

# dallas voice

The Premier Media Source for LGBT Texas

DallasVoice.com | Volume 35 | Issue 26 | FREE | Friday, November 1, 2019



## *Black Tie*

with

## *Flair*

**Billy Porter**

headlines

Black Tie Dinner

by David Taffet,

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## Sharyn Grayson joining AP Inc. staff



Abounding Prosperity Inc. announced Thursday, Oct. 31, that “legendary advocate and community icon Sharyn Grayson” has joined the API staff as director of development and transgender programs/services.

“Affectionately known to hundreds in the LGBTQ+ community as ‘G-Mama’ or ‘Auntie Sharyn,’ Ms. Grayson brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that will serve AP Inc. well as we continue to advance our community through innovative programming and ser-

vices,” an AP Inc. press release noted.

According to the press release, Grayson began her transition in Dallas in 1964, later moving to Los Angeles where she started her career in the nonprofit sector and “committed her life to improving standards of healthcare, education and overall equality for the black LGBT community but most of all, for her fellow black transgender women.”

Grayson has received numerous awards and commendations through the years celebrating her pioneering work in the transgender movement aimed at creating jobs, finding funding and finding other opportunities for organizations supporting equity and empowerment for the community.

In 1986, while living Oakland, Calif., Grayson started her own consulting firm, the Nonprofit & Consumer Services Network, which she currently operates on a limited basis out of her home office in Little Rock, Ark. Her client base has grown steadily through the years and now stretches throughout the United States, putting her in the small but prestigious group of minority transgender women in the U.S. who have owned and operated businesses for more than 10 years!

Grayson described her new job as a director with Abounding Prosperity as “a tremendous opportunity and extremely humbling situation for me, personally. Dallas is my hometown ...

and having the opportunity to take part in the decision-making and implementation processes of programs and services to improve and empower the lives of transgender women of color here, is my perfect dream job.”

AP Inc. CEO Kirk Myers said the agency is “excited to have Ms. Grayson join our family at this exciting time of growth and development in our history. I am certain that Sharyn’s presence will assist in elevating our transgender-focused initiatives to the forefront of our community, providing much needed benefits to local transwomen of color.”

— Tammye Nash

## North Haven Gardens holding ‘Survivor Sale’

Our friends at North Haven Gardens are having a survivor sale, and you can help them recover. North Haven Gardens has been digging through the rubble in the wake of the Oct. 22 tornadoes, and a number of plants and ornamental items survived. So, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Nov. 8-10, they’re having a sale.

The sale is cash only with no holds or deliveries.

The street, which was completely blocked by downed power lines and trees following the tornadoes, is now cleared and open.

North Haven is planning to rebuild its facilities at 7700 Northaven Road, which were destroyed by the storm and hopes to be back in

the spring, bigger and better than before. And watch for an announcement about Christmas trees and poinsettias.

— David Taffet

## Wichita Falls trans woman running for Congress

Two Wichita Falls Republicans have announced their candidacies for Texas’ District 13 seat in the U.S. House, and one of those two is a transgender woman, according to [TexomasHomepage.com](http://TexomasHomepage.com). Monique Worthy and Kevin McInturff have both said they will be running to replace Rep. Mac Thornberry, the Republican who has held the seat for 24 years.

Worthy — whose campaign website includes a plea for help in either raising the money to pay the filing fee or to get the 500 signatures necessary to file without paying the fee — told [TexomasHomepage.com](http://TexomasHomepage.com) that her campaign slogan is “Make Congress Great Again,” and that she is the “outspoken, openly conservative candidate the 13th district needs.” She said, “Black people are mostly Christian, and we mostly believe in things that the bible teaches.

Worthy also said she wants to make sure all immigrants that enter the country do so legally, while adding that she doesn’t agree that immigrants are doing the job U.S. citizens won’t do. “I know plenty of Americans who will get out there and work some construction and stuff like that if you paid them the right dollar,” she said.

— Tammye Nash

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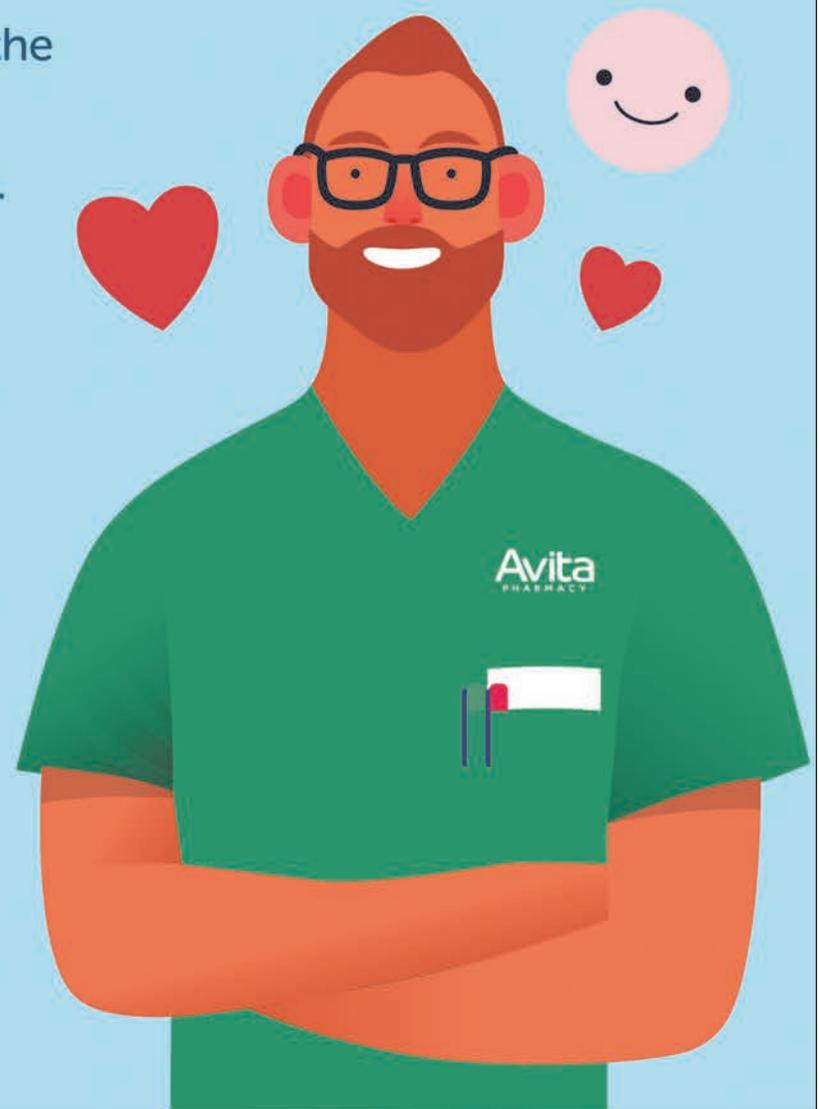
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# THE GAY AGENDA



Have an event coming up? Email your information to Managing Editor Tammye Nash at [nash@dallasvoice.com](mailto:nash@dallasvoice.com) or Senior Staff Writer David Taffet at [taffet@dallasvoice.com](mailto:taffet@dallasvoice.com) by Wednesday at 5 p.m. for that week's issue.

## NOVEMBER

### • Nov. 1-2: De Los Muertos

Verdigris Ensemble presents swirling skirts, painted faces, decorated altars and thoughtful remembrances in De Los Muertos at 7 p.m. at Arts Mission Oak Cliff, 410 S. Windomere. [VerdigrisMusic.org](http://VerdigrisMusic.org).

### • Nov. 2: Glory Holelujah

Not your grandma's gospel presented by the United Court of the Lone Star Empire from 6-10 p.m. at Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. [DallasCourt.org](http://DallasCourt.org).

### • Nov. 5: Election Day

### • Nov. 5: Last Day to receive ballot by mail

### • Nov. 5: Prime Timers

First Tuesday lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Golden Corral, 3312 Forest Lane. [chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth](http://chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth).

### • Nov. 5: Classic Chassis Car Club

LGBT car enthusiasts meet from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Ojeda's, 4617 Maple Ave. For more information visit [ClassicChassis.com](http://ClassicChassis.com).

### • Nov. 6: Estate Planning Seminar

Kent C. Weimer, senior charitable advisor for Parkland Foundation, leads a discussion on estate planning from 5:30-7 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road.

### • Nov. 7: Brewing Up Business

Develop new business relationships by giving your 30-second elevator speech, exchange business cards and learn more about this month's sponsor at 8:30 a.m. at Crickles and Co., 4000 Cedar Springs Road Suite E. \$10 in advance. \$20 at the door. Free to LGBT Chamber members.

### • Nov. 7: Sequins & Saddles

Toast to Life mixer from 5:30-7 p.m. at Billy Can Can, 2386 Victory Park Lane.

### • Nov. 9: Family Zoo Day

The Dallas City Council's LGBT Caucus — Adam Medrano, Omar Narvaez and Chad West — present free tickets to the Dallas Zoo. They'll have a table at the front gate with tickets from 9 a.m.-noon at Dallas Zoo, 650 S. RL Thornton Freeway.

### • Nov. 9: Prime Timers

Brunch at 11 a.m. at Barbec's, 8949 Garland Road. RSVP 214-218-0912.

### • Nov. 9-11: Arboretum

Complimentary admission for active duty and retired military from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden, 8525 Garland Road.

### • Nov. 10: Prime Timers

Games at 2 p.m. in Carrollton hosted by Brian. Call 214-218-0912 for address and directions. [chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth](http://chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth).

### • Nov. 11: Creating Change Host Committee Meeting

The Task Force needs volunteers to plan the January 15-19 Creating Change Conference in Dallas. Committees include fundraising, special events, hospitality, recruitment. Dinner at 7 p.m. and meeting from 7:30-9 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. For more information visit [CreatingChange.org](http://CreatingChange.org).

### • Nov. 12: Grief group

Grief group for persons who have lost a same-sex spouse meets the second and fourth Tuesdays each month from 6:45-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. For more information visit [MyResourceCenter.org](http://MyResourceCenter.org).

### • Nov. 9: Pathfinders

Pathfinders group is a community resource for trans masculine individuals (including non-binary trans masculine people and binary trans men), age 18+ in the North Texas/DFW area. Meets the second Tuesday of every month from 6:30-8 p.m. in the Oak Lawn Library Auditorium, 4100 Cedar Springs Road.

### • Nov. 9: Oak Lawn Committee meeting

a walk or run at Oak Lawn Park, near the intersection of Turtle Creek and Hall Street, every Wednesday at 7:15 p.m. and every Saturday at 8:30 a.m.; **Leadership Lambda Toastmasters** practices and develops speaking and leadership skills from 6:30-8 p.m. on Mondays at First Unitarian Church, third floor of the Hallman Building, 4012 St. Andrews; **Thrive**, program of Resource Center for LGBTQ adults 50+ support group every Monday from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. followed by free lunch at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road; **Lambda AA** meets at noon, 6:30 p.m., 7:45 p.m. and 11 p.m. at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 6525 Inwood Road. Call 214-267-0222 for

Help steer Oak Lawn development if you live or work in the area at 6:30 p.m. at Melrose Hotel, 3015 Oak Lawn Ave.

### • Nov. 12: Preston Hollow Democrats Meeting

Join the Preston Hollow Democrats in their monthly meeting, this month featuring candidates for congressional and Local races; US House of Representatives, US Senate, and Dallas County Democratic Party Chair. The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. at Walnut Hill Recreation Center. For more information visit [ThePHD.org](http://ThePHD.org).

### • Nov. 12: Oak Lawn Committee meeting

Meetings of the organization that weighs in on development in Oak Lawn are open to the public at 6:30 p.m. at Melrose Hotel, 3015 Oak Lawn Ave.

### • Nov. 12: Prime Timers

Dinner at 7 p.m. at Asian Mint, 11617 N. Central Expressway. [chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth](http://chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth).

### • Nov. 14: TPIF Grant Presentation

Texas Pride Impact Funds presents grants to three DFW recipients, free cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and free valet from 6-8 p.m. in The Turtle Room, 3525 Turtle Creek Blvd.

