

www.montrosegem.com

Houston Chosen as Site for HIV Vaccine Clinical Trial

by Deborah Moncrief Bell

Houston has been selected as a site for the HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN) 505 study. The Houston site is at the Baylor College of Medicine (BCM). BCM is trying to reach out in the GLBT community in Houston to raise awareness of the study as well as general HIV/AIDS education and prevention.

The study seeks gay and bisexual men between the ages of 18-45 to participate in the study, which is funded by the HVTN, under the National Institute of Health. The vaccine isn't preventative or curative, but is designed to help improve overall outcomes of men with HIV and reduce viral load if they do contract HIV. The study is also meant to help with understanding about the virus and with future vaccine development. The trial will be open for recruitment in the next few weeks.

"It's a big deal that Houston was given a HVTN study and we see it as setting a big precedent in the community here and the city of Houston with HIV/AIDS research and the search for a cure," said Maggie White, Research Coordinator.

Every 10 minutes, someone in the United States is infected with HIV. A preventative vaccine against HIV offers the best long-term hope to end this worldwide epidemic. Finding a safe and effective HIV vaccine that will protect people is a huge task. It cannot be done without the community's help.

* The study is currently seeking 1350 men who have sex with men to participate in a vaccine trial.

* One cannot become infected with HIV from the vaccines.

* The study will take place in several cities in the United States.

Safety is a primary goal of the vaccine trial. This is a Phase II study, designed to yield limited information on the effectiveness of the vaccine. The research vaccines have been found to be safe in animals and hundreds of humans in previous trials. One of the vaccines is made from an inactivated cold virus known as an adenovirus. The vaccines do NOT contain the HIV virus, and CANNOT cause HIV infection.

~ See **Vaccine** continued on page 4



Daniel "Dan" Choi is a former officer in the US Army. He became an LGBT rights activist and has been publicly challenging DADT. policy. October 19th he re-enlisted as an openly gay man at the Times Square recruiting booth to test the new Pentagon directive.

Confusion reigns over 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'

Reported on Gaypolitics.com: Military recruiters have been told by the Pentagon that they must accept applicants who identify as gay or lesbian while a federal court judge's ruling suspending the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy is appealed, according to the Associated Press.

Still, recruiters are also instructed to tell applicants that the moratorium on the policy could be lifted at any moment. Federal attorneys are working to stay the judge's order lifting the ban on openly gay troops.

Salon.com reported that U.S. District Court Judge Virginia Phillips declared the military's ban on openly gay service members unconstitutional in September, and she ordered a stop to the ban last week. Any minute now, she's expected to deny the government's request for a temporary stay of her injunction pending their appeal of her ruling.

Barack Obama wants "don't ask, don't tell" repealed legislatively. His Justice Department is charged with enforcing and defending the laws passed by Congress. So DOJ politely asked Judge Phillips to lift her order for the military policy to be immediately ended at the same time as Obama's Pentagon halted dismissals under the policy. It is a strategy that pleases no one, and Phillips was not convinced by the Justice Department's argument that ending the policy would cause "irreparable harm" to the armed forces.

~ DADT continued on Page 8

Suicides draw attention to anti-bullying bills

from the Washington Blade

The widely reported suicides of four gay male teenagers in September that have been linked to school bullying or harassment has heightened interest in two separate bills in Congress aimed at curtailing anti-LGBT bullying and discrimination in the nation's public schools.

A third bill expected to be introduced next month by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) would require colleges and universities to develop campus anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies that cover LGBT students.

"For those of us who work in education policy our focus is making the education case for these bills," said Eliza Byard, executive director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, known as GLSEN.

"And unfortunately we're doing that now in a context where recent tragedies have made the cost of not acting absolutely clear to everyone," Byard said.

She was referring to the September suicides of four gay youths ranging in age from 11 to 18 that authorities and family members said followed unrelenting bullying and harassment of three of the teens by their middle school or high school classmates.

The fourth youth, 18-year-old Tyler Clementi of New Jersey, jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge.

Clementi, a freshman at Rutgers University, apparently became distraught when his roommate planted a video camera in his dorm room without his knowledge that captured him in a sexual encounter with another male. The roommate broadcast the encounter live over the Internet.

The Safe Schools Improvement Act, which was introduced in the House in May 2009 and in the Senate in August of this year, would require school districts receiving federal funds to adopt policies prohibiting bullying and harassment.

~ **Bullying** Continued on Page 8



Jay Sullivan is a different sort in The Alley's Production of *Peter Pan: The Boy Who Never Grew Up* - review on Page 10



See Page 4 for the HGLBTPC-PAC endorsements and other information on being an informed voter.



Art such as this "perfect for Halloween" piece was exhibited at "First Bash". See more on Page 7



Meleah Jones of MCC and Gary Wood at the Outreach United Check Signing event from the "Coming Out Day Party". More inside on Page 7 ~ Photo by Douglas Waiter. For other photos at the event and at the Coming out Day Party and other events please see "Out and About" photos online at www.montrosegem.com. This will be a new regular feature of the Montrose GEM.

Community Online

www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org

www.montrosecounselingcenter.org

www.legacycommunityhealth.org

Houston GLBT Political Caucus
www.thecaucus.org

Fort Bend LGBT Political Caucus:
FBLGBT_Political_caucus@yahoo.com

Out In Houston
www.outinhouston.com

www.PFLAGHouston.org
HelpLine Telephone
713-46PFLAG 713-467-3524
HelpLine@pflaghouston.org

www.assisthers.org
The Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI) <http://www.lhihouston.org/>

Houston Political Organizing Network - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HoP-ON>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LoneStarActivists/> (LSA)

FEMINIST ONLINE NETWORK
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FEMNET>

Northwest Corner
www.nwcorner.org

www.socialnotesHouston.com

AIDS Foundation Houston
www.AFHouston.org

Imperial Court of Houston
www.spacecityempire.org

Empire of the Royal Sovereign
Imperial Court of the Single Star
www.ersicss.org

TG Center
www.tgctr.org

UH LGBT Resource Center
www.uh.edu/lgbtrc

www.Do713.com (Community Calendar)

www.visithoustontexas.com/my-gayhouston/

Houston ARCH : Area Rainbow Collective History
<http://houstonarch.pbworks.com/>
www.queermusicheritage.com

Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History, Inc.
www.gcam.org

If you know of another group that should be added, please let us know at montrosegem@yahoo.com

COMMUNITY NEWS & RESOURCES

Peace from the Porch Project

Cristy Claxton is a wonderful musician who produces the **Peace from the Porch (PFTP)** Concerts in the LaGrange area and is now working on the third **PFTP** CD. Each CD features different artists and proceeds from sales go to worthy causes. Christy says, "I'm in the fund development stage of Peace from the Porch, Vol. 3. I need to raise the money to produce the project. Once it's funded, it will be produced and it will benefit rural non-profit hospices".

Here are a few opportunities for you to have a good time while supporting Peace from the Porch!

Sunday, Oct. 24

LOAF House Concert
(Lesbians Over Age Fifty)
Christy Claxton
2pm meet 'n greet
3pm music
3203 Rustling Moss Drive
Houston Texas 77068

Saturday, Oct. 30

Bear Creek Concerts presents...
Christy Claxton
and a steamin' bowl of chili
BYOB
7pm
450 Rogers Trail
La Grange, TX 78945
\$10

Houston ARCH Meeting

The next public meeting of Houston ARCH (Area Rainbow Collective History) will be October 27, 2010 from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM in the GLBT Cultural Center of the Montrose Counseling Center building, located at 401 Branard, Houston, TX 77006. The meeting will be held in Room 112-113, around the hallway corner from the large meeting room we've been in previously.

