



Houstonians gathered at City Hall on August 4th to celebrate the ruling by Judge Vaughn Walker on Prop. 8 in California. This opens the door to same-sex couples being able to wed there and elsewhere and perhaps more. The work goes on as it may take another two years before the case makes it to the Supreme court where the right to marry will be finally decided. ~ Photo by Deborah Bell

## Prop. 8 Unconstitutional Rules California Judge

by Deborah Moncrief Bell

August 4, 2010 is a memorable date because that is the day the decision by federal judge, Vaughn Walker came down overturning Proposition 8. He ruled that Prop. 8 is a violation of due process and equal protection. The proposition was, a referendum passed by voters that banned same-sex marriage.

What is the immediate result of this ruling? Judge Walker concluded his Order by stating that "California is able to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, as it has already issued 18,000 marriage licenses to same-sex couples and has not suffered any demonstrated harm as a result." No heterosexual marriages have been destroyed either. you'll be glad to know.

Since Walker is a federal judge it is thought that this case will have a lasting impact. Already the appeals process has begun by the people who oppose the equal right to marry (it could take two years to reach the Supreme Court). However, when the decision of a trial judge like Judge Walker goes up on appeal, his legal conclusions are reviewed by the appellate court de novo, or "from the beginning." That means that Judge Walker can conclude that Prop 8 violated the Equal Protection clause and the Due Process clause for this or that reason, but appellate judges are not bound by his conclusions. However, Judge Walker's factual findings -- such as the effect of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts or statistics on thriving children of same-sex couples -- must be accepted by the appellate court unless they are "clearly erroneous." Walker's order establishes a comprehensive factual record for review.

The 138 page ruling is a factual record that is detailed and well-documented. This is important because it will be very difficult for the appellate court to find fault with the case details. It would be hard-pressed to upset any of these factual findings. Walker gave sound reasoning to critical points that will be addressed in any appeal. Right now there is so much available online regarding this subject that it is best that anyone who is interested to follow the news stories, blogs, reports, and commentary to get the full picture. What may be most significant, as a result of this ruling, is that it reaches beyond the same-sex marriage issue. For the first time in any legal consideration gay and lesbian people are being viewed as a "suspect class". Judge Walker stated that Prop 8 merits strict scrutiny because it targets a class of people that should be considered a suspect classification and therefore accorded "equal protection". The United States Constitution has a habit of defaulting to equality. The Fourteenth Amendment sets the foundation for treating each other the same, regardless of race, religion or gender (age, disability and other factors fall under this as well). Now, Judge Walker's decision could allow us to add sexual orientation to that list.

**Next issue:** The points made in the ruling and what they mean.

## Ray Hill Confronts HPD at Prop 8 Rally

by Brandon Wolf

Prior to the Prop 8 rally, on 08/04/10, HPD officers said that the rainbow flags at the rally did not meet the guidelines for public demonstrations, and that the flags would have to be taken off the poles.

See *Ray Hill*, Page 2



Nikki Araguz is still grieving the loss of her husband while fighting a nasty lawsuit brought by his family that would deny her widow benefits..

## BEELINES

by Deborah Moncrief Bell

### Nikki Araguz, Her Story

She will never forget that Sunday morning walking into the church and meeting the dynamic brown eyes of the handsome young man she'd noticed looking back into her own. He caught up with her before the service was over and invited her to lunch. They talked for three hours. Even though both of them were recently separated and going through divorces there was no hesitation for either of them in pursuing their mutual attraction.

"It just felt so right", Nikki Araguz explains.

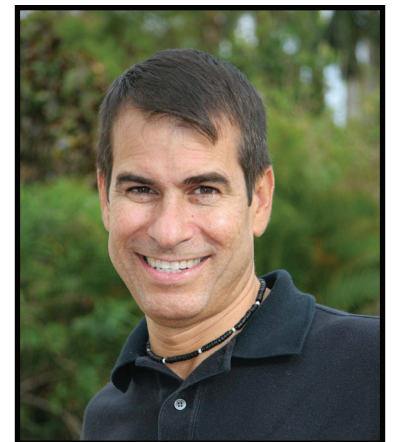
Although tears come too quickly and often, a memory will sometimes bring a smile to her lovely face. The young widow lights up when talking about the man she loved.

By their third date she knew things were moving in a serious direction and told him, "If you are going to pursue a relationship with me there is something you have to know." She was uncertain but not totally surprised by his reaction to her telling him that she was what is known as transsexual (although she did not use that word). She also told him that she had yet to have gender reassignment surgery. She had already developed affection for him and knew she would be hurt if he rejected her at that point, but she also had come to know him enough to suspect that he would not. He didn't. Instead he listened to her, reassuring her that he understood and accepted her for the person she presented herself to be.

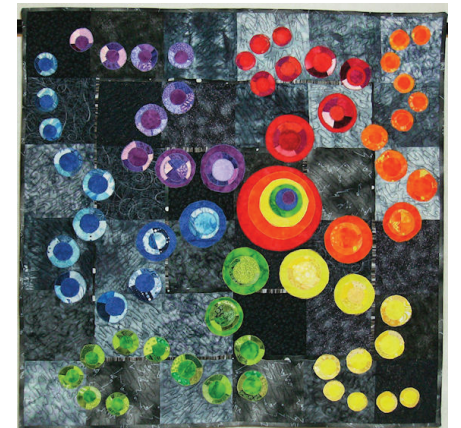
~ See *Nikki* on next page



We will wear pants and celebrate the right to do so with a celebration of Phyllis Frye's long fight against discrimination. ~ see page 2



Alex Sanchez has a new book out about being Gay and being a Christian. See Jone Devlin's review on Page 9



The work of quilt artist Michael Kelly will be featured during the open house LGBT Community Center Awareness Day ~ see page 8



*Screaming Queens* a film about a riot that took place prior to Stonewall. See Page 4



Join us on Facebook and on Twitter.

## Let's Wear Pants!

30 years ago, after 3 1/2 years of lobbying to repeal an ordinance used to harass females wearing fly-fronted pants, Mayor pro tem Johnny Goyen signed the ordinance repealing Houston's Anti-Cross Dressing Ordinance. This is not a joke! At that time women were expected to have their zippers on the side or in the back, otherwise, they were cross dressing. This led to constant harassment and several arrests for trans identified women, lesbians and anyone else the vice squad did not approve of.

Join us as we gather to celebrate Phyllis Frye's long fight against discrimination.

Phyllis will be on hand to share stories about fighting for Transgender Rights starting in the late 70s. Including this one:

"On August the 12th, 1980, after several delay-tags that were put on to the repeal ordinance, it was again before Council. At the time, our Mayor was Jim McConn. He was out of town, as was Jim Westmoreland. McConn knew that it was coming up on the agenda, and he had told the Mayor pro tem for that day, Johnny Goyen, that it was alright with him. City Secretary, Anna Russell, waited until Council members Homer Ford and Larry McKaskell were on the phone. When they got on the phone, she immediately handed the repeal to Johnny. You see, the deal is that under council rules if you're present and you don't vote no, then it's an automatic yes vote. Homer and Larry were on the phone. They didn't even know what was going on. There was only one no vote, and that was Council member Christen Hartung, she was the sole and only no vote. I still hope that somebody will beat her. Homer and Larry went to Johnny about five minutes later, and Johnny says, "oh, I didn't know that was going through." The ordinance was repealed and it has remained so to this day."

