

dallas voice

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The **COMPLETE** package

Cheyenne Jackson and
Megan Hilty join forces

with DSO for holiday concerts

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IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®

This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

(bik-TAR-vee)

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- ▶ **Worsening of Hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS. HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:

- ▶ dofetilide
- ▶ rifampin
- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- ▶ Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- ▶ Have any other health problems.
- ▶ Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- ▶ Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- ▶ BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- ▶ Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ▶ **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.

HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- ▶ This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- ▶ Go to BIKTARVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5.
- ▶ If you need help paying for your medicine, visit BIKTARVY.com for program information.



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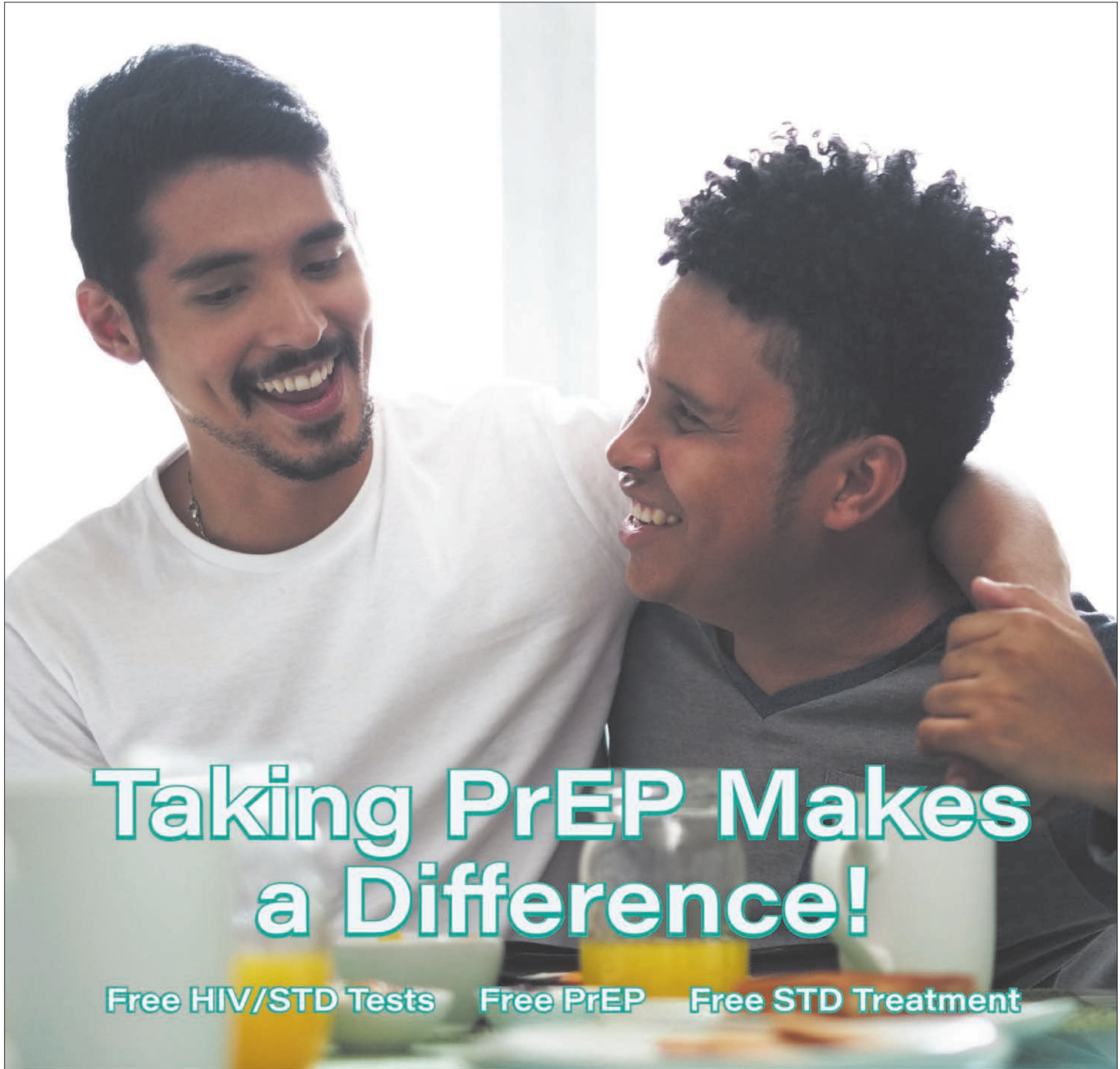
Because HIV doesn't change who you are.

BIKTARVY[®] is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in certain adults. **BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.**

Ask your healthcare provider if BIKTARVY is right for you. To learn more, visit [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).

Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and visit [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).





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Cheyenne Jackson.
Photo by Chris Pizzello/Invision/AP.
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Trans mural has been vandalized

Work is underway to restore the transgender mural painted last spring on the wall of 4000 Cedar Springs Road after the artwork was vandalized. The graffiti was discovered on Sunday, Dec. 8, in the afternoon.

Jerome Larez from Artitude tried to remove the graffiti without damaging the mural. But on Wednesday, Dec. 11, Larez said, "The graffiti spray removal did not work as anticipated."

Larez said they removed as much of the graffiti as they could without damaging the work, even though the painting has a protective finish. Weather permitting, local artist Rafiq Salleh-Flowers will repaint the defaced areas over the weekend.

The transgender mural was painted by New York artist Brian Kenney, and it honors Marsha P. Johnson, who is credited with starting the Stonewall uprising and is dedicated to the transgender community. It's the largest mural honoring the transgender community in the world.

— David Taffet

Dallas Pride registration opens Jan. 6

The 2020 Dallas Pride is slated for June 6-7 in Fair Park, with the Miller Light Music Festival on Saturday, June 6, and the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade on Sunday, June 7 — so the time to start planning your parade entry is now!

Pride officials announced Monday, Dec. 9, that registration for both the festival and the parade will go live at 9 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 6.

For help in planning your 2020 Dallas Pride budget, you can check out the prices at the parade page and the festival page, and get information on being a Pride sponsor, at DallasPride.org.

— Tammye Nash

Black Tie announces record year, distributes beneficiary checks

Black Tie Dinner celebrated a record year Monday night, Dec. 9, by distributing \$1.44 million to Human Rights Campaign Foundation and 16 local beneficiary organizations. The 2019 Wrap Party and Beneficiary Distribution event was held at Gilley's South Side

Music Hall. With this year's proceeds, Black Tie Dinner, the largest LGBTQ fundraising dinner of its kind, upped its donation total for its 38 years to more than \$25 million.

The total represents proceeds from the Nov. 2 dinner at Sheraton Dallas Hotel that featured award-winning singer/actor Billy Porter.

BTD presented national beneficiary HRCF with a check for \$610,000, the largest single donation of the year. Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star received the largest donation — \$65,487 — given to a local beneficiary. Also receiving donations of more than \$60,000 were Resource Center (\$62,761), Rainbow Roundup (\$62,421) and Northaven United Methodist Church (\$61,408).

Other beneficiaries were Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ (\$57,482); Trans Kids and Families of Texas (\$53,219); Celebration Community Church of Fort Worth (\$52,426); Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (\$50,126); Legacy Counseling Center (\$50,126); Uptown Players (\$49,001); Turtle Creek Chorale (\$47,801); Equality Texas Foundation (\$47,450); AIDS Services of Dallas (\$46,551); Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas (\$44,414); Promise House (\$40,007) and AIDS Outreach Center (\$38,882).

The 2019 co-chairs also announced that the 39th annual Black Tie dinner will be held Saturday, Oct. 3, again at Sheraton Dallas Hotel, and they named those newly-elected to board leadership roles for 2020, and the first-year board members. They are 2020-21 Board Co-Chair Brad Pritchett, 2020 Co-Chair-Elect Terry Loftis, Tenay Barker, Denton Bricker, Deirdre Coleman, Marcus DeMello-Silva, Daniel Parker, Regina Lyn Pierce, Nicholas Rodriguez and Ryne Young.

— Tammye Nash

Volunteer for Creating Change

For the third time, Creating Change is coming to the Dallas Sheraton. Thousands of LGBTQ activists will convene in downtown Dallas on Jan. 15-19. The conference is staged by the National LGBTQ Task Force.

Volunteers are needed throughout the conferences and according to Evangeline Weiss, leadership programs director for the conference.

To volunteer for the conference, register at CreatingChange.org/on-site-volunteers.

— David Taffet



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Are you one of the best Medical Assistant in Texas? Are you a team player who is committed to making access to quality health services for LGBT Texans more accessible? If you answered yes to any of the questions, we want to talk to you! The MA role at the HELP includes phlebotomy, lab specimen processing and direct client interactions. **Medical Assistants are full-time benefits eligible positions.** Bilingual English Spanish highly desired for all positions.

Are you a Community Health Specialists? Do you have the ability to talk to a wall? Could you sell ice to an Eskimo? If so, come work with us! Community health Specialists will represent the HELP Center in the community, conduct HIV Testing in office and in community settings and have direct interaction with clients. **Community Health Specialists are full-time benefits eligible positions.** Bilingual English Spanish highly desired for all positions.

 **HELP Center**
for LGBT Health and Wellness

Email resumes to
DeeJay@HELPfw.org
(no phone calls please)

Arlington Center
200 E. Division Street
Arlington, TX 76011

Fort Worth Center
1717 S. Main Street
Fort Worth, TX
76110

THE GAY AGENDA



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

DECEMBER

• Dec. 13: Teddy Bear Party

Teddy Bears for Children's Health from 8 p.m.-midnight at Fashion Industry Gallery, 1807 Ross Ave. A teddy bear is part of admission. Tickets at TeddyBearParty.org.

• Dec. 13: DFW Pride Happy Hour

The LGBT Chamber of Commerce Foundation invites you to celebrate the holidays at the newest LGBT club from 5-7 p.m. at Magnum Dallas, 1820 W. Mockingbird Lane.

• Dec. 13: A Drag Queen Christmas Party

Denton Pride Foundation presents Holi-Slay Drag Show, Snazzy Christmas Sweater Competition, Holiday Story Time with the Queens, open bar (while supplies last) and food trucks from 7-11 p.m. at North Texas Fairgrounds, 2217 N. Carroll Blvd, Denton. Free parking and admission. Facebook.com/DentonPrideFoundation.

• Dec. 13-15: Turtle Creek Chorale

The Turtle Creek Chorale presents 40 years of Fa La La at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday at

Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. For more information visit TurtleCreekChorale.com.

• Dec. 14: Prime Timers

Brunch at 11 a.m. at Angela's on Lovers Lane, 7979 Inwood Road. chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth.

• Dec. 15: Hard Candy Christmas

Texas Gay Rodeo Association presents its Hard Candy Christmas Charity Show at 7 p.m. at the Round-Up Saloon, 3912 Cedar Springs Road. TGRA.org.

• Dec. 15: Prime Timers

Prime Timers attend the Uptown Players production of Nutcrackers A-men at Kalita Humphries Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth.

• Dec. 16: 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.

• Dec. 16: District 104 ribbon cutting

Ribbon cutting for state Rep. Jessica Gonzalez's district office from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Oak Cliff Tower, 400 S. Zang Blvd.



The annual Teddy Bear Party is Friday night, Dec. 13 at The FIG. See listings for details.