The agenda includes discussion of the grants that have been submitted this year, and sharing some exciting developments that took place over the summer, including the formal establishment of a national Advisory Board for Houston ARCH, and the creation of a summer internship at Rice University.

As always, this meeting is open to the public, so feel free to share this announcement with those you feel would be interested in the preservation of the LGBT history of the Houston area.

Until then, please visit our project wiki, at <http://houstonarch.pbworks.com>.

HGLBTC Center and Theatre New West present benefit reading of

The Normal Heart

World AIDS Day, December 1

Twenty-five years ago, *The Normal Heart*, Larry Kramer's explosive drama about the early days of the AIDS crisis, premiered in New York. A quarter century later, the play remains one of the best-known works to deal with the AIDS epidemic. To commemorate the play's 25th anniversary, the Houston GLBT Community Center and Theatre New West will present a benefit staged reading of *The Normal Heart* on World AIDS Day, Wednesday, December 1, at 7:30 p.m., at Stages Repertory Theatre (3201 Allen Parkway).

Tickets to *The Normal Heart* are \$30 each (which is tax deductible). Proceeds will benefit the Center and its programs.

The staged reading will be a version of the critically acclaimed production of *The Normal Heart* presented by Theatre New West in 2006. Theatre New West artistic director Joe Watts and the actors (most of whom performed in the 2006 production) are donating their time and talent for the reading. The Houston production has also been inspired by staged readings of *The Normal Heart* presented this year in Los Angeles and New York and directed by Joel Grey.

"We are thrilled to partner again with Joe and Theatre New West, which has for years been a steadfast friend and supporter of the Center," Center president Tim Brookover says. "We are also honored that Stages Repertory Theater is donating the theater space for this benefit performance."

Plans are in development for a possible pre-show reception and a post-show talk-back session with the director and cast. Details will be announced. Check www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org or www.theatrenewwest.com for updates.

Tickets for the benefit staged reading can be purchased only through Theatre New West by calling 713.522.2204. The *Normal Heart* reading is a Theatre New West production staged as a benefit for Houston GLBT Community Center, presented at Stages Repertory Theatre. Tickets are not available through the Stages box office.

Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway, just off Waugh Drive and D'Amico St.
Curtain: 7:30PM

Tickets: \$30 (tax deductible)
*Reservations: 713-522-2204

ON THE RADIO

MONDAYS, 9 - 11pm
"QUEER VOICES"

SUNDAY MORNINGS
12 - 4am
"AFTER HOURS"

ON KPFT 90.1FM
Pacifica - community radio
HOUSTON, TX
www.kpft.org

Tune in!

ONLINE: www.kpft.org

GLBT Law 101 Free Seminar

Tuesday, October 26

6:00pm - 8:00pm

1111 North Loop West, Suite 101,
Houston, Tx

This is a free GLBT Law seminar open to the community. We will be covering a wide selection of legal topics. For more information, please contact me at mkatine@lawkn.com.

Law offices of:
Katine & Nechman, LLP

Houston Pride Band

The Houston Pride Band is pleased to announce our 2010-2011 Concert season opener, "Across the Pond, A Collection of Music from the United Kingdom". Saturday November 13th, 2010 at Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church. Ticket sales benefitting PFLAG/HATCH Youth Scholarship Foundation.

The Band will perform under the direction of conductor and artistic director, Jason Stephens. Hear The Beatles, Harry Potter, English folksongs, Colonel Bogey, and a little Freddie Mercury thrown in for good measure. Additionally, Saxworx and piano soloist, Pam Stephens will perform.

The Houston Pride Band is an adult, volunteer band comprised primarily of musicians from the Houston-area gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community. The Pride Band is a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization which is financially supported by member dues, grants, and donations.

The Houston Pride Band is a member of the Lesbian and Gay Band Association (LGBA), an organization made up of over 35 GLBT bands from across the nation and around the world. The Houston Pride with LGBA, members have participated at every Gay Games, two Presidential Inaugurations, and concert performances throughout the world.

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The most current up-to-date information available with original articles, news, arts, reviews, commentary, community events and so much more. You will find the GEM is the paper of choice for our community.

The best rates to be found with larger format for the price. Your graphics or ours. We work with you to create an ad that will be noticed.

BEELINES

by Deborah Moncrief Bell



Someone once sent me a card remarking on how fall is the time of the year when strange looking people come knocking on your door. There's the trick-or-treaters of course and then there's something even more scary, the politicians.

We are facing what are called mid-term elections because they are taking place in a non-presidential election year. Yet it is the President that seems to be a huge factor in the current races, both in state races and federal ones. President Obama, still suffering under the mess that was left by George W. Bush, has dropped in popularity among his previous supporters for not taking stronger stands on his own policies. The Obama administration for example asked a federal appeals court to suspend the ruling that overturned the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays even though Obama claims to be against the policy. There are those who saw him as a great harbinger of hope but it has not turned out quite the way we hoped.

State races for federal office are being fought along the lines of how much support the candidate has for Obama (or Nancy Pelosi's) policies. Bill White, former Mayor of Houston, has been accused of a number of things by opponent Governor Rick Perry, including having participated in "Obama style spending". White was a hero of the Hurricane Katrina and Rita disasters providing strong leadership when it was most needed, yet Perry accuses him of having profited from the crisis. There is no truth to this but that does not stop the mud-slinging ads. Perry refuses to debate White and with good reason: he knows he could not hold his own against White.

What I find so frightening about all of this is that people may very well vote in a way that will elect people who do not hold my or your best interest at heart.

The Dallas Morning News (who endorsed White as did the Houston Chronicle) said of Rick Perry: "Perry's strident, tea party tone and strong-arm style won't serve Texas well for another four years. While White's focus has been on finding solutions in Austin, Perry has done little more than rail against Washington's problems. The governor's gaze seems to have drifted from the tasks at hand ..."

The so-called Moral Majority has turned into the Tea Party with the likes of Sarah Palin at its head. Tea Party darling and ex-sorceress Christine O'Donnell thinks the separation of church and state is a bunch of hocus pocus.

O'Donnell, the GOP nominee for Senate in Delaware, was surprised to learn the Constitution had an amendment that prohibited the government from establishing a national religion.

While many of us are equally frustrated that not everything is the way we would prefer, we don't tend to restrict individual liberties or rights in our political activities. These folks seek to do just that. They are anti-gay and anti-choice. The movement's primary concerns, they claim, include but are not limited to, cutting back the size of government; lowering taxes; reducing wasteful spending; reducing the national debt and federal budget deficit; and adhering to the United States Constitution. Many of the movement's members also speak out on a wide variety of other issues such as illegal immigration. Most of us are concerned about those matters as well. The difference is in the approach we would take in addressing those issues.

The "adhering to the Constitution" means their interpretation of the document and there in lies the danger. They are worried about the deficit and admonish Obama for it when it was created during the eight years of George W. Bush and a Republican controlled Congress.

Yes, I am terrified of the direction this country may go if these Tea Party and other right-wing Republicans are in the majority of offices. They may not be the majority but their supporters are motivated to vote and that could win them the seats.

There is some hope. In a New York Daily News online poll the results were:

If Tea Party candidates win a bunch of races in November, will you ...

