays are always a busy and active time for you, but this year seems especially significant. You are sensing that some aspects of your life are passing away while new opportunities and possibilities are presenting themselves. This is a good time to get involved in community activities, your neighborhood-watch group, or nonprofit organizations. You are ready to take a leadership role in these organizations, and others will recognize your leadership skills and want to heed your guidance. You will put more energy into your career, and it's a great time to start a new project or look into new career directions. Your frustrations will be evident to those around you, but just say what you think since you are in tune with what the group is already thinking! Lead by your example.

*For more astro-insight, log on to [lillyroddy.com](http://lillyroddy.com).*

The image is a radio station logo for KPFT 90.1. At the top is a large black musical note with a speech bubble inside it. Below the note, the text "KPFT 90.1" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Underneath that, "WELCOME HOME" is written in a smaller, bold, black font. A horizontal line separates this from the text "PEOPLE POWERED RADIO" which is in a white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this is a colorful audio waveform graphic. At the bottom, the text "LISTEN LIVE 90.1FM | ONLINE AT KPFT.ORG" is written in a white, sans-serif font.

**ryan**  
r.m.t., n.m.t., II reiki t.

professional  
**Therapeutic  
massage**

Voted Houstons best  
massage therapist,  
2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014,  
2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019!  
-outsmart magazine

713 269 7926  
[ryanmassageworks.com](http://ryanmassageworks.com)

Right now is the perfect opportunity

- \* TO BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE
- \* TO BE COMPASSIONATE TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS
- \* TO SHOW GRATITUDE TO THOSE YOU LOVE AND TRULY APPRECIATE

Thank you again to my OutSmart readers for voting me Best Astrologer for all of these years!

Voted BEST ASTROLOGER  
by OutSmart Readers

**LILLY RODDY**

ASTROLOGER

- \* Personal astrological sessions
- \* Relationship readings - personal / business
- \* Presentations & lectures to organizations

CONSULTATIONS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY  
GIFT CERTIFICATES • CREDIT CARDS

**713.529.5842**

[lilycath@aol.com](mailto:lilycath@aol.com) • [www.lillyroddy.com](http://www.lillyroddy.com)

By LILLY RODDY

Illustration by ANGEL ALBARRAN

# Lunar Eclipse

## A major time of deconstruction?

Since September 2017, we have been dealing with the strong alignment of Saturn and Pluto. This alignment has been affecting governments and the economy, exposing the rot behind the “pretty face.” These two planets come together this month on the 12th—one of several astrological phenomena being triggered by the lunar eclipse on the 10th. The Saturn/Pluto alignment will continue to impact us through the end of 2020. This alignment can create fear, tension, and a sense that we are in a major time of deconstruction. This will have the strongest impact on the cardinal signs of Aries, Libra, Cancer, and Capricorn. The first half of the month is the most active time, and is likely to keep us on our toes.

• Positive days this month are January 2, 8, 15, and 25. Difficult days are January 10, 12, 13, 18, 23, 26, 27, and 28. • The sun travels through Capricorn until the 20th, when she enters Aquarius. Mercury continues through Capricorn and enters Aquarius on the 16th. Venus leaves Aquarius and enters Pisces on the 10th. Mars moves out of Scorpio and into Sagittarius on the 3rd. Saturn remains in Capricorn, Uranus in Taurus, Neptune in Pisces, and Pluto in Capricorn.

### ARIES (Mar. 21–Apr. 19)

This is a busy social and career month for you. While one part of your career path is going through huge revisions, opportunities continue to open up for you for most of the year. You may feel that you are having to make some decisions even if you don't want to. Pay attention to your bottom line, since boundaries will be important this month. Friends and business organizations can be very helpful in offering advice, opportunities, and support. January 10–13 is especially tense, but

those will be days of important decision-making for you.