• Dec. 17: THRIVE Holiday Party

Holiday Party for LGBTQ adults 50+ from 6-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. Questions to THRIVE@myresourcecenter.org

• Dec. 18: Prime Timers

Lunch at 12:30 p.m. at Barbec's, 8949 Garland Road. chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth.

• Dec. 19: Log Cabin Republicans Dallas

Log Cabin Republicans Dallas will hold annual elections to fill seven seats on the organization's board of directors: president, vice president, treasurer, secretary and three at-large seats.

To nominate someone for the board, send nominations to info@lcrdallas.org detailing the person's name, the office for which you are nominating them, your name and the name of the person seconding the nomination. Nominees and those nominating them must be members in good standing. For information contact Bo Richardson via email at borichardson1975@yahoo.com.

• Dec. 19: 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.

Weekly: Lambda Weekly at 1 p.m. on Sunday on 89.3 KNON-FM with David Taffet, Lerone Landis and the late Patti Fink. This week's guests is Dallas City Councilman **Chad West**; **Silver Pride Project Coffee and Convo for LGBTQ+ seniors** meets Mondays from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Oak Lawn Library, 4100 Cedar Springs Road, Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at Grauwlyer Park Branch Library, 2146 Gilford St. Wednesdays for Breakfast Club from 10 a.m.-noon at Reverchon Recreation Center, 3505 Maple Ave. and Thursdays for Rainbow Rec from 10 am.-noon at Reverchon Recreation Center, 3505 Maple Ave.; **Unwired Group of Crystal Meth Anonymous** meets Sunday at 5:30 p.m., Monday, Wednesday

and Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday at 11:30 a.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St. First Monday is birthday night at 5750 Cedar Springs Road; **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; **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.

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Call 214-267-0222 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.

• **Dec. 19: Rainbow LULAC**
Monthly meeting at 7 p.m. at Havana, 4006 Cedar Springs Road. For more information visit Lulac.org.

• **Dec. 19: Women with Pride Holiday Party**
Holiday Party for LGBTQ women from 6-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. Questions to women@myresourcecenter.org

• **Dec. 24: Chinese food**
Congregation Beth El Binah goes out for a traditional Chinese dinner. For information visit BethElBinah.org.

• **Dec. 25: Christmas**

• Dec. 25: Prime Timers
Potluck at a private home in Carrollton. Call for address and directions 214-218-0912. chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth.

• **Dec. 28: Prime Timers**
Lunch and planning meeting at 12:30

p.m. at 2 Guys from Italy, 11637 Webb Chapel Road (south of Forest Lane). chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth.

• **Dec. 29: Chanukah party**
Beth El Binah's annual Hanukkah party at a private home in East Dallas at 6 p.m. Info at BethElBinah.org.

• **Dec. 31: New Year's Eve**

JANUARY

• **Jan. 1: New Year's Day**

• **Jan. 2: Pride night at Allen Americans**
Hockey is for Everyone is the theme of tonight's game at 7:05 p.m. at Allen Event Center, 200 E. Stacy Road, Allen.

• **Jan. 2: Prime Timers**
New Years potluck in Oak Cliff. Call for address and directions 214-218-0912. chapters.theprimetimersww.com/dallasfortworth.

AGENDA, Page 18

pet of the week / ROMEO



Meet **Romeo**, a 3-year-old pit bull/basset hound mix weighing 43 pounds. He's a handsome, sweet boy who will steal your heart the moment you meet him. He is very affectionate, gentle and friendly, and he loves meeting new people and giving hugs and kisses. He does well on car rides, walks great on his leash and knows how to sit on command. He really is a perfect gentleman. He also enjoys playing fetch,

cuddling with people and making new friends. If you're looking for a loving guy to spend time, he's the one for you. Romeo has been neutered and microchipped and has received all age-appropriate vaccinations. Come meet him today!

Romeo is waiting for you at the SPCA of Texas' Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas, 2400 Lone Star Drive (near I-30 and Hampton Road). Hours are noon-6 p.m. Sun-Wed and noon-7 p.m. Thurs-Sat. Regular adoption fees are \$150 for puppies and kittens aged 0-6 months and \$75 for adult dogs and cats aged 6 months or older. Fee includes spay/neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, a heartworm test for dogs six months and older and a FIV/FelV test for cats 4 months and older, initial flea/tick preventative and heartworm preventative, a microchip, 30 days of PetHealth Insurance provided by PetHealth, a free 14-day wellness exam with VCA Animal Hospitals, a rabies tag and a free leash. Call 214-742-SPCA (7722) or visit today.

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The Hidden Door turns 40

Founder Jim Roberts, 2nd owner Tony Bobrow had the foresight to create trusts that would keep the bar — and its contributions to the community — going long after they were gone

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

When Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones was introduced to then-Hidden Door President Tony Bobrow, Jones told him he “got a lot of pussy there.” But Jones’ experiences at the Hidden Door happened before Jim Roberts bought the bar in 1979, when it was still a straight bar frequented by airline employees coming over from Love Field. Roberts kept the name and turned it into a gay bar.

The bar already had been around at least a decade when Roberts bought it. The original owners, a couple of Braniff pilots, told Roberts the bar’s name came from a line in a Doris Day-Rock Hudson film in which Hudson tells Day he’s going to stop in at the Hidden Door, the bar in the hotel where they’re staying.

When the bar was originally named, Hudson’s sexual orientation was hush-hush. By the time Roberts bought the bar, more people knew the Hollywood leading man was gay.

Roberts saw the importance, from the beginning, of supporting the LGBT community. As a result, he was the one who donated the initial \$10,000 used to create the Howie Daire Center, an adult daycare center for people living with AIDS now operated by AIN. And that first big donation was just the beginning; The Hidden Door has been giving back to the LGBT community ever since.

The Hidden Door was so successful from the time it opened that within a

couple of years, Roberts opened a second location in Corpus Christi, which is also still going strong although under the ownership of two customers who purchased the bar about 12 years ago.

Roberts died 1988, when he was still in his 50s. Before his death, though, he created a trust that owned the bar and named Tony Bobrow the new president of the trust.

Current Hidden Door President

Harvey Meissner said the bar’s been closed just a day and a half since it first opened in 1979: It closed a half day for Roberts’ funeral, then it was closed for one full day because its TABC license expired after someone filled out the renewal, left for vacation and forgot to mail it in.

Bobrow refused to open without his liquor license and closed the bar for a day until the renewal was in place.

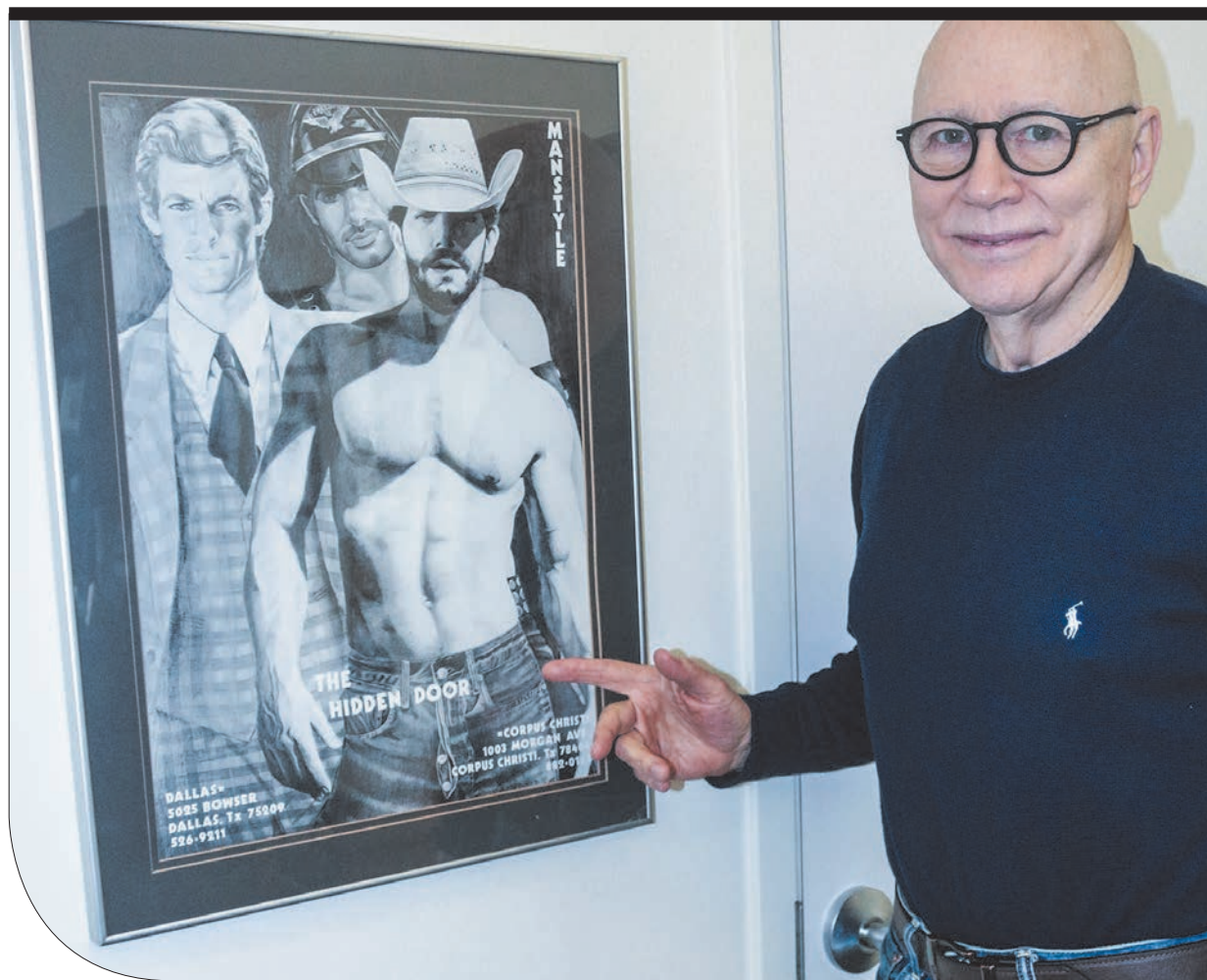
Before Bobrow died in February 2018, he had arranged for a different trust to manage the bar after his death. Meissner said he’s now the president and general manager of Hidden Door, as well as co-trustee of the Tony Bobrow Trust.

But he’s not the owner.

Dan Cutrer is the attorney who incorporated the Hidden Door 40 years ago for Roberts. Now he’s co-trustee of the trust that owns the bar. Should anything happen to him, the co-trustee position goes to Carter Thompson, a Dallas County criminal court judge.

Meissner said this ownership arrangement is unusual: “I’m not sure there’s another one like it in the country.”

He said expenses for the bar are comparatively low; the trust owns the property so there’s no mortgage or rent to



Harvey Meissner with a classic ad for the Hidden Door in Dallas and Corpus Christi. Right, Meissner points to a picture of Tony Bobrow and Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

pay. At the end of the year, after all bills are paid and bonuses are figured for the staff, the balance of the profits go to the trust. That money must be distributed within the next calendar year.

And the bar has always done well. For three years in a row, it was the No. 1 bar in the U.S. in Miller Genuine Draft Light sales. And as parking has gotten worse in other parts of Oak Lawn, the Hidden Door has always offered its customers plenty of space to park.

