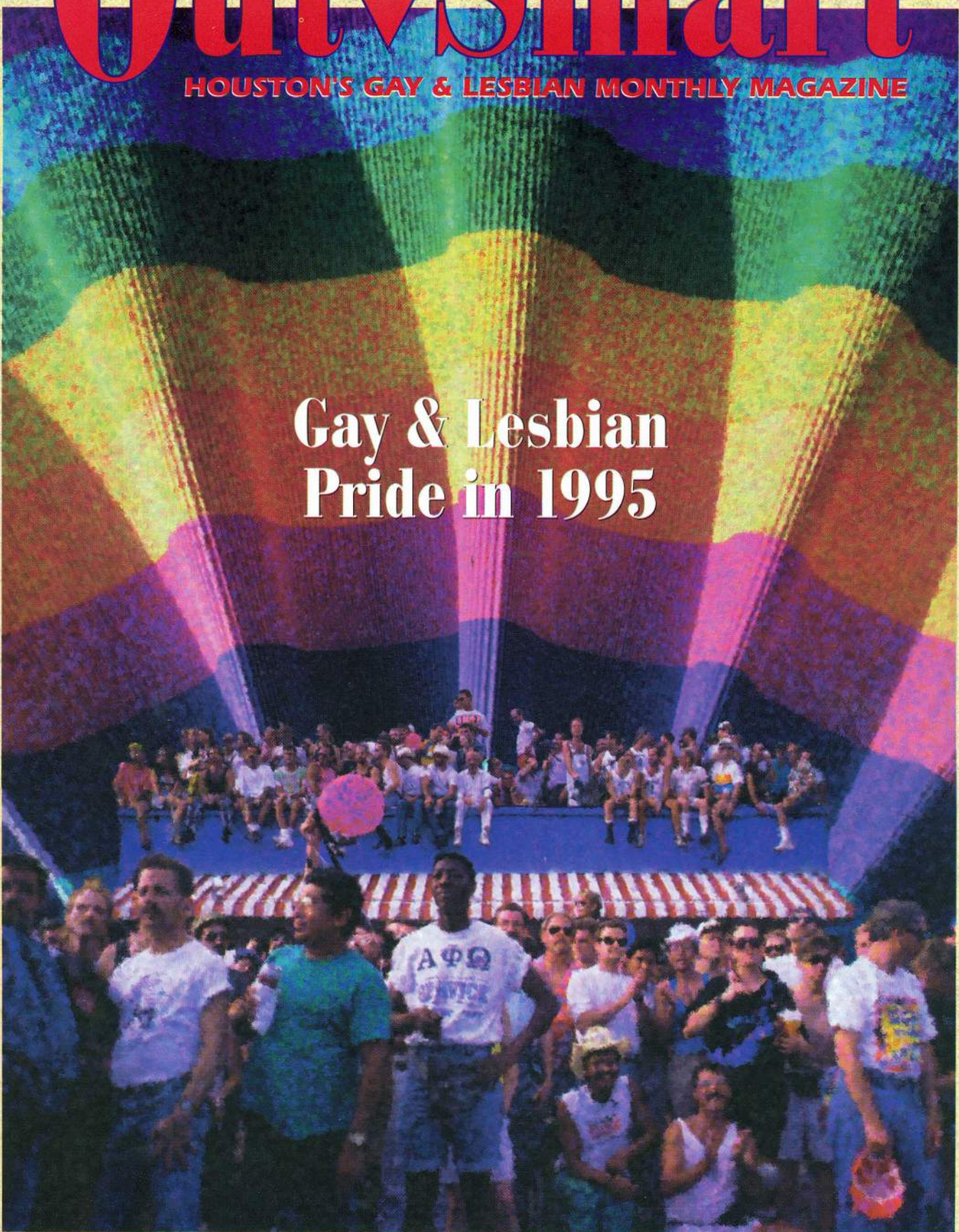


Volume 2 ▼ Issue 5 June 15 - July 14, 1995 Complimentary Copy

Out▼Smart

HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Gay & Lesbian Pride in 1995



SILENCE TO CELEBRATION: PREVIEWING HOUSTON GAY AND LESBIAN PRIDE WEEK 1995 EVENTS



Silence to Celebration

Houston & Lesbian Pride 1995

E · V · E · N · T · S

FRIDAY, JUNE 16

Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride Week

Friday, June 16, is the official beginning of 10 days of celebration. ☎ 713-529-6979, fax 713-529-1223.

HGLPW Official Kickoff Party

Join the Pride Committee for food, drinks, and entertainment. The Lovett Inn, 501 Lovett, ☎ 713-529-6979.

Decoration Contest

The 1995 Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride Week Committee is having a contest for the best decorated bar or business. This year's theme is "Silence to Celebration, Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride Week 1995." Go ahead—decorate both inside *and* outside! Prizes awarded in three categories: 1) large bars, 2) small bars, and 3) businesses. There will be a trophy and press coverage for the winners. June 16-25, ☎ 713-527-9305 or 713-529-6979 (ask for Brian Keever).

The Destiny of Me

Destiny continues with the story of Ned Weeks (first introduced in *The Normal Heart*). Now HIV-positive, he checks himself into a hospital to begin experimental treatments and, while there, battles not



Theresa DiMenno

only the medical establishment but the memories of his past. \$15, 7 pm or 8 pm, Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo (just off the 2100 block of Houston), ☎ 713-868-7516, through June 18.