### TAURUS (Apr. 20–May 20)

You are very mentally active this month as you consider which direction to take as you reinvent yourself. You are looking for the spark that helps to ignite your passion for living. You'll be ready to act on those urges after the 10th. You will be making some changes in your career, and looking for role models to share their expertise. Business and personal relationships that are too restrictive won't do well this month. Keep your exit strategy handy. You get more focused by the end of the month.

### GEMINI (May 21–June 21)

Relationships are in the spotlight this month! This area of your life is much more active, demanding more of your time and attention. If you are involved, you will want to find time to renew your bonds. If you are having difficulty, this is a great time to see a counselor or possibly an attorney. You are still working on improving your financial position. That energy is very strong in mid-January, and you will need a break from your routines at the end of the month to avoid feeling very ragged. Self-care should be the first thing on your list.

### CANCER (June 22–July 22)

This is an especially dynamic time of choices, options, revisions, and letting go of past issues! Relationships need to have meaning, purpose, and goals to bring the partners closer together. This can be a time for a relationship renewal, and possibly even for marriage. If your relationship isn't doing well, this can be a make-or-break time. The eclipse on the 10th could be a trigger for you. You are also focusing on getting your career headed in the direction that best serves you. Finances take on a greater role toward the end of the month.

### LEO (July 23–Aug. 22)

There continues to be change in your work routines this month. That may involve a location change, improved office equip-



### CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22, 2019–Jan. 19, 2020)

January is going to be quite an intense month for you. First, this is your yearly personal cycle around your birthday—the time of the year when you review the past and set new goals for yourself. In addition to the normal annual cycles, Saturn and Pluto are aligning in your sign on January 12. You have been in the “buildup” side of this energy since September 2018, and that will culminate this month. This planetary alignment is creating change at the most personal level. Your company could be downsizing, causing you to rethink your current path. This can be a time when you do something on your own, or even retire and disconnect from the grid! As you change, so will your relationship needs and expectations. This energy is super-strong from the 10th through the 13th. Make sure you find time for yourself through meditation, long walks, or some self-imposed isolation. Self-care is the key!

ment, or new managers. You are more sensitive to your work environment this month, so drama and politics at the office could make you want to work from home! This may also be a time to consider opening your own business. Relationships are more important as the month progresses. If you are single, this is a good time to meet new people. If you are involved, this is a great time to spend some quality time together.

### VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22)

You continue to be in a creative time as you look for ways to have more fun, connect with your children, or work on your favorite projects. You will need to have more fun at work. This is an especially good month to consider publishing your work, exploring classes that make your hobbies more enjoyable, or taking a short vacation! Relationships need some attention, even if you aren't sure what they need. Your partner may need you as a sounding board—just to listen, rather than trying to be the fixer that you normally are! You'll need to spend more time on your health routines by the end of the month.

### LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 23)

Home, family, roots, and changes in your core family structures are very active this month. You could be considering remodel-

ing, relocating, or doing some serious downsizing. You are questioning what motivates and drives you in your career. This is causing you to become impatient at work, so you will have to make some real changes there. This impatience is very active from the 10th through the 13th. With family, there is a shift in who is really in charge. There could be some power struggles there, even if everyone has the best intentions. Stay aware of your limits and boundaries. By the end of the month, you have some emotional distance and can see the situation more clearly.

### SCORPIO (Oct. 24–Nov. 21)

This is a significant month and new year for you—a time to reinvent yourself, explore new career options, renew or initiate a partnership, and bring back some passion and interest in your life. You may have been feeling trapped by a lingering sense of obligation and commitment. You are exploring ways to create more freedom and personal expression in your life. Some may see this as a sudden break, but you have been working on this all year. After the 10th, you are clearer about what you want, and are ready to move forward on your goals. Family responsibilities show up toward the end of the month. You will see your family more objectively, without