Come celebrate this historic occasion! Everyone is welcome!! Food will be provided, bring your own beer & wine.

Sat Aug 14 from 12-5 pm.  
604 Pacific,  
Houston, TX 77006

For more info:  
lou@tgctr.org

*Ray Hill* continued from Page 1

Ray Hill disagreed, saying, "I was probably the first person there and waited for everyone else. When the kids came with signs and flag poles, two officers came and began hassling them about the sticks. I walked over and took the template from the officer and measured the sticks myself and found them within guidelines. I gave the signs back to the kids and pronounced them legal but the officers said the flagpoles were not within the guidelines. I used the templates again and showed they were lying. The officers said because the poles were round they had to match a different guideline. I took possession of the flags and suggested they arrest me and told the officers to call their sergeant. He came and tried to rip the flags from my hands and that worked. He is younger and stronger. We had the heated discussion that everyone could see and hear. I tried to get them to arrest me so we could all go to court with flagpoles and templates in hand and ask a judge to decide what the guidelines were. Three more cops including another sergeant (one that I know) came but all supported the original two officers. At one point the second sergeant noticed my blood pressure was out of control and said, "Mr Hill, we are not taking you to jail but we will take you to a hospital." To which I responded "Only if I am in custody." Annise's chief aide was nearby the whole time and saw and heard everything. I no longer had the poles and they were taking the flags off them since I said the flags themselves were protected by the First Amendment and the second sergeant agreed. I went to the podium and gave my speech, went home took my heart medicine and went to the Caucus meeting with stories to tell as usual."

The next day Hill had other business with HPD Chief McClellan's and found out that the officers at the rally were on their own without the knowledge of their command staff. Hill reports that there are command staff changes coming and the new Asst. Chief over Homeland Security/Special Operations will be the current chief of staff for McClellan, who is someone he has worked well with recently. He thinks it is a good opportunity to use this event as a teachable moment to advance the policies under his new command. "



Ray Hill talks with some HPD officers about the second amendment - photo by Brandon Wolf



Nikki Araguz gazes at a love note from her husband Thomas (one of many he wrote). Following his death she is faced with having her marriage ruled invalid.

*Nikki* continued from Page 1

He was totally straight and did not doubt his sexual orientation or his manliness.

They eventually moved in together. Thomas bought a ring but had not formally proposed. He would tease Nikki by saying, "You know I'm going to marry you."

One day he told her to get herself a special dress for a "big date". She couldn't decide which dress and got two, letting him pick the one she would wear. He would not tell her where they were going or what they would be doing. It was a beautiful day, perfect for what turned out to be a five hour sailboat trip. Nikki was hoping for a proposal. It came about three hours into the trip. That was June 27, 2008.

Thomas and Nikki were married on August 23, 2008. She wore a dress that had been given to her by Thomas' mother and sister. The wedding was at their Grace Community Church Fellowship in Needville.

Nikki had a degree in marketing and Thomas was a truck driver. She encouraged him to pursue his education and he enrolled in the police academy. She started a magazine Wharton Country Living. He had been a volunteer firefighter since 1999 and when he graduated from the academy he realized that he really wanted to be a professional firefighter, maybe an arson investigator. Nikki who was the sole bread winner in the household at the time still stood by him, encouraging him to follow his dream.

In turn, Thomas stood by Nikki, who was diagnosed with a condition called Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (PAIS). PAIS is a hereditary form of male pseudohermaphroditism, in which the baby is born with testes and possesses both male and female characteristics. The disorder is inherited as an X-linked, recessive trait. Nikki had already developed breasts but started the process that would lead up to sexual reassignment surgery.

~ *Nikki's Story* continued Page 3

## Pre-existing Condition Insurance Now Enrolling

Some call it health reform, some Obamacare, yet many with a pre-existing health condition and no health insurance may call it a life saver. For them the wait for affordable health insurance may be over.

The Pre-existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP), part of the new Affordable Care Act, is now enrolling, enabling at last, chronically ill and uninsured LGBT community members access to affordable health insurance.

"For too long, Americans with pre-existing conditions have been locked out" said Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "The Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan gives them a new option – the same insurance coverage as a healthy individual."

The PCIP provides an opportunity for LGBT community members, many of whom have been denied, or could not afford, health insurance because of HIV, diabetes, cancer, or other once exclusionary conditions.

Federally funded at \$5 billion, PCIP is slated to provide a broad range of health coverage including primary and specialty care, hospital care, and prescription drugs. Once enrolled coverage begins immediately and will provide limitless health insurance coverage, low deductibles and low co-payments, at least in theory.

Early enrollment is being encouraged, however, as PCIP's popularity may be substantial and there is concern that there may not be enough funding to meet the pent-up demand. By enrolling early you can ensure that you won't be put on a waiting list. The federal government, or states, will administer PCIP so enrollment costs and eligibility requirements may vary from state to state.

PCIP will run until 2014 when it will be replaced by more affordable insurance exchanges from which even members of congress will have to purchase their insurance. In the meantime, the AIDS Drug Assistance and Ryan White programs will remain in place, that is for as long as they are funded.

If you are in need of health insurance coverage due to a pre-existing condition visit [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov). As enrollment may require proof of a pre-existing condition contact your care provider to collect those records.

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*Nikki's Story* continued from page 2

Thomas went with her to her appointments. When she awoke from the operation her first thoughts were of him.

They enjoyed their quiet country life. Being good parents was important to both of them. Thomas had fought for and won a custody agreement that meant his two sons were with him and Nikki four days of the week. Thomas hoped to gain full custody of the boys.

Sometime in the wee hours of July 4th of this year Capt. Thomas Araguz lost his life while fighting a fire at an egg farm near Boling, TX. Nikki was out of town on personal business. She returned to bury her husband. If losing the love of your life is not enough of a nightmare, Nikki was soon to face another in the midst of her grief. Thomas' Mother and his ex-wife filed a lawsuit against Nikki claiming her marriage was a sham, that Thomas had not known her history and that they should be his beneficiaries. The media jumped on the story like a flea on a mangy dog. They sensationalized Nikki's sexual history, promoting the incorrect idea that she had not been truthful with her husband.

Mrs. Araguz' assets and right to receive benefits were frozen by a judge in Wharton County who also froze the benefits that his two children should receive. Additional money from other benefits that would normally go to a widow would be split between the surviving spouse and the children. Nikki is concerned about the situation, not only for herself, but because she wants to make sure the boys have what should go to them. They will get full tuition (as will their children) to any State college or university. Nikki would be entitled to this educational benefit as well.

Without a job or a home right now, Nikki Araguz has been dependent on the kindness of friends and strangers. The Transgender Foundation of America started a fund to assist her which she deeply appreciates along with the moral support of the community.

A truly sad aspect of this whole matter is that the children are not receiving anything they are due either. A prolonged court will eat away at the money leaving very little for anyone besides the courts and the attorneys. While the plaintiffs insist they are looking out for the best interests of the children this is hardly evidenced. They would have us believe Nikki is trying to get money that rightfully belongs to the children which is not the case. Some \$300,000 is in question which half would go to the boys and half to Thomas' widow. This court battle is denying the boys what they are due as their inheritance as their benefits are on hold while the court case continues.