### • Nov. 14: DIFFA Wreath Collection

The 24th annual DIFFA Wreath Collection: Naughty+Nice silent

and Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday at 11:30 a.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St.; **Core Group Meeting** every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.; **Fuse game night** every Monday evening except the last of the month at 8 p.m. at the Fuse space in the 3918 Harry Hines Blvd.; **FuseConnect** every Wednesday from 7 p.m. For more information call or e-mail [Jalenzski@myresourcecenter.org](mailto:Jalenzski@myresourcecenter.org); LGBT square dancing group **Pegasus Squares** meets the second and fourth Sunday from 2-4 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church, 4105 Junius St. For more info, email [pegasussquares@gmail.com](mailto:pegasussquares@gmail.com); **Dallas Frontrunners** meet for

details; **LGBT Sex Addicts Anonymous** meets at 6 p.m. every Friday at 1919 Independence St., Room 19, Plano. 972-316-9188 for details; **Leadership Lambda Toastmasters** gay-identified Toastmasters group meets from 6:30-8 p.m. every Monday at the First Unitarian Church, 4015 Normandy Road (does not meet on Mondays that are holidays); **United Black Ellument** hosts discussion on HIV/AIDS in the black community (UBE Connected) at 7 p.m. every fourth Tuesday of the month at 3918 Harry Hines Blvd.; **DVtv in Spayse**, news and entertainment discussion live streaming every Friday, 4-5 p.m., on the Spayse Station YouTube channel.

auction from 6-9 p.m. at World Trade Center, 2050 N. Stemmons Freeway. [DIFFADallas.org](http://DIFFADallas.org).

• **Nov. 16: Snowball Gaybingo**  
Gaybingo from 5-9 p.m. at the Rose Room, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Tickets at [MyResourceCenter.org](http://MyResourceCenter.org).

• **Nov. 18: Stonewall Democrats of Rockwall**  
Stonewall Democrats of Rockwall meets at 7:30 p.m. at Harry Meyers Community Center, 815 E. Washington St., Rockwall. For more information, contact Patti or Heidi at [sdrockwall@att.com](mailto:sdrockwall@att.com).

• **Nov. 19: Stonewall Democrats of Dallas**  
Largest Democratic club in Texas meets at 6:30 p.m. at Mattito's, 3102 Oak Lawn Ave. For more information visit [StonewallDemocratsofDallas.org](http://StonewallDemocratsofDallas.org).

• **Nov. 20: Resource Center Speakers Series**  
Third in The Dallas Way, Resource Center and UNT Library's speaker series on LGBT history in Dallas. Agatha Beins speaks on the AIDS Memorial Quilt, Art and Activism. A wine and light bites reception at 5:30 p.m. and speaker from 6-7 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. Free. RSVP to [tfrank@myresourcencenter.org](mailto:tfrank@myresourcencenter.org).

• **Nov. 20: Prime Timers**  
Lunch at 12:30 p.m. at Charco Broiler Steakhouse, 413 W. Jefferson Blvd. [chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth](http://chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth).

• **Nov. 21: GALA Happy Hour**  
Free appetizers, game tables, for GALA's third Thursday happy hour from 5-8:30 p.m. at Henry's, 5741 Legacy Drive, Suite 100, Plano. For more information visit [GalaNorthTexas.org](http://GalaNorthTexas.org).

## pet of the week / ELEANOR



Meet **Eleanor**, a 5-year-old, Labrador retriever mix weighing 72 pounds. Eleanor has the sweetest face and is a total doll. She loves going on daily walks and spending time outside with

her foster family, but what she loves more than anything is snuggling up and napping by her foster family's side. Eleanor needs a home where she will get daily exercise and preferably without any other dogs. If you're looking for a gentle girl, she's the one for you. Eleanor has been spayed and microchipped and has received all age-appropriate vaccinations.

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# Billy Porter headlining Black Tie Dinner

Kuchling Humanitarian Award recipient Don Maison won't be able to attend after suffering stroke

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Emmy and Tony Award-winner Billy Porter headlines this weekend's Black Tie Dinner at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Dallas. The sold-out event is the largest seated dinner in the Southwest.

Porter, who originated the role of Lola in the Broadway hit *Kinky Boots* and currently stars in the FX smash hit series *Pose*, will receive the Elizabeth Birch Equality Award at Black Tie Dinner.

Porter has also appeared on Broadway in *Miss Saigon* and a revival of *Grease*. On film, he can be seen in *First Wives Club* and *The Broken Hearts Club*, and he was recently announced as the fairy godmother in the upcoming movie *Cinderella*.

Black Tie Dinner Co-chair Nathan Robbins said, "Billy Porter represents to me someone who's made a bold stamp for the LGBT community. He's broken down barriers and shown how broad the LGBT community is."

Robbins called Porter a powerful figure, adding, "We're glad to honor him for the work he's done and continuing to do."

## The Kuchling Award

Each year, Black Tie Dinner honors a member of the Dallas LGBT and allied community with the Kuchling Humanitarian Award. This year's honoree is Don Maison, a civil rights attorney and the recently-retired CEO of AIDS Services Dallas.

"With his retirement this year, it was a perfect time to honor him," Robbins



Billy Porter, top, Don Maison, above and Shea Diamond, right

## This year's beneficiaries:

- AIDS Outreach Center
- AIDS Services of Dallas
- Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star
- Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ
- Celebration Community Church
- Equality Texas Foundation
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation

- Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
- Legacy Counseling Center
- Northaven Church
- Planned Parenthood
- Promise House
- Rainbow Roundup
- Resource Center
- Trans Kids and Families of Texas
- Turtle Creek Chorale
- Uptown Players

said, noting that Maison has been on Black Tie Dinner's radar for years for everything from his legal battles to his work housing people living with HIV.

At the time of his retirement, Maison was the longest-serving CEO of an AIDS organization in the country.

AIDS Services of Dallas, a Black Tie Dinner beneficiary, provides housing for

for dancing together at the Village Station.

Maison will not be able to attend the dinner because he is in rehab after recently suffering a stroke that left him partially paralyzed. He is expected to make a full recovery, and those who know and love him agree he's too ornery not to fully recover.

Maison said this week he is very honored to receive the recognition he's gotten this year from the city and the county and now from Black Tie Dinner.

"Sorry I can't be there," Maison added. "Shit happens."

Robbins wished Maison a speedy recovery on behalf of the Black Tie board of directors.

## Alphonso David

Scheduled to speak at the dinner on Saturday night is Human Rights Campaign's new president, Alphonso David.

David joined Lambda Legal as a litigation attorney in 2004, and he was appointed special advisor to the New York Division for Human Rights in 2007. The following year, he was named special deputy attorney general for civil rights cases in New York, and Gov. Andrew Cuomo



people living with HIV. Before Maison retired, ASD had just acquired another property that is being renovated to become housing for people.

Before heading the AIDS service organization, Maison was a civil right attorney. In his most famous civil rights case, he defended men who were arrested in a police raid

tapped him to fill the newly-created position of deputy secretary and counsel for civil rights and later as chief counsel to the governor.

David is the first person of color to head HRC. Earlier this week, he testified before the House Financial Services Committee's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee about anti-LGBT discrimination in housing and lending, including the attacks on transgender people by HUD Secretary Ben Carson.

This will be the first dinner in Dallas where David will speak. Robbins said

# Mansfield CoC's anti-LGBT tweet

Third anti-LGBT incident in three years prompts concern among Mansfield LGBT residents

**JAMES RUSSELL** | Contributing Writer  
james.journo@gmail.com

**T**he Tarrant County city of Mansfield is again under pressure from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists after two recent incidents left them questioning the city's commitment to their safety.

On Oct. 22, members of the pro-LGBT Mansfield Equality Coalition asked the district school board at their monthly meeting to add protections for sexual orientation, gender identity and expression to their nondiscrimination ordinance. The group has been demanding the changes for a year after a lesbian teacher was put on administrative leave following a parent's complaint she was promoting the "homosexual agenda" by showing photographs of her fiancé.

That teacher, Stacy Bailey, sued and was reinstated.

The Rev. Katie Hays of Galileo Church, who leads Mansfield Equality, told trustees the city recently added similar protections.

Or so she thought, based on language appearing on the city's website.

The city of Mansfield personnel director, Shelley Everhart, called Hays on the following day, and disputed Hays' statement. The language had not changed, Everhart said.

According to Belinda Willis, the city's director of communications and marketing, the language was included on the new website, which launched Oct. 17, in error.

"During the redesign of the website, content for the Human Resource Department that had not yet been approved or finalized as policy was mistakenly added to the HR department pages of the website by the HR director. Once the error was discovered the current policy was placed onto the HR department



pages," Willis wrote in an e-mail.

Willis maintains that the city has nothing to hide from the public, nor does the city discriminate. The policy that is currently posted has been in place for many years, Willis said, adding, "The city has always been and remains an equal opportunity employer."

But the city's current ordinance does not protect LGBTQ people, according to Rafael McDonnell, communications and advocacy manager for Resource Center. That's why he reached out to Everhart this summer, requesting a meeting to make the case for protections.

She was happy to meet, he recalled, after the city finished the budget process and open enrollment ended for employees.

He called Everhart in early October but did not hear back. He did notice, however, that the requested language appeared on the website.

"We were happy," McDonnell said. While the center does not have a presence in Mansfield, he credits activists in the city for taking the lead. The situation worsened on Friday, Oct. 25, when the Mansfield Chamber of Commerce tweeted a link to a post on the American Family Association website calling for a boycott of Target because of its support of LGBT youth programs. The social conservative organization is designated as a hate group by The Southern Poverty Law Center for its anti-LGBT positions.

**MANSFIELD**, Page 17



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# Grapevine HS teacher fighting termination

Josh Hamilton says district fired him for telling students he is gay

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor  
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A Fort Worth man who says he is being fired from his position as a teacher with the Grapevine-Colleyville ISD because he is gay has filed complaints with both the EEOC and the Office of Civil Rights challenging his firing.

The Grapevine-Colleyville Independent School District has denied Josh Hamilton's claim that he is being fired because he is gay. Kristin Snively, the

district's executive director of communications, provided Dallas Voice with this written statement:

"To be clear, Mr. Hamilton's sexual orientation has absolutely nothing to do with the reason Mr. Hamilton has been proposed for termination. Mr. Hamilton has been proposed for termination for good cause due to violations of the district's electronic communications policy, violations of student privacy, failure to follow written directives, and violations of the Texas Educator's Code of Ethics. In GCISD, we hold all employees to high standards for their interactions with our most important people, our students. His conduct is not acceptable for an educator in GCISD."

Hamilton has a bachelor's degree in communications, a master's degree in education and a Ph.D. in language and

literacy. He started working at Grapevine High School as the oral interpretation teacher/coach and professional communication instructor in August 2017, beginning with a team of eight freshman that later became seven.

"Those seven have been with me since the beginning," Hamilton said. "My first day at Grapevine High School was their first day there. They are juniors now."

Those seven plus one senior, the team captain, comprise the Grapevine High School team that last year continued the school's winning tradition by claiming state and national championships. That, Hamilton said, is what he was hired to do.

"My very first day of training, the superintendent came in and asked what I was teaching. I told him and he said, 'Ooooh, that's a big program, a lot of pressure.' He was telling me coming in that the expectation was 'Coach these kids and win, just like we've done for years.'"

But Hamilton's place in that winning tradition ended in September, the day after he mentioned to his team that he was gay.

It was a Thursday, and Hamilton was giving his team a pep talk, trying to get

them stoked and ready for the "huge" debate tournament Grapevine High was hosting, beginning the next day. The students, he said, weren't prepared for the tournament, and he was trying to motivate them.

"I told them, 'We've all been through this before, and you know you can do it. I mean, look at me. You guys watched me last year have the worst year of my life, and you've seen me come out the other side as a happy, functioning gay man.'"

"It was a big hype session, and it worked. They told, 'Yeah Hamilton! You're right!'"

Hamilton said he spent the afternoon on the phone with parents, working to secure the final details for the coming tournament. He also met with a couple of students who were, he said, struggling before finally leaving for home about 5 p.m.

"That was it," he said. "A normal day."

But the next morning, about 6 a.m., Hamilton received a text from the GHS principal, Dave Denning, asking him to come to Denning's office at 8. Hamilton said he assumed that he had missed some detail. But when he walked in, he

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found himself facing not just Denning, but two representatives from the district's HR office, too.

"I was like, what the hell?" Hamilton said.

The three began questioning Hamilton on whether he had taken the district's training on communications with students and texting, asking if he had ever texted students and, when he said yes, asking which students he had texted and why.

Hamilton said he told them that it was the eight students on his competition team that he texted about competition and debate information. "I traveled with those kids. I spent 46 days and nights, total, with them," Hamilton said. "I was their caregiver, the adult who looked after them. I took them to the doctor when they got sick; I held them when their mother died when they were out of town for a competition.