Be happy, finally, Washington will have politicians that represent the people? 5%

Get mad, the nation will be in the hands of anti-government lunatics? 85%

Move to another country? 10%

I voted with the majority on that one. I hope I am with the majority on the races I have some say in here at home (where the impact of the Tea Party has effected some Republican candidates). I will be voting for the candidates endorsed by the Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Political Caucus PAC. I think you should too. When we vote we give people the right to have a say so over our lives. You may not be very excited about this election but your vote is crucial, so go vote anyway. Early voting is now taking place around town.

That's the buzz from me for now!

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.

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146*	12/03	11/26
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149	01/07	12/31
150	01/21	01/14
151*	02/04	01/28
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155	04/08	04/01
156	04/22	04/15
157	05/13	05/06
158	05/27	05/20
159*	06/10	06/03
160*	06/24	06/17

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Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC Endorsements

U.S. Representative, District 18:
Sheila Jackson Lee

Governor: Bill White

Lieutenant Governor:
Linda Chavez-Thompson

Attorney General:
Barbara Ann Radnofsky

General Land Office Commissioner:
Hector Uribe

Agriculture Commissioner:
Hank Gilbert

Railroad Commissioner: Jeff Weems

State Representatives

District 127: Joe Montemayor
District 133: Kristi Thibault
District 134: Ellen Cohen
District 146: Borris Miles
District 148: Jessica Farrar

Court of Appeals

Justice, 1st Place 4: Michael Gomez
Justice, 1st Place 8: Robert Ray
Justice, 14th Place 2: Norma Venso
Justice, 14th Place 5: Wally Kronzer
Justice, 14th Place 9: Tim Riley

Judicial District Judges

#55: Dion Ramos
#113: Christina Bryan
#157: Shawn Thierry
#180: Darrell Jordan
#182: Brandon Dudley
#183: Michael Gomez
#184: Jay Burnett
#185: Vivian King
#189: Ursula Hall
#190: Olan Boudreaux
#208: Loretta Johnson Muldrow
#230: Garland McInnis
#232: Greg Glass
#234: Tanner Garth
#245: Janiece Horn
#246: Sherri Cothrun
#247: Mary Kay Green
#248: Jim Sullivan
#257: Sandra Peake
#262: Tom Berg
#269: Katie Kennedy
#270: Bob Thomas
#280: Kathy Vossler
#281: Donna Roth
#295: Paul Simon
#308: Bruce Kessler
#309: Bill Rice
#310: Judy Dougherty
#311: Deborah Wright
#312: Robert Hinojosa
#313: Natalie Oakes
#314: David Longoria
#315: Keith Branch

County Judge : Gordon Quan

Judges, Civil Court

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

Judges, County Criminal Courts

#1: Beverly Melontree
#2: Mary Connealy Acosta
#3: Judith Snively
#4: Alfred Leal
#6: Denise Spencer
#7: Shelia Acosta
#9: Juanita Jackson Barner
#11: Mark Diaz
#12: Cheryl Diggs
#13: Dennis Slate
#14: Lee Harper Wilson

Probate Judges

#1: Kathleen Stone
#2: Joellen Snow
#3: Priscilla Walters
#4: Tammy Manning

District Clerk: Loren Jackson

County Clerk: Ann Harris Bennett

Tax Assessor-Collector:
Diane Trautman

County Treasurer: Billy Briscoe

City of Houston Prop. 1: For
City of Houston Prop. 2: For
City of Houston Prop. 3: For

HISD Trustee, District VIII:
Juliet Kathy Stipeche

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Rose Wall, Treasurer

You may clip this information and take with you into the voting booth. IN races where no endorsement was made please use other voting guides and information in making your decision.

The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area provides an excellent guide. Armed with a Voters Guide, a citizen can make informed decisions and is more likely to participate in voting. Most voter apathy is due to lack of reliable information about candidates, issues, and the voting process. The LWV-HA Guide will enable all registered voters to go to the polls with confidence in making a careful and considerate choice.

The guide is available at local libraries and online through the LWV website: www.lwvhouston.org/html/voter.html which includes other useful information.

You can build your own ballot and find out where to vote, etc. at: www.vote411.org

Early voting: October 17th through October 29th

Election Day is November 2, Polls are open from 7am to 7pm

For Harris County Voters
www.harrisvotes.org

History at a Glance

by Craig Farrell

The Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of History takes you to the very center of The Montrose: The Intersection of Montrose and Westheimer
Date: July 13, 1991
The Event: Ground zero – hate crime demonstration

The intersection of Montrose Blvd and Westheimer is considered the heart of The Montrose. In 1991 this was the place of a powerful demonstration. The community spoke and the world listened.

Nine days prior to this event, July 4, 1991, The Montrose had witnessed one of the most horrible attacks anyone could imagine. Paul Broussard, a 27 year-old Houston area banker was beaten and stabbed to death in a gay-bashing, just outside a Houston nightclub, by ten teenaged boys. Their names: Jaime Aguirre, Javier Aguirre, Derrick Attard, Jon Buice, Chance Paul Dillon, Rafael Gonzales, Gayland Randle, Leandro Ramirez, Brian Spake, and Jeffrey Valentine. They had driven to The Montrose from The Woodlands area, to “beat up some queers,” in the testimony of one of the convicted teens. Paul Broussard and two friends were walking home just after 2:00 AM. When the attack began his two friends escaped down a busy street but Paul was cornered and beaten with a nail studded 2X4 and stabbed with a knife. He died just 8 hours later at St. Joseph’s Hospital.

The Houston news media did not initially report the murder as a hate crime. Queer Nation Houston began to organize public protests. Paul’s mother, Nancy Rodriguez, also participated. More than 2000 demonstrators wound through the streets of The Montrose. People were angry! This was a hate crime! It was NOT OK to bash gays or anyone else for that matter.

The demonstration took over the intersection of Montrose Blvd. and Westheimer. This was ground zero. All of the pain, insults, threats, assaults, name calling, rapes and murders were remembered. The community was speaking as one. Hate crimes must be recognized and prosecuted. During this hour-long demonstration the mounted police retreated and watched from a block away. They were hoping to avoid a riot.

The brutal attack on Paul Broussard led to important changes in the Houston Police Department. The Houston Police Department’s Hate Crime program was enhanced by Mayor Lee P. Brown and Chief of Police C.O. Bradford with the appointment of a Hate Crime Coordinator and the announcement of the Houston Police Department’s Hate



The murder of Paul Broussard, pictured here with his Mom, Nancy Rodriguez,, was a catalyst to action in July of 1991

Crime Hotline (713-308-8737). Sting operations with officers posing as gay men were started. The Houston Police Department views all Hate Crimes as major acts which are given the highest investigative priority possible to ensure rapid apprehension of all persons involved.

It was working! Hate crimes against gays were finally being noticed. This demonstration happened in 1991. Sadly, today hate crimes still happen. Not just in The Montrose but everywhere. Did you know:

§ 60% of offenders commit crimes for the “thrill” connected with control over their victims

§ Hate Crimes are 5 times as likely to involve assault

§ Hate Crimes are traditionally under-reported

§ Over 20 states and the District of Columbia have enacted Hate Crime legislation

So the next time you “catch” the light at Montrose and Westheimer, say a little prayer. Remember this demonstration, remember those that have lost their lives because of a hate crime, remember The Montrose. People came together, spoke up and things changed.

Vaccine from Page 1

Since these vaccines are still being researched, all of the participants are urged to practice safe sex.

The HIV vaccine trial is a collaboration between the HIV Vaccine Trials Network, the Division of AIDS, NIAID and the Vaccine Research Center, NIAID.