"I pray for peace in the family. We are all grieving the loss. We should be grieving together, not fighting against one another," Nikki says. But more than money what matters the most to her is that the validity of their marriage is in question and their civil rights are being denied.

Even though they had a marriage license, their church wedding may be considered invalid due to what stood in Texas law at the time. However, there was a change in the law as of September 1, 2009 (an original or certified copy of a court order relating to the applicant's name change or sex change can be presented to obtain a marriage license) which means that they had what would be considered an "informal marriage" from that time to the time of Thomas' death, as they were living as man and wife and presenting themselves to be married. This was formerly known as a Common Law Marriage in Texas which is just as binding as any other legal marriage.

Nikki admits that their marriage was not perfect, having its up and downs as most marriages do but denies that there was ever a consideration of divorce as has been reported elsewhere.

The State of Texas is not challenging the Araguz' marriage. Her status is only in question due to the lawsuit.

Mornings are hard for Nikki. She says that is when she misses Thomas the most. "I wake up at 3am and miss him and I awake again at 7am and miss him even more," Nikki says. Wiping away tears she expresses, "I miss him holding me in his arms. I miss him telling me how beautiful I am."

Nikki is concerned what the publicity of this case may do to the boys. As children can sometimes be cruel. What they may face in their school in a small town may be an added grief for them. Nikki says the children who were central in her married life have cruelly been cut out of her life. She hopes those who are looking after them will move them to another place where they won't be faced with the stigma of prejudice that is likely where they are.

Nikki herself can no longer live in Wharton because she says that every tree, every road, every building holds too many memories, reminding her of the loss of the life she had and of the man she loved with all her heart. The only place she goes now in Wharton County besides the court house is to visit her husband's grave, where her own plot lies next to his.

*That's the buzz from me this week.*

## THE COMMUNITY PAPER FOR MONTROSE AND BEYOND

Please email or call to let us know you want an ad so we can reserve the space for you.

**Schedule for the rest of 2010**

*Deadline 12pm Mondays prior to print date*

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139	8/27	8/23
140	9/10	9/6
141	9/24	9/20
142	10/8	10/4
143	10/22	10/18
144	11/ 5	11/1
146*	12/3	11/30
147*	12/17	12/13
148	12/31	12/27

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[www.spacecityempire.org](http://www.spacecityempire.org)

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UH LGBT Resource Center  
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Do you know of a group that should be featured here? Let us know at: [montrosegem@yahoo.com](mailto:montrosegem@yahoo.com)

## COMMUNITY NEWS & RESOURCES



### POWER UP

Center begins Project Empower exercise classes for people with HIV

August 7, 2010—In September, the Houston GLBT Community Center will launch Project Empower, a new exercise program for people living with HIV. David Lewis, a personal trainer experienced in working with HIV issues, is the creator of the Project Empower program. Lewis will offer the exercise classes at the Center (3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207) on Tuesdays and Thursdays at noon beginning on September 2.

Project Empower classes are offered to people with HIV at no charge. Classes will stress stretching and exercises that can be done at home without equipment.

“Project Empower seeks to increase wellness in people with HIV,” Lewis says. “I am glad to work with the Houston GLBT Community Center on this new program.”

Lewis brings considerable knowledge to this new endeavor. He first began personal training as a volunteer at Body Positive, the wellness center for people living with HIV (now a program of Legacy Community Health Services). After working as a volunteer, Lewis was asked to become a part-time staff member, and a year later was named the lead personal trainer. This position included overseeing research projects with Dr. Shannon Schrader, taking intake interviews with clients, assisting the dietician and physical therapist, maintaining charts, and designing and implementing an exercise program for each client.

Lewis then worked as a personal trainer for the Fitness Exchange, where he learned comprehensive stretching techniques and advanced exercise modalities. Lewis is now an independent trainer, working with clients at One to One Gym.

“The Center is thrilled that David approached us about his Project Empower concept,” Center president Tim Brookover says. “The Project Empower exercise classes are a strong addition to the Center’s lineup of support groups, which include the Center HIV Support Group and the Center Coming Out Group, and social support programs such as the Center Seniors & Friends Potluck.”

For Project Empower, graphic designer Rob Tomlin has created a logo that features an African symbol for strength.

The Center welcomes donations for Project Empower of exercise bands, exercise balls, yoga mats, leg weights, and a stretch bar. Individuals or businesses interested in making a contribution may contact the Center or contact David Lewis at [empower2010@aol.com](mailto:empower2010@aol.com).

Project Empower is a program of the Houston GLBT Community Center.

The Center is located at 3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207. The phone number is 713.524.3818. The website is [www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org](http://www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org).



### Bayou City Performing Arts Announces 2010-2011 Season

#### Hear the Bells: A Holiday Card from Houston

Featuring Gay Men’s Chorus of Houston, Bayou City Women’s Chorus, and Bayou City Chorale. Jones Hall • Tuesday, December 14, 2010 • 7:30pm Join us in a truly classic holiday concert along with the Texas Medical Center Orchestra, KIPP School and special guest soloists performing the spectacular “Christmas Oratorio” by Camille Saint-Saëns (in English) and other jewels of the holiday Season.

#### Dim Sum and Then Some: A Foreign Affair

Featuring Gay Men’s Chorus of Houston, Bayou City Women’s Chorus, and Bayou City Chorale Cullen Theater • Saturday, March 26, 2011 • 7:30pm. Come away with us on a whirlwind tour

to exotic destinations around the world as we share the stage with various international groups. We will take you on a hop-and-stop trek around the globe with music and dance which shows the power of diversity in its true meaning and provides you with a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

#### Songs of the Poets

Featuring Bayou City Women’s Chorus Zilkha Hall • Saturday, May 14, 2011 • 7:30p. Take a close look with us at the great poetry applied to music in an inspirational concert which addresses a wide variety of topics from feminism to God to romance to death. Simply powerful, passionate and resonant!

#### Anything Goes

Featuring Gay Men’s Chorus of Houston. Jones Hall • Saturday, June 18, 2011 • 7:30pm. The title says it all: Anything goes in this comedy/cabaret performance that showcases the chorus’ comedic and musical talents. We’ll bring you laughter and entertainment to prepare your spirit for Houston Pride celebration week. Be ready for a good time! For more info go to page 6 or: [www.bcpahouston.org](http://www.bcpahouston.org)



SCREAMING QUEENS

EQUALITY ACROSS TEXAS HOUSTON IS OFFERING A FREE SHOWING OF THE EMMY WINNING DOCUMENTARY SCREAMING QUEENS: THE RIOT AT COMPTON’S CAFETERIA. IT IS THE FIRST IN A RANDOM SERIES OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS REGARDING THE HISTORY OF QUEER ACTIVISM.

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## Through the Looking Glass

by Alice Melott

### A friend is someone who votes for you

Last issue's essay, which was titled An open letter to all my self-proclaimed "conservative" friends, but which I'll refer to today as No, really?!? for short, got a few people asking, "Will I still have any friends if I repost THAT?"

I want to be really, really clear. In No, really?!?, I was asking my friends who frequently quote the most extreme of the conservative pundits, such as Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and Sarah Palin, whether they do so because they think those people are funny or because they agree with their positions. And if it's the latter, do they agree with just one or two of their positions or their entire philosophy? And I said I was asking because those same friends' behavior belies the sorts of negative characteristics those oft-quoted pundits lead with. All I wanted to know was who my friends authentically are and what they authentically believe.

