

IMPACT news

UK-born
singer-
songwriter
Sheila Nicholls
comes to
New Orleans
March 11.
DJ Mags
reviews new
release on
page 23



Mystery,
divas, stage
sensations,
lively talks,
and insightful
performances
abound at the
Tennessee
Williams
Festival.
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Volume 25, Issue 05

GAY & LESBIAN NEWS FOR NEW ORLEANS AND THE GULF SOUTH SINCE 1977

MARCH 10/2000



After enduring personal attacks, Marty Pfeiffer and mom Molly see GSA become reality.

McKinley Gay-Straight Alliance approved; Scotlandville forms one

by MELINDA SHELTON

BATON ROUGE—Following weeks of controversy, including protests from students, parents and a group of black ministers, McKinley High School Principal Almenia Warren announced last Friday a club for gay and straight students will be allowed to meet at the school.

But while controversy swirled around the McKinley club, a Gay-Straight Alliance already had been approved—quietly and without protest—by Scotlandville Principal Freddie Williams. Williams said he approved the club, which currently has

nine members, several weeks ago and the club met for the first time March 2.

A third club may be formed at Baton Rouge Magnet High, where a student has expressed interest to Principal J.B. Williams.

The McKinley decision came after Warren said she reviewed the Gay-Straight Alliance's petition and found "... it does comply with the federal Equal Access Act and the school system's guidelines for extracurricular clubs" and can begin meeting monthly on school property.

Club leaders Marty Pfeiffer and Leslie Spillman, both 17 and seniors at McKinley,

said they hope to hold the club's first meeting within two weeks. They said 18 students had submitted the required permission slips to participate in the GSA.

"The Gay-Straight Alliance Club has indicated that it will follow the school system's rules which require all clubs to submit bylaws, have members' parents sign [participation] release forms, be open to any student who wants to participate, and be monitored by a school employee," Warren said in a prepared statement.

"The Club's bylaws basically state that it will focus on respect, acceptance, and tolerance."

> Continued on page 9

State wins fight to keep condemned killer jailed

Texas has executed two men recently while a third sits on death row, bringing gays face-to-face with capital punishment

by GIP PLASTER

An attorney for a gay death row inmate from Houston will not be surprised if the state continues to do everything it can to keep Calvin Burdine in prison.

After 16 years on death row and enduring a defense attorney who slept through much of his 1984 murder trial and anti-gay slurs from a prosecutor, Burdine was to be set free on Monday.

A federal judge ordered his release, ruling that the state missed an earlier deadline to either set Burdine free or retry Burdine for killing his roommate and former boyfriend.

Last fall, the same judge, U.S. District Judge David Hittner, agreed that Burdine's former defense attorney provided inadequate counsel and threw out Burdine's conviction, giving the state 120 days to either retry or release him.

"I would assume that the state is going to do everything in their power to avoid carrying out Judge Hittner's order," Robert McGlasson, one of Burdine's attorneys, said from his Atlanta office. "Basically, he ordered that Calvin be released. I think this court's order is right on with the law."

In his order, Hittner appeared to be irritated with state prosecutors who failed to follow rules and pointed out that Burdine's good behavior during 16 years in prison was evidence he would not be a danger to society.

"In fact, the court is only aware of one incident involving Burdine. In that incident, Burdine was the victim of an unprovoked and vicious attack by a fellow inmate which left him permanently disfigured and disabled," Hittner said, referring to an attack that blinded Burdine's left eye.

Hittner gave the state five days to release Burdine, but the Texas Attorney General's



PAT SULLIVAN/AP

After a federal judge ordered Calvin Burdine be released from death row, Texas officials appealed and the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ordered that he remain jailed—for now.

office asked the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans to block the release. On March 3, a three-judge panel ruled that Burdine will remain jailed until the court decides if he should be retried.

Assistant Attorney General Douglas Danzeiser argued that Burdine fled Texas



after killing Wise and therefore would be a risk for flight now.

McGlasson said he would seek a re-hearing because federal appellate procedure requires that Burdine be released pending appeal.

> Continued on page 15

Bill Bradley or Al Gore?

The Facts—You Decide!

Issue	Bill Bradley's Position	Al Gore's Position
		
Gay Civil Rights Legislation	Bill Bradley proposes to protect gays and lesbians against discrimination in EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, and PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS by adding sexual orientation to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Fair Housing Act.	Gore proposes to protect gays and lesbians only in EMPLOYMENT via the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. He has no plan for any other anti-gay discrimination legislation.
Equality of Marriage	Bradley proposes comprehensive domestic partnership legislation to give lesbian and gay couples the EXACT SAME benefits and rights as married couples, including inheritance, social security, insurance, and tax benefits, as well as immigration and adoption rights.	Gore has not proposed any alternative way for gay and lesbian families to enjoy the same benefits as married straight couples.
Health Coverage for Gays and Lesbians	Bradley's Health Care Plan specifically provides for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people and the families they form.	Gore's Health Care Plan does not take into consideration GLBT people or their families.
Hate Crimes Legislation (HCPA)	Bradley strongly supports including protections for gays and lesbians in federal hate crimes legislation. Original co-sponsor of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act and the re-authorization bill.	Gore says he supports including sexual orientation in federal hate crimes legislation, however.... In spite of all their rhetoric of support following Matthew Shepard's death, Clinton-Gore refused to save HCPA when it was dropped in conference committee. They chose to save others' legislation instead.
Gays in the Military	Bradley opposes and has always opposed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). Bradley was one of only two Democratic Senators who voted against DADT in 1993.	Gore supported DADT from 1993-99. Gore currently opposes DADT, but has changed his stance 3 times over the past 11 months.
HIV/AIDS Funding	Bill Bradley would substantially increase funding for prevention as well as treatment of HIV and AIDS. He would end the current perverse policy which excludes HIV+ people from coverage until the disease becomes full blown AIDS.	Gore opposed Bradley's health plan and the protection it would provide to people with HIV and AIDS. He has supported more limited protections and funding efforts such as the Ryan White Act. Funding for prevention of HIV has been minimal.
Needle Exchange	Bill Bradley supports federal funding for needle exchange programs.	The Clinton/Gore Administration refuses to fund needle exchange programs in spite of overwhelming scientific evidence and the recommendation of its own AIDS Commission.
Discrimination against Individuals with HIV or AIDS	Bradley firmly believes in a strong "Americans With Disabilities Act" (ADA). Last month he sided with HIV+ Alabama prisoners who were being discriminated against in educational & recreational programs because of their HIV status.	Clinton/Gore sided with the state of Alabama to support its right to discriminate against HIV+ prisoners and asked the Supreme Court not to hear the prisoners' case. As a result the ADA was further weakened.

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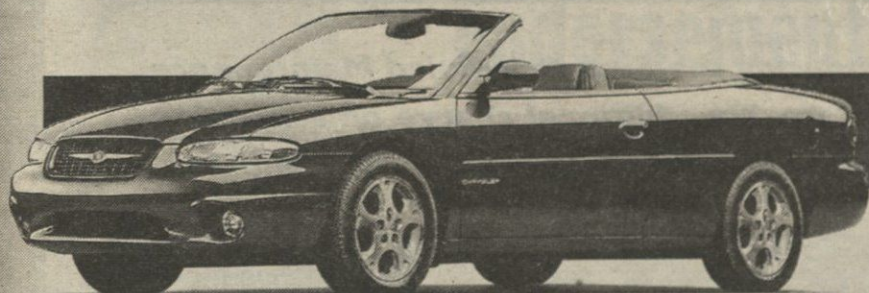
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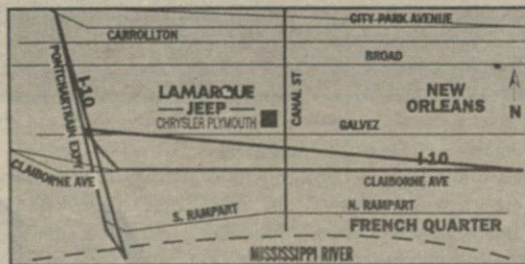
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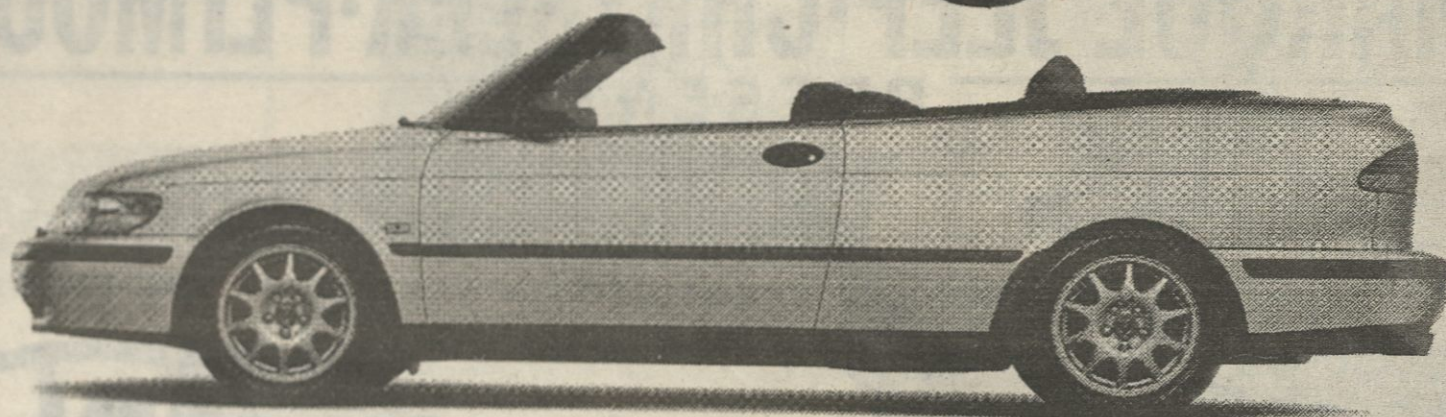
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IMPACT news

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StopDrLaura.com launches web-site, coalition

NEW YORK—The battle to stop "Dr. Laura" Schlessinger and Paramount Television Group, which plans to give the self-appointed counselor a television show of her own, has moved on-line.

Paramount is developing and syndicating the "Dr. Laura" show this fall, and the move has caused quite a backlash in the gay community.

Why the backlash? No-nonsense advice dispenser "Dr. Laura" is well-known for anti-gay messages she preaches on her radio talk show, broadcast on more than 400 stations to 18 million listeners weekly.

A group of veteran gay activists, public relations executives and media professionals have teamed up to create "StopDrLaura.com." As both a web-site and a same-named coalition, the group hopes to log off Paramount's efforts to launch Schlessinger's show.

"Laura Schlessinger has called gays and lesbians 'biological errors,' 'deviant' and much worse," said Alan Klein, a New York-based public relations consultant and spokesman for StopDrLaura.com. "We're not about to let her spew her defamatory pseudo-science on national television."

Schlessinger's now-infamous "biological error" quote dramatically opens the StopDrLaura.com site, with an introduction using state-of-the art Flash technology.

In recent weeks, the flap over the controversial talk show host has escalated sharply. Last month, the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) pleaded with Paramount to control Schlessinger's

on-air rhetoric. Another group, the San Francisco-based Horizons Foundation, launched a nationwide ad campaign to educate the public about the danger Schlessinger's anti-gay rhetoric poses to children.

Now, StopDrLaura.com takes the battle on-line. The ad hoc coalition began several weeks ago with the issuance of a simple e-mail appeal. Titled "Stop Dr. Laura," the e-mail encouraged netizens to contact Paramount, which has poured considerable resources into offering "Dr. Laura" on television this September.

"When Jimmy-The-Greek stereotyped blacks, he got fired," the e-mail begins. "But Dr. Laura calls gays 'biological mistakes,' and she's getting a TV show from Paramount."

"The e-mail alert really woke people up to Paramount's double standard," said the e-mail's author, John Aravosis, a Washington-based Internet expert who is in charge of the coalition's on-line strategy. "Had Dr. Laura called blacks biological errors, Paramount would never have given her a show. But since her target is gays, somehow that's ok. Well, it's not ok."