The property where the bar is located — at 5025 Bowser, just a block off Lemmon Avenue — is so valuable, Bobrow was once offered what Meissner called a very generous amount to sell. But he laughed off the offer, Meissner said, adding that the would-be buyer forgot to figure in the value of the business. Buying new property in Oak Lawn, including space for parking, and building something suitable to house the Hidden Door would have cost much more than was offered, he said.

After Bobrow died, the trust closed out the balance in the Jim Roberts Trust, adding those funds to funds from the Bobrow Trust and distributing the \$250,000 total equally between Resource

Center, Legacy Counseling Center and AIN in May last year. In December, the Bobrow Trust donated \$100,000 to Dallas Hope Charities, which used it as seed money for a shelter for LGBT youth. The trust also gave \$25,000 to AIDS Services Dallas for its ongoing work providing housing, including a new facility being renovated for its residents who have returned to work and are able to live independently.

The trust is also the primary sponsor of an upcoming all-day Ed-U-Care program that addresses caregiver fatigue, and it continues to donate money in Bobrow’s hometown, Teague, to support the volunteer fire department, the library and a soup kitchen.

In all, in its first year, the Bobrow Trust donated \$600,000 in its first year of existence. Meissner estimates that 25 cents out of every dollar spent at the Hidden Door goes directly back into the community, and the trust is set up so that donations to the community will continue.

HARVEY MEISSNER

Meissner has worked for the Hidden Door for 34 years. In February 1986,



as San Diego's best bartender.

But as much as he enjoyed bartending and loved not being under constant corporate pressure, he knew this wasn't what he needed to be doing. "I needed to push myself away from my comfort zone," he said.

So, after four years, he resigned and moved back to Dallas. That's when he met Steve Tracy, who was bartending part-time at the Hidden Door. Tracy was also a sportswriter who recruited Meissner to play on the Hidden Door's softball team. When Meissner came into the bar, Tracy introduced him to Roberts, who offered him a job.

Meissner decided he'd take the job while he was looking for that "real" job. But part-time developed into full-time, and he found himself behind the bar for

31 years.

In 2012, Bobrow developed throat cancer. In 2013, Meissner began working in the office. Bobrow died at age 78 in February 2018. "He would have been 80 when the bar was 40," Meissner said.

The bar continues hitting new records. Its biggest day ever was Sunday of Texas Bear Round Up weekend this year. The second largest was Pride weekend this year, following the newly-revamped Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade in its new location at Fair Park.

The Hidden Door also notched up record sales for a September this year, even though the Pride parade and festival had been moved from September to June, and from Oak Lawn to Fair Park. And despite an extremely cold November this year, the bar set a sales record for that month, too.

That's very important to Meissner — and not for any personal gain. It's important to him because those record sales mean more money goes into the trust, and that means more money will be distributed back into the community, letting Hidden Door continue to support the people who have supported the bar for the last 40 years. ■

he accepted a temporary, part-time job working behind the bar — and maybe one year he'll make that job permanent.

He had been working in medical equipment sales. He said the company only hired med techs, but his major in college was marketing. Still, he became the company's top salesman.

After he came out at the age of 29, Meissner decided to make a fresh start.

So he moved to San Diego. He met someone at Balboa Park who managed a bar, and he offered Meissner a job. Meissner said he didn't know anything about tending bar, but that place only served wine and beer. So he accepted while he was looking for a "real" job.

Before he knew it, Meissner was managing the bar. Then he was managing two bars. And he was winning awards

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LEGACY

And the race is on...

LGBT candidates filing for office
in Texas include familiar names

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

More than a dozen out lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender candidates from both the Democratic and Republican parties have filed to be on the ballot in Texas for the March primaries for state and federal offices.

While the neither the state parties nor the Texas Secretary of State formally track the sexual orientation or gender identity of candidates, it appears that at least 13 Democrats and one Republican who openly identify as LGBT have filed to run for office

In the Texas House, the five incumbent state representatives who formed the new LGBTQ Caucus are all running for re-election. Caucus Chair Mary Gonzalez, D-Clint, Rep. Celia Israel, D-Austin, and freshman Reps. Jessica Gonzalez, D-Dallas and Julie Johnson, D-Carrollton, will face no challengers in the primary. Of the five, only freshman Rep. Erin Zwiener, D-Driftwood, who became the first openly bisexual member of the Texas Legislature when she was elected in 2018, faces a primary challenger — bookkeeper Liliana Posada.

While Republicans are on the defense this cycle, the 12 Democrats who flipped Republican seats in 2018 are top Republican targets. That includes Johnson and Zwiener.

Five additional candidates are running in seats targeted by Democrats. They include Dallas's Shawn Terry, who is gay, Houston's Jennifer Rene Pool, who is transgender, Katy's Elizabeth Markowitz, who is lesbian, Eric Holguin



of Corpus Christi, who is gay, and Ann Johnson of Houston, who is bisexual.

Terry is one of three Democrats seeking the chance to take on General Investigating Committee Chairman Morgan Meyer, R-Highland Park, who narrowly won re-election, by a mere 200 votes, in 2018. Terry faces 2018 candidate Joanna Cattanch and Tom Ervin in the Democratic Primary, while Meyer has no primary opponent.

Pool is running for the second time for the open House District 138 seat in the Houston area, currently held by retiring Republican Rep. Dwayne Bohac. She was defeated in the 2018 primary by attorney Adam Milasincic, who would eventually lose to Bohac by a slim 40 votes. If elected, Pool would be the first elected transgender state representative in Texas.

Markowitz is running simultaneously in special and primary elections to succeed former Appropriations Committee Chairman Dr. John Zerwas of Richmond, who resigned in September to take a job as executive vice chancellor for health affairs with the University of Texas System. His resignation triggered a November special election, where Markowitz was the top vote getter in the swing district. She faces Republican

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The five founding members of the House LGBT Caucus (from left): Celia Israel, Mary Gonzalez, Erin Zweiner, Jessica Gonzales and Julie Johnson.



chairman of the Texas Republican House Caucus after a secretly recorded meeting with right-wing activist Michael Quinn Sullivan revealed he, along with Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen, made numerous damning remarks about incumbents, including offering a target list of 10 Republican incumbents in exchange for avoiding expensive primaries against vulnerable incumbent Republicans. After a rebellion in the caucus and chorus of members calling for his resignation, Bonnen announced his retirement.

Gary Gates in next month's run-offs, but has no primary opponent.

Holguin is running against Rep. Todd Hunter of Corpus Christi, who received a B- on Equality Texas's most recent legislative scorecard. Holguin, a gay Latino, has the backing of the Victory Fund, the national LGBT organization headed by former Houston Mayor Annise Parker and dedicated to electing LGBT people to public office. He would become the first gay man of color elected to the Texas House if he were to win.

Ann Johnson, who ran in 2012 and is also backed by the Victory Fund, is running again against Rep. Sarah Davis of West University Place. But Davis is not a typical Republican. She is the only member of her caucus to receive an A+ from Equality Texas, which also gave her its Profile in Courage award at this year's 30th anniversary gala.

Two additional candidates are challenging Republican incumbents.

Transgender candidate Addison Perry-Franks of Snyder in West Texas, faces James Barrack in the Democratic primary. The primary winner will face the tarnished House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dustin Burrows of Lubbock.

Burrows resigned last summer as

Lesbian candidate Stephanie Phillips of Canyon Lake is running again for the Central Texas seat currently held by state Rep. Kyle Biedermann. She ran against Biedermann in 2018, becoming the first Democrat to challenge an incumbent Republican in the district in a decade.

The two remaining candidates are making bids for Congress, and one could win. War veteran Gina Ortiz Jones, who is lesbian, nearly knocked off incumbent Congressman Will Hurd of Helotes in 2018. The difference was fewer than 800 votes. Hurd, the only black Republican in the U.S. House, announced his retirement this year.

The district is seen as a prime pick up for Democrats, and Jones is considered the frontrunner.

The sole out gay Republican running this cycle is also making a bid for office again. Mauro, who owns the gay nightclub Pegasus in San Antonio, would become the first gay Hispanic Jewish Republican. He ran in the primary in 2018 for an open seat held by former Congressman Lamar Smith. This time, he's running in the primary to take on Congressman Joaquin Castro, who represents a solidly Democratic district.

Early voting for the Tuesday, March 3 primaries begins Tuesday, Feb. 18. ■

A large graphic advertisement for the 'creating change conference'. The top half has an orange background with a logo of a stylized 'C' and the text 'creating change conference'. Below this, the word 'love.' is written in large white letters. The middle section has a purple background with a photo of a speaker at a podium and the word 'learning.' in large white letters. The bottom section has a green background with the text 'NATIONAL LGBTQ TASK FORCE', 'January 15-19, 2020', 'Sheraton Dallas Dallas, Texas', 'creatingchange.org', and '#cc20'. At the very bottom, the word 'liberation.' is written in large white letters. The background of the entire graphic shows a crowd of people.

Senate confirms Bumatay to 9th Circuit

Anti-LGBT Van Dyke confirmed to the same court the next day

LISA KEEN | Keen News Service
lisakeen@mac.com

The U.S. Senate voted 53 to 40 on Tuesday afternoon, Dec. 10, to confirm an openly-gay man Patrick Bumatay to the nation's largest federal appeals court. And on Wednesday, Dec. 11, the Senate con-

firmed U.S. Deputy Assistant Attorney General Lawrence VanDyke, who has been denounced by LGBTQ advocates, to the same court by a vote of 51-44.

Bumatay's confirmation to the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals makes him the second openly-gay person to be appointed to a federal appeals bench seat. The first was Todd Hughes, appointed by President Obama to the U.S. Circuit

Court for the Federal Circuit and confirmed by the Senate in 2013 by a 98-0 vote.

Charles Moran, managing director of the national Log Cabin Republicans, said the group was "heartened" by Bumatay's confirmation, adding that it makes him "the highest-ranking LGBT jurist in the nation."

"He is an accomplished prosecutor

with solid experience, and we're thankful to President Trump for pushing forward with Patrick's nomination and the Senate confirming him," said Moran. "I know all Americans will welcome Patrick's arrival on the Ninth Circuit, bringing some sanity back to the circuit most known for being out of the mainstream."

The vote on Bumatay was along strict party lines, with 53 Republicans voting for confirmation, 40 Democrats and Independents voting against, and seven senators not voting. The Senate's two openly-LGBTQ senators — Tammy



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anne Feinstein and Kamala Harris, both Democrats. During Bumatay's Oct. 31 confirmation hearing, Feinstein said she appreciated the diversity Bumatay would bring to the bench but added that she did not think he has the experience necessary for the job. She also said she was "dismayed to learn through Bumatay's written answers that he had worked on Trump administration policies that separated migrant families at the border," according to the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Feinstein voted against confirmation; Harris was not present for the vote.

Bumatay worked in the White House Office of Legal Counsel under President George W. Bush and worked as a federal prosecutor in San Diego since 2012.

During his opening statement at his confirmation hearing, Bumatay introduced the committee to his parents, his sister, his brother-in-law, two nephews and Alex, "my husband." He noted he and Alex also had with them their two daughters, who were born in April. The daughters prompted a remark from Louisiana Republican Sen. John Kennedy, who called them "precious."

Bumatay's confirmation hearing and

his confirmation were overshadowed by controversy surrounding VanDyke's nomination.

LGBT groups opposed VanDyke's nomination and the American Bar Association expressed concern that VanDyke might not be "fair to persons who are gay, lesbian, or otherwise part of the LGBTQ community." During his confirmation hearing, VanDyke said he was shocked by that criticism, but later he implied that he had worked to help an LGBT group when, in fact, he had represented a group that sought to bar LGBT members.