Angels in America

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* is a gay fantasia on national themes. Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning play directed by Michael Wilson. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas (at Louisiana), ☎ 713-228-8421, Tuesdays through Sundays, through July 9.

Charlie's...Still Here, But Out and Proud!

The new owners, Nick and David, invite you to experience a new dining attitude at Charlie's. Diversity is the spice of our community, and the new decor as well as the new menu exploit our wide variety of taste! 1.5% of all sales to Montrose Clinic during Pride Week. Charlie's Coffee Shop, 1100 Westheimer, ☎ 713-522-3332.

The Artist Eye: Silence to Celebration

An art show opening, featuring select pieces of art by local gay and lesbian artists. Free, 6-10 pm, The Hyde Park Gallery, 711 Hyde Park, ☎ 713-526-2744.

"Lesbian and Gay Voices"

A special show broadcast live from the Lovett Inn with the kickoff party for Pride Week '95, it features a look at the history of Pride Week and our community. We look back on the beginning of our modern move-

ment and where we are now. We also look at some of the many other events that will happen this week. ("Lesbian and Gay Voices" airs weekly with such segments as Womyn's music, reviews of gay and lesbian cultural events, and news from "This Way Out.") 6-10 pm, KPFT 90.1 FM, ☎ on-air line 713-526-KPFT, fax 713-529-1223.

SATURDAY, JUNE 17

Black and White

The Dizinger Foundation presents a collection of photographs by people living with HIV/AIDS. The original works and smaller reproductions will be for sale. Masks made by Dizinger artists will also be on sale. Refreshments provided, donations accepted, 2-6 pm, 214 Avondale, ☎ 713-527-8490.

Mr. Venture-N Contest

Enter or watch the fabulous men of Venture-N strut their stuff to become Mr. Venture-N. All entertainment tips will be donated to HGLPW. The entry fee of \$10 goes to the LVL Holiday Fund. A Don Gill production. The Venture-N, 2923 Main, ☎ 713-522-0000.

Freedom Dance 3

With a live performance by Pussy Tourette at midnight. Ms. Tourette will perform *French Bitch*, *Kiss*, and more. Heaven, 810 Pacific, ☎ 713-521-0107.

Tony Kushner Personal Appearance and Book Signing
The Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright of *Angels in America*, Tony Kushner, makes a personal appearance and signs books. (His visit to Houston is underwritten in part by the Omni Houston Hotel.) 2-4 pm, Border Books, 9633 Westheimer (at Gessner), ☎ 713-782-6066.

Destiny of Me

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

Angels in America

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

SUNDAY, JUNE 18

Spectrum '95

Featuring Town Meeting II, business expo, art show, speakers' forum, and an evening concert of gay and lesbian performers such

as Romanovsky & Phillips, Lynn Lavner, the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston, and the Turtle Creek Chorale. \$15 and up, Astroarena, Kirby and South Loop, ☎ 713-526-2853.



Lynn Lavner is one the headliners at Spectrum '95, Sunday, June 18.

A New Beginning for All!

A variety show benefiting the Montrose Clinic. The show will encompass the "Best of the Best" performers in both drag and live presentation! Our Masters of Ceremony will be Lady V & her two Dons. Free, 6:30 pm, Chances, 1100 Westheimer, ☎ 713-523-7217.

Pride Night at Fitzgerald's

Some of Houston's hottest up-and-coming bands are playing. Monster Soup, Violent Blue, Starbelly, Clover, Boy Girl, and Objection will be playing a benefit for the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard of Houston. \$6, 7-12 pm, Fitzgerald's, 2706 White Oak (at Studemont), ☎ 713-529-3211.

2nd Annual

Miss Life Today Pageant

For female impersonators. Titleholder agrees to assist in fundraising and awareness promotion for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders who are affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. Benefit for River Oaks Health Association, donations, 8-10 pm, EJ's, 2517 Ralph, ☎ 713-977-4101.

Destiny of Me

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

Angels in America

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

MONDAY, JUNE 19

Striving to Get the Love You Want

Lecture based on Imago Relationship Therapy developed by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., author of the best-selling books, *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples* and *Keeping the Love You Find: A Guide for Singles*. Sponsored by MCCR and P-FLAG. Free, 6:30-8:30 pm, Montrose Library, 4100 Montrose, ☎ 713-529-1913.

They Called Him Michael

Goat Song A Theatre Group presents the world premiere performance of the new work by local playwright K. David Cochran. Opening night proceeds go to People With AIDS Coalition. \$25. Opening night, \$15, 8 pm, Stages, 3201 Allen Parkway, ☎ 713-525-5960.

TUESDAY, JUNE 20

Make a Joyful Noise V

Local churches unite to celebrate Jesus! Each church submits talent to this tremendous event, sponsored by Community Gospel Church. 7:30 pm, Community Gospel Church, 501 E. 18th (at Columbia), ☎ 713-880-9235.

The Miss Houston Pageant

Beauty pageant for female impersonators. \$5, 10 pm, Heaven, 810 Pacific, ☎ 713-861-4667.

Grand Marshals' Reception

Food and beverage. Come meet the grand marshals and Pride Committee at the annual reception, sponsored by The Royal, Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star. 7-9 pm, Gentry's, 2303 Richmond.