With the new site, StopDrLaura.com hopes to expand its e-grassroots effort.

In addition to encouraging people to contact Paramount, StopDrLaura.com features photos and virtual testimonials from a cross-section of Americans offended by Schlessinger's statements. Titled "Our Feelings on Being Biological Errors," the testimonials literally place a face on the targets-



Dr. Laura in action on her daily radio show.

to-be of Paramount's upcoming show.

The site also offers an index of Schlessinger's anti-gay rhetoric, a section called "Paramount's Big Deal," and several options for taking action and staying informed.

In addition to the web-site, the group has raised funds for advertisements in Variety magazine.

The StopDrLaura.com pro-bono coalition includes: William Waybourn, a gay civil rights leader and co-owner of Window Media, parent company of IMPACT News; Robin Tyler, veteran activist and Los Angeles-based producer; Joel Lawson, a Washington-based public relations consultant; and Scott Robbe, a producer and director of TV and film. StopDrLaura.com was designed and built by BlueMaggie.com.

—From wire and staff reports

Endorsements made in March 14 primaries

Louisiana is participating in the Tuesday, March 14, presidential primary. Voters in Orleans Parish will elect a new city councilmember and Orleans Parish School Board member, and the state's Republicans and Democrats are running for their respective state and parish party offices.

The Lesbian and Gay Political Action Caucus membership issued the following endorsements:

Dual endorsement of Sean Gerowin (D) and Scott Shea (R), for City Council District A. This race is to fill the unexpired term of Suzanne Haik Terrell who was elected state Elections Commissioner last fall. The district includes much of uptown New Orleans, the University section, much of Carrollton to the parish line, much of the Lakefront and Gert Town.

Gerowin is a teacher at Booker T. Washington High School. He is founder of the Outdoor Club and sponsors educational leadership tours. He is pursuing a Master's in

Educational Administration at UNO.

Shea is a former member of the Orleans Parish School Board, where he served as vice-president and chairman of the budget and finance committee. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in political science and earned his JD from Loyola University. He is married and the father of three sons.

Lois Dejean, Orleans Parish School Board, District 6. Dejean is an ordained Baptist minister with the campus ministry at Loyola University. She has been involved with youth and elder activities in the community for 32 years. She has worked with the Youth Inspirational Choir for many years, and during this time has worked with gay youth and youth with HIV/AIDS.

Several of the candidates running for the parties' state central and parish executives committees include lesbians and gay men and supporters of the GLBT community.

Candidates running for the state central committees compete in their respective legisla-

tive districts. Those running for the parish executive committees run in their city council district.

The LAGPAC Board of Directors recommends the following candidates:

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District 89, Seat A: Gloria Bryant Banks

District 93, Seat B: Alan Donnes or Jacques Morial

District 94, Seat B: James Fahrenholtz or Nick Varrecchio

District 96, Seat A: Danae J. Columbus

District 97, Seat A: Yvonne Hughes

District 101, Seat B: Johnny Jackson, Sr. or Cedric Richmond

REPUBLICAN STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

District 93: Stephen M. Swain

District 98: Garey J. Forster

ORLEANS PARISH DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(NOTE: Voters may vote for 14 candidates; we ask you to

vote only for our recommendations.) District A: Jan Harrell and Nick Varrecchio

District B: Karen Carter and Alan Donnes

District C: Stephanie Roche Edwards Butler, Greg C. Carter, Christopher Daigle, Delwin Davis, Sr. James Farenholtz, Renee Lapeyrolerie, Frank A. Pizzolatto and Barbara Waiters

District E: Lena Craig-Stewart, Naaman Craig-Stewart, Mary Lodge Evans and Johnny Jackson, Jr.

ORLEANS PARISH REPUBLICAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

District B: Randy J. Boudreaux, Anthony J. Clesi, Jr., Kenneth Marino, and James E. Wiggins

District C: Gregory Curtis, Stephen M. Swain and William Thibaut


The LAGPAC Board may make additional recommendations prior to the election. If so, these will be included on LAGPAC's ballot prior to distribution.

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Around the Nation

Civil unions bill passed in Vt.

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP)—A bill that would create "civil unions" for gay couples overwhelmingly passed a Vermont House committee last week, a key step toward creating the nation's most far-reaching law for gay domestic partnership. The bill grants all of the benefits and rights of marriage the state can legally offer, but it cannot grant the tax advantages and hundreds of other benefits that the federal government provides. The House Judiciary Committee voted 10-1 to approve the bill.

The only openly homosexual member of the Legislature, state Rep. William Lippert, made the formal motion to recommend the bill as a crowd nearing 50 people spilled out into the hallway of a committee room designed for half that number.

Randall Terry, an anti-abortion activist from New York who came to Vermont to oppose the bill, stood near the door scowling. "The day of judgment is coming, folks," Terry said as the committee meeting ended. The only vote against the bill came from Rep. William Mackinnon, who said homosexuals should be granted full marriage rights—equal to what heterosexuals enjoy. The Vermont bill still must be reviewed by the Ways and Means Committee before it goes before the full House. The bill is not likely to go to a floor debate until the middle of the month. Gov. Howard Dean supports the measure.

Gore gets Stonewall support

Washington, D.C.—The National Stonewall Democratic Federation (NSDF) endorsed presidential candidate Al Gore in the Democratic race for the White House. The Human Rights Campaign also endorsed Gore.

The NSDF Board discussed core Democratic and LGBT issues with Gore and challenger Bill Bradley, including the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), hate crime protections, safe schools, HIV/AIDS issues, domestic partnerships, immigration policy, and gays in the military. The National Stonewall Democratic Federation is the only national organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Democrats. With over 45 affiliated clubs, Stonewall has more than 10,000 members. NSDF is committed to educating voters about the vast difference that exists between the two major parties on issues of importance to the LGBT communities.

Resignations follow publisher's refusal to print pro-gay news

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A group of weekly newspapers distributed free to 126,000 households has created an outcry with its refusal to publish news favorable to gay or pro-choice viewpoints. More than a dozen editorial employees of two of the papers have quit since the policy was enforced. "We've received 400 e-mails this week that are just positive and supportive," said chief operating officer Todd Hansen, who also reported 400 cancellations and 13 new advertisers because of the uproar. The controversy stems from a community calendar listing for a local PFLAG chapter that ran in the *Atascadero Gazette* from Nov. 25 until Feb. 17, when editor Ron Bast was told the owner had ordered the listing pulled. Bast, who has since resigned, said he was told there were to be no stories that showed gays or abortion in a favorable light. "The issue has everything to do with integrity and nothing to do with journalistic ethics," said owners Mary and David Weyrich in a Feb. 24 statement. "Call us old-fashioned, but it hasn't been too many years since our professed beliefs were the accepted norm in America."

Mayor faces fine for pamphlet on defeated gay rights ballot

FERNDALE, Mich. (AP)—An ordinance that would have banned discrimination against gays was narrowly defeated in Ferndale, a Detroit suburb, by a margin of 117 votes. Meanwhile, Tom McMillin, the mayor of nearby Auburn Hills, may have violated state election laws in attempting to influence the election by circulating 5,000 pamphlets opposing the referendum. McMillin's organization, Oakland County Residents for Equal Rights Not Special Rights, received funding from the Tupelo, Miss.-based American Family Association and their address was omitted from the pamphlets, which is a violation of state election laws. McMillin, who became Auburn Hills mayor in November, defended the mailing. "So I didn't put a post office box on it—what good would that have done them?" he asked. "We had our name on it." Anne Corgan, director of the compliance and rules division of the state's election commission, said failing to include an address on campaign literature is a misdemeanor punishable by 93 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Gay teen's clothing prompts debate at Oregon high school

GRESHAM, Ore. (AP)—Oregon school administrators have started policing a high school student's wardrobe because he wore a dress to school after they asked him to stop wearing gay-themed T-shirts and pins. Brian Peters, a junior, started wearing a more "out" wardrobe this year at Sam Barlow High School, starting with buttons on his backpack, then "out" T-shirts like "Sorry Girls, I'm Gay." When school administrators asked him to remove the pins and to cover the T-shirt, the self-described activist struck back. "If you want to see gay, I'll show you gay," he said. The next day, he wore a black velvet dress, high-heeled pumps and red lipstick. Now his attire is screened daily by Barlow Assistant Principal Val Garrison. The case has caused teachers and students to talk about free speech, homophobia, gay rights and dress codes. Peters and his allies, for example, believe his clothing is neither "sexual" nor "disruptive." But Principal Wally Scherler and other staff said cross-dressing is disruptive because it can prompt hoots, snickers and stares. This controversy has left Peters depressed, sad, singled out, and angry. "I feel like they're putting me back in the closet," he said.

—From staff and wire reports

Around the South

Hate crimes move forward; Sodomy repeal stalls

NASHVILLE—Several state legislatures throughout the South acted on gay issues last week. In Nashville, a hate crimes bill that includes sexual orientation passed the Tennessee Senate by a vote of 23-9, with five Republican votes in favor. The bill would increase penalties for criminals found to have picked their victim because of race, religion, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry or gender.

In Richmond, a Virginia senate committee voted 8-6 to kill a bill that would have reduced sodomy between consenting adults to a misdemeanor. The bill had already passed the Virginia House of Delegates by a 50-49 vote. The move was made as an alternate to an effort to repeal Virginia's "crimes against nature" law, which makes sodomy a felony for both gay and straight Virginians.

In Frankfort, the Kentucky Senate approved a bill that would allow churches to refuse to rent facilities to gays, atheists and others who violate their religious beliefs, but not blacks or other racial groups. The bill now goes to the desk of Gov. Paul Patton, who has not indicated whether he supports it.

And in Jackson, a Mississippi House committee will take up a ban on gay adoptions. In addition, the bill says Mississippi will not recognize adoptions by gays in other states. "I don't view this as a major policy issue that we have to address at this time. These issues tend to be divisive and emotional," said Democratic Judiciary Committee chairman Percy Watson, who was reluctant to hold hearings on the bill. Gov. Ronnie Musgrove, a Democrat, has said he will sign the bill into law if it passes.

Teen conference on 'converting' gays draws more than 700

BRANDON, Fla. (AP)—More than 700 parents, teachers, pastors and youth workers showed up in this small town 20 miles east of Tampa to attend a conference designed to send teens the message that they can change their sexual orientation. "This message is just unheard of: Homosexuals can be changed," said John Paulk during a break in the all-day gay conversion symposium he helped coordinate. "We of all people should know what it's like to be there." Paulk, 36, is a policy analyst with Focus on the Family, a Colorado Springs-based conservative Christian organization in its second year of hosting symposiums around the country. Paulk also heads a group called Exodus International, which is designed to help homosexuals make the transition. While Paulk and the conference focused on one side of the debate, a group of 200 pro-gay and lesbian activists met across town in Tampa, holding placards reading: "Ex Gay. No Way." and "Stay Outta My Genes."

School pulls textbook over gay references

NAPLES, Fla. (AP)—Collier County school officials pulled a European history textbook from a high school class after a teacher raised questions about its references to homosexuality. Barron Collier High School teacher Terry Walters objected to "graphic descriptions of alternative and aberrant sexual practices during the Renaissance" in Houghton Mifflin Co.'s "A History of Western Society." Homosexuality is discussed in nine passages in the 1,063-page textbook, which is used in an advance placement class offering college credit for students who pass a national exam. "What really troubled me was the description of the 40-year-old guy with the 15-year-old boy," Walters said. "No one, including gay rights advocates, want that idea promoted." Margaret Sherry, a spokeswoman for Boston-based Houghton Mifflin, said she was not aware of any other complaints about the book used in colleges and high school courses. The decision to pull the book comes as the school district considers whether gays should be protected by an anti-harassment policy.