After the Senate voted Wednesday to confirm VanDyke, Lambda Legal issued a statement by Sasha Buchert, one of the organization's senior attorneys. Buchert said VanDyke's confirmation "represents the latest affront to the LGBT community by an administration that appears to revel in its disdain for LGBT people and our families."

She continued, "As outlined in our letter of opposition, Mr. VanDyke's long history of working to diminish the civil rights of the LGBT community renders it wholly implausible that he is capable of administering fair and impartial justice.

In fact, it is precisely this concern that led the American Bar Association to rate him as 'Not Qualified' for this lifetime position of public trust.

"For our legal system to have credibility, people must have confidence that judges will follow the facts and the law, and yet Mr. VanDyke has refused to disavow his prior statements promoting harmful and unfounded myths about LGBT people, including the long-since discredited notion that marriage equality will somehow 'hurt families, and consequently children and society,'" Buchert noted. "And yet, once again, Senate Republicans have chosen to vote in lockstep, and advance another dangerous ideologue to a position that he will occupy for decades to come. It is impossible to overstate the damage that is being done to the credibility of our system of justice by the confirmation of judges like Lawrence VanDyke.

"Particularly on days like today, we call on all people who believe in equal justice under law to make their voices heard and demand better from their elected representatives in Washington."

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Baldwin, D-Wisc., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., voted against confirmation.

The Ninth Circuit is the nation's largest federal appeals court, with 29 seats and jurisdiction over 20 percent of the nation's population, covering California and eight western states. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which has 12 judges, deals specifically with disputes involving international trade, government contracts and federal personnel, among other things.

Bumatay's nomination was opposed by California's two U.S. senators, Di-



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Amsterdam at last

Netherlands' capitol city is a
 must-see for LGBTQ travelers



David Webb
 The Rare Reporter

of its history. The small bar dates back to 1927, making it one of the oldest LGBTQ bars

After passing through Airport Schiphol a couple of times on my way to other destinations, I finally kept a promise to myself and landed there on my birthday last August for a stay in the LGBTQ capital of Europe and the birthplace of gay rights — Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Within hours of my arrival, I began to wonder why I had waited so long to visit the storied city. Amsterdam's charm radiates from splendid historic buildings, canals lined with dandy houseboats, colorful sidewalk cafes, exotic restaurants, fascinating shops, narrow pedestrian lanes and throngs of intriguing, often beautiful, people walking, running and biking the endless pathways.

A million people live in the urban area of Amsterdam, and every neighborhood seems as interesting as the other. The best way to navigate the city is by walking, renting a bike or taking the trams, buses and canal boats. I began my exploration of the city with a canal boat ride accessed at a dock across the street from my hotel, the Apollo Museumhotel Amsterdam, in the museum district. It is also situated a couple of blocks from Leidseplein, the largest entertainment district featuring the government-run Holland Casino, the Hotel Americain and various other high-end restaurants and nightclubs.

As a thrifty traveler, high-end entertainment intrigued me not, so after a day of sightseeing on the canals and wandering in the museum district, I sought the help of an LGBT travel guide on the Internet to find the perfect gay watering hole. I settled on Cafe t Mandje on Zeedijk, a narrow pedestrian-only lane in the heart of the city on the outskirts of De Wallen, Amsterdam's famous red light district where prostitutes sit in windows.

Cafe t Mandje appealed to me because

in Amsterdam. It is a museum in its own right, with walls laden with memorabilia dating back decades, and the regulars give it lots of local color. Owner Diana van Laar inherited the bar from her mother, who inherited it from her older sister, Bet van Beeren, who was a lesbian. When Bet van Beeren opened the bar in 1927, it attracted the patronage of prostitutes, pimps, sailors and lesbians, according to lore. There is no record of gay men hanging out there in the early days, but you know how it goes: Where there are horny sailors, it's a pretty good bet you will also find some bad boys.

At Cafe t Mandje bartender Alexander Dikes, a big bear of a guy, quickly pegged me for a tourist and welcomed me. As it turned out, he spent time in Texas a few years ago working on a ranch with horses and welcomed me vigorously. He even treated me to a shot when I told him I was celebrating my birthday. He joked that his name could be pronounced in two different ways so if he ever opened a bar and named it after himself it could be for boys or girls.

I loved my time at Cafe t Mandje, where I also met an older man wearing a sundress and open-toe pumps but no makeup or any other mark of femininity. The bartender advised me that the motto of the bar is "to show respect everyone and to celebrate diversity."

After I reached my quota of celebratory beers, I went looking for a restaurant. I found De Portugees, also on Zeedijk, featuring Portuguese food. I so enjoyed my meal of grilled swordfish and the charm of the family running the cafe that I made a mental note to visit Portugal in the future.

Later, I ventured down the street to

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The Queen's Head, a larger bar that also caters to a regular crowd and features dancing, drag shows and weekly bingo. While at The Queen's Head, I met a guy who was utilizing a long layover at Airport Schiphol to visit a few gay bars in Amsterdam. He asked the bartender for suggestions and headed out after finishing his beer.

There are plenty of bars for the gay traveler to see in Amsterdam. In addition to the Zeedijk, there are several gay areas with gay bars, gay-owned hotels, restaurants and retail stores. The Reguliersdwarsstraat is more mainstream and commercial for weekends. The street Amstel features traditional Dutch-themed gay bars, and Warmoesstraat is known for cruise and fetish clubs.

Unsurprisingly, Amsterdam celebrates gay Pride just as big, if not better, than U.S. cities. The bartender at Cafe t Mandje told me I should have been there on the 30th of April to celebrate Queen's Day, the annual carnival-like commemoration of the queen's birthday, currently Queen Maxima, wife of King Willem-Alexander.

Gay men in Amsterdam take particular pride in celebrating Queen's Day, and the bartender said queens stood

shoulder-to-shoulder in the streets of the gay areas. I narrowly missed the August celebration of Amsterdam Gay Pride, which included a canal parade. There was also a celebration of Leather Pride in October.

After the gay parties end, the masses of visitors to Amsterdam find plenty to do in the city known for its art and dedication to the preservation of history. Of particular interest to LGBTQ visitors is the Homomonument, a memorial to people who have experienced persecution due their sexual orientation, specifically those killed by the Nazis. Unveiled in 1987, the monument comprises three giant pink triangles of granite set into the ground forming a larger triangle visible from the Keizersgracht Canal. Every May 4 on Remembrance Day wreaths are placed on the memorial, and on May 5 on Liberation Day there is a street party there.

When Amsterdam showcased the Homomonument, it led to other nations and cities following suit, a trend began long ago. Amsterdam decriminalized homosexuality in 1811, a good century and a half before the United States.

The first gay rights organization in

AMSTERDAM. Next Page

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AMSTERDAM, From Previous Page

Amsterdam, the Center for Culture and Leisure, was founded in 1946. An equal rights law banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was enacted in 1993, and in 2001 The Netherlands became the first country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage.

Clearly, Amsterdam is so much more than the freewheeling city of tolerance in regard to drink, drugs and sex that we



Cafe Mandje

have all come to think of it as. It should be on every LGBT person's bucket list.

I considered my visit to Amsterdam one of the most enlightening experiences of my life, and I regretted leaving when I did to catch a train to Germany for a prearranged reunion. Once again, I left Amsterdam promising myself I would be back. ■



AGENDA, From Page 9

• **Jan. 7: Brewing Up Business Plano**
Develop new business relationships by giving your 30-second commercial/elevator speech, exchanging business cards and learning more about this month's sponsor from 8:30-9:30 a.m. at 3100 Independence Parkway, Suite 300, Plano. \$10 in advance. \$20 at the door. Free to Chamber members.

• **Jan. 14: Mingle with TWCD**
Mingle with The Women's Chorus of Dallas with 25 percent of your dinner bill going to support the chorus from 4-9:30 p.m. at Rocco's Uptown, 2717 Howell St. TWCD.org.

• **Jan. 14: Same-sex partner grief group**
Grief group for those who have lost a same-sex partner through death from 6:45-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road.

• **Jan. 18: Gaybingo**
MyResourceCenter.org.

• **Jan. 17-19: Women Lead**
Human Rights Campaign presents Women Lead Summit: Leading into the Future at Westin Dallas, 1201 Main St.

• **Jan. 24: Educare**
Educare presents Becoming Visible: LGBTQ+ Care from Theory to Practice with keynote speaker Tim Johnson from SAGE discussing serious and unique health challenges due to historically unfair and cruel treatment from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church, 9200 Inwood Road. Register at EducareDallas.com.

• **Jan. 28: Get Centered tour**
Tour Resource Center and learn about its programs from 5-6:30 p.m. at 5750 Cedar Springs Road. MyResourceCenter.org.

• **Jan. 28: Same-sex partner grief group**
Grief group for those who have lost a same-sex partner through death from 6:45-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road.

• **Jan. 31: Business and Community Excellence Awards**
Awards luncheon at Renaissance Dallas Hotel. LGBTChamber.com.



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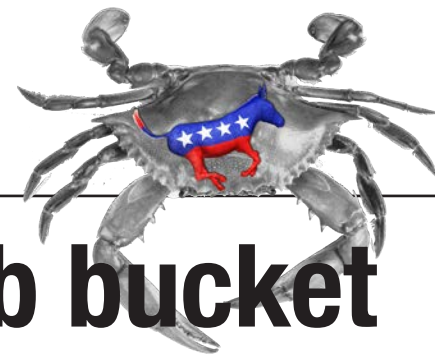
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The Democratic crab bucket

There is an old story that if you put several crabs in an open-top bucket they won't be able to escape even though each individual crab might be able to climb out. The problem is, the crabs will all struggle to climb out at the same time, and they end up pulling potential escapees back into the bucket.

The end result is that none of the crabs escape, and, in the case of the poor crabs destined to be someone's dinner, they all lose!

With the crowded field of Democratic candidates currently contending for the presidency, I believe we are watching the political version of the crab bucket unfold on the national stage. Good, well-intentioned candidates rise in the polls only to be pulled back down by rumors, "purity tests" and resentments.

Kamala Harris is the latest potential nominee to fall prey. She came on very strong and gained a lot of support and buzz among Democrats. Yet she had to end her campaign because she ran out of money, even though when she declared her candidacy back in 2018 she was a top fundraiser.

As does any candidate, Harris had her pluses and minuses. But she couldn't withstand the barrage of criticism on social media and from other candidates, and she ended her campaign less than a year after it started. She was accused of being "too centrist," and she was looked on with suspicion by a lot of people because of her background as a prosecutor.

And so, the crabs pulled her back into the bucket, and her campaign withered.

Now Pete Buttigieg has risen in the polls, and already the crabs are snapping at his heels. He's gay and a progressive, and he supports a lot of strong progressive ideas, including eliminating the death penalty, supporting abortion rights, a public option for health care, adding LGBTQ rights to the Federal Equality Act and a higher minimum wage.

He even has a plan to address systematic racism in America including large grants to African-American entrepreneurs and historically black colleges.



Hardy Haberman
Flagging Left

in South Bend over illegal wiretapping allegations. Others claim that black voters will never vote for a gay candidate.

Bernie Sanders keeps climbing up as well, only to be pulled down by criticism that he is "too old" and "too progressive" to be elected. Joe Biden keeps peeking over the edge of the bucket only to be dragged back down by discredited conspiracy theories and the same "too old" argument that plagues Sanders.