Angels in America

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

They Called Him Michael

(see entry for Monday, June 19)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21

Bring Your Money Out of the Closet

Financial advisor Julie LaRue, LUTCF, discusses financial planning for gay men

Pride Calendar

Continued from previous page

and lesbians. *Limited seating, RSVP. Free, 6:30-8:30 pm, The Acacia Group, 9 Greenway Plaza, Ste. 300, ☎ 713-888-3500, fax 713-888-3501.*

Rolling With Pride

Lambda Rollerskating Club will be hosting their 4th annual Pride skate night. \$5 (includes skates), 8-10 pm, Dairy Ashford Rink, 1820 Dairy Ashford, ☎ 713-933-5818.

Pride Week Bear Night Out

Join the Men of the Mine as they host a celebration fit for a bear. 5 pm, Montrose Mining Company, 805 Pacific, ☎ 713-529-7488.

Shiela Lennon— A Country Kind of Gal!

Lennon is a versatile singer whose performance is both entertaining and danceable. All moneys donated to the Montrose Clinic. \$1, 9 pm - 12 am, Chances Bar, 1100 Westheimer, ☎ 713-523-7217.

Angels in America

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

They Called Him Michael

(see entry for Monday, June 19)

THURSDAY, JUNE 22

Legal and Financial Planning for People with a Life-Threatening Illness

Attorneys Mitchell Katine, Connie Moore, and Debra Hunt, along with financial advisor Julie LaRue, will discuss legal and financial planning tools for living with a life-threatening illness. *RSVP. Free, 6:30-8:30 pm, The Acacia Group, 9 Greenway Plaza, Ste. 300, ☎ 713-888-3500, fax 713-888-3501.*

Lesbian & Gay Pride 4th Annual Ice Skating Celebration

The rink will be open to the general public, so community people are asked to wear their favorite lesbian or gay T-shirt. Sponsored by Montrose Ice Picks. \$7 (includes skates), 8-10 pm, Galleria Ice Rink, 5015 Westheimer, ☎ 713-629-1432.

Broadway Show Tunes

Celebrate 50 years of gay and lesbian contribution to the theater. Sing along to some

of the best known show tunes of the century. Emcee Randall Jobe. 9 pm - 2 am, JR's Bar and Grill, 808 Pacific, ☎ 713-521-2519.

Angels in America

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

They Called Him Michael

(see entry for Monday, June 19)

FRIDAY, JUNE 23

Absolutely Fabulous Pride Party

A party fashioned after the hysterical Britcom that has become a gay phenomenon throughout the U.S. Win *Absolutely Fabulous* T-shirts, books, and more. Heaven, 810 Pacific, ☎ 713-521-0107.

"Lesbian and Gay Voices"

A special show on the future of Pride Week and our community, community leaders will discuss where our future lies. ("Lesbian and Gay Voices" airs weekly with such segments as Womyn's music, reviews of gay and lesbian cultural events, and news from "This Way Out.") 6-10 pm, KPFT 90.1 FM, ☎ on-air line 713-526-KPFT, fax 713-529-1223.

Soul Survivor

Play billed as "a heavenly, romantic comedy for the 90s," written by Anthony Bruno, it is a farcical love triangle with a ghostly twist involving a gay man, his new boyfriend, and his deceased lover who returns from heaven to check out the new relationship. \$12, 8 pm and 10:30 pm, Curtains Theater, 3722 Washington (at Waugh Drive), ☎ 713-522-2204.

Houston's Hot VII: A Night in Black Leather

National Leather Association/Houston's traditional kickoff party for Pride Week-end open to the public. Leather/Levi and fetish wear are encouraged. Throughout the evening, a variety of leather scenes and demonstrations will be played out. Free, 10 pm - 2 am, The Venture-N, 2923 Main, ☎ 713-527-9666.

Destiny of Me

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

Angels in America

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

About Houston Gay & Lesbian Pride Week 1995

Houston Gay/Lesbian Pride Week was founded in 1979 by a small group of Houston gay and lesbian activists to coordinate a formal program and celebration each year for the gay and lesbian community of Houston.

In 1975, an estimated 200 people held a march in downtown Houston to commemorate the Stonewall riots (June 25, 1969), which was sponsored by the fledgling Gay Activists Alliance of the University of Houston. Singer and former beauty queen Anita Bryant's appearance as featured entertainer for the Texas Bar Association convention in 1975 brought an estimated 5,000 angry gay women and men down Houston's streets in protest. The heavily publicized march, headed by such notables as gay publisher David Goodstein and Rev. Troy Perry of the Metropolitan Community Church, was in vivid reaction to Bryant's ordinance then in effect in Miami, Dade County, Florida. A few weeks later, Houston's gay community held its first Gay Pride Rally in Cherryhurst Park to celebrate what has become a national holiday for lesbians and gay men.

Three years later in 1978, over 4,000 community activists met at the Astrodome for Town Meeting I, the first organizational gathering in Houston that included gay men and women from every aspect of Houston society. Former state legislator and vice-presidential nominee Frances "Sissy" Farenthold was the keynote speaker, and the meeting was chaired by Virginia Apuzzo, a leading gay activist who became executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in New York. Many of Houston's gay services, including the Montrose Counseling Center and the Montrose Clinic, were formulated and organized at the first historic meeting.

During the 1980s, the AIDS epidemic hit the gay community. With little federal and almost no state or local help, the community responded first by dealing with its own morality, then by building community institutions dealing with AIDS.

Since 1979, the gay community of Houston has celebrated Gay Pride Week with a full schedule of events spanning 10 days in late June.

In the wake of the 1993 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian, and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation, and with this year's flood of positive media portrayals of gays and lesbians, it would appear that pride, diversity, and being Out are good for us all. We have reason to celebrate. But now is not the time to compromise ourselves back into a closet of obscurity, even a padded one with a view. We make positive strides and withstand negative aggressions from silence to celebration.