CONTINUED ON PAGE 93

# Tech Auto

## MAINTENANCE & REPAIR



- 20+ Years Experience in Houston
- State-of-the-Art Auto Repair Facility
- Mechanics Specializing in Both Domestic & Import Vehicles
- Quality Reliable & Professional Service at Competitive Rates
- Guarantee on All Parts & Service
- Hours: Monday-Friday 7am-6pm



**VOTED BEST  
AUTO MECHANICS**  
by OutSmart Readers 2013-2019



National Instituted for  
**AUTOMOTIVE  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE**



BOBBY HARTING, OWNER

37 WAUGH DR. HOUSTON, TX 77007  
**713-863-8244**

FOR 24/7 DIRECT TOWING TO TECH AUTO CALL 281/859-0994

Since 1978



COUNSELING

DEPRESSION • ANXIETY • SEXUALITY • GENDER IDENTITY • ADDICTION  
GRIEF & LOSS • COUPLES & MARRIAGE • PARENTING • CAREER GOALS  
COMING OUT • CHRONIC ILLNESS • DIVORCE • STRESS • SELF-ESTEEM  
SUICIDE • SOCIAL MEDIA • INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA • SEXUAL ASSAULT • RELIGIOUS ABUSE  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE • EATING DISORDER • BIPOLAR DISORDER • ANGER  
PERSONALITY DISORDER • FAMILY

Because **life** happens.

FAVORITE LGBT  
PHILANTHROPIC  
ORGANIZATION

THANK YOU  
HOUSTON!



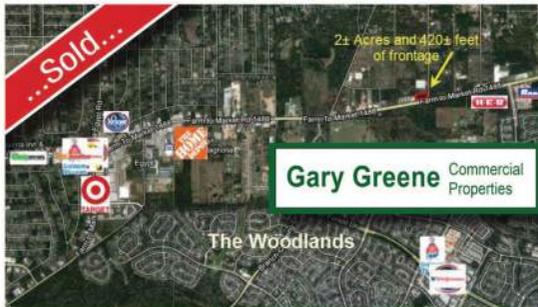
the  
**Montrose  
Center**

401 BRANARD STREET | HOUSTON, TEXAS 77006 | [MONTROSECENTER.ORG](http://MONTROSECENTER.ORG) 713.529.0037

AFFORDABLE SLIDING SCALE. INSURANCE ACCEPTED, INCLUDING MEDICARE & MEDICAID

## Buying, Selling and Investments

Available for all your Commercial and Residential Real Estate Needs



**Gary Greene** Commercial Properties



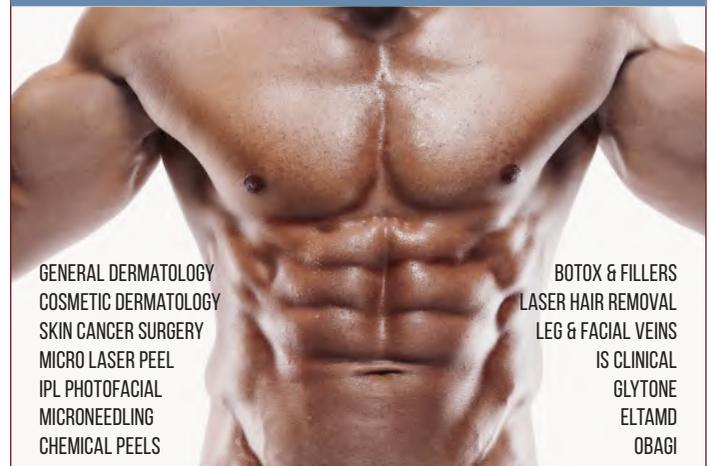
**Lynette Lew • 713.582.2202**

Residential and Commercial Realtor  
Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Gary Greene  
Gary Greene Commercial Properties

Lynette@LynetteLew.com | [www.LynetteLew.com](http://www.LynetteLew.com)

## HEIGHTS DERMATOLOGY & AESTHETIC CENTER

COME IN FOR A FREE  
COSMETIC CONSULTATION!