Elizabeth Warren nears the rim, but she gets criticized for having once been a Republican and for being too wonky and having a plan for everything.

The crabs are working hard to bring everyone back into the bucket.

What is the point of it all? Well, with the prospect of another four years of Trump, the stakes in this election are as high as they have been in my lifetime.

It is important that we scrutinize all the candidates and choose one that can defeat Trump in the general election. We must know their flaws and their strengths. But it is also important that we don't become so critical that we end up with a candidate who may have no flaws, but who has no appeal, as well.

The truth is, no one candidate will satisfy everyone's vision of an ideal candidate. They all have histories prior to running for president, and though you can infer a lot from a person's history, it is also important to remember that people — and their viewpoints — do change.

Democrats and progressives in general, by their nature, like to look at all sides of a candidate. But only the most politi-

cally involved will have their finger on the pulse of a candidate's prior positions and political history.

Most voters make their decisions emotionally not logically. That truth was made abundantly clear in the last election, when voters' emotions were swayed not only by campaigns but by foreign meddling through social media. That meddling will most likely happen again; I suspect it is already going on.

The crabs that are energetically pulling candidates back into the bucket might not be who we think they are. Fake organizations and false profiles are being found every day, and so far, social media companies have not found a way to effectively combat the problem.

Additionally, the Trump administration has systematically cut funding to cyber security research and routinely dismisses the idea of Russian meddling. I wonder why? (That is a rhetorical question for the irony-impaired.)

So, while it is important to examine all the candidates in the primary, it would serve us all better if we stuck to promoting our favorite candidate's best qualities and policies rather than dragging other candidates back into the bucket.

The average voter wants a candidate they can understand, one that makes them feel good about choosing them for office. If we do nothing but harp on other candidates' flaws, the general public will look at all Democratic candidates as flawed, and they will lack the enthusiasm needed to win the election.

Unlike with Republicans, who have become a cult in recent years, a Democratic candidate has a higher bar to clear, since loyal Democrats seem to actually care about the details of a candidate's political history.

With that in mind, it is vital that we remain focused on the positives of our favored candidates and stop behaving like crabs. Otherwise, we will all be served up on the menu at Trump's second inaugural dinner.

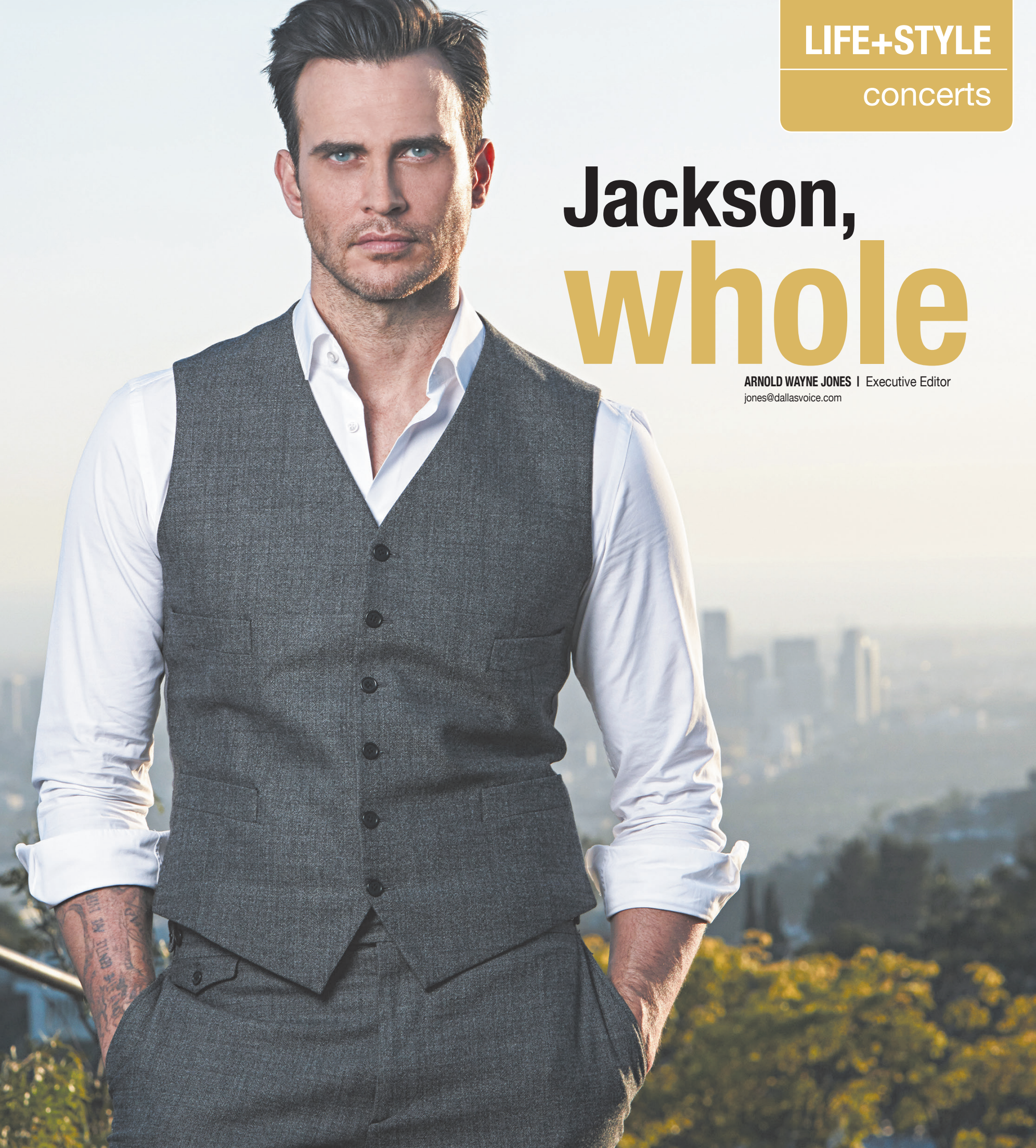
Hardy Haberman is a longtime local LGBT activist and a board member of the Woodhull Freedom Alliance. His blog is at Dungeon-Diary.blogspot.com

LIFE+STYLE

concerts

Jackson, whole

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
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Singer-actor-dad Cheyenne Jackson is the complete package, which he unwraps for a series of holiday concerts at the DSO

Cheyenne Jackson was given his unique first name because his dad was a fan of the old TV Western series *Cheyenne*, starring a hunky actor named Clint Walker. Considering how Jackson himself turned out — tall, muscular, square-jawed, a leading-man-type in every way — he admits that he's lucky his father wasn't a fan of *Bonanza* — he could have been named Hoss.

But the openly gay actor-singer has never hidden his orientation for career advancement, instead frequently taking on roles (often not by design) that speak to a queer sensibility. He's never allowed his life to be guided by anything other than the pursuit of his dreams.

And he's living a kind of dream now. At 44, he's devastatingly good looking in addition to having talent in a variety of disciplines, but he relished the role of dad of twins most of all. And while he's enjoyed visiting Dallas in the past, the concert of holiday music he will perform with pal Megan Hilty will be his first time with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.

We chatted with Jackson prior to the upcoming concert — about his favorite carols, trying *not* to imitate Judy Garland and why family matters to him most at this point in his life. ■

Dallas Voice: You're coming to Dallas for a series of concerts with the DSO featuring both you and Megan Hilty. Will you be performing the show together or in separate acts? Cheyenne Jackson: We are performing together. We have been friends for a dozen years — between us, we have four kids under 4 — and we've done one-offs here and there, but this will be our first full symphony performance together. We have been flirting with the idea for about a year [so it's great that it has come together]. It's a little more fun when you're sharing the stage with someone you know and like.

How did you two meet? We are both from

Washington State [though we didn't meet there]. She first saw me in a local theater production of *West Side Story* in 1998 or 1999... I first saw her around the time she was [playing Galinda in] *Wicked*, because she was with a friend of mine, Eden Espinosa [who played Elphaba].

This is a show of Christmas music; how do you go about picking from the catalogue of carols, novelty songs and pop classics to come up

with a set? It all so depends — you're limited chart-wise — you have libraries and catalogues that the symphonies can do. But Megan did a

holiday album about two years ago, and she had a lot in her repertoire already, so I learned some of those. And then there are songs that we've always wanted to do, plus a few that aren't technically "holiday" songs but will fit [in with the program], it's just a mix of things.

One of my favorite songs of all time, holiday or not, is "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Definitely. And [the great thing about that song is], it can be jazzy, it can be completely melancholy and sad, of course you just think of Judy Garland singing it in *Meet Me in St. Louis*, with that cry in her voice ... it's good.

Do you have your own favorite holiday songs? I'm such an old-school guy! I love all the old old old old stuff... like Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby even as modern as the Carpenters. I love the vibe of the old stuff.

Do you ever suffer from the anxiety of influence when you do songs popularized by Nat King Cole and Bing Crosby and Judy about how you stack up? For sure. That's why I don't ever try to do the same feel of [a popular version of a song]. If I am going to do something iconic, I try to find my way through it. If you're gonna sing it at a lower tempo you'll better live up to the Judy version, so don't bother.

Speaking of being old-school, you've released an album of music inspired by the *Mad Men* era, as well as Great American Songbook selections on a release with Michael Feinstein.... Yes, [Michael and I] created a show together which we put on at his club in New York. It was so fun — we have such similar tastes — we decided to record it. He's been such a mentor to me, and he's such a mensch and he's really funny, with a left-of-center sense of humor. He's also a savant when it comes to this music — which versions there are, and who did it first and in what key....

CHRISTMAS AT THE DSO

With Megan Hilty and Cheyenne Jackson. Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. Dec. 20–22. MyDSO.com.

■ JACKSON Page 30



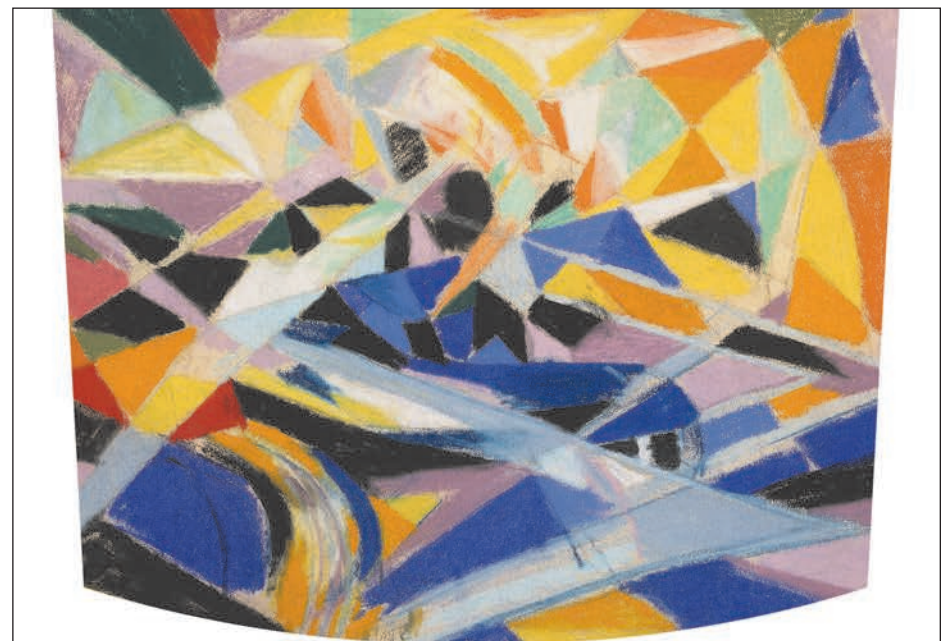
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L+S | profile

'Swonderful, 'smarvelous, 'sCallaway



Out singer Ann Hampton Callaway rings in 2020 in North Texas

New Year's Eve concert at Bass Hall with the Fort Worth Symphony, which celebrates Gershwin.