They Called Him Michael
(see entry for Monday, June 19)

SATURDAY, JUNE 24

**A Front Row
Seat for Pride Parade**

Chances Club will have an enclosed beer garden with bleachers all weekend. Seating will be available for \$5 donation to Montrose Clinic. 10-2 am, Chances Bar, 1100 Westheimer, ☎ 713-523-7217.

**The Leather
Forum & Symposium**

A three-hour educational symposium covering such topics as tattooing, piercing, bondage, flogging, creating scenes, uniforms, and other fetishes. Safe, sane, consensual play and sex, fantasy vs. reality. Tools of the trade will be on hand. Question and answer time will be available with experts. \$1, 1-4 pm, ☎ 713-527-9666.

Beer Garden Blowout

Susan Masar and the Family Connection will be performing all afternoon for your pleasure. The multi-talented, bilingual lead

City Men's Chorus, MCCR-Houston, and MCCR-Austin for a gala concert. \$10 to \$25, 7 pm, Cullen Theater, Wortham Center, 500 Preston, ☎ 713-743-5904.

HATCH Prom

The Houston Area Teenage Coalition of Homosexuals will host its third annual prom event as a major fundraiser for the organization. \$15, 8 pm, Majestic Metro, 911 Preston, ☎ 713-942-7002.

Destiny of Me

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

Angels in America

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

SUNDAY, JUNE 25

Pride Sunday at MCCR

Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR) and Cathedral of Hope (Dallas MCC) chorus will perform *God Be With Us* at this service. Free, 10:45 am, 1919 Decatur (off Washington), ☎ 713-861-9149.



Theresa DiMenna

singer, Susan Masar, has been performing for our community and various AIDS-related benefits for the last 10 years. Proceeds go to the Montrose Clinic. \$1, 3-8 pm, Chances Bar, 1100 Westheimer, ☎ 713-523-7217.

Proud Out Loud!

We welcome members of our Texas Choral Family, including HeartSong, Capital

**A Front Row Seat
for Pride Parade**

(see entry for Saturday, June 24)

**Houston Gay and Lesbian
Pride Week Parade**

One of the largest parades in the city of Houston and the Southwest. Follow the parade to PrideFest '95 (see next entry). 2 pm, lower Westheimer, from Woodhead

to Taft, ☎ 713-529-6979, fax 713-529-1223.

PrideFest '95

Join us immediately following the parade for a concert with Fem 2 Fem and Dajae. Donations benefit AVES, Stephens House, Lesbian Health Initiative, 20-Something, MCCR, and Pride Committee of Houston. Afterward, join the Pride Party '95 at Numbers (see next entry). Free (donations accepted), Lovett Street (between Whitney and Taft), 4-7 pm, ☎ 713-529-6979, fax 713-529-1223.

Pride Party '95

After PrideFest '95, DJ Jon Sims will be spinning records from the late 70s and early 80s. Donations given to selected charities. Donations accepted, Numbers, 300 Westheimer, 5-11 pm, ☎ 713-529-6979, fax 713-529-1223.

**Loading Dock
Party '95**

In celebration of Pride '95, a post-parade dance co-hosted by NLA/Houston and Pacific Street for Houston's leather and Levi community. Doors open immediately after the parade, Pacific Street, 710 Pacific Street, ☎ 713-523-0213.

**Absolutely Fabulous After-
Parade Party**

Join us after the parade for a party to introduce the season of gay America's favorite Britcom. Houston's exclusive premiere of a new episode begins at 6 pm. 5 pm at JR's Bar and Grill, 808 Pacific, ☎ 713-521-2519.

**After the Parade
Beer Bust**

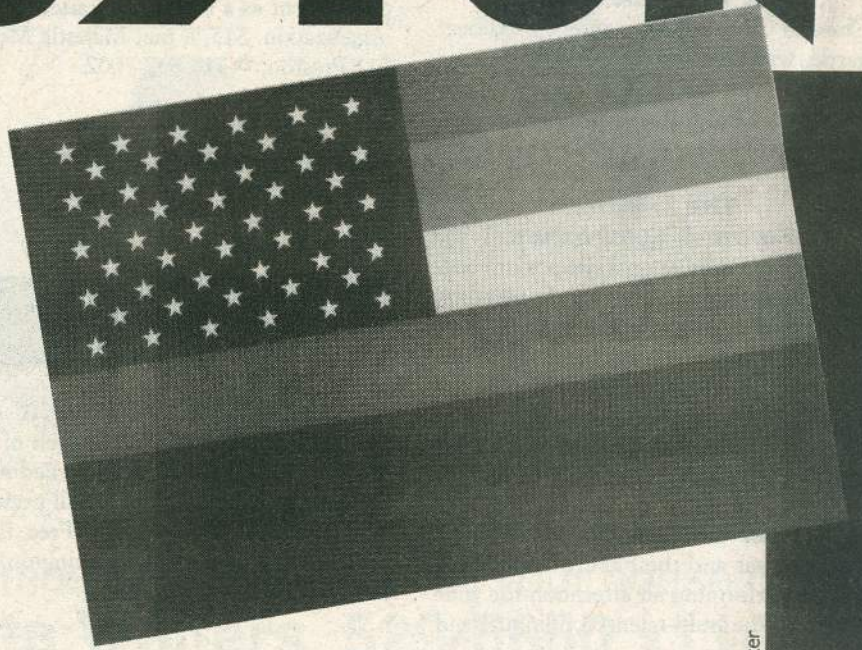
Escape from the heat with the Men of the Mine and ice cold Miller Lite Draft. 5 pm, Montrose Mining Company, 805 Pacific, ☎ 713-529-7488.