Gay adoptions bill awaits debate

JACKSON, Miss. (AP)—A House leader is not enthused about a bill that would ban homosexuals from adopting children, but he allowed his committee to take up the proposal. The last such debate on gay issues in the Mississippi Legislature came in 1997 when lawmakers outlawed same sex marriages.

House Judiciary A Committee Chairman Percy Watson, D-Hattiesburg, said he had not heard of any cases of gay couples adopting children. "I don't view this as a major policy issue that we have to address at this time. These issues tend to be divisive and emotional," he said. "I wish we'd deal with more substantive things."

The adoption ban was unanimously approved by a subcommittee and Watson said that when his full committee met he planned to bring the bill up.

There is support in the House for the ban.

"Children should have a male and female parent to grow up and have a normal life," said Rep. Tom Cameron, I-Greenville. "I'd hate to think I grew up with a dad and a dad instead of a mom and dad." Cameron said each parent "adds to the influence of a child's life. I think it would be extremely confusing for a child."

Jackson activist Rims Barber has told lawmakers there are homosexuals in long-term relationships who would make good parents. "How you do your sex has nothing to do with how you raise a child," he said.

Gov. Ronnie Musgrove said he would support the bill. In addition from banning gay couples from adopting children, the bill says the state will not recognize adoptions by gays in other states.

—From staff and wire reports

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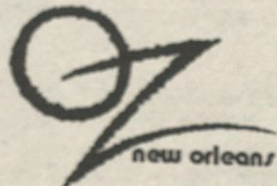
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Controversial Gay-Straight Club gets nods from BR principal

➤ Continued on page 9

erance of all people. As long as it sticks to these concepts, then I don't expect there to be any problems on campus."

Warren wrote that the club falls under protection of the Equal Access Act, which requires equal treatment of extracurricular clubs and access to public school campuses.

Shortly after learning of Warren's decision, a euphoric Pfeiffer told IMPACT News that he and Spillman would quickly move to call the group's first school meeting. The group must further develop its constitution, select leaders and reach a consensus regarding the club's community and social activities, Pfeiffer said.

Weeks of debate, protests preceded GSA decision

Warren's decision came on the heels of often-contentious public debate for and against the Gay-Straight Alliance and escalating verbal and physical harassment of the club's supporters at McKinley.

Students opposed to the club staged a series of protests on school grounds Feb. 18. One group reportedly ran through hallways, banged on lockers and doors and chanted "No gay club." Three-day suspensions were issued to 39 students for participating in an "inappropriate disturbance" and refusing to return to class, said EBR High Schools Executive Director David Corona.

The suspended students returned to classes Feb. 28. Spillman said she experienced "a few negative reactions" from the returning students, "but nothing beyond what I'm used to. There were still some who showed their ignorance and cowardly ways—calling me names behind my back or in low voices—but I've sort of become desensitized to it all."

Pfeiffer said he was hit in the back of the head with a thrown object, but otherwise "it was the usual stares. Nothing extraordinary."

Last October Pfeiffer asked Warren for permission to start a GSA. His request was denied, and he then took the matter before an East Baton Rouge Parish School Board subcommittee.

"We think most students no longer want homophobia and bigotry in their schools, and I believe most will support GSAs—at McKinley and other schools."

On Feb. 3, the subcommittee approved an equal access policy regarding all extracurricular student clubs and granting principals the authority to determine which clubs would be allowed on their campus.

Under the glare of intense media coverage, the full board met Feb. 10 and listened to often emotional, frequently religion-based opposition to GSAs and homosexuality. Despite the subcommittee's recommendation, the board rejected the proposed policy.

The next day, Feb. 11, board attorney Max Kees announced to media that principals would be given a revised set of rules and complete guidelines regarding the establishment and continuation of extracurricular school clubs.

Students protested days after Warren announced she would review the GSA application, and on Feb. 28 a group of black ministers met with Warren to voice their opposition to the GSA.

Although the matter could again go before the school board, Pfeiffer and Spillman said they intend to move forward and call as many meetings as they can before they graduate later this spring.

"We think most students no longer want homophobia and bigotry in their schools, and I believe most will support GSAs—at McKinley and other schools," Pfeiffer said.

"I think that when I'm 80 years old and look back this will be one of the shining points in my life. We've worked so hard for so long, but it's been worth it. I truly believe Baton Rouge will be a better place—for all students."

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GUEST EDITORIAL

White gays and racism

by STEPHEN DONAHUE

Recent protests against the formation of a Gay-Straight Alliance club at the historically African-American McKinley High School in Baton Rouge, and the assertion by some that the so-called "Millennium March on Washington" has designated too many black groups as recipients of the March's financial windfall, have served in recent weeks to highlight the continuing tensions between gay rights activists and people of color.

A recent editorial in *IMPACT News* stated that "racism exists in the African-American community just as it does in every community." ("School Board, administrators to blame for gay backlash," 2/25/00) However, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Ph.D., in her book "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" offers the following definition of racism: "... a system of advantage based on race." Racism is a complex system of institutional policies, practices and beliefs which work to protect white privilege at the expense of people of color. I have known both African Americans and whites who are prejudiced and bigoted, but the claim to being racist is reserved for those of us who are white.

At McKinley High School some members of the majority black student body have said that the leader of the GSA [Marty Pfeiffer] there got special treatment from the [East Baton Rouge Parish] school board because he is white. Before we start knocking such statements can we who are white realize that such a suspicion of racism on the part of the black students is justified by years of collective experience? The fact is that whites are generally treated better than blacks by those in authority,

white or black. In this case, however, homophobia and heterosexism diminished the white skin advantage. Did it negate it completely? Most likely not.

It is tempting for us who are white and queer to ask why more black people, after seeing the similarities in our struggles for civil rights, still don't support us. We might ask our friends of color about this. They might in turn ask us why we would

however, that the meritocracy myth has been a useful tool over the years to maintain status quo white privilege.

The members of the GSA at McKinley High say that their club will be the most inclusive club on campus. What a sign of hope! For adults, however, inclusiveness along racial lines has proven to be a difficult prospect. White queers who really want to forge links connecting our civil

At McKinley High School some members of the majority black student body have said that the leader of the GSA, Marty Pfeiffer, got special treatment from the [East Baton Rouge Parish] school board because he is white. Before we start knocking such statements can we who are white realize that such a suspicion of racism on the part of the black students is justified by years of collective experience?

expect straight blacks to be any less homophobic than straight whites. In recent years the lily-white Christian right has gone to great lengths to convince black Christians that any extension of civil rights for queers will undermine and belittle the African American civil rights struggle. They have had some success in this.

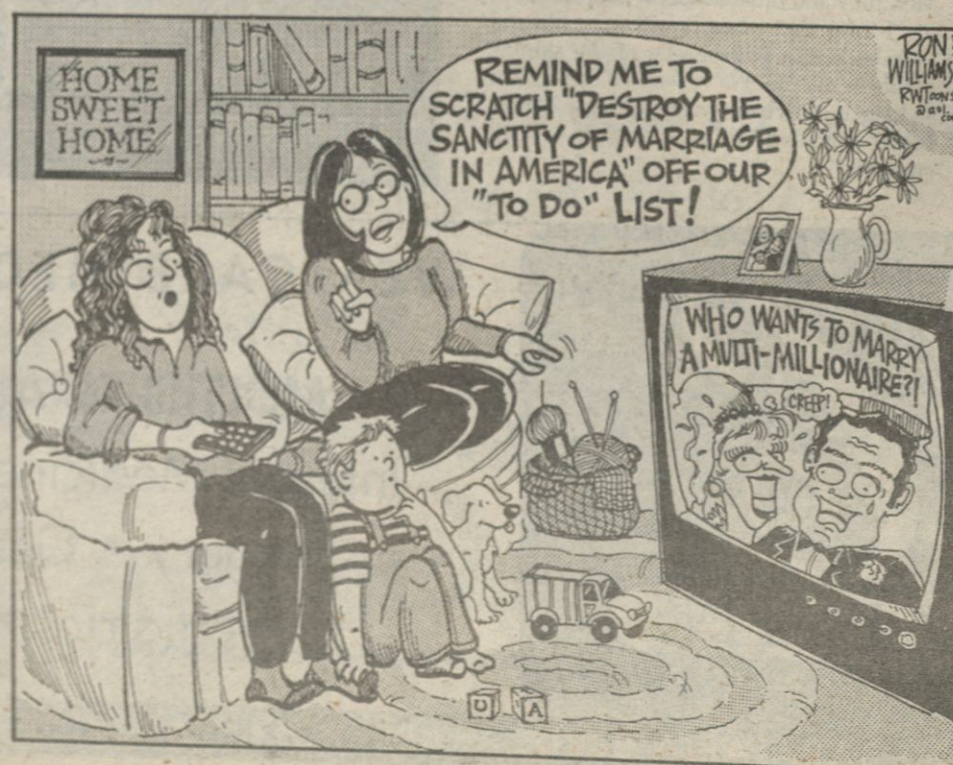
It has also not helped that much gay rights rhetoric just drips with images of white privilege. We are rich, brand loyal, smart, enjoy the finer things in life, and most importantly, deserving. We argue for anti-job discrimination laws with arguments framed upon the notion of merit and performance. Most blacks are aware,

rights struggle with the struggles of people of color can start the process by coming out. We must come out and admit that as white people we have benefited from racism. We must also admit that to the degree that we accept this as normative we are racists. It would be helpful to acknowledge that even the discrimination which we experience on account of being queer is often mitigated by our skin tone. Of course this is not the case for queer African-Americans.

We must become accountable to people of color, especially to queer people of color. White queers, especially white queer men, must be quiet and listen to the questions of those who rarely get a hearing. African Americans and other people of color, both queer and straight, might want to ask us why we have been so often either neutral about, or in some cases down right hostile, to their struggles. They might also ask us what we intend to do about the racism from which we benefit. How will we respond? Will we call them reverse racists? Will we tell them that we stick to queer issues only? Will we write them off as homophobes. or if they are queer will we just write them off, unless of course we are applying for grant money?

Maybe we will respond by admitting that we don't know how to undo the racism which surrounds us, but that we are willing to try to dismantle it with their guidance. This response will take us in the right direction for forging an adult gay-straight undoing racism alliance.

Stephen Donahue is an anarchist member of Lavender Left, a multi-issue organizing project of the Lambda Center in Baton Rouge.





POSITIVE VIEWPOINT

HIV and the gay black community

by DALE BOGGS

A few weeks ago I was asked to write a column addressing issues HIV/AIDS-infected gay black men face. As a gay white man, I felt compelled to do as much research and talking as possible: I attended numerous meetings, went to a town hall sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus, read every publication I could find with articles about gay black men.

After doing all of this, I reached an obvious conclusion: I can't speak for gay black men.

My own words came back to me: "We must as individuals and as a community regain our voices. We must each take charge of our care, and as a community speak for those who can't speak for themselves."

In the January 2000 issue of *The Banner* I read that "G/L/B/T youths suffer more emotional distress, try suicide more often and engage in riskier sexual and drug behaviors not because they are homosexual but because of the isolation and bigotry they face daily."

The words "isolation and bigotry they face daily" struck a nerve. Look at this statement again and add "black" or "African American."

This week is "The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS." Yet in the Balm of Gilead promotional information not one single church in New Orleans was listed as participating. At the town hall meeting in January, our own U.S. Rep. William Jefferson was listed as the keynote speaker; however, due to pressing issues he was unable to attend.

Gay black men in this community appear to me to be facing gay issues alone, "isolated" from the black community at large and rejected due to bigotry in the gay community at large.

While the CDC is not my favorite group to quote, it issued an important statement in a Feb. 14 report: "... race/ethnicity itself is not a risk factor for HIV infection; however, among racial/ethnic minority MSM (men who have sex with men), social and economic factors, such as homophobia, high rates of poverty and unemployment, and lack of access to health care, are associated with high rates of HIV risk behavior."

The CDC suggests that leaders of the black community must address sexual orientation if they are to overcome social barriers that affect HIV prevention. Black men discussed these very issues at the meetings I attended.