Baylor College of Medicine
Vaccine Research Center
One Baylor Plaza, Room 225D
Houston, TX 77030
713-798-4912

For more info about the study, you can check out the national HVTN 505 website at <http://www.hopetake-saction.org>.

A Testament

by Brendan Mikeska

Comments made at the Montrose Counseling Center's The Secret is Out Program. Clients and others talked about the importance of the programs offered at MCC.

When I was younger, I had grand ambitions to stamp out prejudice where ever I found it and in some way elevate the human condition. You're allowed to think like that when you're a kid. But as I grew up, I realized that I may not have the power to create immediate change for a large group of people, but I can help improve the lives of one or a few.

Several years ago, I met someone who was in crisis. He was on the verge of losing everything he had and returning to a life of living on the streets and surviving day to day by what he called survival sex. This had been a pattern in his life for some time. His only pleasures in life were drugs and alcohol.

During a particularly difficult time in his life, he got up from his living room where we were both sitting and went back to his bedroom. He had been crying but then suddenly stopped. I went back to check on him, and he was hanging in his closet with his belt tied around his neck. Fortunately, I was there and was able to continue to be there for him.

After many starts and stops, he was put on a medication regiment from MHMRA and sought substance abuse counseling here at MCC. We have been friends for many years now. He is on medication and is drug and alcohol free. This didn't happen overnight. It took him many tries, but I stood by him. I helped in anyway I could. Where I couldn't help, I found resources like MCC that could. I decided that I would do my damndest to improve the life of one. That, I could do.

My work and time I spend volunteering at MCC allows me to touch the lives of so many more. By connecting, volunteering, and financially supporting organizations like MCC, I can join with others and be a part of changing lives. MCC is one of the reasons my friend is alive and doing well today. I have been given an opportunity to be a part of improving the mental health and the human condition of those that are helped by MCC.

I found my way to MCC through my work with HATCH, which I have been involved with for over 10 years. When people used to ask me what I did for a living, I used to tell them that I was a HATCH facilitator and I work for a recruiting firm to pay the bills. HATCH is an affirming, safe place for teens to

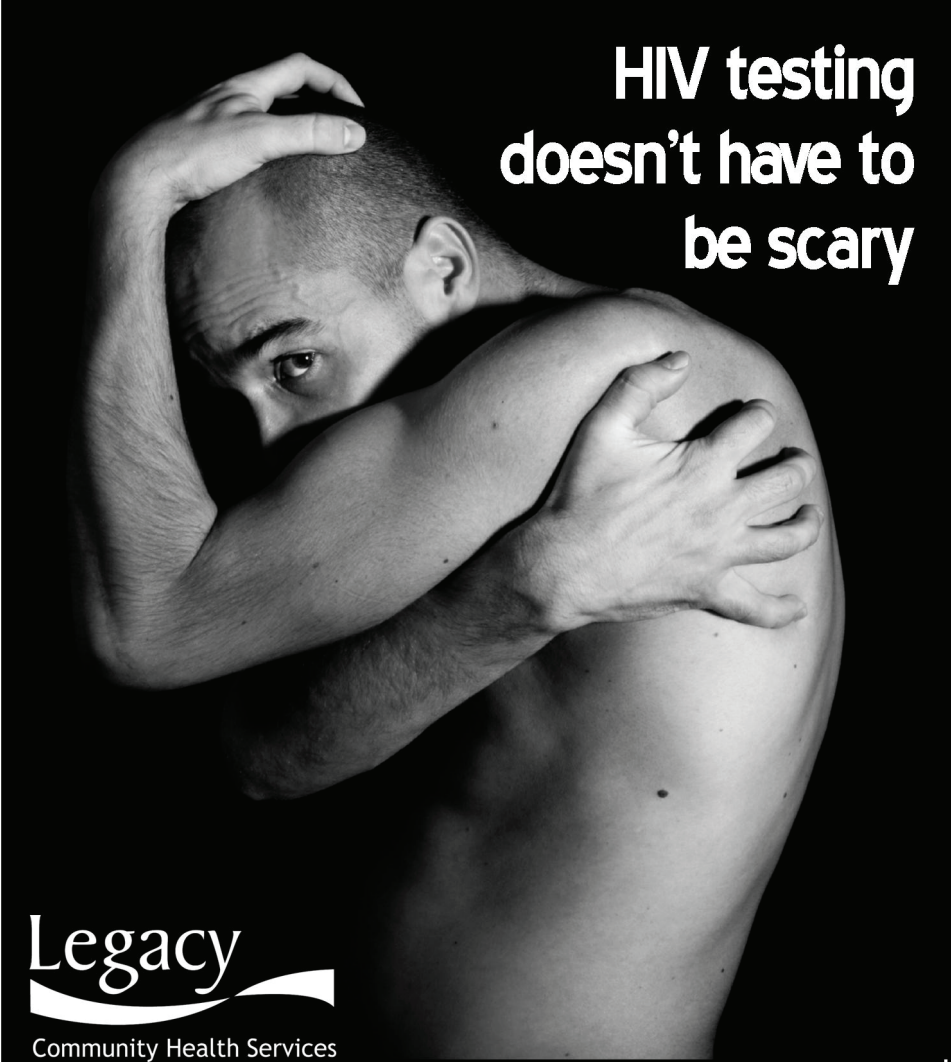
build support structures- a place where kids don't have to be alone. It is a safe place where kids can be who they are without worrying about being called a faggot, beaten up, or harassed to the point of misery. Since 1987, if these things were happening to you, then you had a place to go to get through it.

Over the last ten years that I have been with HATCH, I have seen subtle change in our society and how LGBTQ youth are treated and accepted. The age of those self-identifying as GLBT is getting younger. Young people, as a whole are more accepting of GLBT people. We have had HATCH youth go back to their schools and start Gay/Straight alliances. We have had HATCH youth age out and become community leaders here in Houston. A current HATCH youth just won a national leadership award for what she as done on behalf of GLBT issues. Openly gay youth can be elected student body president of their high school and college campuses.

However, there are still pockets of despair, misery, and suffering. Even when the majority is accepting, a few or a one can fill a person with hopelessness. We have had HATCH youth kicked out of their homes by their mother and father because they were gay or transgendered. We have had HATCH youth excommunicated from their church because they are gay. I truly believe that HATCH has saved many lives over the years.

As a nation, we have lost 6 kids that we know of in the last several weeks to suicide due to bullying and harassment because they were gay or perceived to be gay: Raymond Chase-19, Tyler Cementi-18, Justin Aaber-15, Billy Lucas-15, Seth Walsh-13, Asher Brown-13. These kids should not have had to endure the form of harassment and character assassination that ultimately led to them taking their lives. GLBT youth are more vulnerable to the tragic consequences of bullying than most. In some cases they are afraid of being further isolated from their own family because of their sexuality. In the face of all this, we still have Lawmakers, Administrators and Professionals who refuse to acknowledge the existence and need for protection of LGBTQ youth in schools.

So, over time I have learned that, given time and perseverance, even small changes can lead to bigger changes in society. One of the simplest and most powerful actions we can each take is by living as openly gay and lesbian people so that no one can say they do not know a GLBT person. People are allowed to demonize those they don't know. If people know you to be a good, honest person who happens to be gay, it will make it harder for them to dislike or hate someone just because of their sexuality. Heterosexual friends and allies can also



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(713) 830-3070 Testing Info Line
legacycommunityhealth.org

HIV TESTING
Monday-Thursday
11am-6:30pm
Friday 11am-4:30pm

help by supporting LGBTQ causes, and supporting their friends, neighbors, co-workers, and children.