"That was me, taking care of them. They were like my own children. In fact, for every hour I spent with my own children, I spent six with those kids," he said. "I'm not talking about Little Suzy that I might see in class every other day. These are my own children. I would do



Josh Hamilton

anything for them."

Hamilton said he even handed over his phone and let the principal go through all the texts before, about 45 minutes into the meeting, he finally asked outright.

"I said, what are we getting at here? And the HR lady — I'll never forget it — she says, 'Have you told the kids anything about your personal life changes?' I said, 'Are you asking me if the kids

know I'm gay?' and she said, 'Do they?'" Hamilton recalled. "I told her yes, sure they do. Just like they know I was married. Just like they know I have kids. And immediately, the paperwork came out."

Hamilton said the HR representatives said he was under investigation for sharing too much personal information with students and that he was on leave effective immediately.

"She tells me I'm on leave, and I just break. I start crying, and I can't get it

back together," Hamilton said, adding that the HR representative expressed concern about where he would go and what he would do when he left the office, and that the principal offered to drive him home.

But Hamilton declined, telling the principal he would be ok to get home and that he was going to turn his phone off to give himself time to process what had happened. He gave the principal his ex-wife's phone number so they could reach him that way if necessary.

Hamilton said Denning instructed him to respond to the allegations in writing by the end of the day, something he found difficult to do because he wasn't clear on what it was he did wrong, especially since they wouldn't tell him what texts in particular were problematic.

Finding himself in "a pressure situation," Hamilton said, he wrote a statement in which he acknowledged having texted students, apologized for doing so and pledged to be more circumspect moving forward.

"I didn't have an attorney then, and I didn't think anything was really wrong.

TERMINATION, Page 14

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# Finding a 'Safe' place

Dallas couple starting nonprofit  
to create an LGBT tiny home  
village

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor  
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Everybody needs somewhere they can go and know they are among friends. Somewhere they know they can be themselves without worrying about being judged. Somewhere they can relax and not constantly have to be on guard.

Everybody needs somewhere they know they are safe. And nobody needs that more than LGBT people.

And that's exactly what Dallas couple Ethan Avenzino and David Whitehead hope to provide for people in the LGBT community through the newly-established nonprofit, Safe To Be.

"When I came out [and] transitioned, and when I was talking with people about my story of acceptance from my family and friends and at work, I started to realize, my story is not the normal story," said Avenzino, a transgender man who works for Southwest Airlines.

Many trans people are fired from their jobs, kicked out of their homes and lose their family and friends, he said. And those who find themselves homeless also often find that shelters and services are not at all trans-friendly.

"That is something that has to be addressed in our community," Avenzino continued.

So when he started seeing articles about "tiny home" communities that are being created for homeless people, Avenzino said, it struck him: "Why don't we do that with an LGBT focus?"

"There is a need for transgender people to have somewhere safe to live, somewhere that they can be themselves and not be afraid," he continued. "There is a need for housing for homeless LGBT youth, a need for housing for LGBT se-



niors who don't have children or other family to care for them as they age.

"And so Safe to Be was born."

Avenzino and Whitehead said they really began working toward establishing a non-profit organization aimed at creating a "tiny home" LGBT village in April of last year. "That was when the idea really solidified," Whitehead said. "I mean, life-changing-commitment solidified."

So they began the process of applying for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. Unfortunately, after they started that process, the federal government shut down for five weeks, from Dec. 22, 2018 to Jan. 25, 2019. So the waiting period between filing for and actually being approved for nonprofit status took about six months.

Approval finally came through at the end of March of this year.

That process isn't free, and Whitehead said that he and Avenzino that they raised the money to pay for it the way they've raised all the organization's funds so far: primarily through the LGBT

# Safe To Be

David Whitehead, left, and Ethan Avenzino

Whitehead has the answer to that. "Besides the fact that it is absolutely gorgeous there, Eureka Springs is one of the most diverse and most inclusive cities we have ever visited," he said. "There is a very large gay community there, and a very large trans community. And the residents there accept everyone, which is something we just fell in love with."

Avenzino recalled an incident on their first visit to Eureka Springs in which they were walking down the sidewalk holding hands when "this big Bubba in his big truck pulled up beside us and rolled down his window. I thought, 'Oh, here it comes.'"

Instead, the man asked if they were on their first visit to Eureka Springs then welcomed them to town. And when they met with the man from whom they purchased the land for Safe To Be, he also offered a warm welcome and acknowledged them as a couple.

Plus, as they say in real estate, location is everything. And this property has location in spades, the couple said. It is close to Dallas, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, Kansas City, Tulsa and more, and the wooded, rural setting will offer residents a kind of "spiritual retreat" away from the strife of big city living.

"Nature tends to nurture," Whitehead said. "I am hoping that's what happens here."

The Safe To Be property will feature what Whitehead and Avenzino said are known as "shomes" — a collection of residences, each consisting of two sheds, each converted into a tiny home each with its own kitchenette and living space, connected by a common outdoor deck or porch. There will also be community gardens, community kitchens and other shared spaces and amenities.

Safe To Be will provide emergency housing for those with immediate need, transitional housing for those looking for a safe way station on the way to something else and permanent housing for those who "want to stay there for the rest of their lives."

The idea is to provide safe housing that gives residents the privacy they want and need, while at the same time offering ample opportunity for interaction within a supportive community. And while Safe To Be might not be the ideal spot "for someone who is a her-



community.

The couple are members of the United Court of the Lone Star Empire, and the Court has played a big role in helping raise the funds Safe To Be has needed so far, they said. "We are so thankful for the Court," Whitehead said. "We couldn't have done anything that we've done so far without them."

But for the biggest expenditure so far, Avenzino and Whitehead dug into their own pockets, using their own funds to purchase 22 acres of wooded land in Eureka Springs, Ark., which will become the site of the Safe To Be village. They closed on the sale Wednesday, Oct. 30, and will later donate all but one acre of the property to the Safe To Be organization. That one acre, they said, is where they will build their own cabin in the woods.

Why Eureka Springs? Considering that Arkansas doesn't have the reputation of being especially LGBT-friendly, it may seem to some a strange place for Safe To Be to be located.

SAFE, Page 17

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The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) invite you to attend a public meeting about the D2 Subway, the proposed second light rail alignment through the Dallas Central Business District (CBD). DART is in the process of developing Preliminary Engineering (PE) and a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for this project.

The following information will be available at the meeting:

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Two public meetings will be held on:

**Wednesday, November 13, 2019**  
**11:30 a.m. Open House / 12 p.m. Presentation**  
**6:00 p.m. Open House / 6:30 p.m. Presentation**  
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The same information will be provided at each meeting, and the presentation will be made available immediately following the meetings at [DART.org/D2](http://DART.org/D2). Learn more and subscribe to project updates at this website.

#### For Additional Information

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## TERMINATION

From Page 11

In my mind, they'd be like, 'Hey, don't text the kids. Use this app instead.' And I would be back at work, no problem," he said.

Hamilton had also been directed not to communicate with any of the Grapevine High School faculty or any of the students while the situation was under investigation, unless he had a familial or social relationship with that student and the student's family.

The following Monday, Hamilton received a text from the principal, Denning, instructing him to be at the district's HR office at 3:30 that day. "I still wasn't sweating it," he said. "I figured if there was something seriously wrong, I would have gotten something from the HR department. I figured I would get written up then sent back to work. I even went dressed to go to Meet the Parent Night afterwards."

He arrived early then at 3:30 was called in to the office. "Their first words were, 'Ok Josh, we've done an investigation. We've reviewed the texts and we are no longer continuing your employment.'"

"I was stunned," he continued. "I had no idea what had just happened."

Hamilton said when he asked to see the texts in question, the HR representative refused, saying they were protecting the student. Even when he pointed out that the texts were his own texts, they refused. "I knew immediately that I would be getting an attorney, so when they refused to show me the texts, I said, 'Ok, then you'll have to give them to my attorney.' And that's when she stopped talking. They took my keys; they took my badge, and they told me I was done."

Hamilton said that as far as he understood, the investigation was over, and he was no longer an employee, which meant directives about not communicating with students or faculty were no longer applicable. So when the debate team captain, the student that had babysat his children, called him that night asking what was wrong, Hamilton responded, saying he didn't know and giving the student some instructions on wrapping up loose ends from the debate tournament that had just taken place.

Hamilton later discovered that was the student whose parents had complained, prompting the investigation, even though the student wasn't aware. And it was that communication that prompted the charge against of him "failure to fol-

low written directives."

Hamilton said he immediately contacted a friend, Seth Phillips, to be his attorney, and that he and his attorney just recently received copies of the texts that apparently prompted his termination. There were, he said, eight texts. In one instance, which Hamilton asked the student to babysit, and when the student asked why, Hamilton told him he had an appointment with a counselor. In another, Hamilton was explaining to the student that he and his wife were separating because Hamilton was gay. And in a third instance, Hamilton was discussing a "problematic" team member with the team captain.

In addition to school officials having "proposed [him] for termination," giving him 15 days to appeal, Hamilton said the district also sent a notice to the Texas Education Agency, although no state or federal law required them to do so in this instance. As a result, he said, TEA has flagged his teaching certificate, which keeps him from being able to find another teaching job until the flag is removed.

"The EEOC says that is definitely retaliation," he said. "That's why the EEOC took our claim."

Hamilton said that he and his attorney filed complaints with the EEOC and the ORC primarily on the basis of "lack of accommodation for mental health requests," because that even though he asked Denning, the GHS principal, on three separate occasions to either reassign him or provide him with help on an issue causing him problems, Denning did nothing.

Hamilton said that the district received notice of those complaints on Monday, and that afternoon, he has been told, Denning began calling his former students into the office, "trying to dig up dirt on me."

Hamilton said he intends to continue fighting what he sees as GCISD's anti-LGBT prejudice, and he adamantly disputes the district's claim that his sexual orientation is not at the root of him being fired.

"We just won the state and national championships last year. The kids find out I'm gay, and now I'm gone," Hamilton said. "Thursday the kids heard the word 'gay.' Friday, I am on leave. Monday I am gone. For the district to say me being gay has nothing to do with it is bullshit." ■

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# Renoir in perspective

The Kimbell Art Museum exhibit focuses on the artist's nudes by comparing and contrasting

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

What could the Kimbell Art Museum do to follow its blockbuster Monet exhibition that drew record attendance and unprecedented new memberships? Renoir.

But this exhibit isn't just "same genre, different artist." This is an entirely different look at one facet of Renoir's work.

The exhibit is entitled *Renoir: The Body, The Senses*. While the artist painted landscapes, cityscapes and family portraits, this exhibit focuses on the woman's body, mostly nudes. Renoir was, Kimbell Art Museum Director Eric Lee said, "the greatest painter of the nude of his time."

The entry gallery includes the first painting by Renoir accepted into the Salon. In the next is the only nude by the artist entered in the Impressionist exhibitions. And in the final room hangs "The Bathers," finished in 1919, the year of Renoir's death. George Shackelford, Kimbell deputy director and co-curator of the exhibit, called this work Renoir's masterpiece and a "glorious last movement of a symphony."

"The Bathers" also serves as an interesting contrast to the previous Monet exhibition, which focused on the last years of that artist's life. With dimming eyesight, Monet's canvasses got darker and more abstract. Renoir's "The Bathers" was brighter. Shackelford describes the color as "too saturated."

Although Renoir suffered from severe arthritis, an assistant would place a brush in his hand, and his movements came from his arm rather than his fingers to produce nude figures are that



larger and well defined.

Interesting about "The Bathers" is that two nude women are lying in a field painted in a very Impressionistic style. Three women are bathing in a pond behind them. Obviously, the scene is an exterior. But maybe not. The front nude lies on a pillow, and the women behind her props her up on her elbow leaning on something that blends into the landscape.

The main women in "The Bathers" were painted on a sofa in Renoir's studio while the exterior was from a different view or maybe from memory. But the blending of interior and exterior in one of his final, if not his last work, is a brilliant piece that I kept returning to during my visit to the collection.

While expecting comparisons between the recent *Monet: The Late Years* exhibit and Renoir, I kept finding contrasts. The Monet exhibit focused entirely on that artist. One Monet after another, most from collections I'd never seen before. The current Renoir exhibition puts the artist in context. His nudes are juxtaposed with similar and contrasting works by other artists.

In the opening galleries of Renoir are



nudes by Corot and Reubens, artists of an earlier generation whose work influenced Renoir's earliest paintings.

Renoir grew up in Paris blocks from the Louvre. "Diana Leaving Her Bath" by Francois Boucher, on loan from the Louvre, is a painting that, Renoir said, "was the first painting that grabbed hold of me, and I have continued to love it all my life, as one does his first love."