I think that's a fair question. After all, minorities will always be in the minority unless some of the majority support them. It's a numbers game. So any of us whose civil rights are currently seconded to those of the majority need to know who our friends are. The idea that we are one person in public and another in private is not new or shocking. But if who we are in private is Mr. Hyde to Dr. Jekyll, if our private thoughts are in stark and conflicting opposition to what we say and do, that bears reflection.

Facebook has us counting our friends like fourth graders. "How many friends have YOU got?" we say to each other, and feel a little smug when our count is higher than a cool kid. But hundreds of Facebook contacts notwithstanding (;c), I personally count among them seven intimate friends – the kind that sub for family — my "inner circle," if you will. And guess what? We don't agree about everything! Three voted for Bush (the first time), and one still calls herself a Republican. Two will tell me I was nuts for writing what I did, citing privacy, five will applaud me, and three of those five will repost. (Three aren't even on Facebook. Can you believe it?!?)

Here's what I say to the two who cite privacy:

A couple of years ago, I wrote an email to my personal real estate agent contact list suggesting that Karl Rove wasn't the best choice for the Texas Association of REALTORS keynote speaker at its annual convention.

My thinking was that our collective professional reputation would be better served if we chose someone whose publicly perceived ethics were above reproach. My email went viral, was critiqued (and applauded) on blogs and op-ed pages nationwide, and created a firestorm for me, especially with professional colleagues who felt, like my two private friends, that as a businessperson I should just keep my views to myself. And with that I was for a short time effectively silenced.

Then along came Ike. I began writing again after the storm, and my opt-in list grew and grew, and the writing fed my soul and helped others, and I pledged to myself that I would never, never be silenced again. Writing is what I do, what I have always done, since long before real estate and Galveston and everything else I'm identified with today. The only practical difference between me and my heroes, essayists Molly Ivins and Maureen Dowd, is that I don't have a column. Instead, I have a blog. I personally don't want conservative writers to stop exploring their ideas publicly, no matter how far flung from my comprehension, because I read everybody. I want to know and learn and grow and write better. The targets of my current query are not the writers and the thinkers that keep us questioning, but the reliably rigid pot-stirrers who prey with misinformation on public fears.

I want to know why my friends keep quoting the worst of the fear-mongers!

Not to belabor the point, but I am in a minority. Less than thirty years ago, there were some rumblings from the likes of these same ultra-conservative pundits suggesting that homosexuals should be rounded up and exiled. If you weren't in the middle of it, then this probably sounds extreme to you, but it happened all over the country, including New York City where I lived at the time, and it made this well-heeled, educated, Southern WASP sorority girl who happened to be gay sit up and take notice. For the first time, I was aware that I could be targeted — anybody can be — if enough good people refuse to speak the truth aloud, if our "friends" do nothing. Ask any 20th Century Jew, European immigrant, African American, Japanese internee, or woman — all of whom still walk among us. It has been that short a time.

If you're not in a seconded social group today, good for you. You (or someone you really do love) might be tomorrow — because you might get old when it's not popular to be old

Continued on Page 6



## Believing in a Gay Spirit

Rev. Burton Bagby-Grose

One of the great things about literature, and for that matter, the Bible, is that there are many different interpretations of the same text. Each of us understands the same words in a different way; based upon our own life experiences and even our feelings at the time we read the words.

Author C.S. Lewis wrote *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* in 1949 as the first of seven books in the series titled, "The Chronicles of Narnia." The movie based upon the book was the second highest grossing film of 2005 in the United States.

Beloved by children all over the world for generations, this is a tale of virtue, hard lessons learned, exploration, friendship, and love. For me, Lewis' writings show how truths about our own world are often seen more plainly through a story that takes place somewhere else.

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* tells the story of four ordinary children: Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie. Lucy discovers a wardrobe in Professor Digory Kirke's house where they are staying that leads them into the magical land of Narnia.

In Narnia, the four children help Aslan, a mysterious talking lion, save the oppressed talking animals and dwarves from the evil White Witch, who has reigned over the Kingdom of Narnia for a century of perpetual winter. The children are subsequently crowned as kings and queens of Narnia and leave a legacy that is rediscovered in the six volumes that follow.

There are numerous interpretations of the symbolism behind Lewis' writings. Some even see a gay theme: The wardrobe symbolizes coming out to a place that is wonderful, enchanting, and exhilarating all at the same time.

Lewis converted to Christianity in his mid 30's and wrote some books on Christian apologetics as well as fiction with Christian themes. It would probably surprise many today to know that Lewis always maintained that he did not initially intend to integrate Christian theological concepts into his Narnia books. In his book of essays and stories called "Of Other Worlds," Lewis wrote:

"Some people seem to think that I began by asking myself how I could say something about Christianity to children; then fixed on the fairy tale as an instrument, then collected information about

child psychology and decided what age group I'd write for; then drew up a list of basic Christian truths and hammered out 'allegories' to embody them. This is all pure moonshine. I couldn't write in that way. It all began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion. At first there wasn't anything Christian about them; that element pushed itself in of its own accord."

Lewis always held to the position that the Narnia books were not allegory and wrote in a 1958 letter that:

"If Aslan represented the immaterial Deity in the same way in which Giant Despair [a character in "The Pilgrim's Progress"] represents despair, he would be an allegorical figure. In reality, however, he is an invention giving an imaginary answer to the question, 'What might Christ become like if there really were a world like Narnia, and He chose to be incarnate and die and rise again in that world as He actually has done in ours?' This is not allegory at all."

Lewis maintained that although he did not begin the books with the intent to include Christian symbolism, they did seem to end up containing a great deal of it. He also wrote in one of his final letters before his death, that,"

"Since Narnia is a world of Talking Beasts, I thought He [Christ] would become a Talking Beast there, as He became a man here. I pictured Him becoming a lion there because (a) the lion is supposed to be the king of beasts; (b) Christ is called 'The Lion of Judah' in the Bible; (c) I'd been having strange dreams about lions when I began writing the work."

Also interesting to note is that many Christians have sharply criticized Lewis for the pagan symbolism that they see in the books.

Lewis espoused the view that pagan mythology could serve as a preparation for Christianity, both in history as well as in the fantasy life of people. He went as far as to propose that modern humanity was in such a woefully materialistic and selfish state that it might be helpful to "first to make people good pagans, and after that to make them Christians."


Burton Bagby-Grose is an ordained minister living in Houston with his husband Ron and their daughter, Rosalee. Contact him at [Burton.Bagby-Grose@att.net](mailto:Burton.Bagby-Grose@att.net)

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 BCPA 2010/2011

**Hear the Bells: A Holiday Card from Houston**  
 Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2010, 7:30pm  
 GMCH, BCWC and BCC  
 Jones Hall

Join us in a truly classic holiday concert as we join musical forces with Houston Medical Center Orchestra and special guest soloists. Featuring the spectacular "Christmas Oratorio" by Camille Saint-Saens (in English) and other jewels of the holiday season.