— Gregg Shapiro

Out chanteuse Ann Hampton Callaway is perhaps best-known as composer and performer of one of the jazziest TV theme songs ever — “The Nanny Named Fran” from the Fran Drescher sitcom *The Nanny*. Of course, there’s more to Callaway than that. She’s the older sister to singer (and occasional duet partner) Liz Callaway and has released more than a dozen albums during the course of a recording career that has lasted more than 25 years. On her latest, *Jazz Goes to the Movies* (Shanachie), Callaway applies her impressive vocal skills to a set of 14 songs written between 1927 (Irving Berlin’s “Blue Skies” from *The Jazz Singer*) and 1962 (Rodgers and Hart’s “This Can’t Be Love” from *Jumbo*). As the opening cut states, the album “’S Wonderful” (composed by the Gershwins for “An American in Paris”) in the way that it offers listeners another way to enjoy these classic tunes.

We spoke with Callaway prior to her

Dallas Voice: After years of living in New York, and being a Chicago-area native, you relocated to the Southwest — how do you like living in Tucson? Ann Hampton Callaway: I love living in Tucson! I got lucky and found an incredibly beautiful home that makes me feel like I moved to heaven and God is my roommate. I’m on the road so much of the time that it

doesn’t really matter where I live. I was living in New York and almost never doing anything in New York except paying its prices. My better half [Kari] is from Tucson, and

it was time to switch turf and give this a try. What’s great about what our life is is that when I come home from touring and doing what I love, I have this beautiful, relaxing, stunning home with the mountains and the big skies. As a songwriter, it’s a very inspiring place to live. We have lots of great friends here. I get to New York every six weeks. I rent an apartment in the city per night. Instead of living in Westchester, where I lived before, I have immediate access to everything I want to do, all the people I want to see. It’s turning into a beautiful lifestyle of performing, spending

**ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY:
A GERSHWIN CELEBRATION**

Bass Performance Hall,
535 Commerce St., Fort Worth.
Dec. 31. FWSymphony.org.



were arranged already and some had to be arranged. The result of it is a CD of love songs from a time when some of the best songwriters of the great American songbook were writing. It was during a similar time in national history when Americans were going through a lot of angst. I feel like we are [also] in a challenging time. There's so much unknown and anxiety; people are feeling alienated. The idea was to return to songs that were written during World War II or the Depression, [when] people were coming up from all of that, that bring beauty and inspiration and hope to people and are so well-made and timeless. The response I've been getting, traveling around and doing the shows and radio, has been very positive. I'm so happy that the CD is in the pre-Grammy nomination category.

One of the shows for which you are currently touring is *The Linda Ronstadt Songbook* in which you celebrate the music and career of Tucson's most famous native recording artist. Do you focus on a specific period or do you incorporate the full Ronstadt spectrum?

It's not possible to put on a great show and do the entire spectrum. It would need to be a three-night series. I just saw the documentary about her, *Linda Ronstadt: The Sound of My Voice*. What a powerful, extraordinary career she had. I've sort of unknowingly created a legacy series. I love celebrating women, the trailblazers, who inspire me, who made it possible to what we now take for granted: having a career as a woman doing many kinds of music about which I am passionate. I thought I would be spending more time focusing on my normal wheelhouse music — the Great American Songbook — [for] which she did fabulous albums with the great Nelson Riddle. But what I found was that I was really more interested in the pop stuff that she did. She did folk pop and jazz pop and country pop and rock pop. When I was growing up, part of me wanted to be a singer/songwriter in that genre, more pop. I feel like I'm having Linda Ronstadt's career backwards [laughs]. She turned to her early childhood music later in life, and I'm tuning into my old college years when we were jamming on James Taylor and Carole King and Joni Mitchell — the wonderful singer/songwriters of that time. It's been a thrilling thing for me to put my own stamp on these great classics and to work with one of her guitarists, Bob Mann. It's a thrilling show and the audiences go berserk. They love Linda and they love these songs. It's not just nostalgic. As a serious actress and interpreter of the lyrics of these songs, I think I'm having fun helping people hear them for the first time, in a way. Sometimes when a song becomes a part of your memory bank, you take it for grant-

■ CALLAWAY Page 27

time in New York, and of course we visit my hometown maybe once or twice a year. I am a woman of the world. Anyone who's fortunate enough to have a career, you're basically on the road a good percent of the time. Wherever I hang my hat is home. I have dear friends wherever I go. It's a kind of exhausting and amazing life. I feel blessed.

On *Jazz Goes to the Movies*, you cover 14 songs from movies made between 1927 and 1962, from *The Jazz Singer* to *Billy Rose's Jumbo*. What was the song selection process like?

The CD started with my good friend and beloved record producer Lisa Schiff. She's the woman who is probably responsible for creating Jazz at Lincoln Center. She's a real mover and shaker and huge fan of mine who's recorded many of my CDs. She said, "Ann, I think it's time for you to record another CD. I'd love to work with you. Here are some songs I'd love to hear you record." I listened to the songs she gave me and I noticed the ones I related to had something in common. They were all from movies. We had something really beautiful here, a theme without even knowing into it. I'm kind of an old-fashioned person and I love breathing new life and energy and taking a listen to words and music to see how it's relevant today. We had a ball! We sifted through the various things we both brought to the table until it looked like we had a gorgeous show. Some of these

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Living in a lone (star) state

One of the year's most acclaimed books is a powerhouse memoir from a gay Texan

How We Fight for Our Lives: A Memoir by Saeed Jones (Simon & Schuster 2019) \$26; 193 pp.

Saeed Jones was just 12 years old when his mother first uttered the word "gay," though he never thought it would be anything she'd ever say. Afterward, the word was "vibrating in the air between us," but there'd be no conversation.

Jones knew even then that the word described him. Fascinated by men, he spent hours clipping pictures of male

models from his mother's fashion magazines, and he furtively read everything about gay men and AIDS that he could find at his local Texas library. The library was also where he had his first sexual encounter with a stranger (he was 16).

That, too, was something he'd never tell his mother, but he sensed she knew his truth: Some days, he'd find his clippings in shreds, in a plastic bag on the kitchen counter, and he'd just start another collection. There was no discussion then, either.

By the time he graduated from high school, Jones knew that his life was not 20 minutes north of Dallas anymore. He envisioned himself walking around

■ LONE STAR Page 29



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■ **CALLAWAY** From Page 25

ed. You just get into the beat and feeling of it. But people are beginning to listen to songs such as “Poor, Poor Pitiful Me” and go, “Wow, that’s a more serious song than I realized.” There’s a deliciousness in returning to these songs that I’m loving. It’s up there with when I put together the Streisand songbook. The response is off the charts.

Have you heard from Linda about the show?

Yes! She and I have a mutual friend, Dan Guerrero. He’s the one who put me in touch with her. She helped me find some of the charts. I’m using some of her charts when I do symphony shows. She put me in touch with various people in her life. She gave me a beautiful quote. She said she was so happy someone of my caliber was performing her music. She felt like my voice brought a lot to it. I asked her, “Of all the songs that you’ve ever sung, which is the core of who you are?” She wrote back, “Heart Like A Wheel.” We have occasional correspondence, and I’ve spoken to her on the phone. She couldn’t be a nicer person, an amazing human being — The way she’s living through this chapter of her life. To have a voice and career like that and not sing anymore when you love to sing so much and you have all that talent. It’s one of the reasons I wanted to say thank you to her for her inspiration and the way she took a lot of music that I love and made it famous and loved again. I think that’s a great gift.

Linda is known for being a longtime supporter and advocate for the LGBTQ community. Does that have any meaning to you as an out artist? Of course, it has meaning to me! I always appreciate people who have the love and generosity of spirit to think about people who are less advantaged and face certain challenges. We’ve made many great strides through the years, but now we live in a cli-

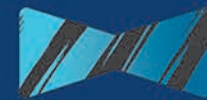
mate where some things we now take for granted, like being able to marry someone you love, could be taken away with the current administration. I applaud anyone who is open about who they are or about embracing people, remind people that we’re all human and that all have a right to love. No matter your religion, race, sexual preferences — we’re all human beings and have the same needs and wants. She’s one of the braver people who’s never made any bones about what she believes in. I love her fearlessness. I think that’s one of the reasons she’s had an extraordinary life. One of the things I admire most about her is that people would say, “That’s not going to be good for your career. You should only do this. You can’t do that; it will never make any money.” She never let anyone stop her from being political or making the records she wanted to make. She always said, “No, this is what my heart says I must do. If I don’t do this, I’m not going to be me.” Her speaking out for LGBT people and immigrants and so many of the people she cares about is just a part of who she is. She wouldn’t be her if she didn’t speak out.

On New Year’s Eve you are performing a Gershwin show in Fort Worth. Are you someone who enjoys all the New Year’s Eve brouhaha? I do! When I was a kid, with [the threat of] nuclear war and everything, I thought to myself, “Are we still going to be here at the end of my life expectancy? Will the planet still be here?” I have this tremendous sense of gratitude for whatever forces keep us somewhat at peace. I went through a breast cancer scare in 2012, and I’m very grateful that I got through that very well. Any time I can celebrate a new year of life and a new year of setting good intentions for a better world, to be a more useful artist in this world. I love having a chance to sing great songs and bring people together.

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L+S | stage

Puns and nuns on the run



The cast includes, left to right, Trey Tolleson, Sonny Franks, Gabriel Ethridge, Randy Pearlman, Duke Anderson and Mikey Abrams. Photo courtesy Mike Morgan

'Nuncrackers' puts the holy sisters in drag

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

Dan Goggin's play *Nunsense!* launched nearly 35 years ago as an underground comedy starring (usually) famous women "of a certain age" — I saw a tour in 2004 with Kaye Ballard, Darlene Love, Lee

Meriweather, Mimi Hines and Georgia Engel — dressed up as nuns, spouting off quasi-sacrilegious puns and riffing on Catholicism with good-natured sarcasm. It's the off-est of Off-Broadway-style theater.

Since its origins, though, the Nuniverse has expanded exponentially into more than half-a-dozen standalone shows, including at least two in which all the sisters are played by "brothers" — i.e., men in drag.

And of course, that's the kind that Uptown Players is producing now at the Kalita for a brief run (it closes this weekend). Cuz that's how they do over there.

Nunrackers, A-Men! involves the same characters as in all the plays — imperious Mother Superior (Randy Pearlman), sensible Sister Mary Hubert (Duker Anderson), hard-talkin' Sister Robert Anne (Mikey Abrams), charming Sister Mary Paul (Trey Tolleson) and Father Virgil (Sonny Franks, in a trouser role). It's Christmastime, and the Mount Saint Helen's Convent in "Noo Joizee" is putting on a pageant while the nuns jealously contemplate the swag under their tree. Things go wrong. Songs are sung. Lessons are learned. Puns are flogged. It's all nonsense, as its title suggests, a fluffy holiday trifle.

And on that level, it works... more or less. Often less.