Next are works by Renoir's friends and contemporaries, such as Degas and Cezanne, hung side by side with his canvasses. Similarities and how they influenced each other are evident, as are each artist's distinctive style.

Finally displayed are nudes by younger artists such as Matisse and Picasso who were fans of Renoir and influenced by him. One Renoir canvas, "Bather Seated in a Landscape, Called Eurydice," was purchased by Picasso in 1920 and is included in this exhibition on loan from the Picasso Museum in Barcelona. It is one of seven Renoirs that were part of Picasso's personal collection.

Another surprise in this exhibit are bronze sculptures by Renoir. Created with an assistant later in life when he was stricken with arthritis, he directed every stroke of the creations even if his hands weren't directly molding the bronze.

A note about judging the beauty of the figures in Renoir's works: While his models may have been thin, Renoir painted his own idealized vision of beauty at that time. Breasts were uniformly rounded and firm. Heads were often smaller than what might have been accurate and hips were always wide.

On the hundredth anniversary of the artist's death, we have a vision of what beauty was a century ago and an exhibit that amazes and wows any lover of Impressionism.

While the Monet exhibit was about a lot of the Monet you wanted to see, this exhibit is about a Renoir you didn't expect to encounter. ■

*Renoir: The Body, The Senses on view at the Kimbell Art Museum, 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd, Fort Worth through Jan. 26. \$18.*



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## SAFE, From Page 13

mit," Whitehead said, Avenzino noted that "We will certainly be inclusive of introverts, especially with trans folk. We want them to be comfortable living in their true, authentic gender, to be comfortable with who they are."

And, Whitehead added, "We want to give them a chance to celebrate who they are."

Avenzino said he also sees Safe To Be as "an amazing opportunity to bridge the gap between generations. We are not really communicating and sharing our history across the generations now, and this will be an incredible opportunity to do that."

Avenzino said one of the first steps they need to take is to "beef up our board of directors," and they want to hear from people who are interested in participating. Avenzino himself will lead the charge, noting that he has "seen plenty of allies who want to help and who do their best" when it comes to services for transgender people. "But to have a trans voice leading an organization — I think that is very important. And of course, we want more trans representation than just me on the board."

"Putting together a solid board is the top priority, and the second thing is capital funding," he continued. "Right now, we have a budget of about \$1 million, which is way over the top of what we expected. And to start, we are looking at 20 homes, maybe a few more."

The plan, Avenzino said, is to "create a model that could be replicated anywhere. If we can make this happen here in the South" — "In Arkansas, of all places," Whitehead interjected — "there's no reason it couldn't be successful elsewhere."

Right now, Whitehead said, "What we need is for people to give money [to Safe To Be]. That's the big thing. And we need people to spread the word and to be supportive of this project. We want people to realize that this isn't some big corporation somewhere starting this up; it's just two people in Dallas who happen to be gay who want to do something for our people."

Avenzino added, "We know we are reaching for the stars. But if we don't try, who will?"

For information about Safe To Be, visit [SafeToBe.org](http://SafeToBe.org) or contact Ethan Avenzino or David Whitehead via Facebook.



## MANSFIELD, From Page 9

The chamber's Twitter account has since been removed, but screenshots of the tweet shared with Dallas Voice verify that it did appear. The post also appeared on the personal Facebook page of chamber President and CEO Lori Williams. It has also been removed from that site or is at least no longer visible publicly there.

McDonnell has worked with multiple cities and counties on adding nondis-

crimination protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. When presenting cities with material about what the language should be included, he includes materials from the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index, which rates companies on a scale from 0 to 100 for their commitment to LGBT equality. The chamber's tweet is troubling because many of the

top companies on the Index likely have a store or employees in the city, he said.

"It's pretty likely some employees live in Mansfield," McDonnell said. "And there are companies not based in Mansfield but that have significance presence there, like Target, Starbucks and other national retailers."

McDonnell chided Mansfield's elected officials and chamber leader, who owe the public an explanation.

"There is something wrong in Mansfield," he said.



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## BLACK TIE, From Page 8

he expects to hear an incredible speech in which David will outline his vision for HRC's future.

The featured entertainment for the dinner will be African-American country music artist Mickey Guyton, an Arlington, Texas native who was, in 2016, nominated as new female vocalist of the year by the Academy of Country Music.

This year's Visibility Award recipient is Shea Diamond, a transgender activ-

ist and singer/songwriter, known for her bluesy, soulful music and voice. In February 2019, she was nominated for the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Music Artist.

Diamond tells her powerful story through her music.

"Many people have heard her sing," Robbins said. "I'm anxious to hear her speech. It will be powerful to hear her tell her story in words."



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Other featured guests at the dinner will include actor Dyllón Burnside, who plays dancer Ricky Evangelista alongside Porter in *Pose*. He has appeared in the HBO series *High Maintenance* and NBC's *Peter Pan Live*.

Comedian Dana Goldberg will return to the stage as the luxury auctioneer. Goldberg is a stand-up comedian who has appeared at Black Tie a number of times and has been one of the most successful live auctioneers in the history of the annual event.

"We're excited as always to welcome her back," Robbins said. "She energizes the audience. She's inspiring and funny."

Two of the items Goldberg will be auctioning from the stage are packages to the Grammys and tickets to the Democratic National Convention July 13-16 in Milwaukee.

In addition to the dinner itself, Black Tie Dinner will also present B4Black, a free event kicking off the weekend at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel on Friday, Nov. 1, featuring a musical performance by British singer/songwriter Georgia Ku.

The organization also hosts an official after-party on Saturday with music provided by New York-based DJ Ty Sunderland.

Black Tie Dinner was founded in 1982 and the first dinner was held at the Fairmount Hotel and attended by 140 people. That event raised \$6,000 for HRC.

Since its inception, Black Tie has distributed \$23 million to local beneficiaries and HRC. About 50 dinners that benefit HRC are held around the country, but the Dallas dinner is the only one that splits its proceeds between local groups and the national organization.

This will be Robbins' final year co-chairing Black Tie. He said this was the first time in a number of years that the dinner completely sold out. He also said to expect a surprise celebrity guest. ■

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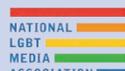
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Subscriptions via First Class Mail are available: Three months (13 consecutive issues), \$65. Six months (26 consecutive issues), \$85. One year (52 consecutive issues), \$130. Contact Dallas Voice at 214-754-8710 x123.

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# Stop this *MaD*ness!

Politicians need to stay out of trans child's business

On Oct. 24, Greg Abbot, governor of Texas, tweeted: "FYI the matter of 7-year-old James Younger is being looked into by the Texas Attorney General's Office and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services."

Why the interest in a child custody case that had already been settled by an 11-1 jury verdict in the second-most populous state in the country? Because the child is transgender.

You remember transgender people right? That 1.4 percent of the population that is so reviled, a special session of the Texas Legislature was called in 2017 to dictate where we pee?

Our attorney general, Ken Paxton, has also inserted himself into the fray, tweeting: "Texans understand that children ... should be supported and properly cared for as they grow up in our communities. I trust that the DFPS will act immediately upon our request, conduct a thorough investigation and protect this child."

Texas House Rep. Matt Krause of Fort Worth chimed in with his own tweet: "Absent a special session between now and the 87th Session, I will introduce legislation that prohibits the use of puberty blockers in these situations for children under 18. We missed our opportunity to do so in the 86th Session. We won't miss the next one."

That is chilling.

By the way Matt, no one who is 18 would be able to block puberty. That ship has sailed. Read on; I will try and educate you.

I'd like to believe that the motivations of our elected representatives are born of genuine concern for a child. But that is clearly NOT the case. It appears to be the first salvo in their 2020 re-election bids, and nothing fires up Republican Primary voters like transgender people.

None of those white men weighing in on the issue are transgender. None of



Leslie McMurray  
Accidental Activist

them are doctors. None of them are qualified therapists.

As a transgender woman, I have some thoughts on the matter.

(Surprise!)

First and foremost, none of those politicians should be interfering in matters settled by a family court. A jury ruled 11-1 to give sole custody to the affirming mother, and then Judge Kim Cooks overruled the jury and awarded a joint managing conservatorship to both parents

I weep for Luna. (I will refer to this child by the name and pronouns she has chosen, by the way.)

Three mental health professionals have evaluated her and diagnosed her with gender dysphoria. Being transgender is hard. It's harder still when your family is fighting over you and what they consider your best interest.

It's a million times worse when politicians who don't know you or care about you use you as a tool to get re-elected.

Once again, fear is being used as a tool to gin up phony outrage. Words like "chemical castration" or "mutilation" are being thrown around. As someone who knows a little about the subject, let me share some truth:

"Transition" for a 7-year-old is social, not medical. It might involve hairstyles, clothing choices and selecting new a new name and pronouns. It might also include counseling.

That's it. Period. Read it again.

Do you see anything there that is irreversible or would rise to the definition of mutilation or chemical castration? I don't.

Between now and the onset of puberty, Luna's parents have time to discuss and

observe her. Luna should be able to guide them on her feelings — not Greg Abbott, not Ken Paxton, certainly not Ted Cruz and especially not Matt Krause.

Doctors and therapists can help, but ultimately Luna should decide.

If puberty blockers are introduced, they are generally introduced at Tanner Stage 2 (There are five Tanner stages to puberty). Boys typically begin Tanner stage 2 around age 11, and for girls it's between ages 9 and 11. So, there is time. Lots of it.

Puberty blockers essentially hit the "pause button" on puberty, giving the transgender child and their parents yet more time to make sure a medical transition is right for them. If the puberty blockers are removed, the child would have a puberty in alignment with their sex assigned at birth.

Completely revocable. Non-permanent. No mutilation. No chemical castration.

If the trans youth and their parents agree, at age 16 or so, THEN cross-sex hormones can be introduced. This will provide a puberty that matches their lived gender and prevent a whole host of undesired effects of a biological puberty.

I hated puberty. I wish with all of my heart I would have had access to affirming parents and puberty blockers. But I was born before such things.

The effects of my puberty are permanent, and I live with them every day. I am female through and through. But my voice is deep; my hands are big; my hips are narrow; I'm nearly 6 feet tall, and my feet are too big to find shoes in most women's shoe stores.

Luna can be saved from this fate — if that's what she wants. And if her parents can put aside what "they" want and do what's best for their child.

Please, keep her health and well-being first and foremost.

The rest of y'all — Stay out of it! ■

Leslie McMurray, a transgender woman, is a former radio DJ who lives and works in Dallas. Read more of her blogs at [lesliemichelle44.wordpress.com](http://lesliemichelle44.wordpress.com).

# Get angry and Carrie on

Carrie Brownstein on the evolving sound of Sleater-Kinney, her cult-fave post-punk band cum electronica duo

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor  
jones@dallasvoice.com

Before she became a comedy icon as one of the stars and co-creators of the quirky comedy show *Portlandia*, Carrie Brownstein was best known not for her acting, nor for her sense of humor, but for her guitar licks and anger issues. At age 21, she and Corin Tucker formed the band Sleater-Kinney, one of a slew of post-punk girl bands originating in Washington State associated with the underground movement known as riot grrrl, which put issues like reproductive freedom, queer rights, rape and female empowerment at the fore of their sound. For 11 years, Sleater-Kinney carved out a rep as one of the leading exponents of feminist music (both Brownstein and Tucker identify as LGBTQ).

After seven studio albums, however,

Brownstein, Tucker and then-drummer Janet Weiss went “on hiatus,” each pursuing separate projects, until a reunion in 2015 put them back in the studio... and on the road. This August, S-K released its ninth album, *The Center Won't Hold*.

The roll-out was not without its hiccups. While the topics seem familiar, the sound is new — more synth, more electronica, more ... clarity. Weiss suddenly left the band before the album was done (drums are definitely less in evidence

on the disc). Purists might scoff, but long-time fans have embraced their evolution. Now Texas fans can see that Sleater-Kinney

continues to perform with the same passion, even as the women move from the energy of their 20s to a more deliberate style in their 40s. Before their concert at the House of Blues on Nov. 8, we spoke with Brownstein about the new sound and the new tone of S-K, keeping music-making fresh and how being queer informs everything about the group. ■

**Dallas Voice:** As I was preparing for this interview, Ric Ocasek of The Cars died, and I immediately began to recognize connections between The Cars

and Sleater-Kinney. Does that seem correct? Were they an influence? Carrie Brownstein: I think you couldn't find any guitar-based band that wasn't influenced by The Cars. They were always ahead of the curve; they had multiple singers and songwriters; their albums sounded different from year to year. But [through it all] there was such a plethora of amazing, indelible songs — sometimes with oblique lyrics but also plainspoken [ones]. They could vacillate between something sophisticated and something low-brow. Also, [Ric] had one of those voices that was very knowing, very cool. I think about [The Cars' 1984 album] *Heartbeat City* in terms of our new album — you could feel them bringing in new influences, writing catchier songs, more electronic [production, as we have on *The Center Won't Hold*]. It surprises people [when you do that] but it also creates more space for yourself culturally. You say, our canvas is bigger and now we're gonna have more fun. It's really just laying down tracks — figuratively, not songs — so you can continue and not think in reductive ways.