**Dim Sum and Then Some: A Foreign Affair**  
 Saturday, Mar. 26, 2011, 7:30pm  
 GMCH, BCWC and BCC  
 Cullen Theater at Wortham Center

Come away with us on a whirlwind tour to exotic destinations around the world as we share the stage with various ethnic groups. We will take you on a hop-and-stop trek across the globe with music and dance which shows the power of diversity in its true meaning and provide you with a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

**Songs of the Poets**  
 Saturday, May 14, 2011, 7:30pm  
 BCWC  
 Zilkha Hall at Hobby Center

Take a close look with us at the great poetry applied to music in an inspirational concert that addresses a wide variety of topics from feminism to God to romance to death. Simply powerful, passionate and radiant!

**Anything Goes**  
 Saturday, June 18, 2011, 7:30pm  
 GMCH  
 Jones Hall

The title says it all: anything goes in this comedy/cabaret performance that showcases the chorus' comedic and musical talents bringing you so much laughter and entertainment. Prepare your spirit for the Houston Pride Week celebrations. Be ready for a good time!

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Package B (3 concerts excluding Songs of the Poets)	\$140	\$115	\$99	\$79	\$56
Package C **	\$121	\$104	\$94	\$80	\$65

\*\*Package C includes Songs of the Poets PLUS Your choice of two of the following concerts: (Circle your choice of two)

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**Through the Looking Glass** from Page 5

or you might get divorced when it's not popular to be divorced or you might be thin when it's not popular to be thin or you might be from Texas when it's not popular to be from Texas or your kid might be gay — or you might just understand in your heart of hearts that but for the grace of God you were born without social encumbrances, that nobody will discriminate against you... today.

I was called "liberal" yesterday. Guilty. I'm blonde, too, by the way. But the most striking feedback were the few emails from my opt-in list saying, "Regrettably, I must opt out..." Regrettably. There's a message in there. I know what it means to me. Knowing what you know about No, really?!?, what does it mean to you?

Alice Melott is a Galveston essayist (<http://amelott.wordpress.com>), real estate broker and storm chronicler, among other things. Join her online, [www.facebook.com/alicethewriter](http://www.facebook.com/alicethewriter).

"Marriage Extraordinary. — In Woodstock, N. B. Mr. J. Munson to Mr. Henry Allen. It appears that Munson and S. I. Page, of Hallowell, originally came from Connecticut, and set up business in Hallowell on a very extensive scale. Shortly after, Mr. Page went to Connecticut, and brought back Henry Allen as a clerk in his store. Every body was well pleased with Henry Allen, and he was offered the highest wages when he left Mr. P's employ, but he would listen to no offers but those of Mr. Munson, who was about establishing himself in Houlton. Here, again, Henry Allen displayed the same activity; exciting the admiration of men by his judgment in business and his knowledge of accounts, for he appeared to be quite young; but the astonishment of the ladies at his accomplishments was without bounds, for no woman in the country could sew, iron, or manage household affairs, equal to Henry Allen, as he frequently exercised his skill in these matters at his boarding house. But the denouement came at last. He went over to Woodstock with his employer, put on woman's clothes, and was married to him as a Miss —. It seems she had been engaged to Munson in Connecticut, but her father refusing to sanction the match, she ran away, and ended in courtship in the above manner."

**GAY MARRIAGE IN 1834!**

**The New York Transcript, Tuesday Morning, August 5, 1834**

"Marriage Extraordinary. — In Woodstock, N.B. Mr. J. Munson to Mr. Henry Allen. It appears the Munson and S. I. Page, of Hallowell, originally came from Connecticut, and set up business in Hallowell in a very expensive scale. Shortly after, M...r. Page went to Connecticut, and brought back Henry Allen, and he was offered the highest wages when he left Mr. P's employ, but he would listen to no offers but those of Me. Munson, who was about establishing himself in Houlton. Here, again, Henry Allen displayed the same activity; excitation the administration of men by his judgment in business and his knowledge of accounts, for he appeared to be quite young; but the astonishment of the ladies at his accomplishments was without bounds, for no woman in the country could sew, iron, or manage household affairs, equal to Henry Allen, as he frequently exercised his skill in these matters at his boarding house. But the denouement came at last. He went over to Woodstock with his employer, put on women's clothes, and was married to him as Miss —. It seems she had been engaged to Munson in Connecticut, but her father refusing to sanction the match, she ran away, and ended in courtship in the above manner."

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**Be Part of Art**

Whip out your cellphones and become part of the performance as our friends at The Aurora Picture Show hosts Bay Area artist Darrin Martin and the premiere of his latest video performance, *Fragments*, a work in progress utilizing sound, video, and the distractions of said cellphones to create a thoroughly engaging contemplation on the meaning of "fragment", both as a temporal technological phenomenon and the remnants of ancient civilizations. The program will also consist of three earlier pieces, including The Knocking, a stunning meditation on memory and history in which a central character moves in and out of drag performing simple domestic activities as the images and sounds of an unsavory 20th Century history surround him.

The Aurora Picture Show Presents: *Fragments* with filmmaker Darrin Martin in Attendance

Friday, August 13, 7PM  
DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway  
Price: \$7 Non-members; Aurora and DiverseWorks members free

**Vote for 2011 Pride Theme**

The vote is on for the theme to the 2011 Houston LGBT Pride Celebration. Pride Houston will be accepting votes from community members, and the winning theme will represent the Houston LGBT community for the upcoming 2011 Pride season!

A few weeks ago, we sent out a call to the community for their suggestions on next year's theme. In addition, successful and fun themes from other Pride organizations was considered. Over thirty suggestions were submitted and have been narrowed down by Pride Houston volunteers, staff and board members. For 2011, the choices are:

**Live. Love. Be.**

**COME OUT & PLAY!**

**Be Yourself and  
Change the World**

You decide the 2011 theme. VOTE NOW on which theme you feel would best represent the LGBT community in 2011. Follow the link to cast your vote.

[http://www.pridehouston.org/index.php/celebration/pages/2011\\_theme\\_vote](http://www.pridehouston.org/index.php/celebration/pages/2011_theme_vote)

**Houston GLBT Political Caucus  
Moves, Announces Endorsements**

**Housewarming Party**

We've taken on new digs at 1124 W. Gray (at West Gray and Marconi, just west of Montrose), and we want the whole community to come see. Join us for food and fun while you check out our new office space and meet our members. We'll also be raising funds for our PAC so we can help elect the pro-equality candidates we endorse this election season. We are asking for a \$25 donation for each person. Click here to buy your tickets today.

Where: 1124 W. Gray  
When: August 21, 2:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

You can also sign up to be a sponsor! To sponsor, e-mail Kris Banks at [kbanks@the-caucus.org](mailto:kbanks@the-caucus.org).

Sponsors So Far: Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Judge Dion Ramos and Council Member James Rodriguez.

**Endorsements**

The membership decides which candidates are most prepared and best able to serve the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community after an intensive screening process. On August 4, the members heard from the Screening Committee, and cast their votes. The Caucus is a nonpartisan organization. We will endorse more candidates at our September 1 meeting, so this is not a complete list, The Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC is proud to announce their endorsement of the candidates listed in the boxed column on the right.