MCC and HATCH are the reason many LGBTQ youth and adults are alive and fulfilled today. I do have the power --we all have the power -- to change one person's life. Together we have the power to change and stamp out prejudice wherever we find it and elevate the



A new home for the Houston GLBT Community Center

The Houston GLBT Community Center announced this week their imminent move to the Historic Dow School in the Old Sixth Ward Historic District just north of Memorial Drive on the western edge of downtown Houston. This national register historic district is between Montrose and the Heights/Old West End.

The former Dow Elementary School, is located at 1900 Kane Street, is the home of MECA (Multicultural Education and Counseling Through the Arts), the incredible and highly regarded arts and culture organization that serves Latino youth and families.

"We are thrilled by the potentials for collaboration with MECA, one of Houston's oldest social service and cultural agencies," said Tim Brookover, Center president.

~ Center continued on Page 10

Lesbian Health Initiative Rainbow Health Fair

Get Life Saving Screenings at the November Rainbow Health Fair Saturday, November 6, 2010 at the Legacy Community Health Services Building located at 215 Westheimer, 9am-3pm

Sign up for screenings now: To schedule a mammogram, pap, or comprehensive blood screening, email info@lhihouston.org or call (713) 426-3356.

Leave your name, phone number and email address (if calling, speak slowly and say your phone number twice). Contact us right away because available slots are going fast.

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DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS
 HONORING OUR PAST. CELEBRATING OUR FUTURE

October 30, 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
October 31, 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

MECA proudly presents Dia De Los Muertos: Honoring our Past, Celebrating Our Future. Dia de los Muertos is a traditional Latin American holiday that honors and celebrates the lives of family and friends who have gone before us. Different countries celebrate Dia de los Muertos in their own unique way. The common theme that runs through the two-day celebration, traditionally held November 1 and 2, is the belief that the dead return home, visit loved ones, and feast on their favorite foods. A playful mockery of death and a reaffirmation of life are demonstrated through music, dance, theatre, and visual arts. MECA's event features Dia de los Muertos celebrations from throughout Latin America, with an altar exhibit competition, foods from the Americas, vendors selling authentic Latin American Dia de los Muertos arts and crafts, and a Calavera Fashion Show. This festival truly is a community cultural event celebrating our ancestors and Latin American traditions. MECA Dia de los Muertos: Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Future is held at MECA's colorful, art-filled campus located at the nationally recognized historic Dow School in Houston's Old Sixth Ward.

What good is sitting all alone in your room? Come hear the music play!



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YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US IN CELEBRATING ONE OF HOUSTON'S CULTURAL LANDMARKS

Southwest Alternate Media Project (SWAMP),
 a 33-year-old nonprofit media arts organization serving independent filmmakers in Houston and statewide,

with a screening of

For the Sake of the Song: The Story of Anderson Fair

Tuesday, October 26, 2010, 7pm

Landmark River Oaks Theatre ★ 2009 W. Gray at Shepherd
Advance tickets \$15 online (www.swamp.org) \$20 at the door

Want live music?

Come to an intimate after party at Anderson Fair with musicians from the film for \$50 (price includes one movie ticket).

Space is limited! First-come, first served.

For more information, contact swamp@swamp.org or call 713-522-8592 x 2 for details.

Sarah Gish, the generous sponsor of this event, is celebrating the 10th anniversary of her company Gish Creative (www.gishcreative.com). SWAMP, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit arts organization, provides a variety of services and opportunities to independent filmmakers (www.swamp.org). SWAMP was Sarah's first client and will be the recipient of all proceeds.

SWAMP served as the proud fiscal sponsor for the documentary film being screened. Through interviews and songs by an array of talented musicians, *For the Sake of the Song: The Story of Anderson Fair* (www.andersonfairthemovie) tells the extraordinary tale of another venerable Houston landmark, Anderson Fair, a small music venue with a loyal following and major impact in the world of artists working in the singer songwriter tradition.

Sarah used to manage the historic River Oaks Theatre (www.landmarktheatres.com) and helped get it designated as a city landmark in 2007.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30TH

**2ND ANNUAL HALLOWEEN
800 PACIFIC STREET**

**HIGH HEEL
DRAG RACE**

**RACE TIME
10:00PM**

**HOSTS
KOFI &
KOURTNEY
VAN WALES**

TWO BIG RACES

**HIGH HEEL
--ANYONE--**

**1ST PLACE
\$100 CASH
& TROPHY**

**1ST RUNNER UP
\$50 CASH
& TROPHY**

**HIGH HEEL
--IN FULL DRAG--**

**1ST PLACE
\$100 CASH
& TROPHY**

**1ST RUNNER UP
\$50 CASH
& TROPHY**

HIGH HEEL 'ANYONE' - Anyone can enter and the only requirement is a heel no less than two inches.

HIGH HEEL IN FULL DRAG- Anyone can enter who is wearing a heel no less than two inches, has breasts (real or fake), female apparel and wig.

Entrants will race down the 800 block of Pacific Street to Crocker Street and back to the finish line at Pacific Street and Grant Street. Registration is from 9:00pm until 9:45pm at the 800 Pacific Street Halloween Block Party. You're only eligible to win in one category.

Questions may be addressed to Randall Jobe at randall@jrsbarandgrill.com

Houston
Rainbow Health Fair
For Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual & Transgender Women

Saturday ~ Legacy Community Health Service
November 6 ~ 215 Westheimer
9:00am-3:00pm

Lifesaving
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For LGBT Women
with No Health Insurance or
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lipids, STD testing, HbA1c for diabetes

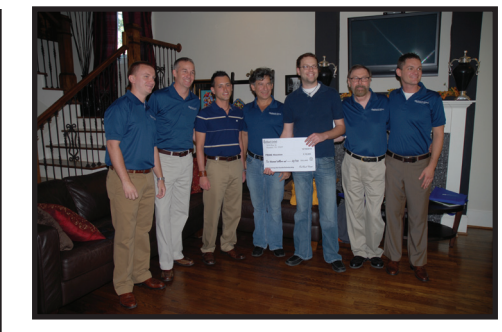
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Meet with Ob-Gyn Mary Alice Cowan, MD
and much more

Special Instructions:
For the most accurate blood tests,
do not eat before blood testing.
(Diabetics-Use common sense regarding eating)

Out and About



Top row: Montrose Counseling Center: The Secret's Out event

Second row: First Ward celebrates "First Bash" at Winter Street Studios.

Third row: Outreach United's "Coming Out Day Party" check presentation: Photos of this event by Douglas Waiter. See more photos at www.montrosegem.com

~ DADT from Page One

The administration will now probably ask the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for a temporary stay. Again, Obama's preference for results to be achieved only through the "correct" process is killing him politically with his supporters and gaining him nothing from his opponents.

Alex Pareene wrote on Salon.com that, "If Obama actually thinks "don't ask, don't tell" is a bad policy that should be overturned, he was just handed a gift -- a way to get rid of the policy without issuing an executive order or attempting to corral a lame duck congress. But he seems to worship the "correct" process so much that he's willing to delay, or doom, the desired result."

U.S. District Court Judge Virginia A. Phillip, who last month struck down the policy, imposed an injunction ordering federal officials not to enforce the controversial policy on gays in the military. The federal government has 60 days to appeal, but Justice Department attorneys have not said whether they will.