**When I was listening to *The Center Won't Hold*, I was immediately struck by how identifiably different the sound was than on prior S-K albums. If you rose to prominence as a post-punk girl group, this sound could be called post New Wave. “Reach Out” sounds like it could**

**even be a forgotten Madonna track. It's far more produced and infused with electronica.** I think with every record we have definitely wanted to do something different. When *The Woods* came out [in 2005], a lot of people weren't happy with the imprint on it. [The following year, S-K went on hiatus for nearly a decade.] On this record, there are a few things that have a New Wave/Depeche Mode sound. But we let the songs dictate the production. There's a sense of freedom when we go into the studio. We are not interested in meeting people's expectations. I'd prefer them to say, “This doesn't sound like a Sleater-Kinney record” than “This sounds just like every other Sleater-Kinney record.” It's about expanding the vocabulary. There's [got to be] a new element on each record that we apply as we go forward — not feel limited but an expansiveness.

**You have been associated with the riot grrrl movement. Is that something you still embrace, or do you feel it is reductionist and backward-looking?** In terms of the logistics, we *did* come out of a post-riot grrrl era and out of a feminist community in Olympia, Wash., and the Northwest in general. The great thing about riot grrrl was the precedent [it] set — taking feminism out of an academic context and [moving it] to a more popular vernacular. But as an intersectionality, it was centered on white women and not

**SLEATER-KINNEY**  
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as involved as it should have been in recognition of race and class. But it has been great at creating a more nuanced [understanding of] feminism. So definitely something I embrace in terms of legacy. But the current iteration [of feminism in music] is more inclusive, and it's great to see it manifested.

**How is writing and performing political-socially charged songs different in your 40s than it was in your 20s... or for that matter, in the Trump era?** There's a lot on this record that has a sense of anger, but the mode in which it's conveyed has a lot of multitudes. It's more a *reflection*, a meditation on anger — how anger affects the body metaphysically. It's more we are addressing trauma and fractiousness and chaos. It speaks to connec-



tion and hope. It's not a cynical record. I like making music in the present day, and that's different now that I'm older. I like writing songs that speak more to where I'm at now, and hopefully, people will see themselves in it. That's more honest than trying to recreate records from 15, 20 years ago.

**You and Corin are both singers and guitarists. How do you decide lead on each song?** It's pretty organic — more intuitive than deliberate. We know what the other person's strengths are. Sometimes we'll write guitar parts and have the other one sing over it. I still consider Corin's voice the secret ingredient in our band — a love-it-or-hate-it voice. I love it, of course, and I always encourage her to

be big. She decided [for this album] that she didn't just want to be the screamer.

**Janet Weiss, your longtime drummer, left the band suddenly this summer. How has that affected the dynamic, with two members instead of three?** It's different and the same... if that makes sense. Corin and I started the band together, recorded the first two albums, then Janet joined [after]. But there [has always been] something very fundamental about the dynamic I had with Corin to the core of this band. Janet was great about navigating that tension between us, so it was really hard [when she left], but at the same time the collaborative relationship with Corin is the one I was always [cultivated].

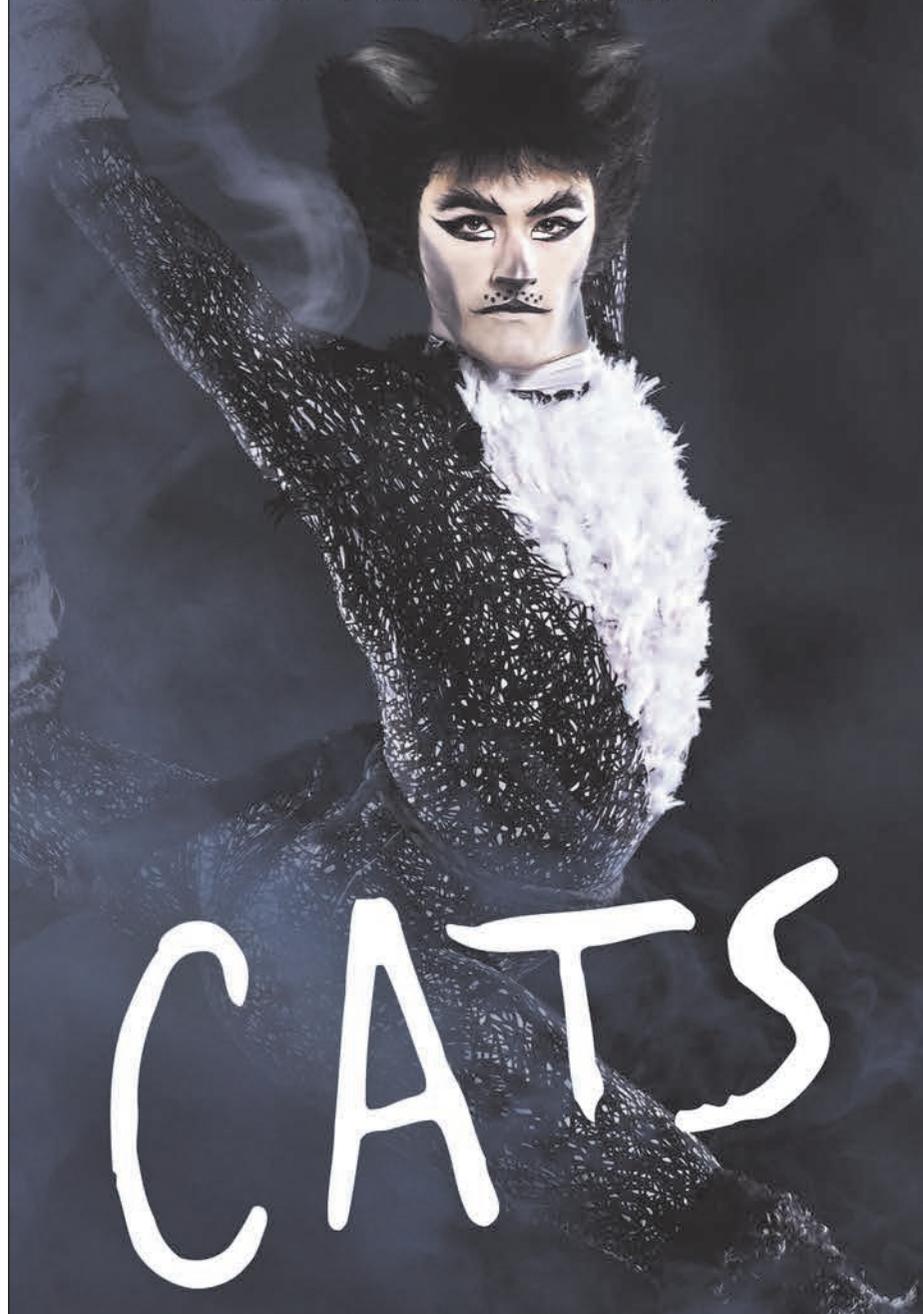
**You and Corin have both identified as bisexual; does that inform your music at all?** I would identify more as queer than bisexual. I like looking at things through a queer lens and the queering of culture. I like things that are neither-nor, or possess a sense of "both" but that are pulling from the margin and upending ideas of heteronormativity... or even homonormativity. That [standpoint] definitely affects the songwriting — whether lyrically or musically it occupies a space that is "other." I think we would be hard pressed [to deny] there something differ-

ent about [Sleater-Kinney]. Our ineffable quality [is our queerness].

**Austin is sometimes considered the Portland of Texas, but what do you think of Dallas?** I love Dallas. I've been there a couple of times. St. Vincent is from Dallas and has been a friend for many years. I've been to Resident Taqueria and all around — it's a great city with great restaurants and arts. I think people who aren't from [Texas] think Austin is the only hip city, but Dallas has a lot going for it.

**Yes, Dallas was recently named by Gourmet magazine "best restaurant city in America." Well, I think Portland would have something to say about that.**

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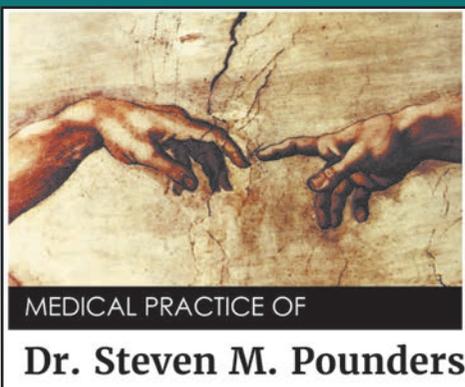


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L+S drag

# Asian Barbie



Dallas Drag Racer Plastique Tiara's life has changed entirely in the last year, and she couldn't be more grateful

her, it's Nashville. The tour has just hit its halfway point, and the Drag Racer still has 20something more cities to go. But that's not the end... just the end of the beginning.

**ARNOLD WAYNE JONES** | Executive Editor  
[jones@dallasvoice.com](mailto:jones@dallasvoice.com)

After this tour, which finishes up with a swing through Texas in mid-November (plus one more date in early December), Plastique will join a drag tour in South America. Then it's off to Australia. Then hopefully joining a residency in Vegas. Then... well, she'll have to check her calendar. All she knows is, it's a whirlwind. (When I ask her where

It's a month into the Werq the World Tour when we talk, and Plastique Tiara is having an "If it's Tuesday, this must be Belgium" moment... only for

she'll be for the holidays, she gasps: "Good question! I guess it would be a responsible thing for me to figure that out. Thanks for reminding me!")

Everything is new and exciting, of course, when you're young. Plastique is just 22 ("I'm so old!" she sighs. "I'm not in the 21 club anymore! So sad."), and barely a year ago, she was still a drag newbie.

She's only been doing drag for about three years, and even then "just on and off — I was working, going to school, so like once a month. Then I won the Rising Star contest at the Rose Room, and it became like once a week."

A few weeks after winning Rising Star, she submitted an audition tape to *RuPaul's Drag Race*. While many contestants wait for years and resubmit applications several times, Plastique heard back about a month later — just after she turned 21. She almost immediately began filming Season 11, which aired earlier this year. "I got lucky, for sure," she says. (She came in eighth; Yvie Oddly, who is now on the *Werq the World Tour* with her, won.)

Plastique seems genuinely grateful for all the good fortune she has experienced in the last year or so, but much of it was hard-earned. Born in Vietnam,

fashion always were my interest."

Her mom didn't know quite what to make of this young boy... and was even more puzzled when she came out as a drag performer.

"When I was first getting into it, they thought I had psychological problems!" she laughs... although she's totally serious. "My family is getting better, for sure. They still don't get it, but they are getting used to it — before it was just like I was cursed by the devil. My grandparents are a little more supportive of my drag than my mom — they will tell me when I am on TV in Vietnam."

She eventually became a hairdresser after years of practicing on Barbie. So it wasn't a far trip for her to choose Barbie as her drag inspiration: "Big hair, womanly body, and you can dress it up however you want?" she notes. What's not to love?

And now it's her turn to inspire others.

"I never thought I would be doing this as a way to somewhat inspire some kids out there is crazy. That's my main purposes for doing this tour — there's some way to inspire [other Asian kids] that you can make it."

Being on *Drag Race* has certainly

#### WERQ THE WORLD TOUR

Majestic Theater,  
1925 Elm St. Nov. 11.  
Ticketmaster.com.



she moved to the U.S. with her family at age 11, living in Houston before finally settling in Dallas when she was in the eighth grade.

"I didn't know a lick of English when I lived in Vietnam," she says. "It was a hard road for me... me and my electronic dictionary."

Even earlier than that, however, she knew she was different.

"I wanted Barbies when I was very little and asked my mom to buy me one — it was the first sign of me being different," she says. "I always wanted to play with dolls when I was little. I was never attracted to cars — beauty and

transformed her life.