GENERAL DERMATOLOGY  
COSMETIC DERMATOLOGY  
SKIN CANCER SURGERY  
MICRO LASER PEEL  
IPL PHOTOFACIAL  
MICRONEEDLING  
CHEMICAL PEELS

BOTOX & FILLERS  
LASER HAIR REMOVAL  
LEG & FACIAL VEINS  
IS CLINICAL  
GLYTONE  
ELTAMD  
OBAGI

**Dr. Alpesh Desai**  
**Dr. Tejas Desai**

BOARD CERTIFIED  
DERMATOLOGISTS



2120 Ashland St.  
Houston, TX 77008  
713.864.2659

[HEIGHTSSKIN.COM](http://HEIGHTSSKIN.COM)

## SCENE OUT

Photos by  
DALTON DEHART & EDGARDO AGUILAR



On December 6, the World AIDS Day Luncheon was held at The Ballroom at Bayou Place. Pictured are Carrie Bradsberg-Dah, Duyen Nguyen, Mondo Guerra, Shelby Hodge, Adrian Duenas, Bruce Richmond, (bottom row) Angel Rua, John Huckaby, and Ernie Manouse.



The Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit was held December 2-4. Pictured are local host committee members.



The Greater Houston LGBT Chamber held its holiday party and a ribbon cutting at Postino's Montrose on December 4. Pictured are Deborah Lawson, Tiffany Tosh, Gary Wood, Alex Taylor, Brent Karlicek, Tammi Wallace, CJ Pappas, Jill Maxwell, Caroline Gaston, Jason Rocha, and Abbey Hill.



On December 5, ActOut at the Alley Theatre held a reception before the performance of *Fully Committed*. Pictured are Lisa Wortman, David Brooks, Tina Berry, Dylan Godwin, Rachel Applegate, Larisa Gawlik, and Dr. Sergio Silva.



On December 5, AIDS Foundation Houston held a VIP reception at BeDesign. Pictured are Heath LaPray, Debbie Festari, and Travis Torrence.



The Diana Foundation held its holiday party at the home of Richard Holt and Mark McMasters. Pictured are Nathan Wright (president) and past presidents Tanner Williams, John Heinzerling, Micheal Leibbert, Bob Briddick, Frank Staggs, and Michael Kemper.



The Holiday Ball Red Ribbon Toy Drive was held at Rivas Restaurant on December 11. Pictured are Michael Syboye, Sally Stapleton, Dena Page, and Rocky Romero.



On December 12, Harmony House held "Home(less) for the Holidays" Holiday Breakfast celebration honoring Mayor Sylvester Turner and Todd Shell. Pictured are Meg Pohodich, Turner, Philamena Baird, Shell, and Preston Witt.



On December 12, The Greater Houston LGBT Chamber received the Chamber of the Year Award from the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise. Pictured are Roy Alvarez Jr., Tammi Wallace, Goodwille Pierre, Lianne Lami, and Dalton DeHart.



On December 12, Legacy Community Health held its 17th Annual Legacy Cocktail Party at the home of Tilman Fertitta. Pictured are Melissa Mithoff, Fady Aramian, Chree Boydston, Bill Baldwin, Debbie Festari, and Ginger Baldwin.



The Victory Fund held a holiday party at Harold's in the Heights on December 12. Pictured are Victory in Houston committee members Mike Holloman, Bryan Hlavinka, Travis Torrence, Allie Owen, Lionel Alexander, Jake Riley, Bryan Cotton, Annise Parker, Richard Holt, Nick Hellyar, JJ Gonzales, and Vince Pryor.



On December 17, the Probate Courts of Harris County held a holiday open house. Pictured are Judge James Horwitz, Judge Jason Cox, Judge Michael Newman, Associate Judge Amy Parsons, Judge Jerry Simoneaux, and Judge Kathy Stone.