Angels in America

(see entry for Friday, June 16)

FROM ALL OF US AT
OutSmart
HAPPY GAY
PRIDE WEEK

HOUSTON



Hollie Hollister

Hollie Hollister



Don Gill
Co-Grand Marshal
(Interview on page 46)

After a few years setting hair, he burned out. "After five years at the company, I quit when I saw Farrah Fawcett and Dorothy Hamil shakin' that hair on TV. I knew that's the kind of hair I wanted to do."

GAY PRIDE



Annella Harrison
Honorary Grand Marshal
(Interview on page 47)

“When everyone was so scared to do anything about the conditions of PWAs and the way companies were laying off those who had the HIV virus, the gay community really got busy.... That's been quite inspiring.”



Suzanne Anderson
Co-Grand Marshal
(Interview on page 45)

“It got me to thinking when I was elected grand marshal. I consider myself too radical. I think I'd just like to say thank you. I'm really grateful to the community. Even for someone like me, it was very humbling.”

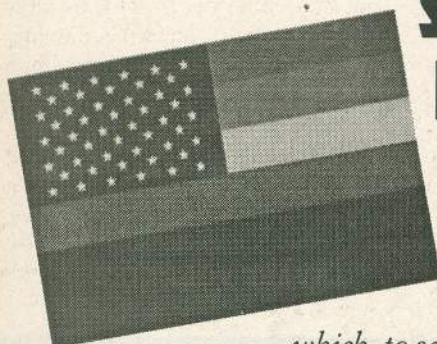
Honorary Grand Marshal —Organization—

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (HATCH)



Theresa DiMeo

HATCH is "in" by being "out" in Houston's 1993 Gay Pride Parade.



Silence to Celebration: My Personal Journey

by Quincy J.

(Reprinted with permission from *The HATCH Newsletter*)

Thinking of "Silence to Celebration" reminds me of the miracle of life and the journey we all make just to be born and become a living, breathing, visible human being. That in turn takes me back to my own childhood, in which, to say the least, the silence was practically deafening. I lived in a rural area on the outskirts of Houston from the time I was a pre-schooler until I was 16 years old.

Given that environment (which was not very exposed to much change or diversity), it should become quite apparent that for a young boy or girl in that situation—who may later come to realize that he/she is homosexual or at least "different"—silence can easily become a way of life, especially since as young children we are so aware of the sense of "not OK" when it comes to certain "differences."

One of the saddest things I have ever experienced was realizing that my own sense of "not OK"—that I originally felt about my difference—easily translated onto my sense of "not OK" about myself. So, I went through my elementary, middle, junior high, and high school years with this overwhelming sense of "not OK."

Needless to say, that does not do any good and, in my case,

actually did much harm to my sense of self. I had a horrible self-concept; my self-image was worse; and my self-esteem was practically non-existent. That was how I lived the first 17 years of my life.

Luckily, when I was 17 years old, I came across the phone number for the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard, from whom I got the phone number of Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (HATCH). It took me about seven months after I got the phone number to make that initial call. By then I was almost 18, at which time I went to my first meeting. Now, it is almost three years later, and—thanks to everything HATCH has given me—my life is much different now. HATCH showed me that I was OK just as I was. HATCH provided positive adult role models who happened to be gay. HATCH pointed me in the direction of finding that

continued on page 49



Suzanne Anderson

by Nancy Ford

"It's an opportunity to be who we are with our people, to just express ourselves. The neat thing about Gay Pride Week is that there's so many choices and ways to celebrate. It doesn't matter whether you want to do drag or do a reading. It's a celebration..."

was a real adventurous, against-the-grain type of thing to do. The most money I ever made, and probably ever will make, was in the 'burbs, but I was so bored. I was so bored. It was just a way to make a living. And really, it was just a way to sell out.

"I started out with my ad saying 'Focusing on Our Community,' and putting 'Our' in italics, and finally deciding 'That's really chicken shit.'" She changed "Our" to "Lesbian & Gay." "That was a real out, different thing to do, and now it's not. That makes me happy, but at the same time, it's like, 'Well, now what do I do?'"

What, indeed? How about being one of the founding members of Lesbian in Business, Houston's leading networking and social monthly consortium for corporate dykes. How about key organizational involvement with H.A.T.C.H., Houston's progressive support group for gay, bi and lesbian teens? How about not only marrying her life partner Judith Meyer at the 1993 March on Washington mass commitment ceremony, but then allowing HBO to film the event for its *Why Am I Gay? Stories of Coming Out* prime-time special? How about her realty firm, Suzanne Anderson

Properties, being named one of *Victory* magazine's 50 fastest-growing gay/lesbian-owned enterprises in the U.S.? Sound like a lot of responsibility for just one person? That's why it's called *activism*.

Continuing this pattern of leadership, on June 28 Anderson will be found at the front of Houston's Pride Parade as co-grand marshal with Don Gill. No one was more surprised at this honor than Anderson herself. "It really got me to thinking when they elected me grand marshal. I consider myself too radical. I think I'd just like to say thank you. I'm really grateful to the community. Even for someone like myself, it was very humbling. It was very affirming. I didn't expect it, and it really made me feel good. And Ms. Meyer is just delighted at the thought of being First Lady."