"I'm still trying to wrap my head around all this, now that I'm doing this for a living," she says. "It's life-changing. I love being here with all the legends — people who I have looked up to for so long, watched on TV, and now I'm getting to do the show with them. I used to perform with Asia O'Hara on amateur night at the Rose Room, and now she's on this tour with us!"

And her drag name — how did that come about? "I don't know. I was just watching *My Little Pony*. I was 16 years old. I was bored. I was stupid. And now it's mine. Hello!" ■



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# In her best light



Trisha Yearwood on her simple reason for supporting the LGBTQ community, the Nashville closet and lesbian love

**T**risha Yearwood has never cared what the country community thought of her LGBTQ allyship, so why start now? The country music icon — who has lent her robust and emotionally resonant mezzo-soprano to hit songs like “She’s in Love with the Boy,” “How Do I Live,” “Walkaway Joe” and “XXX’s and OOO’s (An American Girl)” — sang at a Nashville gay bar two years after Ellen DeGeneres’s sexuality destroyed her sitcom and not long before the Dixie Chicks got Dixie Check’d.

So imagine country music and the associated conservative values of 1999, when Yearwood performed for gay clubgoers at The Connection during the height of her crossover success, showing

her true colors by headlining an event to raise money for her cancer-stricken gay friend. Yearwood was already a major star, having soared to music stardom when “She’s in Love with the Boy,” the lead single from her 1991 self-titled debut album, reached No. 1 on the Billboard Hot Country Songs.

In 2012, Billboard named Yearwood and her husband Garth Brooks the Most

Powerful Celebrity Couple in Music, based on their combined album sales.

(At the time, the couple, who’ve been married since 2005, edged out Beyoncé

and Jay-Z.)

Now the 55-year-old, three-time Grammy winner and host of her own Food Network show, *Trisha’s Southern Kitchen*, returns with *Every Girl*, her first studio album of new material in a dozen years (and a corresponding nationwide tour that parks her in Fort Worth this week). In a recent conversation, Yearwood spoke about getting a kick out of why some lesbians are relating to her new single, marrying Garth because

he’s open-minded, how her concerts are a “safe place” for LGBTQ fans and the Nashville closet.

— Chris Azzopardi

**Dallas Voice:** Let’s start with the album’s lead single “Every Girl in This Town,” which I’ve renamed “Every Gay in This Town.” I hope you don’t mind. Trisha Yearwood: That works for me!

**You sing *We keep kissin’ boys, trying to figure it out* and, I mean, story of my life. Know any single gay cowboys who are handsome, employed and emotionally available?** It’s funny that you say that, because we did it live the other night, and one of my guys who works with me is gay, and I saw him in the crowd, and he loves the song so much, and I sang that right to him. He was just laughing. And then I had a couple of girls who came up to me when we did an album signing recently, and a girl introduced me to her wife and said, “That song speaks to me. It’s like you keep kissing boys trying to figure it out. I finally figured it out.” [Laughs] It was pretty great. The song works for everyone!

**Is it true you were the first major country artist to play a gay venue in Nashville?** I’m not sure if it’s true or not, but it was

a benefit for a friend of mine who’s a hairdresser who had cancer. And he’s a friend of mine, gay or straight. So it’s like, I’m there. I didn’t even give it a thought. I’m sure there were people who thought it was great, and I’m sure there were people who thought it wasn’t great, and I don’t care.

**What kind of reaction did you get from the country music community and fans for performing at a gay bar?** I don’t know. I feel strangely lucky, I guess. People don’t tend to, especially during that time, tell you things to your face. You know, we’re still that way. We talk about each other behind our backs, but nobody’s gonna come up to you and say, “Hey, I think what you did was wrong,” because what do they think I’m gonna say? They know they’re wrong for even thinking that. Somewhere deep down, they know they’re wrong. But I didn’t get any flak. I’m sure there were people who, again, talked about me behind my back, but it was the right thing to do.

**Was your appearance at The Connection your first time at a gay club?** No!

**Oh? Tell me more.** Another hairdresser friend of mine asked me to come to his birthday party, and I went. I can’t remember the name of the place here at

■ LIGHT Page 30

#### TRISHA YEARWOOD

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# Railroaded

By resorting to fictionalization and melodrama, 'Harriet' turns what should have been a powerful biopic into a sanctimonious snore

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor  
jones@dallasvoice.com

"Negroes for sale." The very phrase shocks the conscience. The fact mankind has enslaved others does little to diminish the horrors of having it as part of our still-recent past. Slavery, in other words, needs little embellishment to strike disgust in our hearts and minds. Res ipsa loquitur: The thing speaks for itself.

The same could be said of the efforts of Harriet Tubman — an escaped slave who eventually "conducted" 70 others to freedom along the Underground Railroad (a system of abolition-friendly



homes and routes from south of the Mason-Dixon Line to as far north as Canada). She earned her title as the American Moses, no question. Her bravery and determination before the Civil War, and then during it when leading a raid along the Combahee River in South Carolina that liberated 700-plus slaves, are the stuff of legend.

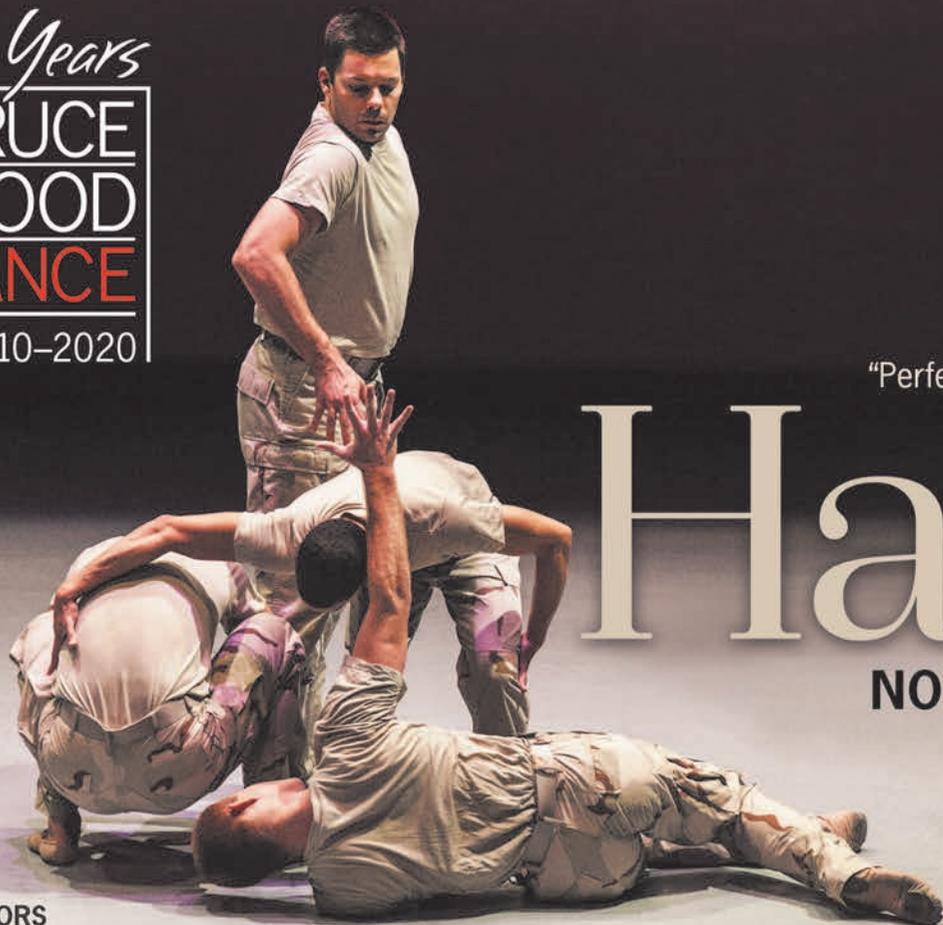
These two facts conspire unexpect-

edly to make the new biopic *Harriet* one of the most infuriating cinematic misfires of recent vintage. Tubman's achievements need no dramatic ornamentation, just as slavery and the treatment of blacks are revolting *sans* adornment. But director/co-writer Kasi Lemmons apparently won't let the facts satisfy her audience; she adds so much melodramatic clutter and banal

clichés, *Harriet* quickly devolves into a self-indulgent mess, the kind of biopic Hollywood screwed up in its early days by sanitizing and dumbing down.

My animosity against *Harriet* arose like a slow boil. At first, I more or less accepted the lazy tropes (the bathing scene, where we silently witness the scarred flesh from mistreatment; the unfair dehumanizing of black folks

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PHOTO BY SHAREN BRADFORD

by their white overlords) as the foundational necessities as exposition. But the telescoping of plot, the shorthands that ignore and even rewrite key facts and the sometimes comical gimmick of Tubman's epileptic seizure as a kind of divine second sight (but playing more like "Spidey sense"), build up like tooth plaque, dulling and deadening the real story of Tubman's life. The screenplay feels like it was written by a sophomore at a small liberal arts college desperate to get an A by kissing up to the professor's sense of indignation; it is among the most inept of any "serious" films I've seen in a decade.

Again, the travesty is that Harriet's life was so significant... although in Lemmons' telling, she was all but solitary in her efforts, while also not given credit for some accomplishments. For instance, the film entirely omits Tubman's support for the violent overthrow attempted by John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, and only skirts by in the closing seconds to her leadership in Combahee; meanwhile, it sets up a Valjean/Javert-like cat-and-mouse game between Harriet (Cynthia Erivo) and her former owner Gideon



Brodess (Joe Alwyn, who all but twirls his moustache while tying damsels to train tracks). Their final confrontation is outright laughable to the point of an-

gering in its smug moralizing. (The film clearly has a point of view about the role of spirituality, which may resonate with some fundamental Christian audi-

ences, but makes for quite feeble drama for the rest of us.) The cinematography (by John Toll) has moments of intense beauty, but you cannot get away from how small the film feels.

Virtually nobody in the cast emerges unscathed. Erivo has been doing a bang-up job recently in films like *Widows* and *Bad Times at the El Royale*, but here she plays too big, especially in the seizures that arrive like deus-ex-machinas. Likewise, Janelle Monae has done gangbusters in films like *Moonlight* and *Hidden Figures*, but here she's simply too modern and artificial to do anything but pull us out of the moment. The sole bright spots are small roles by Henry Hunter Hall (Lemmons' son) as a kind of swamp fox scout who has a Saul-on-the-road-to-Damascus-esque conversion as one of Harriet's lieutenants; and Zachary Momoh as Harriet's husband. Their commitment smoothes over the wrinkles of plot and tone when they are onscreen, but alas, that's not for long. Instead, we're left with long stretches of sanctimonious hoo-haw. Harriet Tubman deserves a movie about her life much better than this one.

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the time. It was on 8th Avenue — I think it's gone. I'm sure everything's gone now, since I'm old. [Laughs] But it was the first time I saw a drag queen impersonating me singing "She's in Love with the Boy," and I was like, "I've made it now. I'm famous now. That's happened."

**And you tipped her \$5.** I did! You know that story! And I did because why wouldn't you?

**So she made a good Trisha?** She did, she did! You know, I can look like a pretty good drag queen myself.

**Wait, you've done drag?** I do drag well. Yes, I do a good Trisha Yearwood impersonation.

**It helps that you are her, so I feel like you have a slight advantage. What was the LGBTQ community like where you grew up in Georgia?** Nonexistent. Well, probably there, but I was born in '64, so during my teenager years, the '70s, early '80s, like most kids in the South, I didn't really have an encounter with anyone who was openly gay until I was in college. I know there were gay people in my hometown, but it was just one of those

things that people didn't talk about.

I'm so lucky to be in an industry that's really open. I was raised by a family who never made me feel like I shouldn't be an open person, so I'm lucky in that way, too. The other day we were just talking about how hard it must be to live a life where you can't really be yourself. So I like where we are. I know it's still not easy in certain circles, but I like where we are and where we're going. We preach "love one another," and that's what we're supposed to do.