Another interesting point they made

concerned the lack of gay black role models. One man said "better press" is needed and this includes the form of videos and films. While the Frameline Film and Video catalog does contain a number of black study films, I've never seen any of the titles in rental locations.

In Frameline Film, Brian Freeman wrote in "Black Queer Like Me" that "film and video production by, for and about black lesbians and gays remains, at best, a sometime thing."

A point I find interesting is that for years the gay rights movement has compared itself to the civil rights movement. However, in communicating with gay black men, I've been told they feel they are about 20 years behind gay white men in gaining equal rights. While I can't describe the disparity caused by AIDS, I do believe gay white men have gained more public acceptance due to their HIV/AIDS activism.

As gay men who have overcome some of the repression of heterosexual society we need to embrace the gay black community. We must offer support and inclusion, particularly since we believe high risk behaviors are closely tied to low self-esteem, isolation and feelings of rejection.

A friend gave me this poem that I hope you also will find enlightening:

I Am A Black Man

It doesn't take a village to raise a damn fool. It takes a fool to be a fool. A fool who hasn't learned the rules.

I can drink, I can twirl but when my life begins to unfurl who can I blame? Nobody that's a shame. I lived it, the life of a Gay Black Man who truly, truly didn't give a damn about what others thought about me. I already knew I didn't fit into society. I twirled. I twirled like there was no tomorrow. I didn't have time for grief and sorrow. No Miss Thang oh no not me that ain't the way not the way to be free. I lived the life and the life lived me didn't care about the future only what I could immediately see. So then when they told me I had HIV, it hit like Brick Wall, the lights went out temporarily. Denial soon sank in I didn't feel no pain. I don't look sick! I can twirl again!!! The partying resumed this time even harder, substance abuse crept in. Reality became harder to grasp—And so I constantly relapsed. Got sick got better started twirling again but the truth was taking hold started creeping within. HIV, Substance Abuse, surely don't mix. AIDS + Crack = Death. A condition a cocktail won't fix. —T.H.

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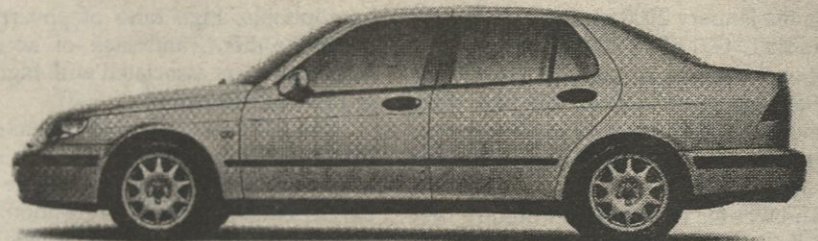
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LESBIAN VOICES

Getting back to reality—and elections

by MARILYN
McCONNELL

Mardi Gras is over and we had a marvelous time celebrating with our partners, friends, family and visitors. At Mardi Gras it's easy to forget we live in a homophobic world without our civil rights. Sooner, rather than later, one of us will lose a job, be taunted at school, lose our children, be evicted from our perfect apartment, be physically beaten or may be killed because we are lesbian or gay. Ask anyone awake during the civil rights movement in the 50s and 60s what happens in a racist society when an African American asks for equality and justice. The answer is—nothing happens until there are laws granting you equality and justice.

For this reason we must vote and vote responsibly in the March 14 elections. Every office is important. Rest assured it will be filled with a person with definite views on homosexuality and those views will directly affect our lives.

In the March 14 election for the Orleans Parish Democratic Executive Committee, I am privileged to know two of the candidates. Not only are they members of our community but they have worked tirelessly for our human rights and pro-choice issues.

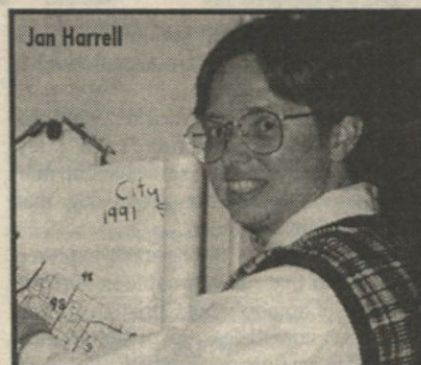
Lest you think this committee is not that important, the elected member represents you in the local Democratic party. More than one elected city official has begun a political career on this committee. Former elected officials, current elected officials and leaders of the large political groups BOLD, LIFE, SOUL, COUP, and Progressive Democrats are all represented in this networking paradise. It is imperative that our community has representation.

Jan Harrell, Dist. A

Jan was elected to this committee in 1996 and is running for re-election. A geophysicist at Shell Oil Company for 20 years, she lives with her partner in Lakeview. Serving on Mayor Morial's LGBT Advisory Committee from 1996-1998, she was appointed by the mayor to the city's Human Relations Commission Executive Committee and serves on the sub-committee that enforce the city's non-discrimination ordinance. She is a past co-chair of LAGPAC and has also served as its secretary and political action chair.

Jan is involved locally in the Human Rights Campaign, ACLU, PFLAG, and LEGAL, and nationally with NOW and NGLTF. She still finds time for socializing with the Mamou Riding Club and plays with the Bayou Women's Tennis Club.

Jan has earned the respect of some of the more powerful New Orleans political organizations and was endorsed by BOLD, SOUL, LIFE and Progressive Democrats. District A covers Lakeview, Mid-City and most of Uptown.



Chris Daigle, Dist. C

Chris began his activism as co-chair with Joan Ladnier of the local '93 March On Washington Committee. Since that time he has been involved one way or another in working to obtain our full civil rights. For more than five years he has been LAGPAC's co-chair and one of the guiding forces behind that organization's growing political influence.

He is also active in LEGAL, PFLAG, NGLTF and many other organizations. He is currently director of the Office of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Life at Tulane University. With an undergraduate degree from Loyola in Political Science, he did his graduate work in banking and finance at

Dartmouth. He resides in the French Quarter with his partner of six years.

Work in many local campaigns and tireless lobbying in Baton Rouge have earned him political expertise and respect.

District C includes the French Quarter, the Marigny and a portion of Mid-City.

Jan and Chris are honest, intelligent, responsible and respected members of our community. They have both worked long and hard for our issues and they deserve our vote. We can elect them if we vote and encourage our family, friends, fellow workers, fellow students, and neighbors to vote. If you do not live in District A or C, check your mailing and phone list, call everyone you know in those districts, encourage

them to get out and vote for Jan and Chris. Together we can elect them with overwhelming numbers. Mark your calendars for March 14!

Women's exhibit at UNO: "Third World Women," is an exhibition of 40 posters from the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Primarily composed by women from Third World countries, the posters reflect the many critical issues at local, regional and national levels: sexism, racism, health care, physical abuse, poverty, education and celebration. The exhibit will be on display at the newly expanded UNO Women's Center throughout March. The center is in the UNO Earl K. Long Library, Room 201. The exhibit is free and open to the public. Call 280-7285 for information.

Wednesday, March 15, 7 p.m., UNO Women's Center: "Elvira Alvarado: A Woman's Struggle for Justice and Human Rights in Honduras." A peasant leader at the forefront of human rights and land reform for 25 years, Alvarado is currently head of the International Relations of the Union of Rural Workers.

Thursday, March 23, 4 p.m. at Newcomb Center for Research on Women: "Cuban Women and National Identity: Changing Portrayals, Changing Realities." A talk by Elvira Diaz-Vallina from the University of Havana. She will speak in the Anna Many lounge.

Congratulations to Rosanna Cruz and the great job she's doing at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center. As director, she has demonstrated how commitment and very hard work is fast leading to a center we can all be proud of.

Dykes To Watch Out For by Alison Bechdel





CLAIMING OUR PAST

Natives wore "jewels of the devil"

by ROBERTS
BATSON

"By the time European explorers landed in America," writes anthropologist Walter L. Williams, "Europe was more firmly committed than any other culture in the world to persecuting sodomy. While homophobia was typical of Christian Europe generally, the Spanish seemed to be at the forefront of this persecution."

During the centuries when the Spanish Inquisition was terrorizing the Iberian peninsula, sodomy was a more serious offense than murder, and, in the eyes of the church, a mortal sin as well. Those found guilty of "the nefarious act" of sodomy were burned at the stake.

Such was the mindset of Spanish explorers who followed Columbus to the new world. Fernandez de Oviedo in 1515 was shocked and disgusted to find native artwork depicting homosexual acts: "... they carry as a jewel a man mounted upon another in that diabolic and nefarious act of Sodom," he wrote. "I saw one of these jewels of the devil ..."

Conquistador Hernando Cortez in 1519 wrote that the Indians of Mexico "are all sodomites and have recourse to that abominable sin." Cortez lectured his native allies:

"You must not commit sodomy or do the other ugly things you are accustomed to do."

Explorer Cabeza de Vaca reported that among the Indians of Florida "I saw a devilish thing, and it is that I saw one man married to another ... and they are huskier than the other men, and taller."

As disgusted as the Spanish explorers were to find that native people in America were free of homophobic Christian culture, they were nonetheless surprised to note that these same-gender oriented men were sometimes the fiercest warriors. One Spaniard described a battle where the last brave to be subdued, one who had "fought most courageously," was dressed not as a man but as a woman. Despite this begrudging admiration, the Spaniard had the Indian warrior burned at the stake.

In Panama, Balboa encountered "men dressed like women." His response was to throw 40 of them "to be eaten by his dogs, a fine action of an honorable and Catholic Spaniard."

Despite this horrendous behavior, the Spanish could not easily destroy homosexuality in the native peoples of America. Over 200 years later, a priest in California wrote that two Indian men at the Mission of Santa Clara were "caught in the act of com-

mitting the nefarious sin." This account confirms two facts: the Spanish were having a hard time in their effort to end sodomy, and they annoyingly over-used the word "nefarious."

This same priest went on to write, "But we place our trust in God and expect that these accursed people will disappear with the growth of the missions. The abominable vice will be eliminated to the extent that the Catholic faith and all the other virtues are firmly implanted here, for the glory of God and the benefit of those poor ignorants."

The early French explorers were perhaps not as zealous as the Spanish, but their religious take on homosexual behavior among the natives was just as disapproving. Father Marquette wrote that some men "while still young, assume the garb of women, and retain it throughout their lives. There is some mystery in this, for they never marry and glory in demeaning themselves to do everything that the women do."

Other accounts by French explorers and priests throughout the 18th century document "the sins of sodomy," the existence of "men who dress as women," "special friendships" between men, and "effeminacy and lewdness."

Although most of the European

accounts describe the homosexual conduct of men, there are some mentions of women. Francisco de Pareja, a missionary priest serving the Timucuan tribe in Florida, recorded that women were questioned in the confessional, "Woman with woman, have you acted as if you were a man?"

Historian Jonathan Ned Katz, author of the definitive "Gay American History," writes, "The fact that relatively few documents refer to Native American Lesbianism seems no true indication of the prevalence of Lesbianism in Indian society but is more likely an index of what [male] whites were ready or willing to hear about, investigate, and discuss."

Now let's think: Why would these Europeans—men who had chosen a life spent mostly in the company of other men—be so obsessed with men who had sex with men?

Hmmm.

Award-winning writer Roberts Batson cherishes his Choctaw heritage. He is the author of some 200 published articles on G/L/B/T history and contemporary culture, and his research provides the basis of his Gay Heritage Tour, which he conducts. He welcomes suggestions and can be reached at The Bienville Foundation, (504) 945-6789.

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State wins fight to keep condemned killer jailed

> Continued from page 1

Local authorities to intervene

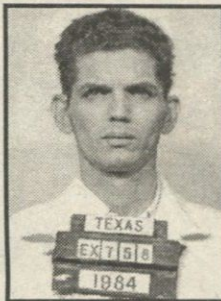
McGlasson and co-counsel Mandy Welch both said they are concerned that if Burdine was released on Monday, Harris County officials would intervene.

And they did, according to Harris County District Attorney John B. Holmes.

