

# Austin American-Statesman

## XL Cover Story: The Fortunate 500

### The stars of Austin's social universe

by Karen Odom Spezia

5.12.2005

They're Austin's social warriors.

You've seen them. Out there every night, making the rounds at every party. In the eye of the social storm, air-kissing and glad-handing. They're not just in the loop; they started it.

Call them what you will: patrons, sponsors, groupies or party animals. They're the movers and shakers of Austin's social scene. They do the "face time" at the events that make Austin hum. Politics, music, charity and a number of other coteries are their passions.

Some are wealthy, but not all. It's less about money and more about connections and, sometimes, influence — often for worthy causes. These people make a difference just by showing up.

Their motivations for hitting the social circuit differ. Some are natural philanthropists or humanitarians. Others are looking to boost their careers or businesses.

Some boys and girls just want to have fun. But they all share the same goal: to make Austin a better place by contributing to the city's social fabric.

So we decided to create a list honoring Austin's top 500 social stars.

Why? Because lists are fun. Who doesn't enjoy the guilty pleasure of People magazine's "Most Beautiful" list or Mr. Blackwell's "Worst Dressed"? But mostly, we wanted to recognize the social mechanics that makes Austin tick.

We call them the "XL Fortunate 500."

In the beginning, the task seemed daunting, as we sifted through list after list of partygoers generated from inside and outside the newsroom. But in no time, our roster exceeded 500, and we had to scale back.

It was a good problem to have — knowing too many worthy folks to choose from.

We struggled with the list's criteria. Naming the celebrities was easy, but "influential" or just "social" was trickier — more elusive.

Austin's social scene is a unique gumbo of talent, celebrity and backgrounds. Eccentrics and sophisticates. Heiresses rub elbows with slam poets. Power brokers swap jokes with penniless musicians. Politicians hang out with humble shopkeepers.

In Austin, jewels and jeans coexist seamlessly. It's a town where everyone knows everyone else, not everyone else's checkbook. Not that we don't like money. We do. But we try not to let it define us.

We pride ourselves on not being a Dallas or Houston, by not letting social stature take precedence. In Austin, we know what really matters. What's important. We're a tolerant, evolved town not hung up on social status.

But that doesn't mean we're not curious.

So here it is, the XL Fortunate 500. It's not a historical list, but one that highlights who we consider social standouts from the past year. They're in no particular order or ranking, although we've spotlighted a few leaders in their genre. Some fortunates are listed singly, others as couples, if they are known socially for going out in pairs. Some of those couples count as romantic life partners, others as frequent public companions (let's not use the old socialite term "walkers").

Naturally, some deserving folks have been omitted. Also, American-Statesman employees and contract workers and their immediate families were not eligible. It's not a perfect list, but we hope it's a good snapshot of Austin's most recognizable social people.

We hope to make this an annual issue, so if you didn't make this year's list, don't feel slighted. There's always next year. And besides, you live in Austin. And that makes us all fortunate.

More...

## The Fortunate 500: Literary and media stars

### People who wrote the book on the literary and media scenes...

By Katy Barron  
May 12, 2005

**Lidia Agraz** media/charity/business/arts  
**John Aielli** media/arts/charity  
**Sammy Allred** media/music/politics  
**Philip Bobbitt** education/literary  
**Sarah Bird** literary/media  
**Olga Campos** media/charity  
**Fred Cantú** media/charity  
**Gary Cartwright** literary/media/charity  
**Elizabeth Christian and Bruce Todd** media/politics/arts/business  
**Bob Cole** media/sports/politics/food/charity  
**Jody Denberg** media/music/charity  
**Ron Deutsch** media/politics/food  
**Betty Sue Flowers** education/literary  
**Robert Hadlock** media/charity  
**Steve Harrigan** literary  
**Mary Herman** literary/charity  
**Donna and Steve Hicks** media/business/charity/education  
**Jim Hornfischer** literary/business  
**Rebecca and Phillip Hudson** media/business/heritage  
**Molly Ivins** media/politics/charity  
**Brette Lea** media/arts/education  
**David Lindsey** literary/charity/politics  
**Jill McGuckin** media/business/music  
**Judy Maggio** media/charity  
**Libby and Bruce Malone** media/business  
**Theresa May** literary/arts  
**Lance Avery Morgan** media/arts  
**Mark Murray** media/music/charity  
**Jeff Nighthbyrd** media/music/heritage  
**Joe Nick Patoski** media/music/literary  
**Steven Phenix** media/literary/arts  
**Kevin Phinney** media/music/arts  
**Cactus Pryor** media/charity/heritage  
**Wayne Slater** media  
**Jim Spencer** media/arts/charity  
**Tom Spencer** media/arts/charity  
**Tom Staley** literary/education/arts  
**Bart Stephens** media  
**Bruce Sterling** literary/media  
**Bill Stotesbury** media/business/charity  
**Maury Sullivan** media/education  
**Kerry Tate** media/business/charity/arts  
**Sally and Bill Witliff** literary/movies/charity/education/arts  
**Roberta and Larry Wright** literary/arts/charity