**Do you think today's country music**

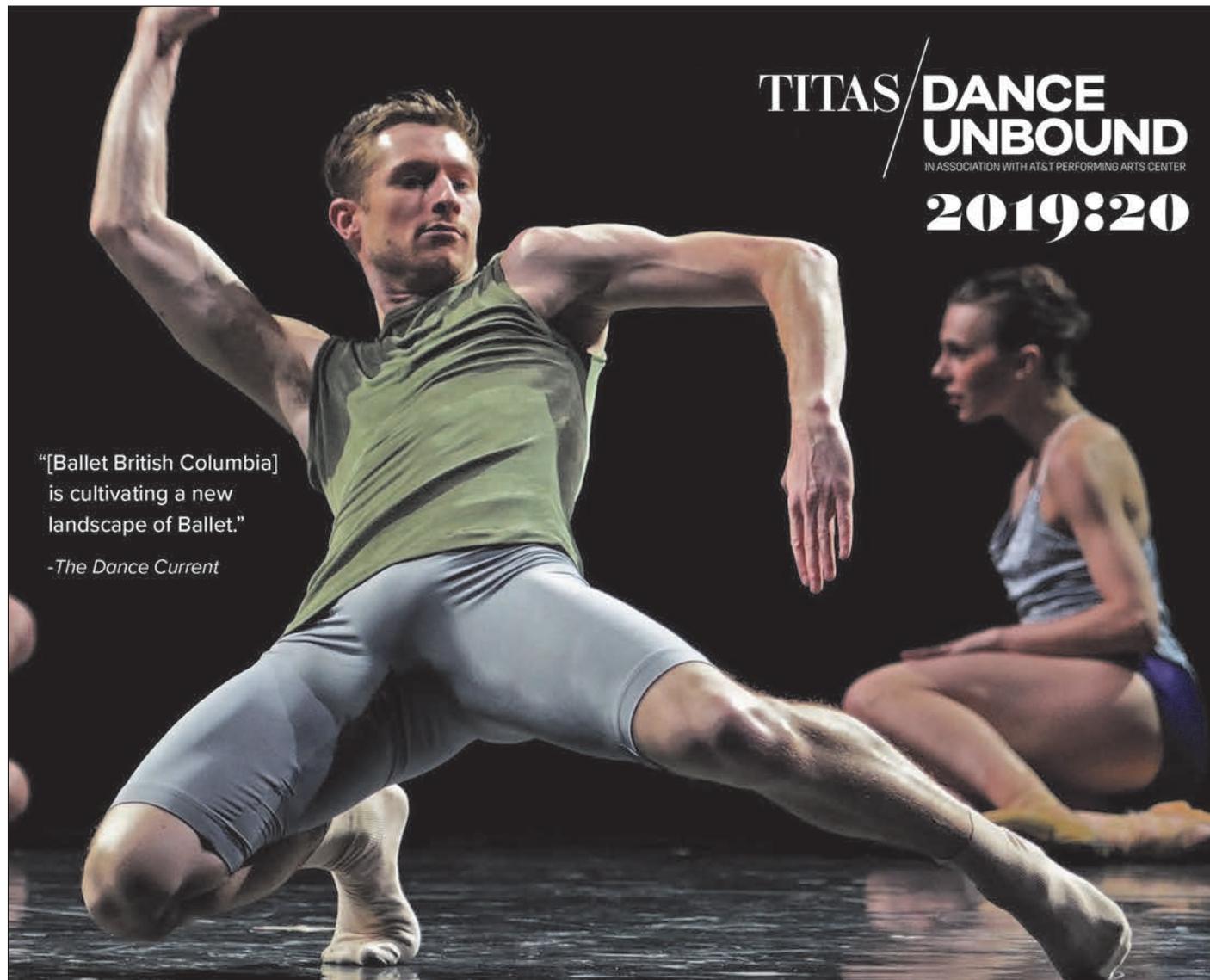
**community is more open to the LGBTQ community?** I think the community here as a whole has always been very open. It's the public community, you know? So coming out and being an openly gay artist is happening, but it's still not probably easy, but because there are more people who have come out, it's gonna be easier. But this community as a whole, as far as the town and the industry that works here, it seems very open. Nashville seems very open and progressive. But I still think the artists probably have a difficult time. But now that there are people who have come out and said they're openly gay, somebody's gotta start that and pave the way, and so they have the hardest time. It's kind of the best kept secret in Nashville that when people come out as gay, no one's surprised. [Laughs]

**Are there still closeted country stars that you know of?** I don't know for sure. I'm sure there are.

**In 1993, Garth released "We Shall Be Free," which stirred controversy with the line, "When we're free to love anyone we choose." I remember how big of a deal that was.** Yeah. I live in a house that is about tolerance and love. I wouldn't be married to a guy who didn't feel that way, and he's been public about that, too. Like you said, it's in that song. You just speak your truth.

**Country artist Chely Wright acknowledged that you were one of very few country stars to offer your support when she came out in 2010. What kind of support did you offer her?** I think it's one thing to say, "Oh, I'm fine with that," and another thing to show up and be a friend. And she had a benefit party every year. I had gone the year before, and that year was the year right after the [coming out] announcement that she had that party. I just went. It was kind of like going to the benefit for the hairdresser; I didn't think about it. She's my friend, I've been before, she asked me to go, and I'm going. And so I don't ever set out to make some sort of strong statement. I'm just friends with who I'm friends with, and if somebody wants to comment about that, that's fine.

**Why do you think more country artists weren't showing their support for the LGBTQ community like you were early on in your career?** I don't want to give myself this positive, like, "Oh my gosh, you're so amazing because you did that," because I don't really look at it that way at all. I think if I was making a statement, it's just that you should be there for your friends. And that's not just a gay or straight statement; that's a "just how I was raised" statement.



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Read more of Chris Azzopardi's interview with Trisha Yearwood, visit [DallasVoice.com](http://DallasVoice.com).

**Monday**  
11.04

**Pop star crystal clear for tour takeoff**

In 2008, singer-songwriter Kim Petras shook social parameters after she became one of the youngest Germans to receive gender assignment surgery at age 16. In 2019, the pop princess tipped into mainstream success with her 12-track debut album *Clarity*, which launched her biggest tour so far, set just weeks after the release of her sophomore album *Turn Off the Light* – released last month. Come see Petras electrify fans at Dallas’ House of Blues.

**DEETS:** House of Blues, 2200 N Lamar St. Show 8 p.m. LiveNation.com.



**Friday 11.08 – Saturday 11.09**

**Canadian repertoire contorts into TITAS season**

One of Vancouver’s most celebrated dance companies, Ballet British Columbia brings an enthralling repertoire to Dallas. This highlight of human ability clashes dynamics with sophistication in one breathtaking performance. Contemporary dance enthusiasts shouldn’t hesitate to catch this sensational act nestled in TITAS/ Dance Unbound’s fall lineup.

**DEETS:** Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. Shows 8 p.m. ATPAC.org.



**Tuesday 11.05 – Sunday 11.17**

**‘Cats’ claws back to Dallas**

Andrew Lloyd Webber’s singing jellicles are back for more moonlit memories. A Tony-winning hallmark of Broadway, *Cats* combines elegant artistry with elaborate costumery, set to one of the most enchanting scores to hit the big stage. Webber tied his music to T.S. Eliot’s magical story about a tribe of felines celebrating life and beyond. And now North Texans can see this spellbinding performance once again close to home.

**DEETS:** Music Hall at Fair Park, 909 1st Ave. DallasSummerMusicals.org



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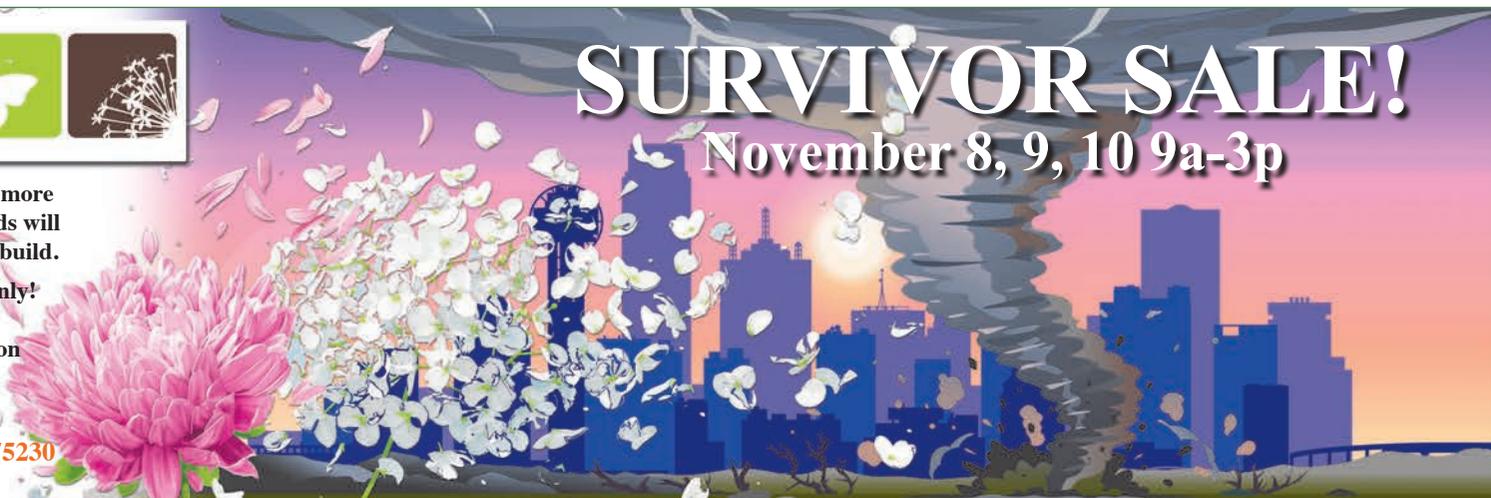
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## calendar highlights

### ARTSWEEK

#### THEATER

**Ann.** One-woman show by Holland Taylor about former Texas Gov. Ann Richards. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through Nov. 10. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

**Lizzie.** The Fall River spinster murdered her parents... right? A musical. Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Drive. Through Nov. 9. ImprintTheatreworks.org.

**Sister Act.** Musical adaptation of the Whoopi Goldberg comedy movie about a woman hiding out from bad guys in a convent. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through Nov. 10. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

#### OPERA

**The Golden Cockerel.** Rimsky-Korsakov's seldom-performed comedy. Conducted by Emmanuel Villaume; directed by Paul Curran. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Nov. 2. DallasOpera.org.

#### CONCERTS

**Dia De Los Muertos.** Verdigris Ensemble and Anita Martinez Ballet Folklorico join forces for this celebration of the Mexican holiday with music and dance. Arts Mission Oak Cliff, 410 S. Windomere Ave. Friday-Saturday. 7 p.m. \$10-\$25. VerdigrisMusic.org.

#### FINE ART

**A Sampling of Contemporary Portraiture.** An exhibition of the work of five photographers producing compelling new examples of portraiture. Afterimage Gallery, 2613B Fairmount St. Through Nov. 4. AfterimageGallery.com.

#### FUNDRAISER

**Chefs for Farmers.** More than 50 chefs — among them Abraham Salum (Salum), Donny Sirisavath (Khno Noodle Shop), Dean Fearing (Fearing's), Bruno Davailon (Bullion) and John Tesar (Knife), add their skills to a weekend-long foodie fundraiser, benefiting local farmers and purveyors. Events include a farm tour, a street food market and the Main Event tasting on Sunday at Dallas Heritage Village. Visit ChefsForFarmers.com for full listing of events.

### FRIDAY 11.01

#### FUNDRAISER

**DSM Gala: An Evening of the Best of Broadway.** Keli O'Hara, Chita Rivera and Amber Riley perform. Tickets available for the performance only, or for the gala dinner. Fair Park Music Hall, 909 First Ave. Nov. 1. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

### SATURDAY 11.02

#### COMMUNITY

**FrontRunners.** Gay jogging/walking group meets weekly at 8:30 a.m. in Oak Lawn Park at Hall Street and Turtle Creek Boulevard for a run along the Katy Trail.

#### FUNDRAISER

**Black Tie Dinner.** Emmy award-winner Billy Porter and Don Maison are among the honorees at this gay fundraiser and dinner. Visit BlackTie.org for details.

### MONDAY 11.04

#### CABARET

**Mama's Party.** Weekly cabaret night with special guest performances. Uptown Theatre, 120 E. Main St., Grand Prairie. 7:35 p.m. \$10.

### TUESDAY 11.05

#### FILM

**What's Up Doc?** Peter Bogdanovich's tribute to the classic screwball comedy of the '30s, a masterful physical comedy with Barbra Streisand, Ryan O'Neal and Madeleine Khan. Screens as part of the Tuesday Big Movie New Classic Series, which now includes a matinee. Landmark's Magnolia Theatre in the West Village, 3699 McKinney Ave. Screens at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

#### THEATER

**Cats.** Andrew Lloyd Webber's massive musical phenomenon. Fair Park Music Hall, 909 First Ave. Nov. 5-17. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

### THURSDAY 11.07

#### CABARET

**Glitterbomb Denton.** Weekly queer variety show with a new lineup every Thursday, now at a new locale and new time. Andy's Bar, 122 N. Locust St., Denton. 8 p.m.