Holmes said Burdine will be re-arrested on the 1983 indictment under which he was charged with killing his roommate.

But Hittner's ruling leaves doubt about whether that's possible. The judge cited an appellate rule that a prisoner be freed on personal recognizance while a release order is appealed.

Burdine's 1984 trial was ruled invalid by Hittner in September, citing evidence that Burdine's then-lawyer Joe Cannon, who died in 1998, slept through large portions of the trial. In Hittner's September ruling, he gave the state 120 days to retry or release the man.



Burdine in 1984

But the state did neither. They appealed the judge's order without asking the judge to stay, or suspend, the judgment. The 120 days expired on Jan. 27.

Last month, Hittner ordered that state lawyers appear and explain why they should not be held in contempt for violating his order. They apologized for their mistake. But since the time period had expired, Hittner said he could not modify the retry or release order issued in September.

But Hittner also said that a new trial would not violate Burdine's constitutional rights.

A flawed trial

Burdine's 16 years on death row began after he was convicted of the April 1983 robbery and murder of W.T. Wise, a 50-year-old night supervisor for a security service.

Testimony showed that the pair had a gay relationship and had been living together for 3-1/2 months before a dispute caused Burdine to move out of their trailer. Burdine told police that Wise wanted him to work as a prostitute.

Evidence showed Burdine and an accomplice, Douglas McCreight, were involved in the burglary in which Wise was stabbed. McCreight served eight years in prison for a lesser crime before he was paroled.

Burdine admitted to taking part in the burglary, but said he did not kill Wise.

"I've never denied the fact I took part in the burglary. I've done 16 years for the burglary. That's almost a life sentence," he

said. "If I had killed to begin with, then I could understand. I was there, I just didn't stop it. I never killed before and don't plan to kill now."

But even if appeals based on inadequate legal counsel fail for Burdine, attorneys can press ahead with new challenges based on anti-gay slurs used by a prosecutor and Burdine's defense attorney.

In 1995, gay activists and the American Civil Liberties Union called Burdine's 1984 trial a "travesty of justice" because of anti-gay slurs by a prosecutor and Cannon.

The ACLU filed a brief in the case as a judge was preparing an execution order for Burdine. Hittner later granted a stay of execution on April 11, 1995, the day Burdine was to be executed.

At issue were comments made by prosecutor Ned Morris during closing arguments in the 1984 trial.

"Sending a homosexual to the penitentiary certainly isn't a very bad punishment for a homosexual, and that's what (Cannon) is asking you to do," Morris told the jury.

Morris was accused of playing on incorrect stereotypes and images of gays to prejudice jurors against the gay defendant.

Cannon was also accused of allowing three people onto the Burdine jury who admitted prejudice against gays and was criticized for failing to call witnesses who might have helped the defense.

Cannon denied the charges.

Texas under fire

Texas' death penalty policies have recently been the focus of national attention both because of the number of executions—including the execution two weeks ago of a woman—and the visibility of Gov. George W. Bush's presidential campaign. There have been 121 executions in Bush's administration, the New York Times reported.

Last week the ACLU called on Bush to suspend the death penalty in Texas.

"The justice system failed not only Calvin Burdine, but also the people of Texas by permitting bigotry and shoddy representation to open the door to this result," said Matt Coles, director of the ACLU's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project.

In a letter sent to Bush the ACLU said an immediate moratorium on the death penalty is the "moral and Constitutional" response to continued injustice in Texas' capital punishment system.

"This is not the only case where gay men or lesbians have been sentenced to death because of their sexual orientation," Coles said. "Just as the death penalty is applied selectively to people of color and low-income people, it is also used against lesbian and gay people. It's unconscionable and it's also unconstitutional."

Bush has said he opposes Burdine's release.

On The Beach

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- New Year's (sold out)
- Mardi Gras (available)
- Tuna Christmas (available)

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in our culture

IMPACT NEWS
MARCH 10/2000

THE re-invention OF DESIRE

by SHANNON WILLIAMS

"When I was called and asked to write an opera based on 'Streetcar,' I said yes before I could draw a breath. I believe it's always been an opera—it was merely the music that was missing."—Andre Previn

With these words, a local institution found a new home through renowned composer Andre Previn's modern opera version of **A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE**. Stunning in its poetic depth, "Streetcar" makes its local debut with the respected New Orleans Opera Association during this year's Tennessee Williams Literary Festival.

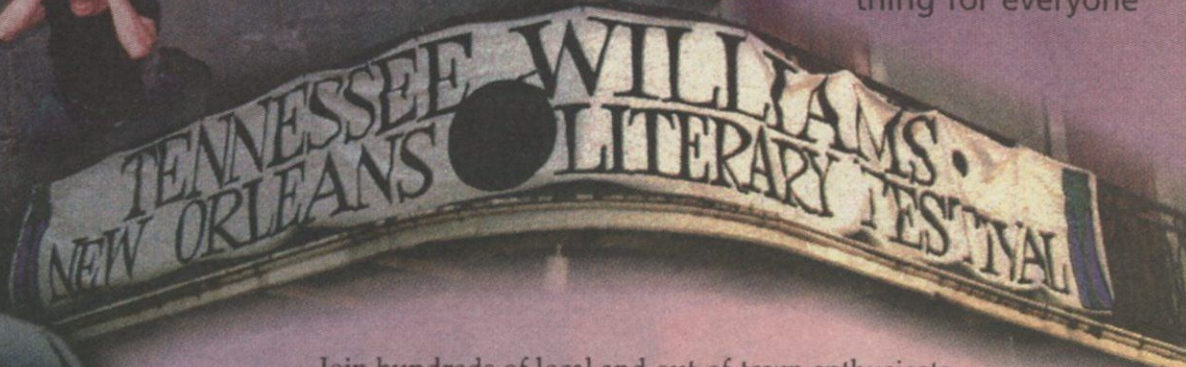
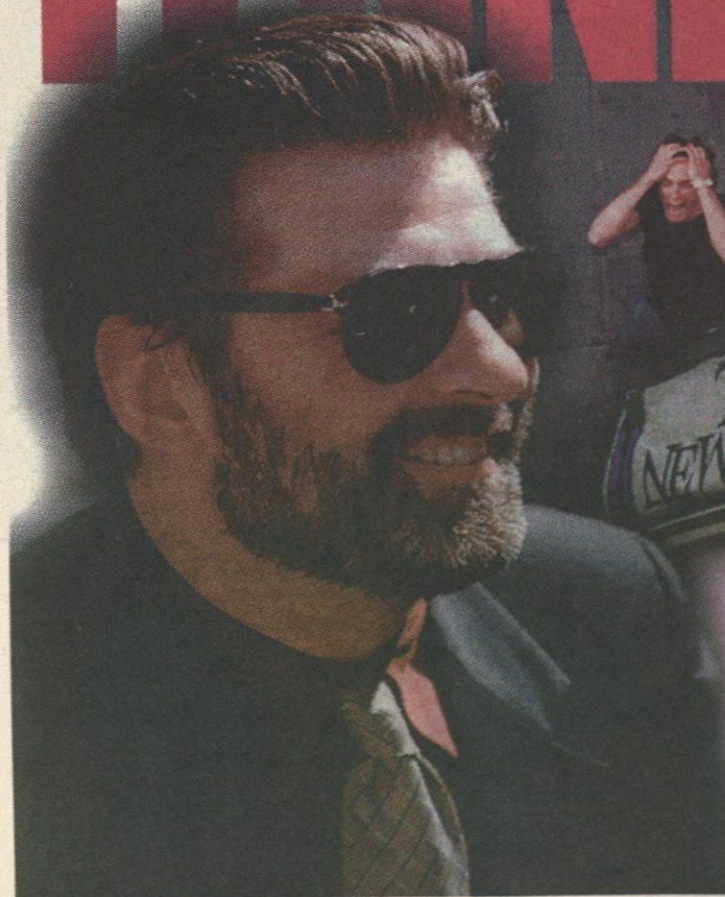
Described as an unlikely marriage between sex, rock and roll, and opera, Williams' Streetcar has received numerous productions but none quite like this. After the world premiere of the opera in San Francisco, the Los Angeles Times reported that "the love music between these characters—languid, smoldering, passionate, rapturous, raw, and real—does exactly what music should do for an opera. It reveals why

➤ Continued on page 27



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Festival Highlights

For a complete schedule of events and ticket information, contact the Festival office at 504-581-1144 or visit the web-site at www.tennesseewilliams.net.

➤ Continued on page 28



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Eating Out

by THE FOOD CRITIC

RESTAURANT
REVIEW

Lunch at Café Degas

Esplanade Avenue is certainly one of New Orleans' crown jewels, stretching as it does from City Park all the way down to the Mighty Mississippi, with plenty of elegant establishments, glittering gardens and beckoning bistros en route.

So after a liberal dose of Swedish Art Nouveau pottery at the New Orleans Museum of Art, my guest and I made for one of Esplanade's more popular gastronomic landmarks: the quaintly named Café Degas. Many probably discovered this little gem during the immensely popular Degas show at the museum, although it has had a loyal following since its inception.

Jacques Soulas bought this charming restaurant from another successful French restaurateur, Nanou (of Crepe Nanou uptown fame) many years ago and it is amazing how the two places, so far apart geographically, perfectly exemplify that certain indefinable Gallic *je ne sais quoi*.

Jacques himself is a talented painter who specializes in local scenes, especially of Bayou St. John, and at any given time myriad examples of his work can be seen hanging on the walls of his establishment. He exhibits regularly and had a very successful show at the Sylvia Schmidt gallery last summer.

Peering at paintings and pottery at the Museum being thirsty work, we quickly summoned the waitress for the wine list. The list is modest, but Euro-friendly, with interesting beers and wines by the glass, all guaranteed to put you in that "this is going to be a naughty lunch" mood.

We started off with smoked trout, offered along with its more common cousin, smoked salmon. It could have been a little more tender but, accompanied as it was with bermuda onion, capers, beautifully arranged lettuce and cherry tomatoes, and some of the most delicious bread in town, it proved a tantalizing lunch-time nibble. Café Degas runs the gamut of pates, terrines, charcuteries and cheeses, all categorized under hors d'oeuvres but really meals in themselves.

We remained in this continental vein, next tackling a robust Salad Nicoise (with a beautifully rendered tuna steak atop) and a breast of chicken salad drizzled with an interesting peanutty sauce. There are plenty of salad-y offerings at lunch, which may explain why there are so many of the proverbial "ladies who lunch" on the premises.

For those munchers with commendable self-restraint, Café Degas also has an omelette category. Europeans are very fond of an omelette for lunch and very often a glass of champagne and a smoked salmon omelette are all that are needed to keep body and soul together. But both of us being somewhat famished, we decided to throw all dietary caution to the wind. I ordered the very substantial veal liver with onions, which seems to be a regular daily offering. I rarely pass up an opportunity to order liver and it is getting

increasingly difficult to find. The French (and English) seem to be the only ones who consistently eat this much-maligned food.

My partner chose a tried-but-true Boeuf Bourguignon (really just beef stew, but what beef stew!). It was a winner for the purist, prepared with plenty of red wine and a tantalizing hint of cognac.

Café Degas usually offers three or so specials, along with several yummy staples. We couldn't possibly manage dessert after our three courses but judging by our fellow diners' rapturous expressions, the creme brulees, chocolate mousses and sorbets were definitely hitting the spot.

Café Degas is also a wonderful place for brunch. The open-air ambiance, reminiscent of a tropical island before it gets too hot (thanks to the fans), the lovely view of Esplanade Avenue and the informal and relaxed service combine to give it a charming "Sunday-ish" feel. The menu is a la carte and of course such life-savers as mimosas and Bloody Marys are on hand to start your Sunday off with a swing or bolster the blood pressure if you happen to be merely finishing up your Saturday.