"Defendants United States of America and the Secretary of Defense immediately to suspend and discontinue any investigation, or discharge, separation, or other proceeding, that may have been commenced under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Act, or pursuant to its implementing regulations, on or prior to the date of this Judgment".

Phillips said the policy banning gays did not preserve military readiness and that evidence shows that the policy in fact had a "direct and deleterious effect" on the military. She also found that DADT violated the 1st Amendment.

The case was filed by the Log Cabin Republicans, the largest political organization for gays in the GOP, in 2004. During the trial, Justice Department attorney Paul G. Freeborne argued that Congress -- not a federal court -- should have the authority and the responsibility to enact military policy. The sole evidence presented by the Justice Department was the legislative history of the ban, which government lawyers argued showed that the policy was properly adopted by Congress through a deliberative and reasoned political process. No witnesses were called.

Conversely, attorneys for the Log Cabin Republicans called to the stand several decorated military officers discharged for their sexual orientation, including Air Force Maj. Michael Almy. Almy, deployed three times to Iraq, said his commanding officer attempted to force him to admit he was a homosexual after another service member, without permission, searched Almy's private e-mail and found a message discussing homosexual conduct. After fighting his dismissal for 16 months, Almy agreed to accept an honorable discharge.

Bullying from Page One

The policies must apply to bullying and harassment targeting people on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity as well as other categories such as race, religion, gender and ethnicity.

Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.) introduced the bill in the House, where 125 members signed on as co-sponsors. Six of the 125 are Republicans. Sen. Robert Casey (D-Pa.) introduced the bill in the Senate, where 12 senators — 11 Democrats and one independent — signed on as co-sponsors.

In January of this year, Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.), who is gay, introduced into the House the Student Non-Discrimination Act. The bill would prohibit sexual orientation or gender identity related discrimination against students in public schools that receive federal funding.

"For the purpose of this act, discrimination includes, but is not limited to, harassment of a student on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of such student or of a person with whom the student associates or has associated," the bill states.

The bill also allows an "aggrieved individual" to take legal action in a judicial proceeding to seek enforcement of the bill's provisions barring sexual orientation or gender identity discrimination. It says the party taking legal action could be awarded compensatory damages and reimbursement of court costs for filing such an action.

In May, Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) introduced an identical version of the bill in the Senate. Twenty-five senators, 24 Democrats and one independent, signed on as co-sponsors. The House version of the bill pulled in 125 co-sponsors, 123 Democrats and two Republicans.

Both the Safe Schools Improvement Act and the Student Non-Discrimination Act have been referred to the House and Senate education committees.

Lara Cottingham, a spokesperson for Polis, said the congressman was hopeful that a legislative hearing on the Student Non-Discrimination Act would be held next year. She said no date has been set.

"Every day, students who are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) are subjected to pervasive discrimination, including harassment, bullying, intimidation and violence, which is harmful to both students and our education system," Polis said in a statement at the time he introduced the bill.

"While civil rights protections express-

ly address discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin, they do not explicitly include sexual orientation or gender identity and, as a result, LGBT students and parents have often had limited legal recourse for this kind of discrimination," he said.

"The Student Non-Discrimination Act establishes a comprehensive federal prohibition of discrimination in public schools based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity and provides victims with meaningful and effective remedies, modeled after Title IX," he said.

Lautenberg announced last week that he plans to introduce an anti-bullying bill covering colleges and universities when Congress returns from its recess in November. He made the announcement on the Rutgers University campus in New Brunswick, N.J., during a forum called to discuss issues surrounding the suicide of Clementi.

He said his bill would require colleges and universities receiving federal funds to adopt a code of conduct that prohibits harassment and bullying. He said the bill would also call on colleges and universities to put in place procedures for addressing complaints about harassment and bullying and would provide federal grants to fund college programs aimed at preventing harassment and bullying.

Byard of GLSEN said studies show that LGBT students enrolled in schools that have adopted anti-bully and harassment policies are less likely to encounter bullying.

"LGBT students in a school with such a policy in place are less likely to be victimized themselves, are more likely to report that faculty actually intervened when things happen, and are themselves more likely to be in a better place in terms of their own well being and their future educational aspirations," she said.

Most, but not all, D.C. area senators and House members have signed on as co-sponsors for the Student Non-Discrimination Act. Co-sponsors include Congressional Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), Reps. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) and Jim Moran (D-Va.), Sens. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), and Sen. Benjamin Cardin (D-Md.).

Reps. Donna Edwards (D-Md.) and Frank Wolf (D-Va.), and Sens. Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Jim Webb (D-Va.) have not signed on as co-sponsors of the bill.

Cardin, Moran and Norton are the only D.C. area members of Congress that became co-sponsors of the Safe Schools Improvement Act.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), the House Majority Leader, doesn't co-sponsor bills according to a longstanding practice of House members who hold the posts of Majority Leader and Speaker of the House.



We knew it for years as the "Aurora Picture Show", now the little former church in the Houston Heights is a microcinema called **14 Pews**. They will present the, "**It Gets Better Film Festival**" over the Thanksgiving holidays (11/26 – 11/28). This festival will showcase gay and lesbian themed films. There will be panel discussions, one specifically discussing the question: "If there has been a sudden outbreak in suicide among gay teenagers or is the media finally paying attention to the massive problem?"

Dave Reynolds, a Sr. Public Policy and Research Manager at The Trevor Project said, "From what we know and can tell, there has not been an increase in suicide completions among lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth over the past few weeks. Sadly, there are likely this many deaths every week, but the media and the general populace are just starting to realize the depth of this public health and social justice issue."

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- 1.) We are looking for gay and lesbian films and documentaries (of any length) to show. Please send them to 14 Pews or call us 281.888.9677
- 2.) We are giving out Gay Teen Awards which will recognize and honor gay teens who have made a contribution to Houston through: community activism, mentorship, leadership, sports, arts, entrepreneurs, or in academics. Can you nominate a gay teen for the Gay Teen Award?
- 3.) We need speakers at our panel discussions! We will be inviting the families of the numerous teens who have unfortunately taken their lives this year but we need local people who are: politicians, business owners, powerful gays and lesbians, not so powerful gays and lesbians, teen hotline folks, Parents of Lesbians and Gays "PFLAG," ministers, local activists, etc. Feel free to contact **14 Pews** if you would like to be a speaker or can suggest someone.

Contact Cressandra at 281.888.9677 or www.14pews.com

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Upcoming Theater Openings

Breakfast at Eight (Main Street, 10/22) – one of their New/Now series of premieres of plays.

Vanities (Theater Southwest, 10/22) - the recurring theme of dressing tables follows three women through their lives.

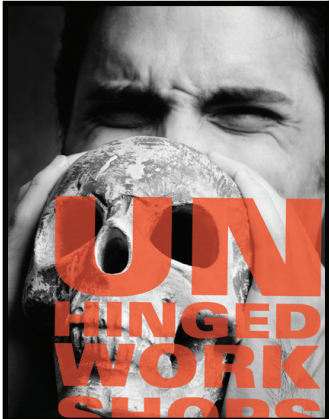
Galveston Pride 2010

featuring Cassidy Haley, Pride Idol winner Brittini Jackson and finalist Nina Lombardo.

When: 2-6 p.m. and 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Oct. 23

Where: 3rd Coast, 2416 Post Office St.

Admission: Free



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 www.comeunhinged.com.

TWO ON THE AISLE

REVIEW BY BILL O'ROURKE



Peter Pan: The Boy Who Never Grew Up (at The Alley) is aimed directly at thinking adults. It's not a play for children.