**HGLBT Political Caucus PAC  
Endorsements for  
November 2 Election**

U.S. Rep., Dist. 18: Sheila Jackson Lee  
Governor: Bill White  
General Land Office Commissioner:  
Hector Uribe

Ag. Commissioner: Hank Gilbert  
State Rep., District 134: Ellen Cohen  
State Rep., District 146: Borris Miles  
State Rep., District 148: Jessica Farrar

**Court of Appeals**

Judge, 14th Place 5: Wally Kronzer  
Judge, 14th Place 9: Tim Riley

**Judicial Districts**

Judge, JD 113: Christina Bryan  
Judge, JD 157: Shawn Thierry  
Judge, JD 180: Darrell Jordan  
Judge, JD 182: Brandon Dudley  
Judge, JDt 183: Michael Gomez  
Judge, JD 184: Jay Burnett  
Judge, JD185: Vivian King  
Judge, JD 189: Ursula Hall

Judge, JD 190: Olan Boudreaux  
Judge, JD 230: Garland McInnis  
Judge, JD 232: Greg Glass  
Judge, JD 234: Tanner Garth  
Judge, JD 245: Janiece Horn  
Judge, JD 246: Sherri Cothrun  
Judge, JD 247: Mary Kay Green

Judge, JD 248: Jim Sullivan  
Judge, JD 257: Sandra Peake  
Judge, JD 262: Tom Berg  
Judge, JD 269: Katie Kennedy  
Judge, JD 270: Bob Thomas  
Judge, JD 280: Kathy Vossler  
Judge, JD 281: Donna Roth  
Judge, JD 295: Paul Simon

Judge, JD 308: Bruce Kessler  
Judge, JD 310: Judy Dougherty  
Judge, JD 311: Deborah Wright  
Judge, JD 312: Robert Hinojosa  
Judge, JD 313: Natalie Oakes  
Judge, JD 314: David Longoria  
Judge, JD 315: Keith Branch

County Judge : Gordon Quan

**County Civil Courts**

Judge, #1: Erica Graham  
Judge, #2: Cheryl Elliott Thornton  
Judge, #3: Damon Crenshaw  
Judge, #4: Bruce Mosier

**County Criminal Courts**

Judge, #1: Beverly Melontree  
Judge, #2: Mary Connealy Acosta  
Judge, #3: Judith Snively  
Judge, #4: Alfred Leal

Judge, #6: Denise Spencer  
Judge, #7: Shelia Acosta  
Judge, #9: Juanita Jackson Barner  
Judge, #11: Mark Diaz

Judge, #12: Cheryl Diggs  
Judge, #13: Dennis Slate  
Judge, #14: Lee Harper Wilson  
Judge, Probate #1: Kathleen Stone

Judge, Probate #2: Joellen Snow  
Judge, Probate #3: Priscilla Walters

District Clerk: Loren Jackson

County Clerk: Ann Harris Bennett  
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County Treasurer: Billy Briscoe

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Kodiak is a Great Dane/Mastiff mix. He weighed in at 66 lbs when rescued and he was skin and bones. Now, Kodiak weighs about 71 lbs and still has a ways to go. He is eating wonderful and loves to be with humans. He has learned to sit and shake paws on command. He has the body structure of a great dane but not as tall. He is estimated to be about 1 to 1.5 yrs old. Lovely dog. Very grateful and content dog now. If interested in adopting or fostering, please email [Hapi4Pets@gmail.com](mailto:Hapi4Pets@gmail.com).

**Car Wash Fundraiser**

On August 21, 2010 from 10a-3p we will be at Chance's (on Westheimer) CARS will be \$5, Trucks/SUV will be \$10. We are offering wheel cleaning and vacuuming as extras on that day for a little extra donation.

## National LGBT Community Center Awareness Day with open house, exhibition

Center also hosts reception for GLBT-themed quilt exhibition

On September 15, the Houston GLBT Community Center will participate in LGBT Center Awareness Day, a day of action organized by CenterLink, the national organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community centers. Locally, the Center (3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207) will host an open-house reception from noon until 8 p.m. that will feature Center programs and Center community partners. At the same time, the Center will hold an opening-night reception for an exhibition in the Center art gallery of GLBT-themed quilts created by the artist Mike Kelley.

The theme for 2010 is "Building Our Community from the Center."

Center board members and facilitators and organizers of Center programs will be on hand at the open-house event. Guests can sign up for the Center Volunteer League, the Center's volunteer corps, and obtain information on Center programming.

Individuals representing Center partner organizations have also been invited to participate. These groups include Houston ARCH, QFest, Team Houston, Texas Transgender Non-Discrimination Summit, Theatre New West, and Unhinged Productions.

"We invite everyone in the community to join us on September 15 as the Center partners with GLBT centers across the

United States in this annual day of celebration," Center president Tim Brookover says. "At the same time, we are honored to present the extraordinary quilts of Mike Kelley in the Montrose Gallery at the Center."

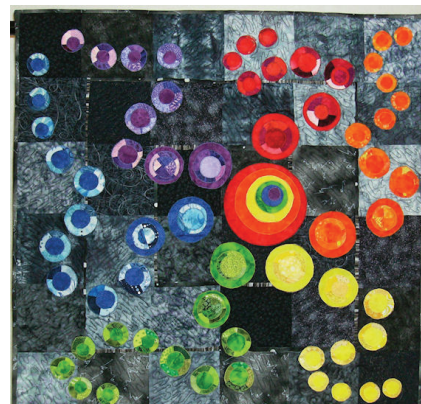
In conjunction with LGBT Center Awareness Day, the Houston Center will host the opening-night reception for the Mike Kelley quilt exhibition in the newly inaugurated Montrose Gallery, located in the Houston GLBT Community Center.

"I started quilting in the early 90s with my other half, Bill, and friends to make quilts for the NAMES Project for AIDS for people who had been part of our lives," Mike Kelley says. "We all did it at Bill's and my house because I had the only sewing machine and any sort of knowledge of sewing. Bill and I went to Washington, DC to deliver the quilts and to see the exhibit of all the quilts. After crying on the first day because of the hurt it causes, on the second day I was blown away by the beauty it displays. I knew then and there that I wanted to do this. I wanted to quilt."

Kelley is a member of the Quilt Guild of Greater Houston. In 2009, two of his quilts were accepted to be shown in the Real Men Can Quilt exhibition at the Machine Quilters Exposition in Manchester, New Hampshire. Kelley has also made five quilts incorporating GLBT-themed T-shirts for the Charles Botts Memorial Archives and Library. The Houston GLBT Community Center is home base for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and allies in the metropolitan area and southeast Texas. Founded in 1996, the Center will celebrate its fifteenth anniversary of service in 2011. The Center is located at

3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207. The phone number is 713.524.3818. The website is [www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org](http://www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org).

Three quilts by Mike Kelley: Gay Across the Universe, Rainbow Star, and LGBT History 1.





## TWO ON THE AISLE

REVIEW BY BILL O'ROURKE



### Way Funny!

*Moon Over Buffalo* (playing through August 22 at the Texas Repertory Theatre Co.) is the funniest play which we have seen in at least six months. One or two of them might have been funnier for twenty minutes, one of them for a whole first act, but over the course of the entire evening, this is way, way the funniest we have seen.

True, it is a bit of a drive for some of us, but we have readers up there I know. And the theater recommends a really good, reasonably priced Tex Mex restaurant in the same shopping center. So do I. Nice décor, good eats, cute staff.

The show may start out a little slowly, but once it ramps up to speed, it flies by! It's one of those farces where doors slam open and shut and people run in and out of them. At times it's like you're standing at one intersection of a huge race where everyone not only can't catch up with each other but sometimes don't even know where each other are!