In the evenings, as should be, the menu is a little more adventurous and slightly heavier. Poultry, fish and meats are all represented in a non-nonsense but imaginative way, be it duck with confit, bouillabaisse with red pepper rouille croutons, or rack of lamb with nicoise olives and feta. Fresh fish is always on hand, with interesting choices such as ruby red trout or shark. But that would all be for another night. We decided the sensible thing to do would be to take a rigorous walk down the avenue to work off some of the most delicious calories in town.

Prices at the Café Degas are uniformly reasonable. Nothing is over \$10 at lunch, or over \$20 (and that is stretching it) at dinner. So let your stressed-out bodies and pocketbooks relax at Café Degas—starting with an aperitif in the minuscule but charming bar, followed by a leisurely meal in a cottage-in-Martinique-type setting. It's not hard to make Café Degas a favorite place of yours, as many others have.

Food File

Café Degas

3127 Esplanade Ave
504-945-5635

Food: C C C C C

Service: C C C C C

Value: C C C C C

Scene: C C C C C

Ratings:

C = stay at home and eat cereal

C C = well, if you really must

C C C = Fine for all but the finicky

C C C C = Worth the drive, so live a little

C C C C C = As good as you'll find in this city



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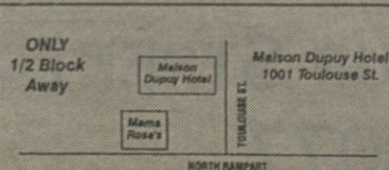
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"Quote unquote"

compiled by REX WOCKNER and STAFF



"I've slept with all the boy bands. I know them all. ... TLC, the Dixie Chicks, now I don't know about them."

—Sir Elton John, 52, after performing with the Backstreet Boys at the Grammy awards ceremony

"He might be a knight in the UK, but here in the good ole USA his friends can still call him Sharon."

—Billy Joel, after presenting Sir Elton John, left, with the Grammy Legend Award; Sharon is the nickname Rod Stewart gave Elton when they became friends in the 70s

"If the religious right really wanted to stop gay sex, they should get behind gay people adopting, because nothing puts a stop to gay sex faster."

—Syndicated sex-advice columnist and gay dad Dan Savage as quoted by the Associated Press.

"I don't pretend to have an understanding of homosexuality that sustains a discussion of its roots, but I do not believe it is simply an acceptable alternative that society should affirm."

—Al Gore to the *Tennessean*, Nashville's daily newspaper, in 1984 when he was running for U.S. Senate.

"I do not support gay rights."

—Bill Bradley in 1978 during his first campaign for the U.S. Senate.

"I want to get back to just being funny. You can't be both political and funny. It's hard for people to separate the two. The political stuff started to be more important to me. Now I feel: Enough of that."

—Ellen DeGeneres, right, to the *New York Times*.



"I did have one gay boy, about 17 or 18, who came up and said, 'I had such a hard time, I'd just come out to my parents, and then they watched your program and they think my life is like that.' And actually your heart bleeds, and I was saying, 'I am so sorry if I caused you any difficulties'. But... the moment you start to take other people's considerations into account it becomes a blander piece of work. This kid's parents—it's their problem if they watch a piece of television and blame him for that."

—Russell T. Davies, author of the groundbreaking British TV series "Queer As Folk," to London's *Gay Times*, February issue

"Marriage as an institution is on its last gasp. Its death will come from the charges of homophobia used to block meaningful public policy discourse. There are public policy issues aplenty when it comes to marriage and children, but they will be sacrificed at the altar of the homophobia accusation we fear and worship by remaining mute."

—Columnist Marianne M. Jennings, a professor of legal and ethical studies at Arizona State University, writing in Salt Lake City's *Deseret News*.



"I started getting e-mails from foot fetishists because Will sometimes walks around his apartment without shoes."

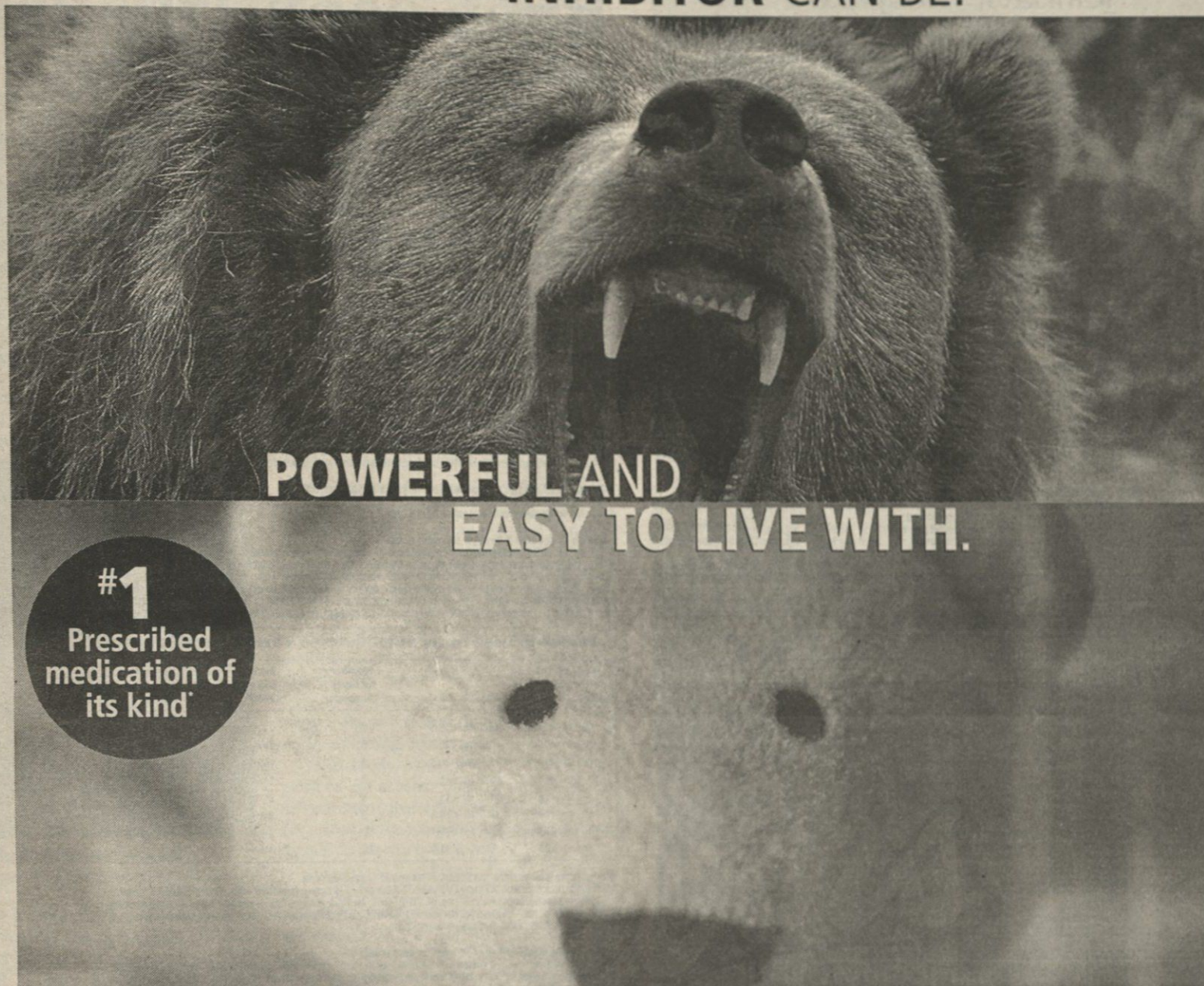
—"Will & Grace" star Eric McCormack, left, to *TV Guide*.

"There is absolutely no question whatsoever that protease inhibitors have helped people. But they've probably hurt more people than they've helped. ... The people for whom benefit has been proven

beyond a doubt are really sick people who would have died without them three years ago. But the target population for the drug companies are the healthy people, and those people will almost certainly have their lives shortened by these drugs."

—Dr. Joseph Sonnabend, co-founder of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, to *Gear* magazine, March issue.

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VIRACEPT IS EASY TO LIVE WITH Take it three times a day with your normal meals or light snacks.

VIRACEPT IS GENERALLY WELL TOLERATED People treated with VIRACEPT may experience some side effects; the most common is diarrhea of moderate or greater intensity in 20% of people in clinical trials. **VIRACEPT WORKS** It's indicated

for the treatment of HIV infection when anti-HIV drug therapy is warranted. It is not yet known whether taking VIRACEPT will help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that can occur with HIV. Some common

medications and some HIV related medications should not be taken with VIRACEPT. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, and with increased bleeding

in patients with hemophilia. Ask your doctor. For more information, call toll free 1-888-VIRACEPT or visit www.agouron.com.

(Refer to the important information on the next page.)

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tablets and oral powder

*IMS NPA Prescription Data 8/98 – 5/99

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VIRACEPT

nelfinavir mesylate

tablets and oral powder

Information for Patients About VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept) Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. You should be aware, however, that the effect of VIRACEPT on HIV in the blood has not been correlated with long-term health benefits. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in their CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT is usually taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zalcitabine® (ddC). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of VIRACEPT are not known at this time. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

It is not known whether VIRACEPT will help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that may occur.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should not take with VIRACEPT:

- Seldane® (terfenadine, for allergies)
 - Hismanal® (astemizole, for allergies)
 - Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
 - Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
 - Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute® Cardioquin® Quinidex® and others
 - Ergot derivatives (Cafergo® and others, for migraine headache)
 - Halcion® (triazolam)
 - Versed® (midazolam)
- Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.
- Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®
- This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with:

Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:

- Phenobarbital
 - Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
 - Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)
- These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")
- If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:

- Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT)
- Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC)
- Zalcitabine® (ddC)
- Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT: Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

- Viramune® (nevirapine)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.

- Other NNRTIs

VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Norvir® (ritonavir)
The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Invisase® (saquinavir)
The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. If used in combination with saquinavir hard gelatin capsules at 600 mg three times daily, no dose adjustments are needed. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include abdominal pain, asthenia, nausea, flatulence, and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. The light blue VIRACEPT Tablets should be taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. You do not have to take VIRACEPT exactly every 8 hours. Instead, you can take it at normal times when you are eating.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 through 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight			Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
Kg	Lb				
7	to < 8.5	15.5	to <18.5	4	1
		8.5	to <10.5	5	1 ¼
		10.5	to <12	6	1 ½
		12	to <14	7	1 ¾
		14	to <16	8	2
		16	to <18	9	2 ¼
		18	to <23	10	2 ½
		≥23	≥50.5	15	3 ¾

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

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Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

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Music for a Queer Planet

by MARGARET COBLE

Essex girl does good

UK-born singer-songwriter Sheila Nicholls sounds like a melodic cross between Ani DiFranco and Tori Amos, a rambling piano-playing troubadour spewing deeply confessional tales of her most intimate thoughts—mixed with a healthy dose of social consciousness.

Her debut album **BRIEF STROP** on her own Essexgirl Records is a 14-track, 53-minute diary entry accompanied by deft piano work, careful vocal phrasing, a British accent that's vaguely reminiscent of Billy Bragg, and infectious, stick-in-your-head melodies. Her lyrics deal with age-old topics like love, lust and self-questioning, for the most part, though a few tackle meatier subjects like feminism, consumerism, and war.



Sheila Nicholls: Spellbinding chantuese and songwriter will perform at Neutral Ground

Got your attention yet?

Those who find this description tantalizing will want to drop by The Neutral Ground Coffee House on Saturday, March 11. That's when Nicholls will make her New Orleans debut, as she checks in on her country-wide tour of coffeehouses, high schools and other assorted alternative music venues. A time wasn't set when we went to press, so just drop by that evening or give them a call.

Oh, and did I mention that's she's bisexual? Well, she is, though you might never know it by reading her lyrics, which seem only to reference male love interests. The album-closing song "Pan" should be the dead giveaway to her queerness, however, as Nicholls designates the Greek god Pan as the "perfect man."

Her feminist slant, though, can hardly be missed. "Medusa" is a sharp criticism of the marriage of sexism and advertising. It's a powerful statement that links man-pleasing female rituals like shaving and using deodorant tampons to "little girl rapes," declaring: "The wound between women keep the war-mongers grinning/The wound between womyn stops recovery beginning."