It's a play about children for adults. However, since it also makes the point that adults often act like children, it's also a play about adults for adults.

Now take John (Adam Van Wagoner), for instance, the older of Wendy Darling's two brothers. He is the one who takes after his father the most. Compared to him, his little brother Michael (Emily Neves) is almost femme -- a bit sensitive for his day and time -- but much more caring. Pity he has to grow up. "*All children grow up, except one -- Peter Pan.*"

Peter has spent some time explaining to Wendy that every time a child says "I don't believe in fairies," a fairy falls down dead. John comes in and when Wendy tells him they are about to meet a fairie, the very first thing John says is "I don't believe in fairies." And you hear a little clunk from afar.

When the siblings arrive in Never Never Land, the lost boys are building a house for Wendy. John complains that the house they have built is really too good for his sister because she's a woman and it really doesn't need a chimney. Tell me, who spends the most time in the family house and does the cooking? The stay-home parent which, in those days, was invariably the woman.

In this version there has been a character added who represents the author himself, played by John Tyson to good effect. His speeches are put together from the stage directions and other things that Mr. Barrie wrote in his own voice. He makes a point right at the closing curtain that this story will keep repeating itself as long as children are young, and innocent, and heartless.

All of these points have always been there in Barrie's own vision of the story but (in a process described in one of the best programs I have ever seen) he needed money and pandered to what the audience wanted. It's not really dark, just pessimistic. Anything would appear a bit dark when compared to Disney's animated Peter Pan. but we know that the Disney Pooh is not the real Winnie-the-Pooh, either.

The musical version came closer to Barrie's original vision but it's still a bit sanitized and warmed up. I still love them, too, but you get the full meat this way.

Yes, I know that the Alley has had a habit at times in the past of losing the romance and a lot of the humor of a piece (slow-motion fighting in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, or *Bottom* flipped like a

flattened pancake) but this time Director Gregory Boyd is fully justified in doing what he's done, and it adds a lot.

Jay Sullivan, as Peter, is at The Alley for the third time. (He works all over the world!) Somehow I missed the other two, but now I wish I hadn't. Or,

the third time's the charm. He is charming, roguish, self-centered but trying to care about others, and ultimately vastly lonely. Bravo!

Elizabeth Bunch as Wendy is his perfect foil -- loving, steadfast, needy, but really self-sufficient.

I had gone hoping to see James Black as the perfect Disney/Cyril Ritchard style Captain Hook. I'd still love to see that some day. However, he got out from under that shadow very quickly and showed me a treat I hadn't been expecting. When Hook makes a grand dying speech he laments that, when children play at this story, the stronger kids play all the good guys and make the weakest little kid play him. (Obviously that's not the truth in this production.) But isn't this Barrie recoiling at seeing the world going gray around him? Yes, there are problems if you don't grow up, but there are also problems if all the color leaves the world, headed for the Gray Havens, too.

Let your inner kid see this, but don't be surprised when Barrie's even handed balancing of both sides of the subject gets your adult side thinking deep thoughts.

Alley Theater, 615 Texas Ave. 77002, 713-220-5700, www.AlleyTheatre.org.

If your theater hasn't been sending me PR releases, please start. Billmork@aol.com.

SEE OPENINGS on Page 9



Jay Sullivan as Peter Pan in the Alley Theatre's production of *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up*. *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up* runs now through October 31, 2010 on the Hubbard Stage. Photo by Jann Whaley.



Nose in a Book

Review by Jone Devlin

Blubber

by Judy Blume

Jill Brenner is a pretty typical young girl. She has a best friend named Tracy, two OK parents, and an annoying little brother. This year she is a little disturbed because her best friend won't be in class with her but other than that things are OK, until it comes time to give book reports.

One of the girls in Jill's class is named Linda Fischer and her report is on whaling. Throughout the report, Linda, who is somewhat chunky, continually talks about Blubber - prompting one of the most popular girls in the class to pass around a note saying that "Blubber" would be a great nickname for Linda.

From there things quickly spiral out of control as the entire class, led by popular girls Wendy and Caroline, proceed to make Linda's life hell. They torment her to tears regularly on the playground by making up horrible jump rope rhymes. They torment her in the lunchroom by mocking everything she eats, they torment her when they happen to come across her outside of class (Jill is so inspired by the bullying she invents an anti-blubber Halloween costume), and even in class (poking, throwing spitballs, passing rude notes) when the teacher is not paying attention (which seems to be most of the time).

At first, Jill goes along with the kids in her class because she thinks it's fun and besides, who doesn't want to be part of a group that includes the most popular girls in the class? Even warnings from best friend Tracy don't penetrate, and Jill jumps right into thinking of bigger and better ways to torture Blubber. As time goes on, however, and the abuse escalates, Jill starts to become a bit uncomfortable with the way Linda is being treated, but is afraid to speak up. Eventually however, things go too far and Jill does take a stand in Linda's favor, with the result that the bullying turns on her.

Soon, Jill becomes known as Baby Brenner, with all the requisite poopy diaper and needs a bottle to eat jokes. At first Jill is shocked and horrified that all of her "friends" could turn on her, but soon realizes that none of this is about friendship. In fact, the majority of the people involved in the tormenting are just doing it to go along with the group, and, of course, to keep the focus from turning on them.

Originally written in 1974 (and a staple on banned books list) *Blubber* was re-

cently re-released with a forward by the author. Though many of the references in the book are dated, the sad reality is

that all these years later, Blume's graphic depiction of bullies and bullying still rings true.

The book, just like most bullying, does not have a happy ending. While Jill is eventually able to fight back against the bullies and save herself, the result is that another target is chosen. Linda Fischer, meanwhile, ends up as what she was before being bullied, an odd loner that no one really likes or talks to.

In her new introduction, Blume talks about how the idea for the book came to her when her daughter came home from school talking about how a girl in her class was being bullied. Blume's daughter was uncomfortable with the bullying but didn't know how to react or respond to it. Blume wrote the book to empower her daughter and others, and to show them that they are not alone.

Sadly, 36 years later, children and still being bullied into killing themselves; and adults appear to be just as clueless as the hapless teacher in in this book.

Blubber by Judy Blume is published by Yearling and is available everywhere. Reviewers Grade:

★★★★ out of 5 stars..

~ Center continued from Page 5

The Center will be located in the Lubbock Wing of the Historic Dow School, which is on the southern edge of the campus (closest to the corner of Silver and Lubbock streets). The main entrance for the Center will be on Silver Street.

"We also excited about the opportunities this gives us to increase our services to Houston's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, especially because of our new 180-seat auditorium," said Brookover.

"Quite appropriately, this new chapter in the Center's history comes right before we roll out our new fully accessible web site," said Rev. Burton Bagby-Grose, Center Treasurer.

The neighborhood (flanked by Memorial Drive and Washington Avenue) is served by at least three METRO lines and the *Wave* jitney service. The location is between Montrose and the Heights/West End just west of downtown Houston and therefore more accessible for residents of the Heights and Northwest Houston while still being near The Montrose.

Cooking Capers with Dr. Dave

Living in Texas, I stopped and realized how fortunate we are to have the Hispanic culture here. Yet, even as I ate chips and salsa at one of my favorite Mexican restaurants the other day, it dawned on me I have not shared some of my Mexican recipes with you. A good friend of mine, Myra, an established chef in numerous food styles, taught me these. I hope you like them.