It's about a cantankerous family of live-theater actors on a day in 1953 when there is hope that a famous Hollywood director may be coming to give at least one of them a real big break into acting for the movies. It develops from there with a pregnant ingenue, the lead actor trying to act after getting drunk and sobering up with coffee he didn't know was spiked, and two love triangles.

Does that sound a bit confusing? Well, it is, for the characters on stage. But for us in the audience? Nah. We have clearly defined direction by Craig A. Miller and a top notch cast making sure we follow them every step of the way.

Steve Finley is the patriarch of the clan. It's amazing how good he is, including everything he can do with just one simple prop. Take for example his sweater (costumes by Tiffani Fuller). When he is staggering around drunk, he only has one arm in his sweater. And the other sweater arm suddenly becomes so many different things – a blanket, a swash-buckling cape, etc., etc.

His wife (Lisa Thomas-Morrison), her dotty, deaf mother (way too long since I've seen her doing diva level comedy) and his daughter, the straight laced, seemingly practical one who is thinking about leaving the theater (Eva Laporte) are all wonderful in their own way. Yet no one ever fights to keep your eye longer than necessary. The whole cast forms a great ensemble.

Josh Taylor might be the find of the evening playing the flunky, young actor of some talent but not enough confidence, but blessed with a rubber, dancing face. Taylor is too much, but only in a good way! This is the first show he's been in at that theater.

And the supporting cast – Alex Dorman, Glen Spencer, and Jamie Geiger Yay is always in tune, too

And those doors had to come from somewhere? Scenic designer and set dresser Travis Horstmann, that's where. This theater is known for its beautiful and imaginative sets. Well, this one wasn't so beautiful really. That wouldn't have fit the play. This lived-in collage does.

Do you get the feeling that both Loyal and I really liked this play? Good, because we did. Get out there!!

#### Theater Information

Texas Repertory Theater, 14243 Stuebner Airline Rd., 281-583-7573, [www.TexRepTheatre.org](http://www.TexRepTheatre.org)

#### Openings

*A Behanding in Spokane* (the Alley) (August 27) – a comedy, actually, from what I hear. Very popular on Broadway just last season.



## Nose in a Book

Review by Jone Devlin

### *The God Box* by Alex Sanchez

When Paul was in second grade his family moved to the United States from Mexico. One of Paul's first impressions of his new country was the other kids in his class making fun of him for not being able to speak English. It was at that moment that Paul decided that, no matter what, he was going to fit in.

Within a year he mastered the English language, changed his name from Pablo to Paul, and worked hard at being the all American kid. Even after losing his mother to cancer, Paul still maintained his high grades, his church and school activities, and his friendships with the kids in his Bible club.

But then puberty hit and with it came something else, something that, to Paul anyway, was much worse than a Spanish accent. Paul started having sex dreams about other men. At first he tried to dismiss them, clinging to books that stated it wasn't uncommon for teenagers to occasionally dream of the same sex and praying as hard as he could for "Jesus" to take his "sin" away. As an added precaution, he also started dating his best friend Angie, even thinking about marrying her someday. As for the fact that whenever she tried to take their relationship beyond just kissing he pulled away didn't mean anything, he told himself, other than that he was a gentleman and living up to his Christian beliefs.

But then Manual moves in and changes everything. Manual is an openly gay student that is proud of his Latino heritage as well as his Christianity. At first Paul doesn't want anything to do with Manual, terrified that associating with someone who is openly gay will cause nothing but problems for him with the other kids.

Manual however, is captivating, outgoing, loads of fun, and very interested in Paul. And, in spite of himself, Paul is also very interested in Manual. As the two become better and better friends, Paul finds his beliefs about being gay and a Christian

being constantly challenged. Scariest still, he also finds his attraction to Manual growing. Then comes the night that changes everything, and Paul soon realizes that staying on the fence and hiding just isn't an option any longer. But will he be true to himself and who he really is, or will he continue to live his life in a "God box?"

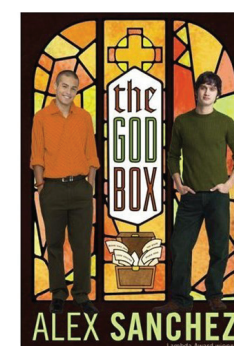
Told from the perspective of Paul, *The God Box* explores the sensitive topic of being a gay teenager in an evangelical world. As Paul struggles with his sexuality, he explores all kinds of crazy options, from an ex-gay style "rehabilitation" (his pastor's idea) to looking at various types of porn on the internet to "verify" what actually turns him on (Manual's idea).

But while the subject matter is very serious, Sanchez tells his story with humor and grace. The author also makes sure that all of the characters have a back story, so that everyone, from the most to least likable, comes across as real people instead of just stereotypes and caricatures.

Sanchez has also done his homework on both sides of the biblical arguments about "homosexuality", carefully articulating each side's position without sounding like a pamphlet. A particularly stand out example of this is his depiction of the "ex-gay" representative Paul is referred to by his pastor.

Well written and thought provoking, especially in this day and age of gay marriage struggles, "The God Box" is the perfect end of summer book. *The God Box* by Alex Sanchez is published by Simon and Schuster. Reviews Grade 5 out of 5 stars.

i i i i i Stars



## Cooking Capers with Dr. Dave



Hello ladies and gentlemen,

I hope you're enjoying your summer. Come on down to Galveston. You'll be able to savor lots of cute men and women in tiny little garments called bathing suits! If you visit, I promise I won't wear my new two piece.

Now that the vision of me in a two piece bathing suit has faded, let me get on to sharing a couple of my favorite recipes. These dishes are more typically served in the fall or winter, but I find them wonderful no matter what time of the year it strikes your fancy to cook them. They are both German dishes, so braid your hair, and get ready to play Helga in the kitchen! Enjoy!

### Borscht

1 pound lean beef, cubed  
1 1/2 quarts water  
1 tablespoon salt  
1 1/2 cups shredded raw beets  
3/4 cup shredded carrots  
3/4 cup shredded turnips  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 tablespoons tomato puree  
2 tablespoons white vinegar  
1 teaspoon sugar  
2 tablespoons butter  
1/2 small head of cabbage, shredded  
freshly ground black pepper  
2 bay leaves  
sour cream

Simmer the beef, covered, in salty water until tender, or about one and one-half hours. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan simmer the beets, carrots, turnips, onion, tomato puree, vinegar, sugar, and butter, covered, fifteen minutes. Stir frequently. Add the cabbage and cook ten minutes longer. Add the vegetable mixture, pepper and bay leaves to the meat and broth. Adjust seasonings to your taste and cook until the

vegetables are tender. Add more vinegar, if desired. Before serving, add sour cream on top to taste.

### Sauerbraten

4 pounds rump roast  
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
2 cups wine vinegar  
2 cups water  
2 cloves garlic  
1 cup sliced onion  
1 bay leaf  
10 peppercorns  
1/4 cup sugar  
3 whole cloves  
flour for dredging and thickening  
2 tablespoons bacon drippings  
1 1/2 cups sour cream

Season the meat with salt and pepper and place in a large bowl. Bring the vinegar and water to a boil and add the garlic, onion, bay leaf, peppercorns, sugar and cloves. Pour the marinade over the beef, cover and refrigerate overnight. Remove the meat and dry thoroughly with paper towels. Reserve the marinade. Dredge the meat with flour. In a heavy kettle heat the bacon drippings, add the meat and brown it on all sides. Add two cups of the marinade, cover tightly and simmer gently until the meat is tender, two and one-half to three hours. Remove the meat to a warmed platter. When the meat has slightly cooled, cut it into slices. Thicken the gravy with a little flour mixed with water. Stir in the sour cream and serve over the meat.