Comprised mostly as a series of vignettes roughly united around a Christmas theme, the play goes all over the map. I'm still not sure what the point of the song "Santa's Little

Teapot" was, and while "The Christmas Box" is a sweet ballad, it's also maudlin and strangely out of place in what purports to be a jokey farce of a show. A gospelly finale, "It's Better to Give," is more justifiably out-of-place — it gets the audience happy.

It doesn't help that Goggin isn't much of a songwriter — he's more of a song *deviser*. The second-act number "In the Convent" is a send-up of The Village People, with the melody tweaked to avoid copyright infringement, but it's too clever by half: All idea, limp execution.

The jokes are also mostly toothless about obvious — a drunken fruitcake baking demo, mis-remembering *The Nutcracker* as *The Ball Break*;

maybe Goggin has used them all up in prior shows. Maybe we've heard them all coming from drag queens in clubs.

Still, the actors give it their all, with Tolleson and Anderson the standouts. Like a store-bought Christmas cookie, there's not much here too offend those who like to honor the religious overtones of the season, just a sweet, quick empty rush of calories. ■

NUNCRACKERS, A-MEN!

Kalita Humphreys Theater,
3636 Turtle Creek Blvd.
Through Sunday.
UptownPlayers.org.

■ **LONE STAR** From Page 26

Manhattan, exploring the city, and he aimed for college there but it wasn't financially possible. Instead, he went to Bowling Green, Ky., and he thrived.

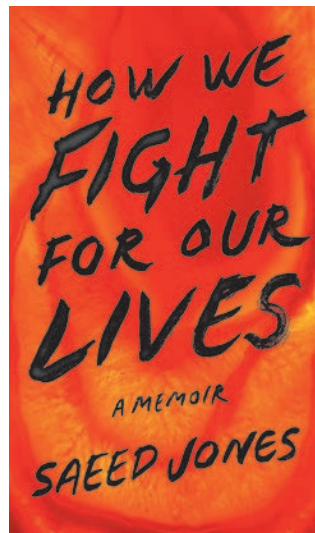
On his own for the first time ever, Jones realized he could be *any* Saeed Jones he wanted to be, but ultimately, he was freest being his gay self. Away from home, he made friends, joined college groups, drank too much, slept with men he barely knew, and he learned that "the words 'gay' and 'alone' weren't synonyms for each other." And then one night, he went home with the wrong man.

On so many levels, *How We Fight For Our Lives* is a heartbreaking and beautiful book. The most unforgettable parts lie where Jones writes about more than just himself and his own observations; a good portion of his tale is his mother's. She recognized her son's life, but she obviously struggled with knowing-not-knowing, and there's a sharp pain in that, pain that leaps from the pages.

The bulk of this story — the part that seizes readers by the shirtfront —

is spent watching Jones come to terms as he comes of age. Seeing him grow from self-absorbed young man into self-confident adult is satisfying, albeit cringe-worthy, because you come to understand what beats him back as well as what makes his spirit soar. Knowing all that happens between the two is what'll keep you turning pages. This memoir can be raw, in both language and meaning, and there are graphic bits inside, but the power you'll encounter in Jones' words will make you want to tell everybody. ■

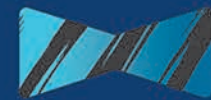
— Terri Schlichenmeyer



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■ JACKSON From Page 21

You're one of those actors who seems a little like a cliché when they say "triple threat" — some people would identify you as a theater actor, some for TV or film, some for concerts and recordings, some as a dramatic actor or comedian, some for musicals... if you had to pick a lane, what would it be? That's the story of my life. People have asked me some version of that question a lot, and the thing is, I'm all of it! You can't help what someone knows you from. It drives my mom nuts that so many people know me only from television and don't know that I can sing. But it's nice to have this other side of you, this secret you can burst out from time to time. It has helped diversify my career and keep me employed in a lot of media. I love it all — it's possible to be in all those worlds and not pick a lane. That's the world we live in.

I read where the instigating factor that led you to move to NYC and pursue a career as a performer was the attacks on 9/11; how poignant was that, then, when you were in *United 93*, and playing Mark Bingham no less? For sure — It was the impetus of following my dreams and realizing my career. [*United 93*] was definitely serendipitous and really wild: My first feature, the subject matter, playing who I played. It was absolutely surreal. I was so glad it happened how it did. It had such a personal connection to all of us.

Even when you're playing straight yourself, as you did on *30 Rock* or in a revival of *Damn Yankees*, you've done lots of gay stuff, from *American Horror Story* to *Altar Boyz* and even workshoping the original work on *The Book of Mormon*. Have you made it a priority

in your career to pursue gay-interest projects? You're giving me more credit than I deserve. It's not thought out *at all*. Once you start thinking about *that*, it feels inorganic and manipulative. You wanna do a reading with Bradley Whitford and Judith Light just to be in the room with them. So I listen to my gut and go with things I believe I can bring some of myself to... and the things that are scary and challenging. I am in the fortunate position to be able to turn down a lot of things because I have done it or some version of it before, or it just seems boring. There's nothing I can do to make it live. Anything I do now has to be worth it, time-wise — any time away from my kids has to be worth it. I'm shooting a Netflix series in Vancouver and it's really, really tough. I make it a priority not to be away from my kids for more than 10 days in a row, and I have done that since they were born.

You mentioned you and Megan having children; you have 3-year-old twins. Did you always know you'd have kids? I *always* saw myself as a dad. I was the only boy babysitter around, I taught Sunday school in our church and ran the child care department in a health club — everyone thought I was one of the trainers. [My husband Joshua and I] do everything together — we don't have a nanny. We are *in it* ... some would say too much. We went out the other night with friends and it was probably the first night in a year we had a night out away from the kids that wasn't a work thing. I don't wanna miss a thing with them. But it was good to get a night off.

Well, thanks for taking three of those nights to come to Dallas.

Friday 12.13

TITAS favorite MOMIX returns for one night only

This weekend, audiences can experience choreographer Moses Pendleton's fantastical dance

troupe MOMIX. This surreal company, now in its 38th season, highlights body manipulation with innovative use of props in unique and astonishing ways. MOMIX creates scenic choreography by utilizing athleticism and creative stage visuals all set to a score ranging from New Age to Vivaldi.

DEETS: Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. 8 p.m. ATPAC.org.



LIFE+STYLE

best bets



Friday 12.20

'Nutty Nutcracker' leaps and lopes at Bass

Those weary of run-of-the-mill Christmas entertainment might enjoy this one-night-only show in Fort Worth: Texas Ballet Theater twists and turns Tchaikovsky's holiday classic into sheer hilarity with *The Nutty Nutcracker*. While a comic twist, the production features beautiful ballet synched to an irreverent story. Follow Clara and her nutty friends through a winter wonderland adventure as they explore musings of current events and pop culture. (The more traditional version continues through December after this one-off lark.)

DEETS: Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. 8 p.m. TexasBalletTheater.org.

Tuesday 12.17 – Sunday 12.22

Love sails in tropical tale

Winner of the 2018 Tony Award for best revival of a musical, *Once on This Island* follows peasant girl Ti Moune and her life situated on a Caribbean island. After island gods contact Ti Moune, she sets out to find the love interest she feels destined to be with. Sound at all familiar? Yeah, it's basically *The Little Mermaid* with a tropical heart. From Texas-born gay director Michael Arden (Tony-nominated for the revival of *Spring Awakening*) and the choreographer of *Jesus Christ Superstar Live*, this show explores the nuances of social class while noting themes of love and community for a short run in the Dallas Arts District.

DEETS: Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. ATPAC.org.



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calendar highlights

ARTSWEEK

THEATER

Cirque Holidays! WaterTower Theatre and Lone Star Circus join forces for this Christmas show. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through Dec. 22. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

A Christmas Carol. The holiday tradition. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Dec. 29. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

Noises Off. The best modern farce conceived, a behind-the-scenes look at a disastrous play rehearsal. Through Dec. 22. Theatre 3, 2900 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Theatre3Dallas.com.

Nuncrackers, A-Men! Uptown Players present the sequel to the hit Catholic comedy *Nonsense*, this time with a drag-tastic bent. *Final weekend.* Kalita Humphrey Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. UptownPlayers.org.

Queen of Basel. At the high-falutin Miami art event, a privileged woman flirts with the help in a Darwinian battle of changing social mores. Hilary Bettis reimagined Miss Julie in the Latinx world of contemporary America. *Final weekend.* Trinity River Arts Center, 2600 Stemmons Freeway. KitchenDogTheater.org.

Swimming While Drowning. A coming of age story about life in an LGBTQ homeless shelter. *Final weekend.* Presented by Cara Mia Theatre. Latino Cultural Center, 2600 Live Oak St. CaraMiaTheatre.org.

BALLET

The Nutcracker. Texas Ballet Theater's annual Christmas show, Tchaikovsky's enduring holiday classic of beautiful music. Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. Through Dec 29. (The comic spoof *Nutty Nutcracker* is performed on Dec. 20.) BassHall.com. TexasBalletTheater.com.

CONCERTS

Turtle Creek Chorale: Fa La La. The gay men's chorus' annual holiday concert. Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. Dec. 13–15. TurtleCreekChorale.com

FRIDAY 12.13

DANCE

MOMIX. The innovative dance company, a TITAS favorite, returns for one night only. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. ATPAC.org.

SATURDAY 12.14

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.

CONCERTS

A John Waters Christmas. Trash god John Waters tells stories of the yuletide with his peculiar bent. The Kessler, 1230 W. Davis St. 8 p.m. \$40. TheKessler.org.

SUNDAY 12.15

THEATER

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. A one-show-only matinee of the children's story about misfits at Santa's workshop. It teaches kids to be hateful and judgmental until the weirdos prove useful. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Dec. 15. 1 p.m. ATPAC.org

MONDAY 12.16

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 12.17

FILM

White Christmas. A remake — and improvement upon — the film *Holiday Inn*, once again with Bing Crosby singing the Oscar-winning smash as well as a host of other songs. 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

Once on This Island. Tony Award-winning revival of the musical fantasy, an adaptation of *The Little Mermaid* set in the Caribbean. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Dec. 17–22. ATPAC.org.

THURSDAY 12.19

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.

this week's solution

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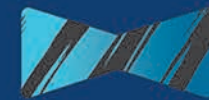
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Ask Howard

How to do the wrong thing right

In a few weeks, I will begin my 15th year authoring this column — every Texan's favorite fountainhead of gay wisdom, sage "advice" and ludicrous insights into the universe's meretricious mendacity. Nothing I write may be exactly hands-on *helpful*, but it sure is always a hambone mouthful. Fifteen years, impressively, makes for a mighty big bulging Santa's sack of cock-based questions; thus, with only a precious few more days still remaining of this millennium's testosterone-engorged teens — to be replaced by the whoring '20s — I think we'll just close out this year with a column from dearest Howard here that sidesteps penises altogether. Girl, wha..? Yes, sweet readers, the time has come, alas, to wash our sticky fingers of who's bigger, who's longer, who's a multiple shooter, whose jizz is junkiest and, my own personal favorite, "Miz Thang, mine be bigger than yours floatin' nekkid in the polar bear pool!" Ready? Let's get cat scratchin' right to it.