### FRIDAY 11.08

#### DANCE

**Ballet BC.** Dance company from British Columbia. Presented by TITAS/Dance Unbound. Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. 8-9. ATTPAC.org.

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**browse**

For a more complete Community Calendar online, visit [Tinyurl.com/dvevents](http://Tinyurl.com/dvevents).

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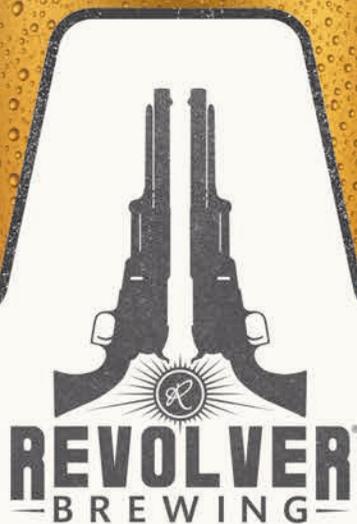


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## Girl on girls

**Jenny Block** on the power of conscious uncoupling

I remember rolling my eyes when Gwyneth Paltrow announced that she and her husband were going through a “conscious uncoupling.” “Hollywood,” I muttered under my breath. “Come on, Gwyneth. You’re getting divorced — just like the rest of us peons.”

But as I watch so many friends and family now going through nasty battles over children and money and possessions, I realize that although Gwyneth is wrong about putting jade eggs in your vagina, she’s right about ending a relationship with kindness, respect and personal awareness. When it came to ending my own 20-year marriage, I was acutely aware of how it would affect my then-18-year-old daughter and my now-ex-husband, as well as how it would affect me. I wanted us all to feel as safe and as loved as possible. I didn’t want anyone to feel taken advantage of or like a victim. I wasn’t interested in the blame game because there was none to play.

Handling the dissolution of our marriage as more of a conscious uncoupling and less of a divorce has served us all well. No amount of money would be worth battling over our daughter or risking her mental health (or our own). And now, three years later, we are all the better for our decision to make kindness rather than resentment be our guide.

So I feel deeply saddened by what I’m witnessing. Spouses trying to take custody of children or refusing to pay child support or maligning their exes, all in the name of money and revenge. Here’s the thing: When you do that, it speaks volumes about you and says next to nothing about the person you are lashing out at.

Part of me simply doesn’t understand that urge. At some point, the two of you loved one another enough to commit your lives to each other. Now, you are willing to rip one another limb from limb, figuratively if not literally. I get it. You’re sad and angry and probably a little lost. But this won’t help. Trust me.

It *will* hurt. It hurts you. It hurts your soon-to-be ex, and it hurts those who love either or both of you. Breaking up should be treated as consciously, if not more consciously, than getting together. Why? Because being apart is 99 percent more likely to stick.

Remember when you worried about what she thought and what she felt and what she needed? Remember when you put him first and yourself second? Remember when winning the respect of their friends and family was the most important thing in your life? Remember when you thought of your relationship as something to be nurtured and protected to the exclusion of all else?

I get that things are different now. Maybe there was infidelity. Maybe there was indifference. Maybe there was change that pushed you apart rather than pulling you together. But somewhere inside you both is the couple that once was and the two people who loved one another and wanted this coupling more than anything, and that deserves a continued respect even as your relationship ends.

Besides, do you really want to be that guy? The one who dragged his ex to court frivolously again and again? The one who demanded what really wasn’t hers? The one who used the children as a weapon? Is that who you want other people — future partners, friends, relatives — to see? Is that who you want to be? If nothing else, be conscious enough in your uncoupling to save face. It’s always better to come out looking like the good guy. Better yet, it’s better to be the good guy. Always.

One friend’s ex is taking her to court quarterly with new accusations and requests that he knows will be shot down. Why? Simply in an effort to bankrupt her. Another friend’s ex is keeping meticulous records of when she has the child and it’s the other spouse’s turn, in hopes of one day gaining full custody. Another’s ex is asking for half of my friend’s estate, despite the fact that they were married for only 18 months. It’s shameful and ugly and foolish. Because no matter how you look at it, this will come back to haunt those folks.

I try to live every day of my life — heck, every moment of my life — as consciously as I can. I don’t always do it perfectly. Sometimes I don’t even do it particularly well. But I try my best. I think that is what we must ask of ourselves. We must do our best and be our best even when we’re sad and hurt and lost. At the time, it will be hard; being the bigger person often is. But in the long run, it will serve you well.

You loved them once. You cherished your relationship once. So love yourself enough now to behave like the good person you are instead of the hateful one your pain is asking you to be.

Send your questions, comments or suggestions to [GirlOnGirls@gmail.com](mailto:GirlOnGirls@gmail.com).



UCLSE Emperor and Empress XLV Dan Perry and Valarie Atkins. (Photo by Ron Comstock)

### Making the SCENE the week of Nov. 1-7:

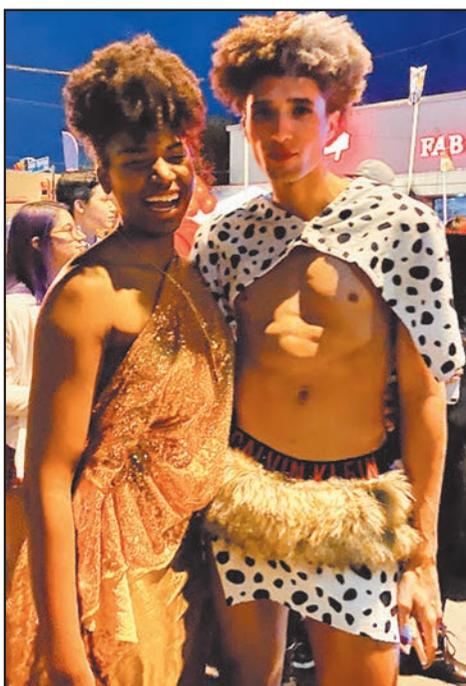
- **1851 Club:** **Barbie Davenport, Aundra Mikyles and Sapphire Davenport** on Friday. **Tara St. Stone, Patrick Mikyles and Jaden Davenport** on Saturday. **Candi Carrol, Aries Noir and Kristie Davenport** on Sunday.
- **Alexandre's:** **Girls Night Out with Peggy Honea** on Saturday. **Karaoke with Wayne Smith** on Sunday. **Broadway with K-Marie** on Tuesday. **Vero Voz** on Wednesday.
- **Cedar Springs Tap House:** **The Darlin' Show** with karaoke, games and live entertainment from 8-11 p.m. on Friday.
- **Club Reflection:** **Neon Survivor's Prom Show** at 6 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Dallas Eagle:** **United Court** from 7-10 p.m. on Saturday. **Dallas Diablos Cookout** from 5-9 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Havana:** **Showtime** is 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Hidden Door:** **T-Bear Club Night** from 7-10 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill:** **Dragula Season 3** with **Bleach** at 7 p.m. on Tuesday.
- **Magnum:** Get trashy every Tuesday with **DJ Charlie Phresh**.
- **Marty's Live:** **Rock the Beat** from 10 p.m.-2 a.m. on Wednesday.
- **Round-Up Saloon:** **Chris Chism Video Release Concert** and party at 4 p.m. on Sunday. **Couples/Partners Dance Lessons** with Mike at 8:30 p.m. on Monday. **Boys, Boots & Boxer Briefs Contest** with **Sassy O'Hara** at 10 p.m. on Monday. **Wine Walk** at 6 p.m. on Wednesday. **The Saloon Girls Drag Show** and **Lip Sync Battle** with **Domita Sanchez** at 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Sue Ellen's:** **The Queerdom** at 10:30 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **Woody's Sports & Video Bar:** **Karaoke** at 10 p.m. on Sunday. **Jada Pinkett Fox Variety Show** at 11 p.m. on Thursday.

Photos by **Chad Mantooth** and **Nicholas Gonzalez**

## Halloween Block Party







# GLBT Chamber Spooktacular

Photos Courtesy  
Michael Jackson | CLVR Agency



## After the tornado



The cleanup begins at North Haven Gardens



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# Friends of Jessica Jones

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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54	55	56				57	58				59	60	61	62
63						64					65			
66						67					68			
69						70					71			

Solution on Page 32

**Across**

- 1 Easy putt for Patty Sheehan
- 6 Bunch of stallions
- 10 Mary's pet
- 14 Best possible
- 15 1847 Melville travel book
- 16 Steinbeck migrant
- 17 With 18-Across, first Black lesbian superhero on TV
- 18 See 17-Across
- 20 B in Leviticus
- 21 Memory unit
- 22 Endora portrayer
- 23 "\_\_\_ no idea!"
- 25 "Queen of Country" McEntire
- 27 Rio beach of song
- 30 "Rainbows Reign" and more
- 34 Hulu program with a teen lesbian
- 36 Bread
- 37 Elton John's lang.
- 38 Bottom line
- 40 Queer \_\_\_ three-dollar bill
- 41 Like a porn facial
- 45 Title role for Ruby Rose on the CW
- 49 *Cats* inspirer
- 51 It may be eaten in a bar
- 52 Invite from bottoms to tops?
- 53 The life of Riley
- 54 Tickle a funny bone

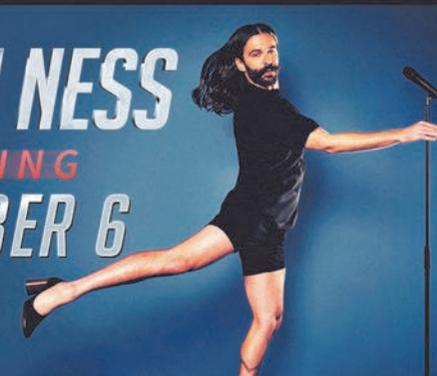
**Down**

- 57 Skipper's spot
- 59 "Dancing Queen" band
- 63 TV show with Alex Danvers, big sister of one from Krypton
- 65 Katrina Law plays Nyssa on this program
- 66 Penetrating question?
- 67 Shirley MacLaine's la Douce role
- 68 Moonshine maker
- 69 Straddling
- 70 Dog owner of *South Park*
- 71 Where to stick your tools
- 1 Bee Gees family name
- 2 Laying out
- 3 Sexual partners, inelegantly
- 4 Deus ex \_\_\_
- 5 Antlered beast
- 6 Easter, Passover, and Bette Midler's birthday?
- 7 Do a nocturnal activity
- 8 Mister with a neighborhood
- 9 Homer's outburst
- 10 Once upon a time...
- 11 Similar (to)
- 12 "Can't Help Lovin' That Man Of \_\_\_"
- 13 Asks from one's knees
- 19 Just not done

- 21 Tallulah's home, for short
- 24 Cut
- 26 One with limbs spread wide
- 27 Legal conclusion beginning
- 28 Gridiron kicks
- 29 Stones' song covered by Tori Amos
- 31 Siege site of 1836
- 32 \_\_\_ T. Lardbottom of "Kudzu"
- 33 Pundit Alexander
- 35 Where to stick your salami
- 39 Navigator with a strait named for him
- 42 Norma Desmond's shot
- 43 Baseball great Ralph
- 44 "Getting to Know \_\_\_"
- 46 Amsterdam transport
- 47 "Till There \_\_\_ You"
- 48 In the world
- 50 Casual top
- 54 Sailing the Pacific
- 55 Bitch without papers, e.g.
- 56 Capable of performing
- 58 *At Wit's End* author Bombeck
- 60 Soft cheese
- 61 Cheeky
- 62 They poke around in leather
- 64 Bunkmates on base
- 65 Tammy Baldwin's party symbol

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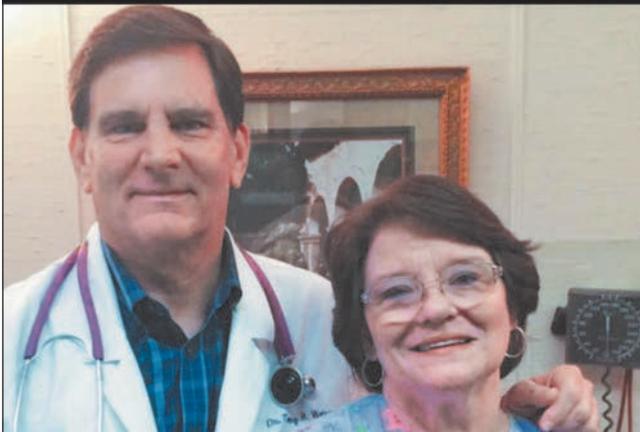
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