Please enjoy these dishes and your summer!

**Editor's note:** Dr. Dave lives in Galveston where he enjoys gourmet cooking as a means of relaxation. Many people have told me they have tried and enjoyed his recipes, a regular feature of the Montrose GEM.



### How to study with the Greats Or Two Gin and Tonics Please!

I am busily working on this sonata and having a great time doing it. There are very fond and funny memories associated with these particular sonatas. One occurred at the International Clarinet Convention in Richmond, Virginia.

Picture this, Richmond 1980ish, there I am staying in the Holiday Inn. And after a long day at the convention hearing some wonderful new compositions performed and meeting the composers, I retired to the lobby drinking establishment for an afternoon refreshment, (Gin and Tonic by the way), when what to my wondering eyes should appear? It was a little man in a red hat that had just arrived from New York City. Well, Well, Well (well drinks are cheap), to my welcome surprise, it was none other than Leon Russianoff, the very one that I was performing for and with on the morrow. Needless to say, we had dinner that night, a hangover the next morning and got to know each other quite well as a mutual admiration society began. The next morning, Kelly, my accompanist came into town to play with me during the Master Class series with Leon. We met, ran the Brahms down quickly, well, quickly for Brahms is 45 minutes and prepared for the Performance with Russianoff doing a public coaching on the piece.

Hitting the stage, there was Leon and in the audience were the premiere clarinetists of the era. Leon took us through the first movement and into the second movement with a bit of ease, commenting only momentarily on the technique and the interpretation. Of course, he had to ask who I was studying with and I said "Alan Balter". "Oh", Leon said, "One of my former students who just happen to be in the audience."

Enough jocularly I thought, but that was not to be. As Kelly and I began the Allegro Appassionato movement, Leon, with all the verve of a demented teacher in his red hat, grabbed an umbrella and started dancing behind us, Mary Poppins style. There was laughter from the audience and I was wondering what was going on. Was I doing something well, was it really messing up or were my pants unzipped? Hummmm. Well, I just happened to see out of the corner of my eye, that little man, an icon of professionalism and clarinet etiquette, doing this wonderful umbrella waltz.

Thus began my wonderment and my private study with Leon Russianoff. By the way, for a point of reference, it is a waltz movement and I was not conveying that at the time well enough for him. I was too stiff and not letting it flow.

That evening, we adjourned to the by now infamous Holiday Inn lobby for dinner and the evening progressed from there with a lot of laughter and some serious discussions about studying with Leon in NYC. Our table became a crowded spectacle of people trying to sit and talk for a bit and passing on to other tables. It was truly fun.

As the evening progressed, and a lot of gin and tonics later, we ended up in the den of raucous behaviors better known as the Holiday Inn Bar. Well, what transpired there seemed to top the by now infamous Brahmsian Umbrella Waltz. There is Leon on top of the table, dancing, dealing with his inhibitions in a wonderful way. I immediately went to bar for another round of Gin and Tonic and well...Perhaps are best forgotten in a foggy haze of total imbibement.

By the way, Leon taught at Julliard and I studied privately through the Artist Program established as an independant program at this wonderful institution. His wife was Penelope Russianoff, a writer and psychologist in Manhattan. She has 5 books out.

Years later, when Leon passed away, Kelly met me backstage at a Memphis Symphony Concert with Alan Balter conducting, and shared this sad news with me. We had a tearful, but joyous remembrance of a wonderful man, full of life with a different approach to teaching, a true Master in his own right.

Kelly has moved on to a wonderful life in Virginia and those talented hands are performing to this day in Virginia and with the National Symphony in DC on both the organ and the piano. I am truly blessed with some wonderful people in my life, and Kelly is right at the top as a great friend.

Jere Douglas is a Professional Performing Artist as the Principle Clarinetist, Collage Chamber Ensemble and a Tenor with The Houston Celilia's Chamber Choir.

For samplings of current performances go to: [www.jeredouglas.com](http://www.jeredouglas.com) or [www.ukitena.org](http://www.ukitena.org)

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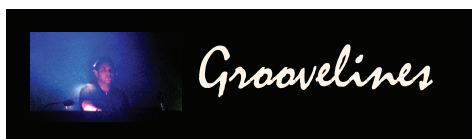
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Howdy disco citizens! It's time for your bi-weekly dose of Groovelines – your iFriendly source for what's hot and hip in the land of electronic dance music and beyond.

Over at iTunes, and hot for digital download, is the hot new Jump Smokers album Kings of the Dancefloor! Lovin the beats and bass lines on this phat electro offering. If you dig LMFAO or 3OH3! You will love Jump Smokers. Hot never before heard newbies on Kings of the Dancefloor! include Love of Electro, Club Rockers, & Superstar. Included are the J.S. hits Don't Be A Douchebag, Now You See It, and Dance Rock Shake Pop. On the list of guest artists appearing on Kings of the

Dancefloor! are Alex Peace, Frankie J, Baby Bash, Honorbel, Twista, Quote & Pitbull. Be sure to check out the remix work from Juump Smokers on Obsessed by Mariah Carey, History by Vassy, and Russian Roulette by Rihanna. Also awesome are the Jump Smokers singles My Flow So Tight and We Got That Smoke from back in the day. Learn more online at [www.jumpsokers.com](http://www.jumpsokers.com).

Also diggin' the good vibes and kick ass grooves being offered up on iTunes from Stay by Judy Torres – the Giuseppe D Tune Adiks Mix, Knock You Out from Tiesto featuring Emily Haines – the Mysto & Pizzi Electro Mix, Beauty in the World by Macy Gray – the Cutmore Extended Mix, 2gether from Roger Sanchez – the Chris Moody Remix, Push Push by Kat Deluna featuring Akon – the Electro Club Mix, Club

Can't Handle Me from Flo Rida featuring David Guetta, Full Focus by Armin Van Buuren, We Speak No Americano – from Yolanda Be Cool & Dcup, and the music video for the Taio Cruz hit Dynamite. Great stuff. You'll find those floor fillers and more online at iTunes.

You can hear me play these mentioned hits and more weekly at Meteor & JR's in Houston and at Halo in Bryan/College Station. Be sure to tune into Hypersonic Radio every Saturday night at 10 pm to catch Groovelines Aloud on 101X in Austin. Stream it live from the web at [hypersonicradio.com](http://hypersonicradio.com) or from your iPhone using the free 101X app. For info on all upcoming DJ C.A. events and happenings head over to [djchrisallen.com](http://djchrisallen.com). Stalk my every move at [twitter.com/groovelines](http://twitter.com/groovelines), [MySpace.com/djchrisallen](http://MySpace.com/djchrisallen), and [facebook.com/](http://facebook.com/)

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Deep in the heart of Texas, that is the Groovelines for now. You know the golden rule boys and girls - play it loud and disturb the neighbors! The scene can only grow and thrive if we participate in it folks. It exists because we make it so. Be active, support your local talent. Buy, don't share.

Remember, life might not always be the party you had hoped for, but while you're here you might as well dance.

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