APPETIZER

Aguacate Relleno con Escalope
(Avocado Stuffed with Scallops)

12 oz shucked (opened) scallops
1/3 cup fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano (not dried)
1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro
2/3 cup olive oil
salt and freshly ground pepper
3 large avocados, ripe but slightly firm
minced chile serrano (optional)

Place the scallops in a bowl and add the lime juice, oregano, cilantro and oil. Season with salt and pepper and let stand for 20 minutes or until opaque. This process "cooks" the seafood. Cut the avocado in half, remove the pit and spoon out balls of the pulp, reserving the avocado shells. Mix the avocado balls with the scallops and spoon the mixture back into the avocado shells. If desired, sprinkle minced chile serrano on top. Ummmm....good!

SOUP

Sopa de Queso (Cheese Soup)

1 poblano pepper
1 green bell pepper
3 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup chopped onion
5 cups chicken stock
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons cornstarch
3/4 cup water
4 cups evaporated milk
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
4 oz. queso Chihuahua (or Monterey Jack) finely chopped
1 cup chopped tomato

Remove the stems, seeds and membranes from the chile and bell peppers and cut into a small dice. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in a skillet, add the onion and saute for about 2 minutes or until transparent. Add the chile and bell pepper and cook for 3 additional minutes; set aside. Bring the stock to a boil in a large saucepan. Whisk in the flour and cornstarch in the 3/4 cup of water, add to the stock and stir constantly for 2 minutes. Add the milk and lower the heat. When it comes to a boil, add the peppers and cook over low heat for 5 minutes. Add the salt and pepper and cook 2 minutes more. Add the remaining tablespoons of butter and set aside. Before serving, heat the soup and place 2 tablespoons of cheese and 2 tablespoons of tomato in the bottom of each bowl. Enjoy!

MAIN DISHES

Filette de Pescado al Horno con Jitomate, Cilantro Y Cebolla Morada
(Fish Fillets Baked in Foil with Tomatoes, Cilantro, and Red Onions)

6 fillets of firm-fleshed white fish such as snapper or sea bass about 5 oz each
salt and freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
2 1/2 cups mayonnaise
1/4 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon minced dried cilantro
1 teaspoon dried tarragon
2 tablespoons Pernod
1 tablespoon lime juice
1 large red onion, thickly sliced
3 tomatoes, peeled and thickly sliced
12 pitted green olives

Rinse fish and pat dry. Season with salt, pepper, and 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. In a bowl, combine the mayonnaise, wine, cilantro, tarragon, Pernod, lime juice, and the remaining tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut 6 sheets of aluminum foil which are approximately 8 by 10 inches. Coat each sheet of foil with a tablespoon of the mayonnaise mixture. Place a fish fillet on the foil and cover lightly with more of the mayonnaise mixture. Top with 2 slices of onion, 2 slices of tomato, and 2 olives. Fold the foil to form an envelope and roll the sides so that the juices won't seep out. Place the foil packets in a baking pan and bake for 10 to 20 minutes depending on the thickness of the fillets. Good stuff!

Alcachofas a la Hacienda
(Hacienda-Style Artichokes)

6 large artichokes
2 tablespoons salt
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon baking soda

Dressing for Artichokes

4 hard-boiled eggs, finely chopped
1 cup finely chopped onion
3/4 cup mayonnaise
1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
2 teaspoons olive oil
1/3 cup minced parsley
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon white pepper

Cut the stems of the artichokes flush with the bottoms and cut off the thorn-like tips of the leaves. Place about 3 quarts of water in a large pot with the salt, bay leaves and baking soda. Bring to a boil and add the artichokes; cover and cook for 20 minutes. Drain. With a small knife, pull out the fuzzy choke in the center of each artichoke and discard. Place the artichokes upside down on a platter and chill. To make the dressing, combine the eggs, onion, mayonnaise, mustard, vinegar, oil, parsley with salt and pepper. If the mixture is too thick, thin with water to the desired consistency. Chill. Immediately before serving, spoon the dressing into the center of each artichoke. These are great!

Well gals and guys, I've shared everything from "fish to balls" in these recipes. Have the food with your favorite margarita and, before you know it, you'll be doing the Mexican Hat Dance! Until next time, eat well, love well, and enjoy life!



Believing in a Gay Spirit

Rev. Burton Bagby-Grose

Many of us watched with fear and hope the saga of the miners trapped hundreds of feet below ground level in Chilean mines.

Some of us lost hope. Some of us remained fearful. Some of us clung desperately to our hope that the miners would be rescued. We hoped that they would be rescued from the darkness of the mines.

Isn't it the same for many of us in our daily lives?

Many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth hope that somehow they will be rescued from oppressive lives at school and often even at home.

Many GLBT adults hope for rescue from oppressive religious leaders while clinging desperately to the faith that continues to transform our lives.

As a wonderful seminary classmate reminded me recently, "We all need to be rescued at some point in our lives."

But she also added that, "We may, too, be asked to rescue."

How many of us would be willing to be crammed into a capsule so narrow we had to hunch our shoulders and be lowered over 2,000 feet down a shaft to a place of desperation, fear, and isolation?

The rescuers who were lowered to that dark place also found hope. They also brought hope with them.

There is a HUGE question right now for so many of us not only in regard to GLBT youth, but also struggling GLBT adults, and all who are perceived to be different:

How can we bring hope to these folks? How can we tell them in loud, clear voices that "IT GETS BETTER!" in ways that will transform their lives and save them from despair?

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee took a step in that direction Monday evening when she convened a local, state, and federal hearing at Houston City Hall to address bullying of youth.

Lee was joined by Congressman Al Green, State Senator John Whitmire, State Representative Alma Allen, HISD Trustee Paula Harris, Houston City Council Members Jolanda Jones, Brad Bradford, Al Hoang as well as Harris County District Attorney Pat Lykos, and other area officials.

There were moving testimonies from parents and teachers about successful and failed attempts to combat bullying on school campuses. There were impressive presentations from several local school districts about their anti-bullying programs. Some parents testified that those programs don't always work well because teachers are afraid to intervene.

There was a clarion call issued at the hearing for legislation that will not only provide educators the security and support they need in order to successfully combat bullying, but a call for legislation that would mandate that educators address bullying on our school campuses.

When the Coming Out Support Group of the Houston GLBT Community Center (www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org) convenes every first and third Monday, we hear stories from teachers who are afraid to address bullying because they know they will be targeted by colleagues and supervisors if they do so.

And they find hope in our gatherings. They find solidarity. That's how we can offer hope. We must foster the creation of gay-straight alliances in each and every high school. We must have anti-bullying programs in every school. We must offer places where GLBT youth can find that solidarity, that hope that we all need in our lives.

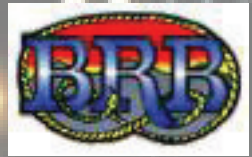
Jesus Christ taught that the most important things for us to do in life are to love God and to love everyone else.

We have to ensure that children and adults learn how to love themselves so that they can then in turn love others. They have to know that, "IT GETS BETTER!"

We have to have more public speeches like the one given at a Fort Worth City Council meeting by Councilmember Joel Burns (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YHglV8_h9E) about how "IT GETS BETTER!"

His emotional, hopeful words will truly save lives. May an avalanche of people come forward to do the same.

Now is the time to put our feet to the pavement and join the groups like the Houston GLBT Community Center, the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN), the Human Rights Campaign, Equality Texas, and others that are on the ground working to combat and end bullying against all people who are perceived as different.



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