But she does recognize what possibly may have been the reason for her nomination. "Visibility. I'm a salesperson. I'm a promoter. And sometimes, it's the P. T. Barnum style. And that's fun."

Oh, God. Surely she wasn't referring to Barnum's famous credo, "There's a

continued on page 49

Suzanne Anderson and I met for lunch recently in one of Houston's louder, more boisterous Mexican restaurants. I worried that my mini-recorder wouldn't pick up our voices over the chatter and clattering of patrons and platters. Not a problem. Anyone who knows her—personally, professionally, or politically—will testify that if Suzanne Anderson has something to say, she *will* make herself heard.

She refers to herself as "a pissed-off woman, fighting the world, slaying dragons one after another." Born in Tulsa, with an extended stopover to stew for American Airlines in Chicago, Anderson migrated to Houston in '76. "When I came from the 'burbs to sell real estate and decided to focus on the lesbian and gay community, it

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Don Gill

by Hollie Hollister

"Studies show the incidence of teen suicides, among gay teens, has dramatically dropped. And that is because we are out there, showing these young people they are not alone in the world."

articles that have been in the gay press and what I have been able to accomplish as a fundraiser this year. One of the organizations, The Royal Sovereign Imperial Court of the Single Star, submitted my name, and the gay community voted on it and I won.

Is fundraising a primary function of the parade's activities?

Not per se fundraising. Anyone that I have known to be grand marshal in the past, male or female, it is what they have done to assist as a positive role model for the community. Suzanne [Anderson, co-grand marshal '95] is a business owner, as am I, and we've employed gay people in our businesses. Even though I am only a one-man shop now, that has only occurred in the past four years. I owned a much larger salon [Hair Plus, by Don] with gay employees as well. You become grand marshal not just for the fundraising but for how you assist people in the community.

Gill, who has lost two lovers to AIDS, has taken into his home numerous PWAs, and given them the opportunity to live with dignity in a homelike atmosphere. "When my friends are ill, I bring my friends here. They like my chicken and dumplin's, my black-eyed peas, my turnip greens, butter beans, and my cracklin' cornbread. I'm just

a country boy living in a big city."

Gill moved to Houston in May of 1970 after graduation from high school in Leesville, Louisiana, just the other side of the Texas-Louisiana border, on the road to Alexandria. "I wanted to move away from home. I was the youngest child, very protected by my family. We were dirt poor, but we had lots of love," reflects Gill.

Gill wanted to make something of himself and enrolled in beauty school. After a few years setting hair, he burned out (pardon the pun) and went into the corporate world, where he worked his way up from mail room to salesman for a major Houston industry. "After five years at the company, I quit when I saw Farrah Fawcett and Dorothy Hamil shakin' that hair on TV," he says. "I knew that's the kind of hair that I wanted to do."

Don, where were you in June of 1970?

Probably sitting on a pew in the Pentecostal church.

Care to explain?

I didn't accept my homosexuality until January of 1973. When I moved here from Louisiana, my life was the same—I was in church four days a week.

What does someone do in church four

continued on page 48

Don Gill, owner of Studio 911 Hair Salon, is active in our community as host and fundraiser for many community-serving functions. He sports personal letters of thanks from former Governor of Texas Ann Richards and Houston Mayor Bob Lanier.

"I am so proud of those letters. I am just a country boy from a poor family in Louisiana. I am just doing what my mother and father raised me to do to be exactly who I am and to have some pride in being the best I can be. They raised me with lots of love. I think this is the thing I am most proud of—carrying the goodness of my family out into the world."

Hollister: Why do you think you were chosen for grand marshal?

Gill: Probably because of different

photo by Steven David

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Annella Harrison

by Hollie Hollister

"I had seen enough discrimination and harassment," remembers Harrison. "Before I went to the City Council, I had a talk with my son and his lover. I asked them if they would mind if I did this."

For Annella Harrison, honorary grand marshal for the Gay Pride Parade '95, community involvement has been a way of life. Harrison is a veteran of World War II, a former Registered Nurse, retired caseworker for the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, and the parent of a gay son. Annella became involved with the struggles of the gay rights movement in the mid-70s, when to live Queer in Houston meant risking jail when the cops raided the gay bars seemingly for their personal entertainment.

In the 1970s, homosexuals were the target of the police, churches, and teenagers who drove into the Montrose from other parts of town to bash queers—going out on a Saturday night had become a death-defying act.

During the McConn and Whitmire administrations, Annella went before Houston City Council to plea on our behalf for equal protection under the law. "I had seen enough discrimination and harassment," remembers Harrison. "Before I went to the City Council, I had a talk with my son and his lover. I asked them if they would mind if I did this." Annella went before council with little fanfare and no press coverage—she guesses gay rights was too hot a topic. By the second time she

appeared before council, she was active in P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), and that time she sought out the press. She represented P-FLAG on Houston community "talk shows" and was sought out for comment whenever the gay community was in the press.

Hollister: Annella, tell us about your first Gay Pride celebration.

Harrison: It was much smaller, though well attended, and very joyful. I remember there was a rally near the Dome Stadium, I think the Astroarena. Sarah Weddington was there and a speaker from New York. It was quite something. I guess we have Anita Bryant to thank for all of this. [Anita Bryant, former Miss America, singer, and performer, has been credited over the years with causing so much hatred against the homosexual community, that she forced us to pull together.]

How has the celebration changed?

It is certainly much larger, many more activities going on. And I feel good that the Gay Pride celebration is not just a parade only.

Do you see a need for Gay Pride celebrations?