# MIDTOWN VETERINARY HOSPITAL

Your Neighborhood Pet Care Solution



*“Our Mission is to deepen the bonds between people and their pets by providing personalized, compassionate care. We are a full-service veterinary hospital offering high-quality services for your pet.”*



**Midtown  
Veterinary Hospital**

1434 W. Alabama St. • Houston, TX 77006  
(713)528-4900 main • (888)504-9006 fax

[www.MidtownVetHospital.com](http://www.MidtownVetHospital.com)



Voted  
the BEST Male  
Insurance Agent

# COVERAGE TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU WANT



- Automobile insurance
- Business or Commercial
- Call to see if you can save

## Lane Lewis

Your Local Agent

2200 North Loop W Ste 136  
Houston, TX 77018

[LLewis@FarmersAgent.com](mailto:LLewis@FarmersAgent.com)

Call 713.688.8669 today!

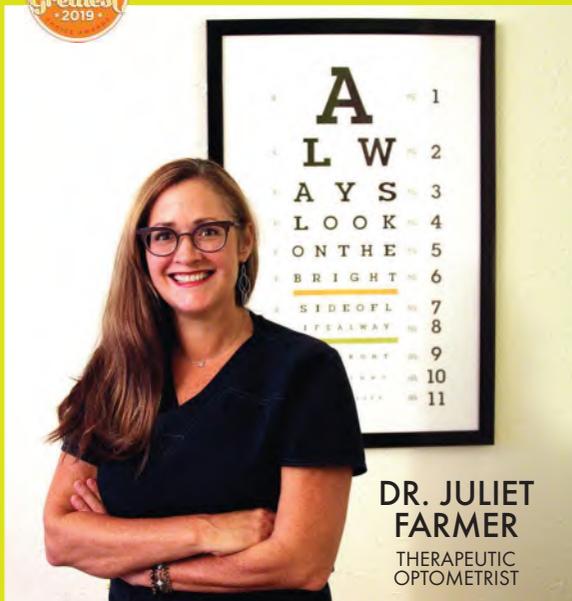
For Home, Auto, Life and Business.



Restrictions apply. Discounts may vary. Not available in all states. See your agent for details. Insurance is underwritten by Farmers Insurance Exchange and other affiliated insurance companies. Visit farmers.com for a complete listing of companies. Not all insurers are authorized to provide insurance in all states. Coverage is not available in all states.



Voted one of the **Best Female Eye Doctor**  
Outsmart Readers' Choice Awards 2019



**DR. JULIET  
FARMER**  
THERAPEUTIC  
OPTOMETRIST

*Boutique*  
EYE CARE

1806 A. Westheimer Rd.  
Houston, TX 77098  
713.528.2010

Schedule online at  
[BOUTIQUEEYECARE.COM](http://BOUTIQUEEYECARE.COM)



# THE EYE GALLERY

HAPPY NEW YEAR,  
TO YOU HOUSTON!

WELCOME TO  
THE YEAR OF  
2020 VISION



[EYEGALLERYHOUSTON.COM](http://EYEGALLERYHOUSTON.COM)

1806 WESTHEIMER RD - RIVER OAKS

1700 POST OAK BLVD - POST OAK (NEXT TO WHOLE FOODS)  
POST OAK LOCATION NOW OPEN SUNDAYS!

713.523.1279

713.622.7470

# A HARD KNOX LIFE

By SAM BYRD  
Photo by GT STUDIOS  
gtstudiogallery

**M**et Chloe Knox, Houston's most statuesque drag queen. At almost six-and-a-half feet barefoot, she's through the roof when you add the heels, the hair, and the attitude.

This twig in a wig sat down for a minute between her multiple gigs to give OUTSMART a quick dig into her life.

## Pronouns?

You can refer to me with any of them, but I do identify as a *he*.

## Spirit animal?

A giraffe.

## Home town?

I was born in Toronto, but I consider Houston my home town.

## Drag birth date?

I started drag in August 2012, but my first club performance was June 6, 2013, so I'd say then.