"I have heard the word feminist more than once, an association I am proud of," Nicholls says. "I write songs about women

because I am one and this is how I experience the world. The world is not yet equal. There are continuous presumptions, ceilings, definitions and conditioned responses, however subtle, that perpetuate a 'less than' state for many, not just women.

So therein lies a motivation to create, and not be passive. If anyone thought my songs could help in the continuing struggle for women's and anyone else's equality, I would be quite delighted, although it has never been an objective."

Nicholls certainly isn't afraid to speak her mind. Her most vitriolic diatribe, however, can be found on "War Isn't Working," an unapologetic criticism of the US-UK war machine: "Don't tell me your maps are outdated/did the dog eat your homework/And don't deeply regret 1000 dead civilians/just know your numbness may eat your children and you."

Other songs are more personal in nature. "Rapunzel" was written as a plea to herself, to change her life circumstances after growing weary of her job as a nanny. "I was disappointed with myself," Nicholls explains. "I felt like I was on the precipice of permanent distraction. You know, when you put your dreams and desires on hold for sufficiently long enough you eventually forget what they were. I knew I wasn't doing what I wanted and was hiding myself away."

"All of my songs seem to arrive when I need to get a better view of myself and my environment, just extensions of my diary and for a long time completely private," she continues. "I am my own shrink."

Raised in Colchester, Essex, England, a town 52 miles east-northeast of London, where her two brothers live and her mother runs a pub, Nicholls says she blocks out most of her childhood. She's been writing songs since she was 14, but didn't talk about them until she was 24 when she was living in New York and formed a band called "Sheila Nicholls and the Splendid Frock."

She moved to Los Angeles in 1997 to record her music, where she has been organizing and hosting "Chicks In Arms," a performance venture which promotes a community of diversity among women performers in the Los Angeles area. "It's a bit like Lilith [Fair] 'cept boys can play if they wear a dress," Nicholls says.

Her label, Essexgirl Records, "came about through the understanding that major labels are unable to provide artists with complete freedom to create their art as they see fit," Nicholls says on her web-site.

ACTION ! info

Sheila Nicholls

Saturday, March 11, at Neutral Ground Coffee House, 5110 Daniel St. Call (504) 891-3381 for showtime.

For more information and ordering details, point your browser to www.sheilanicolls.com.

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Out in the Community

compiled by DALE BOGGS

Gay/Lesbian Dive Club

Any divers out there looking for a "family" dive club? Robin wants to form a group for local and road-trip dives. Call her at (504) 865-0348 or via e-mail robin-wwc@mindspring.com.

Music Ministry

MCC of Greater New Orleans needs new participants in its weekly music ministry. Musicians of all levels of ability are invited to participate. The call will be conducted Monday, March 13, at 7 p.m. at 1128 St. Roch Ave. Call (504)945-5390.

Zimbabwe activist to speak

Tsitsi Riripano, a prominent member of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), will speak about the persecution she, GALZ members and other Zimbabwean gays and lesbians regularly face on March 18 at 4 p.m. at the Ashe Cultural Center, 1712 Oretha Castle Haley. Call the Lesbian and Gay Community Center at (504)945-1103 for more information.

Movies

The Lesbian and Gay Community Center is continuing its Friday Night Movies at 7 p.m. each Friday. March 10—"Heaven's a Drag; aka To Die For" (1994, Great Britain); March 17—"Companions (Omnibus); March 24—"Wonderland; aka

The Fruit Machine" (1989, Great Britain); March 31—"Word is Out" (1997, USA).

Art

"Lineworks, Etc." at the Brunner Gallery, 522 N. New Hampshire St., Covington. Reception: Saturday, March 11, 6-8 p.m.

March 13-April 5 the J. Edgar and Louise S. Monroe Library at Loyola University hosts a Juried Student Show containing student artwork. All exhibits can be viewed 1-6 p.m. For more information (504) 864-7111.

Theatre

The Loyola Department of Drama and Speech presents Shakespeare's "The Tempest," at the Marquette Theatre, 6363 St. Charles Ave., March 17-26. Call (504) 865-3624.

Baton Rouge Lambda Center Activities, 733 Florida Ave.

Sun., Mar. 12, 2 p.m.—P-FLAG meets. Call Molly at 753-3774.

Sun., Mar. 12, 6 p.m.—Gay Men's Group

Mon., Mar. 13, 7 p.m.—GSLEN

Baton Rouge

Wed., Mar. 15, 7 p.m.—Movie Night

Sun., Mar. 19, 6 p.m.—Gay Men's Group

Mon., Mar. 20, 7 p.m.—GSLEN Baton Rouge

Memorials

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In my heart, mind and soul
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And to be in love until we met
The love we shared will stay with me
forever, I truly deeply miss you,
Until we're together again.

Always and forever... Love, Griffin

LEIF ARONSEN died the morning of Jan. 15 at the New Orleans VA Hospital due to complications of advanced liver disease. A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., Leif retired from the New York Fire Department and lived in New Orleans for the last nine years with his companion Steven. He is survived by his mother, sister and brother, all of Brooklyn. Leif was a lovable and friendly person. He never met a stranger. Everyone crossing his path would become family.

So a toast to you, Leif: "Him, him... We'll miss him."

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ADVICE

by MINDY MILAM, BCSW

Newsman's arrest opens debate

In the wake of the arrest of veteran newsman Mike Longman on multiple sex offense charges, including allegations that he had sex with minors, the issue of confidentiality in therapy has arisen. To refresh your memory: Police were tipped off by a youth counselor who told them that a 15-year-old boy living in a group home for abused children said that when he was 14 he had sex with Longman in exchange for money.

Since confidentiality is an area of concern to most people who enter therapy, I thought I'd review some key concepts regarding confidentiality. In order to feel safe enough to discuss very personal aspects of their lives, clients need to know that the therapist will protect their privacy.

Licensed social workers are required to follow the codes of ethics developed by the National Association of Social Workers and the Louisiana Social Work Licensing Board, just as other mental health professionals are required to comply with the codes of ethics for their professions. Both the Social Work Code of Ethics and Louisiana law provide that without the client's consent a therapist is prohibited from disclosing any information that is obtained from a client, or relative to that client's treatment, or even from identifying whether someone is a client or not.

There are, however, some exceptions to this provision. The first exception—and the one most relevant to the Mike Longman case—is that certain specific professionals are mandated by law to report any information regarding the abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or death of children. Failure to report such information is punishable as a misdemeanor criminal offense and the violator may be fined up to \$500 or imprisoned for no more than six months, or both (R.S. 14:403). In addition to the criminal penalties, violators may face disciplinary proceedings through their professional organizations or state licensing boards.

Mandatory reporters, as defined in the Louisiana Children's Code Title VI, include individuals who provide health care services to children or their families (such as physicians, dentists, chiropractors, nurses, nursing aides, or hospital staff members), individuals who provide mental health care or social services to children or their families (such as psychiatrists, psychologists, family counselors, or social workers), or individuals who provide training and supervision of children (including school teachers, teachers' aides, school principals, probation officers, foster home parents, group home or child care institutional staff members, or day care providers). Mandatory reporting requirements also apply to commercial film and photographic print processors.

Mandated reporters are required to report when they have cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse. If the neglect or abuse is believed to have been perpetrated

by a parent or caretaker, it is reported to the local child protection unit. However, if it is believed to have been perpetrated by someone other than a parent or caretaker, the law requires that it shall be reported immediately to a local or state law enforcement agency.

Child abuse includes any of a number of specific acts defined in the Louisiana Children's Code that seriously endanger the physical, mental, or emotional health of a child, including the involvement of the child in any sexual act with a parent or any other person, or the involvement of a child in sexual activity, which constitutes a crime. The code defines a child as a person under age 18.

Additionally, there are a number of criminal statutes that prohibit certain sexual behaviors with children under the age of 17.

There are other provisions in various professional licensing statutes that permit—not mandate—therapists to disclose confidential information. One of those is when the therapist believes that a child is a victim of a crime. Sometimes this situation may overlap with the mandatory reporting of child abuse.

Therapists may also disclose confidential information when the therapist believes that a client is a danger to themselves or to others.

The most obvious exception to the requirement of confidentiality is when a client gives consent for the therapist to disclose information.

An *IMPACT News* reader recently questioned whether a youth involved in the Longman case knew that his therapy was "not confidential." This question assumes that the young client did not give his consent for the therapist to call the police. At this point we don't know if he gave his consent or not.

There are times when clients ask therapists to disclose information about their treatment. Examples of this may be when the therapist is collaborating with other treating professionals, when a client wants the therapist to speak to family members about an issue that has come up in therapy, or when a client asks the therapist to disclose information to an organization or agency to assist the client in obtaining benefits, resources or other services.

It is important that therapists recognize the client's right to know the limitations of confidentiality before therapeutic work begins. Clients should be informed as early in the process as possible about what information is not protected and what the potential consequences would be, such as reporting to authorities. Such disclosure allows the client to make the choice of what she or he discloses to the therapist.

This column was written in consultation with Clay Latimer, a child advocate and attorney practicing in the juvenile justice system for nearly 20 years. Write Mindy Milam c/o IMPACT News, 2118 Burgundy St., NOLA 70116 or via e-mail at editor@impactnews.com.

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BOOK
REVIEWS

Chase to sign books, read

Tennessee Williams called New Orleans his spiritual home. The list of writers who have lived in the Crescent City at one time or another is impressive: Truman Capote, Shirley Ann Grau, William Faulkner, Sherwood Anderson, Julie Smith, J. M. Redmann and Ellen Gilchrist are only a few of the glittering stars who have drawn inspiration from our unique city.

Another renowned writer who is inspired by New Orleans is Clifford Chase, author of "The Hurry-Up Song" and editor of "Queer 13: Lesbian and Gay Writers Recall Seventh Grade." Chase will be at the Faubourg-Marigny Bookstore on March 12 for a reading and discussion. He also is working on his first novel, "Winkie," which he describes as a "biography" of a teddy bear and part of which is based on the three years his family lived in Metairie.

Q: What brings you to New Orleans?

A: I'll be in New Orleans partly so I can go see Metairie and scare up memories and images for my novel, part of which deals with the period that my family lived there, from '63 to '66.

Q: Is your new project a children's book?

A: "Winkie" is definitely not a children's book. I'd say it's sort of a "Toy Story" for adults, with bodily functions. Winkie himself is somewhere between Kermit the Frog and Frankenstein.

Q: What prompted you to write it?

A: Winkie's character began as an experiment in point of view and turned out to be a very rich character. After "The Hurry-Up Song," which is a straightforward memoir, I was looking for a new way

to approach writing about my life. This is also a way to write about my mother's life, since Winkie was hers first (she got him for Christmas in 1925). I should also say that Winkie eventually runs away to the forest to live like a real bear, where he has a baby.

Q: What was your motivation behind putting together "Queer 13"? What did you learn from the experience?

A: I decided to put together "Queer 13" after spending a year writing about my own experiences as a seventh grader. I found that I had largely forgotten that embarrassing period, and yet the memories as they slowly unfolded were remarkably vivid. This was, of course, when my sexuality came forward and when I realized I was queer, an incredibly formative time, and the beginning of the closet. It occurred to me that most queers can probably trace many of their deepest fears about their sexuality and identity back to this period, and it seemed important to get those stories out. As it turned out, those stories are often also hilariously funny.

Q: How dramatically has New Orleans changed since you lived here?

A: I don't know how much New Orleans has changed, since I haven't been there since I was a kid in 1966. I'll be curious to see how it has changed. I'll also be curious to see how much I remember of it. I left when I was 8.



lesbian and gay writers recall seventh grade
EDITED BY CLIFFORD CHASE

INFO

Clifford Chase will be at
Faubourg-Marigny Bookstore,
600 Frenchmen, from 4-6 p.m.
on Sunday, March 12. Call
(504) 943-9875.