Oh yes. People need to know about some of the things people are doing. People



in different professions—the law, medicine. People need to see that gay people are people, too.

Is there anything you would change about the celebration?

Well [laughing a little], I would have it in cooler months! Texas in June is very, very hot. Other than that, no I like it the way it is.


What do you think has been the biggest detriment to our movement?

I hope your readers will understand that I am from another generation, and I have different ways of dealing with things. I guess my time was different, inasmuch as I feel one can better gain one's goals by appealing to everyone. So I do not mean to single out any one group or thing, but I feel some of the actions taken by some politically involved groups might be better served with less offensive actions.

What exactly do you mean?

I mean that some of the political actions are offensive, and I feel that closes

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DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH BY REV. JANET PARKER



Grief is described as intense emotional suffering caused by loss, disaster, misfortune, etc. It is acute sorrow and deep sadness. This is probably one of the most difficult emotions for any person to experience. It is an emotion that reaches down to the very pit of your soul. It doesn't feel good. It hurts. It is painful. It can be a scary and lonely feeling.

For some of us, grief is too painful to bear. Because of the intensity of our pain, we want to walk away from it and not let it run its course. The course that it may run involves several stages: Bargaining, Denial, Anger and Acceptance. These stages can be experienced rapidly or over a long period of time. There are no right and wrong ways of handling our grief. Each person must simply recognize that they must deal with this intense emotion at some point in time. The sooner we face it the sooner it will be behind us.

In our community we sometimes face what is called "serial grief." We may have many intense losses at one time and get confused about whom we are grieving. Sometimes there just isn't time to fully grieve over one loss when suddenly we have another upon us. That is when the emotions can get the best of us.

With grief you may experience withdrawal, sadness, and crying without any warning. You may also go to the extremes and find yourself covering up and filling in your day so that you don't have to face your emotions.

There is One to turn to in times of grief and that is to God. The Psalmist tells us that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." God promises to comfort us like a mother comforts her child. When Jesus went into the Temple on the Sabbath and was asked to read the Scripture, He spoke from Isaiah 61, "The Spirit of the Yahweh is upon me, because God has anointed me to tell the good news to the poor. God has sent me to comfort those whose hearts are broken, to tell the captives they are free, and to tell the prisoners they are released. God has sent me to comfort all those who are sad and to help the sorrowing people. I will give a crown to replace their ashes, and the oil of gladness to replace their sorrow, the clothes of praise to replace their spirit of sadness."

This chapter goes on to tell us how Jesus will rebuild our lives again. After great periods of grief and loss, God can restore our joy and our gladness. Turn to God for comfort. It may come in the guise of a friend, a lover, a stranger, or an angel! The important thing to do is RECEIVE IT!

Don Gill

Continued from page 46

days a week?

Lots of praying on my knees that I wasn't who I was, a homosexual.

What did you do?

I went to the pastor of my church and confessed to him I was homosexual. And he told me he couldn't advise me on that subject.

Why?

Four years later he came up to me in a gay bar and said, "This is why I couldn't advise you on your sexual identification."

I don't know why this doesn't surprise me! When you were coming out, who did you look up to or admire?

My best friends—Larry Miller, Jerry Wayne Smith, and David Sawyer—some of the first gay people I met.

What was it about these three people that you admired?

They saw my innocence. I was very "country" and trusting, and people made fun of my speech. I said lots of over-yonders, the slow dragged-out speech of a country boy. I was very fortunate to meet these three men who protected me and wouldn't let anyone hurt me or abuse me.

Do you remember your first Gay Pride celebration?

Yes, I do. It must have been 1975, '76.

What do you remember about it?

How happy everyone was, all those smiling faces. Finally, we could stand up and be counted, even if it was only amongst ourselves.

Is there anything you would change about the celebration today?

No, there isn't. You know, Gay Pride is different from other parades or celebra-

tions. Where other celebrations involve something everyone can be in, Gay Pride is for us. The few, the proud...

The gay?

Yes, exactly.

What do you think is the biggest deterrent to our civil rights movement?

Our fractionalization—one group refusing to accept and work with another. This causes confusion; it certainly causes division.

So I gather you see unity as the most important goal we must achieve.

Yes, I do.

What do you think has been our "finest hour"? What have we done right?

Our visibility, and our involvement with each other. Studies show the incidence of teen suicides, among gay teens, has dramatically dropped. And that is because we are out there, showing these young people they are not alone in the world. We have a big heart—we take care of our own. There is a lot of solidarity in the community. I am just so proud of that—it's unique.

Is there anything you would like to see the gay community achieve in the upcoming years?

Let me draw you a picture; it's a little "country," but it works. Our lives are like a wagon, and it is full of hay. When that wagon reaches the barn, there will be hay for the winter, enough to keep everyone alive through the darkest hours. If we can manage to pull ourselves together—the "Polos" with the leather community, the lesbians with the gay males, the transsexuals, the bisexuals, the drag queens—all of us must pull together so that we can achieve equal rights. We have to fill the barn, so to speak, with resources, so we can weather even the worst of times. ▼

Annella Harrison

Continued from previous page

some ears that might benefit from the "message" and could help the cause. Some of those ears, whether you like them or not, close up tight when they see things that illustrate the very worst behavior in anyone.

You mean to say then...

I mean some behaviors are offensive, and those behaviors illustrate the things some politicians say are truths about the homosexual lifestyle in general. People only see what they want to, and when they see things that offend them, they remember that, and they use that as an excuse to not listen.

Why do you think you were chosen as honorary grand marshal?