## Describe your drag persona.

A willowy, statuesque model (a young Carmen Dell'Orefice), but with a cornball personality.

## Team Britney or Team Christina?

Britney

## What illusions are you known for?

At EyeCons, Houston's longest-running celebrity-illusion show at Michael's Outpost on Saturdays, I do Stevie Nicks, P!nk, and Kesha. But my favorites are probably Annie Lennox and Madonna.

## Where can we catch Chloe when she's not performing?

Almost always in my apartment, with my mom, or at Midtown Bar and Grill with Violet S'Arbleu.

## Pet peeve when you're performing?

People treating you like an object and not a person, or looking miserable. Smile! It's drag—we are having fun!

## What do your fans in the audience do that you appreciate?

Taking photos and videos of my number and sending them to me. Getting someone to film or take pictures is a hassle, so it's nice to have evidence of the hard work we do.

## What have you learned about yourself from doing drag that you carry into your daily life?

We humans are more powerful than we know. I have more confidence and belief in myself in my daily life than I believe I would have otherwise.



## Favorite charity to support?

Hatch Youth

## Favorite RuPaul's Drag Race contestant?

Katya, whose full name is Yekaterina Petrovna Zamolodchikova.

## Horror stories from performing in drag?

One time, a girl on drugs followed me onstage and around the bar during my number.

## Dream job?

To be an actor, a comedian, or a model.

Any combination of the three.

## Most distant place you have traveled to perform?

Salt Lake City.

## What would be your goal as Chloe Knox?

To get to a level of success that I feel is sufficient, where drag is concerned. Whether it be Miss Gay America, RuPaul's Drag Race... When I've reached it, I'll tell you.

## Performers whose songs you love to sing?

Muse, Betty Who, Allie X, Taylor Swift, Gaga, The Sounds, Stevie Nicks, TLC, Kesha, Avril Lavigne, and others.

## Hobbies?

I like drawing, painting—anything artistic. I'm also a super fan of figure skating. I follow it religiously.

## Professional role model?

There are many, but [I admire] anyone who's a boss-bitch who knows who they are and what they want. Especially if they've overcome struggles with self-confidence.

## Advice for your younger self?

Don't *ever* lose that spark and lack of inhibition. Don't let anyone tell you what you need to change to make yourself "better," because your obnoxious personality will be an asset to you in more ways than you know.

## What would you say to the world about the LGBTQ community?

Before we're anything else, we're human beings. Just because you don't understand something doesn't mean you can't respect it and let people live their lives. [That *doesn't* mean] being ambivalent about us. It means *supporting* our right to live our lives without hindrance.

Keep up with  
Chloe on Instagram  
[@chloeknox](https://www.instagram.com/chloeknox).

## What do we not know about

### Chloe Knox that is interesting?

I'm a ginger. I'm a twin. I played football in school. Take your pick!

### Houston's best-kept drag secret?

Real talk: the most decorated and well-respected drag legends come from here.

### Final thoughts about Chloe, Houston's LGBTQ scene, and drag?

Houston's drag scene is bursting from the seams with talent, but the fervor and excitement for it isn't always there. Go out and support, show love, and show these artists they are valued. Oh, and always remember to wash and air-dry your tights. ▼

GORDON E. CROFOOT MD PA



Over 30 years of excellence.  
Thank you Houston for voting us  
your Gayest and Greatest  
for 10 consecutive years.



Houston's only LGBTQ+ focused health center.

Primary Care | HIV Treatment | Transgender Specialty Care | PrEP | Research | 713.526.0005



VOTED  
BEST  
DENTIST!



MAKE YOUR 2020 THE YEAR OF  
HEALTHY, CONFIDENT SMILES!



GENERAL & COSMETIC DENTISTRY



SAMUEL A.  
CARRELL, DDS

620 West Alabama | Houston, TX 77006  
713.529.4364 | MONTROSEDDS.COM



AUSTIN T.  
FAULK, DDS