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STREETCAR

> continued from page 17

people feel the way they feel. No explanation is necessary."

Covington native Elizabeth Futral will continue her origination of the lead role of Stella. Futral's voice has been described as "extraordinarily beautiful and sweet" and "charmingly lighted by humanity." Her amazing body of work includes time spent with what are arguably many of opera's greatest talents, which is incredible for a 31-year-old soprano who is averse to the role of a prima donna. "It's not in line with my upbringing," she says. "Diva fits are fun to watch, but they only work a limited amount of time. That 11th time someone's going to say 'Out with you!'"

Joining her will be the exceptional talents of Sheryl Woods as Blanche, Franco Pomponi as Stanley, and Jay Hunter Morris as Mitch.

NOOA General Director Robert Lyall will conduct. Lyall's conducting and composing are world-renowned for their depth and passion.

"I believe this to be the right piece and the right city," Lyall says of "Streetcar" and its likely impact on the city in which the Elysian Fields-set story takes place. "Rendering a famous piece such as this one into another art form such as opera has many twists and turns. Working through the stereotypes and de-mystifying [opera]

are inherent to discovering its communicative power."

Opera has a long and colorful history in New Orleans, beginning in 1796 when the city played host to the first opera house opened on the North American continent. Laying claim to the great operatic European traditions, New Orleans was the site for dozens of American premieres at the world-famous French Opera House that used to stand at the corner of Bourbon and Toulouse before it was lost to fire in 1919.

Maestro Lyall's goal as NOOA director is to "de-emphasize the elitism that has made the perception of opera so completely off the mark." To continue with this goal, an original piece celebrating the Louisiana Purchase was commissioned for NOOA's 2003 season and will have its debut here in New Orleans.

"A Streetcar Named Desire" is the final production of the 1999-2000 NOOA season.

A Streetcar Named Desire

March 22, March 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Matinee performance, Sunday,
March 26, 2:30 p.m.

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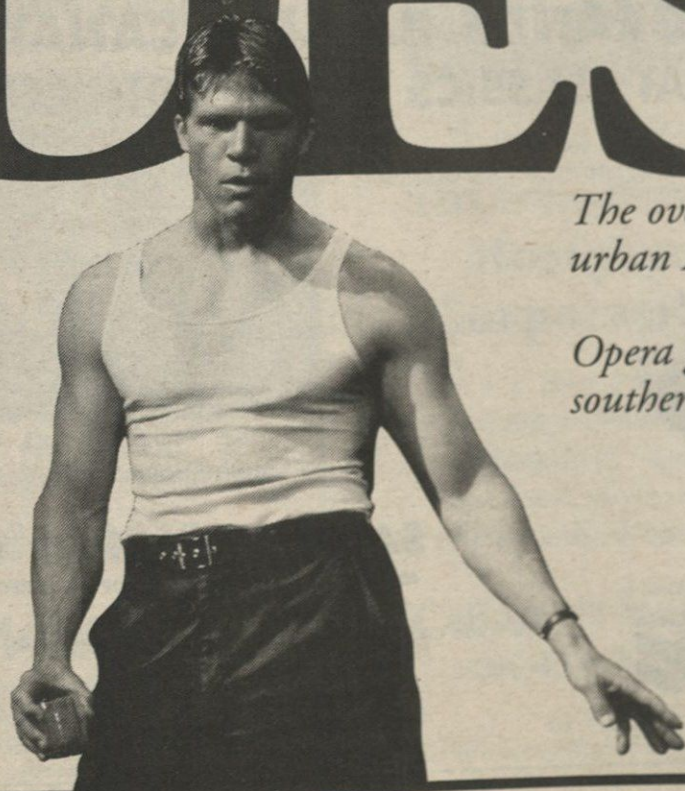


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Opera gives poetic depth to Tennessee Williams' story of the haunted southern aristocrat Blanche DuBois...

—David Patrick Stearns, *USA Today*

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French Quarter Literary Conference (a series of 11 MASTER CLASSES)
Wednesday, March 22, 11 a.m.

Christine Wiltz, "Capturing A Life: Non-Fiction and the Novelist's Art." In her recent work of non-fiction, "The Last Madam: A Life in the New Orleans Underworld," novelist Christine Wiltz used archival records, oral interviews and her subject's own memoirs to draw a portrait of the legendary Norma Wallace, one of New Orleans' most successful and flamboyant "ladies of the evening." Wiltz discusses how novelistic techniques helped her create a highly readable, character-driven account that remains faithful to the facts of an extraordinary life.

FESTIVAL OPENING NIGHT GALA
Thursday, March 23, 7 p.m.

Alec Baldwin starring in a "Reading of The Night Of The Iguana." Alec Baldwin returns to the festival to read the role of Reverend T. Lawrence Shannon in what some consider to be Williams' most mature work. Joining Baldwin in "Iguana" is Elizabeth Ashley, who portrays the sex-starved widow Maxine, Stephanie Zimbalist, as the untouchable Hannah, and Kent McCord as the poet, Nonno.

LITERARY PANELS
Friday, March 24, 2:30 p.m.

Detective Divas

The detective novel was once the province of male writers like Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. In modern times, women have taken over. Mystery novelist Tony Dunbar interviews New York Times best-selling author Sue Grafton and Edgar Award winner Julie Smith about the emergence of women as the tough-talking heroines in the detective world.

Saturday, March 25, 10 a.m.

Lost Worlds

Fiction is the link to times past. In the gay community, the AIDS epidemic is a subject with which many writers are still grappling. Award-winning authors Andrew Holleran, William Mann, and Sarah Schulman have written works detailing the plague years and its effect on American society as a whole. On this panel, they will discuss the "lost world" they have documented in their fiction. Moderator: Greg Herren

Saturday, March 25
11:30 a.m.

Alternative Literary Criticism

Is a book meaningful and successful only if it gets a mention in the New York Times or if Oprah picks it for Oprah's Book Club? What's a writer who writes outside the mainstream supposed to do to get attention, and do reviews really have an impact on a book's success, anyway? Writers, reviewers and editors discuss navigating the treacherous waters of talking about books.

Panelists: Shelley Bindon, Michael Thomas Ford, J.M. Redmann
Moderator: Paul Willis

THEATRE

Sunday, March 26, 3 p.m.

"I Can't Imagine Tomorrow"
by Tennessee Williams

This short play by Williams again illustrates the author's unique ability to illuminate the pathos and terrible loneliness that can underlie the human condition. A confrontation between one man and one woman becomes a revealing and moving emotional experience as the two accept the need to face alone terror that might be more easily met together. Directed by Perry Martin.

MUSIC

Sunday, March 26, 3 p.m.

Drummer & Smoke: Tribute to Danny Barker

Danny Barker was the elder statesman of New Orleans jazz, a griot who chronicled the culture in the books he wrote and in the stories he told. A songwriter and grand performer, he sang and played guitar and appeared on many recordings. A panel discussion of his music with live performance.

Panelists: Sylvia Barker, Gregg Stafford, Michael White, Bruce Raeburn
Moderator: Jason Berry

STANLEY AND STELLA SHOUTING CONTEST

Sunday, March 26
4 and 5:30 p.m.

Contestants vie to rival Stanley Kowalski's shout for "STELLA!!!" in the unforgettable scene from "A Streetcar Named Desire." Female contestants are welcome to try a little role reversal and yell for Stanley.

TOURING NEW ORLEANS

Tennessee Williams Literary Walking Tour: Homes and hang-outs of the playwright in the French Quarter, Kenneth Holditch, Heritage Tours.

The Gay Heritage Tour: This acclaimed tour illuminates the people and events that shaped history and culture in New Orleans. Roberts Batson, The Bienville Foundation.

The Scandal Tour: A light-hearted look at Louisiana's history: corruption, debauchery, fashion errors—and the invention of the cocktail! Roberts Batson, The Bienville Foundation.

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Classifieds

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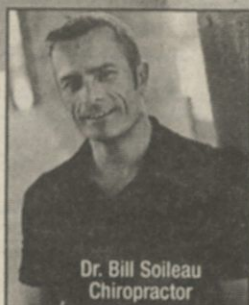
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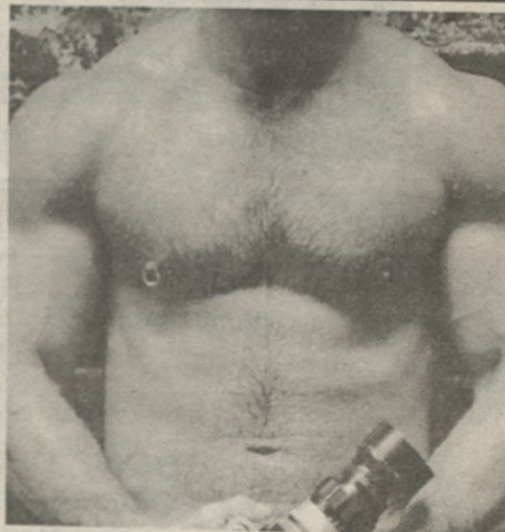
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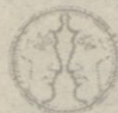
March 10-23



ARIES: Don't judge your feelings; just experience them. Mercury goes direct in your house of the unconscious on the 14th, so look to your slumber for profound answers to your most inane questions. It may be time to break down and show a little emotion to a Cancer.



TAURUS: Venus moves into your house of friends on the 14th—how sweet for you and your buddies! Allow yourself to get sentimental, but don't forget to build some new memories too. A pal could give you the inside scoop on a Sag you're scoping.



GEMINI: Feast your eyes on the new you, Gemini. You have successfully completed a subtle but delicious transformation. Take control of your career and do something no one is expecting. Stay ahead of the competition by competing with yourself. Try out your new talents on a Libra.



CANCER: The Sun is finishing up a stint in your house of travel and education, so do something to expand your mind or go somewhere to expand your life experience. Let your aggressive side show, especially in your love life. You could hook up with a most mind-altering Virgo.



LEO: Do some deep breathing and get back in touch with what's truly important to you. You've been a little bit distracted by the minutia of everyday life lately. Check out lots of different scenes, in the sexual and the spiritual realms. An Aquarius can take you places you never knew even existed.



VIRGO: There's a spark of love burning inside you, shy Virgo. You may not like to get all mushy, but it's there and you may as well not deny it. You are in need of some tender loving care, and a Cancer wants to give you plenty (and as much tough love as you request).



LIBRA: The full moon (late on March 19) falls in your house of the unconscious. It may be time for you to assess how your day job affects your body and your psyche. In your personal life, you've got plenty of affection to give, so be generous, especially with an Aries who needs lots of validation.



SCORPIO: Your sex appeal can land you in hot water—and into the next big lucky opportunity in your life. Push it, baby. Be attuned to the inner motivations of some new and interesting people in your life. A Sagittarius is surprisingly fascinating—once you get past the obvious.



SAGITTARIUS: Be nice to animals, grandmothers, and heterosexuals during mid-March. This is a time when you need to be truly giving and non-judgmental. You may have to push yourself a bit harder than usual to attain your goals, but you will prevail. Open your heart to a Virgo who needs a friend.



CAPRICORN: The full moon (late on the 19th) falls in your adventurous ninth house. Take a spontaneous trip—or go out caterwauling with your buds and look for trouble in the arms of a Taurus. Be open about your feelings, and life will go much more smoothly than usual in the days ahead.



AQUARIUS: Now that Mercury has gone direct in your money sector, you can really start raking in the dough. Put your procrastination habits away for good: your career is waiting. In love, you won't be able to avoid a long-term relationship. A Libra can teach you the true meaning of commitment.



PISCES: Forgive someone in your life who has done you wrong—and I don't mean that fake "I don't hold a grudge; I've made amends" crap. The full moon, late on March 19th, falls in your house of love, so be ready for anything when it comes to romance. Especially, be ready for a very sexy Leo.

Jill Dearman is the author of the best-selling *Queer Astrology for Men and Queer Astrology for Women* (both from St. Martin's Griffin). For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

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