I guess because of my actions with P-FLAG and being one of the few parents of a gay person willing to speak out.

Were there any role models you admired, who were out and vocal?

When things started up, no, things were pretty much closeted. No one in particular—I do admire the community as a whole! I think that the gay community is the best example of a group committed to having civil rights, and I admire the dedication I see.

What do you think has been our finest hour?

The AIDS crisis: When everyone was so scared to do anything about the living conditions of PWAs and the way companies were laying off those who had the HIV virus, the gay community really got busy and moved into real action to get the PWAs the insurance that they had paid for and the medical attention needed. That's been quite inspiring.

Where do you see the gay rights movement going to in the next century?

Well, it's anybody's guess, what with the political feeling in Washington these days.

Are you saying there is a real force in Washington that might very well put down all that we have accomplished?

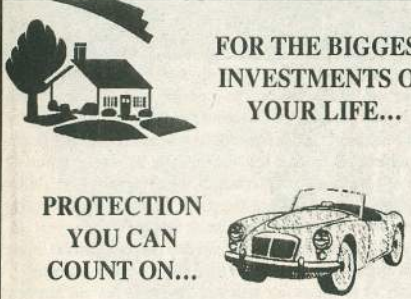
I am saying that things are going to be rough, and we'd better get ready to fight for rights on every "shore"!

Kind of like the fight for human rights in WWII?

Hopefully not that bad.

Annella, what accomplishment in your life are you most proud of?


I guess living well, and living to the age of 85! ▼



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Suzanne Anderson

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sucker born every minute..."

"No, I'm talking about not being shy. One of the things that I have always felt comfortable with was talking about my strong points, [though] I'm not without weak points. I've never understood people who, when you ask if they can play softball, say, 'Oh, I'm okay.' Say, 'I'm an ace! I can knock the shit out of that ball!'"

She transfers this confidence and positive attitude to her commitment with the lesbian/gay community by "just knowing who I am and being comfortable with who I am. That's a real movement in our community. More and more people are coming out. They're showing other people that they can come out and they can survive. They can still be gainfully employed—some of them. Not all of them."

Though a young lesbian growing up hardly has a wealth of role models to emulate, Anderson managed to identify one. "As much of an old biddy as she is, my mother would have to be one [of my role models]. She was a mean old thing. Even though she gave up a lot of her life to be a traditional mother and wife, it was obvious that she wasn't happy about it, and she thought it was wrong. She let me dress like a boy if I wanted to. I never had any sense that, because I was a girl, there was anything that I couldn't do, or that I was limited. I got that from her."

Even if she weren't pre-designated royalty for this year's Pride celebration, Anderson looks forward to the week of June 18-25 as though they were Queer High Holy Days. "It's an opportunity to be who we are with our people, to just express ourselves. The neat thing about Gay Pride Week is that there's so many choices and ways to celebrate. It doesn't matter whether you want to do drag or do a reading. It's a celebration. It's a way of honoring yourself. We don't get honored much."

As one of Houston's most vocal and effective activists, what, in Anderson's eyes, is the main problem facing our community?

"We've got to quit tearing at each other. It's real hard for me, being very out, to not be critical of people who aren't. It's going to be a tremendous challenge fighting the Christo-fascists who are out there today. They're organized and they've got money and they're dangerous. They are fucking dangerous. People right now just love to hate. I grew up in the Southern Baptist Church, and I know how pious these people are. Things *are* going to change.

Things could go either way. I mean, people are nuts. *A hand-gun bill?* How can people justify something like that? Statistically, they say that straight, white militarized men carried the election last time around. I think this is just their mentality."

White, straight, militarized men—?
"—and the women who love them."

P.S.—In case you ever have lunch together, Suzanne Anderson likes her charra beans extra spicy. Now there's a bulletin. ▼

HATCH

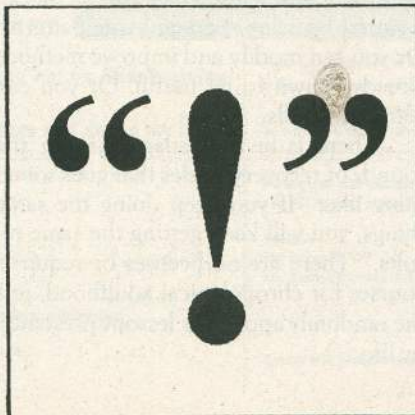
Continued from page 44

sense of "OK" for which I had been so desperately longing. The downward spiraling path of my life stopped, then turned much more positive. HATCH enlightened me to the fact that I could be whatever I wanted to be, in spite of what society told me about what I had to be—or couldn't be—because of my sexual orientation.

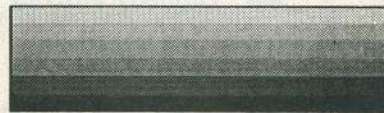
Now, I am 21 years old. I am a nurse, as well as an instructor, at a nursing assistant academy in Houston. Without HATCH, it would be very hard to picture myself at the place to which I have progressed in my life. Because of the age range of the group—15 to 21—I will soon be leaving the group. If it were not for HATCH, I could not have made it this far or have had the self-worth to continue to make plans to go further. HATCH has given me enough of a good sense of myself to go forward with great enthusiasm, excellence, integrity, leadership, and compassion. If nothing else, I will take these qualities with me as I exit HATCH to make my mark on the world.

To HATCH, thank you. ▼

Qunicy is a member of the HATCH Steering Committee, Outreach Program, and a regular contributor to The HATCH Newsletter.



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