There's that smile. That's it. So, take a fresh deep breath now, bois. Exhale slowly, uh huh, and we'll all exit 2019, cleanly, with cuddlesome Boo and Roo (my pair of 19- and 15-year-old pets, respectively). As you know, I'll occasionally reference my elder cat, Boo, and am always appreciatively surprised by the concerned inquiries I receive regarding his ongoing, steadily debilitating "seniorhood." (In people years, Boo is 104!) Rarely, though, do I bring up the nepotistic topic of Boo's younger, adopted brother, Roo. It's high time I correct this sibling injustice, first mentioning that Roo is not of this planet; rather, in the shrieking words of my housekeeper — whom I one day walked in upon chasing Roo down the hallway with a severed hand in his mouth — "Your new kitty not like other cats!"

Few more prescient words were ever uttered. Despite that severed "hand" being only a water-filled Latex glove snatched up by a bubbles-infatuated, infuriatingly curious Roo from the kitchen sink (which, nevertheless, did not diminish Yolanda's truth one whit), Roo most definitely is not your average *felidae cattus*. For starters, he does not age... to say nothing of mature. At 15, Roo remains now the *exact* same irascible kitten that he was at age 7 months when I first rescued him, stumbling upon him in a cage at the pet supply store where, short of a pardoning miracle, he'd been sentenced to death come closing time: Diseased, deaf, scrawny and ugly as a proverbial mud fence, Roo's contribution to evolution had unfortunately expired. As a pimply-faced cashier guffawed to me as I cuddled the shivering, doomed creature in my hands: "That one they found living off spider eggs and snails at some condemned apartment building over in Deep Ellum. He's awfully affectionate, I guess, but, ha! I mean, just look at him — Barbara Streisand's abortion! We're only

allowed to keep 'em 30 days. SPCA oughta known from the start nobody's gonna adopt this ratty turd. A whole month, totally wasted here. Not a single taker. I'm just hopin' his replacement tonight has better show appeal. It's pretty rare when you can't even give 'em away. But duds happen."

in his jaws, as though his alpha bruh was the urban equivalent to little more than some Serengeti wildebeest calf: It sent Boo hissing ballistic. But clearly, Roo had not been raised by fellow felines during his rough-and-tumble first half-year of mean-streets/condemned-apartment dwelling.

I'm guessing a passel of opossums had taken pity on little abandoned Roo and his



As do miracles. Saved from the gas chamber with scant hours to spare, Roo's days of retrospection now metamorphosed into just an eternal, heavenly holiday: The skies are always sunny, the glass is always half full. Should Cruella de Vil show up at my door soliciting a specific, Abyssinian orange cat fur for a new dazzler touring coat — "I'll pay you any price, dahling, just name it!" — Roo would leap straight into her arms. He never met a stranger. Roo believes everyone loved him. Perhaps, indeed, he may have dimly realized just how close his own call with The Reaper really came, for his turnaround was breathtaking to behold. A testament to what good nutrition will do, within only days Roo's fur started growing back; within months, even his hearing returned — where previously he wouldn't stir from a nap with even the vacuum cleaner running next to him, suddenly he could hear the pop of a Fancy Feast tin from 40 paces! Roo ate voraciously, never left a crumb in his bowl nor gained an ounce. His orange coat began to shimmer, luxuriously, like sunlight off a velvet eel. Wiry and sinuous, the best one-word definition of Roo is "scrappy." And if only the imperious Boo would take to his new, younger brother, life in our sky aerie would parallel paradise.

Alas, instantly, they became fast-and-furious foes; rather, whilst Boo spent his days deviously plotting this scrappy little epsilon's untimely demise, Roo worshipped the very air Boo breathed. Roo had no concept of pecking order, nor that within said order his station was of a lower caste than Boo's. Roo always played dominant, tackling Boo from behind, clamping the spine of his neck with-

subsistence-foraging of spider eggs and slugs, for during his first initial few weeks at his new high-rise home, the only method in which Roo could fall asleep was by scooching up against my living room sofa's pillows, his furry little butt up at the top, his head resting beneath at the bottom, the tip of his tail curled down under his whiskers, oddly emulating opossums' innate, gravity-defying ability to snooze dangling suspended in mid-air via their tails wound to a tree limb. No wonder poor Roo's own tail was stripped bare of fur; undoubtedly, his fear of becoming a juicy little midnight morsel (for whatever toothsome creatures lurked beneath) far outweighed whatever reluctant reservations he harbored about plummeting, repeatedly, all night long to the ground below: One sticks by one's protectors, resultant mental incapacitations be damned.

Having never been cursed by the burden of intelligence, Roo dottily settled, truce-like, into his new jackpot life with Boo; neverthe-

less, with the two of them together, I never knew what I'd wake up to find — gifted dead birds in my bed or Roo prancing about (a la Uncle Fester) with a 100 watt lightbulb wedged in his mouth. Idiotically fearless, often I'd awaken to a flash of Roo scampering by moonlight (16 floors above ground!) the entire length of our outdoor balcony's two-inch-wide railing, feverishly snatching at moths! Closed doors and/or cabinet drawers never impeded Roo in the slightest. He could (and can, still) open anything! Once, I woke up to what I swore were humming noises emanating from a room down the hall, as if a child was singing lullabies to itself. Flicking on the light to my (previously shut) office, there stood Boo triumphantly perched atop the Japanese tansu, guiltily peering over its back where, stuck tight as Max's Christmas-stealing master inside a Whoville chimbley, gurgled Roo cheerfully to himself, unconcerned as an amoeba: *You're a monster, Mr. Grinch/Your heart's an empty hole/Your brain is full of spiders, you have garlic in your soul, Mr. Grinch/I wouldn't touch you with a thirty-nine-and-a-half-foot long pole!*

What can I say? When you take on a cat, they'll run herd over your life. Inevitably, "cat people" always seem to hear and heed this following advice too late. Hopefully I've caught at least one or two of you in time; please, listen closely, fellow puss lovers:

Never ever feed your housecat canned tuna! I implore you, for the jig's sure up then, people: What innocently starts out as just a special treat will, overnight, metastasize into the feline version of hardcore heroin addiction. You *might* escape it if, by luck of the dice, you accidentally served precious Tabby a tin of tuna canned in oil (cats loathe oil-preserved foods — at least my cats won't touch it); however, you'll sure roll snake eyes if, innocently enough, you opted for serving solid white albacore Bumblebee packed in spring" water instead: Welcome to Crack Pad Sallie's!

To put it kindly, this past year has been a dicey one for my cats: Last Christmas, I was forced to remove Boo and Roo, well into their senior years, from the only home they'd ever known (albeit, temporarily, while it underwent renovation). Hell, just the displacement of Boo, at full-bore dotage, would probably do him in. So WTF? They both got all-you-can-eat Bumblebee daily, plus fresh gulf shrimp and Alaskan king crab legs on occasion. Spoiled they were, but *something* sure worked, because here I now sit, returned back home again with both my antediluvian boys miraculously safe, warm and living — grizzled, old bony Boo cozily lapping his favorite treat of melted, room-temperature vanilla Ben & Jerry's from a cupcake pan; Roo marching, contentedly, the holiday-red marzipan cap off a slaughtered popcorn Santa — wishing you all a very merriest hat-in-the-cat Christmas, where the fireplace hearth crackles, hospitality's no sin; 2020, girl, come on in!

— Howard Lewis Russell

Have a question on love, sex, etiquette or anything else you need answered? Sent it to AskHoward@dallasvoice.com and Howard may publish it.



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Making the SCENE the week of Dec. 13–19:

- **1851 Club:** Chanel St. John, Kristie Davenport and Andre Versace at 10:30 p.m. on Friday. Candi Carrol, Tara St. Stone and Brody Brooks at 10:30 p.m. on Saturday.
- **515 Bar:** Tap TV Trivia at 8 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Alexandre's:** Terry Loftis on Saturday. Wayne Smith's Karaoke and Wreath Auction on Sunday. K-Marie Broadway on Tuesday. Vero Voz on Wednesday. Chris Chism on Thursday.
- **Cedar Springs Tap House:** The Darlin' Show with Karaoke, games and live entertainment from 8-11 p.m. on Friday. Hangover Brunch begins at 10 a.m. on Saturday. Drag on Tap at 9 p.m. on Monday.
- **Dallas Eagle:** Gloria Devine's Very Merry Birthday from 7-10 p.m. on Friday. United Court of the Lone Star Empire Investiture and Jingle Balls from 5-10 p.m. on Saturday. NLA-Dallas Club Night begins at 7 p.m., and Dallas Bears Club Night begins at 9 p.m. on Saturday. Twisted Party begins at 9 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Havana:** Showtime is 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Hidden Door:** S.L.U.T.S. Club Night from 7-10 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **House of Blues:** Drag Diva Holiday Brunch at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday. \$45.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill:** Double Trouble with Bleach, Raquel, Mulan and Fantasha at 11 p.m. on Tuesday. Dream Girls with Chanel, Bleach, Barbie, April and Stefani on Thursday.
- **Magnum:** El Jueves Latino at midnight on Friday.
- **Marty's Live:** Miss Wanda from 9-midnight on Sunday.
- **Pekers:** Totally Twisted Karaoke at 10:30 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Round-Up Saloon:** Couples/Partner Dance Lessons with Mike at 8:30 p.m. on Monday. Line Dance Lessons with Yoshi at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday and with Ray at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Sue Ellen's:** Lauren Alexander and The Anton Shaw Band on Sunday.
- **The Rose Room:** Cake Moss on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Rising Star with Sasha and Kelexis at 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- **TMC: The Mining Company:** Sasha Andrews hosts Fuego Latin Dance Contest at 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **Urban Cowboy:** Imperial Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Rockin' Neon Cowtown Christmas at 6 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Woody's Sports & Video Bar:** NFL Games on screen all day long on Sunday.

Photos by Chad Mantooth and Nicholas Gonzalez



LGBT Chamber Holds Ribbon Cutting for Celebrity Cruises

December 05, 2019 CommunityPress
ReleaseChamberMember NewsTravel & Tourism

At the December Brewing up Business, the North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Celebrity Cruises.

Celebrity Cruises has been a member of the Chamber since June 2019. We have partnered with them to promote the LGBT Chamber's first group cruise. Benefits include special group pricing, additional perks, private events, and group excursions. Travelers can enjoy a relaxed atmosphere that can be used for personal time, vacation time, and even some time for business or networking.

"People like to do business with people they like," explains Lisa Howe, Vice President of Membership & Programs at the Chamber. "This is a fun and organic way to possibly meet your next insurance agent, CPA, team member, or bond with a co-worker. A traveler can take advantage of the prices and perks of a group cruise and do as much or as little work as they want."

Kasey Roberson, Market Sales Representative at Celebrity, adds, "As a member of the LGBT Chamber, I have met many loyal professionals and consumers who genuinely have a good time while they work together. I thought Chamber members and the LGBT community, as a whole, would take advantage of the opportunity to travel together."

Celebrity is an LGBT-friendly company who includes sexual orientation and gender identity in their non-discrimination policies for employees, customers, and suppliers. Their parent company, Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd. has scored 90-100 on the HRC Corporate Equality Index for several years.

Kasey and the Chamber are promoting the cruise among members and partners of the LGBT Chamber of Commerce, including GALA, corporate LGBT Employee Resource Groups, and members of the other Texas LGBT Chambers in Austin, Houston, and San Antonio.

The trip is a five-night Western Caribbean cruise on Celebrity Infinity which leaves out of Miami on March 27, 2021. See the Chamber website for more information. Contact Kasey Roberson at kroberson@celebrity.com to reserve your spot.

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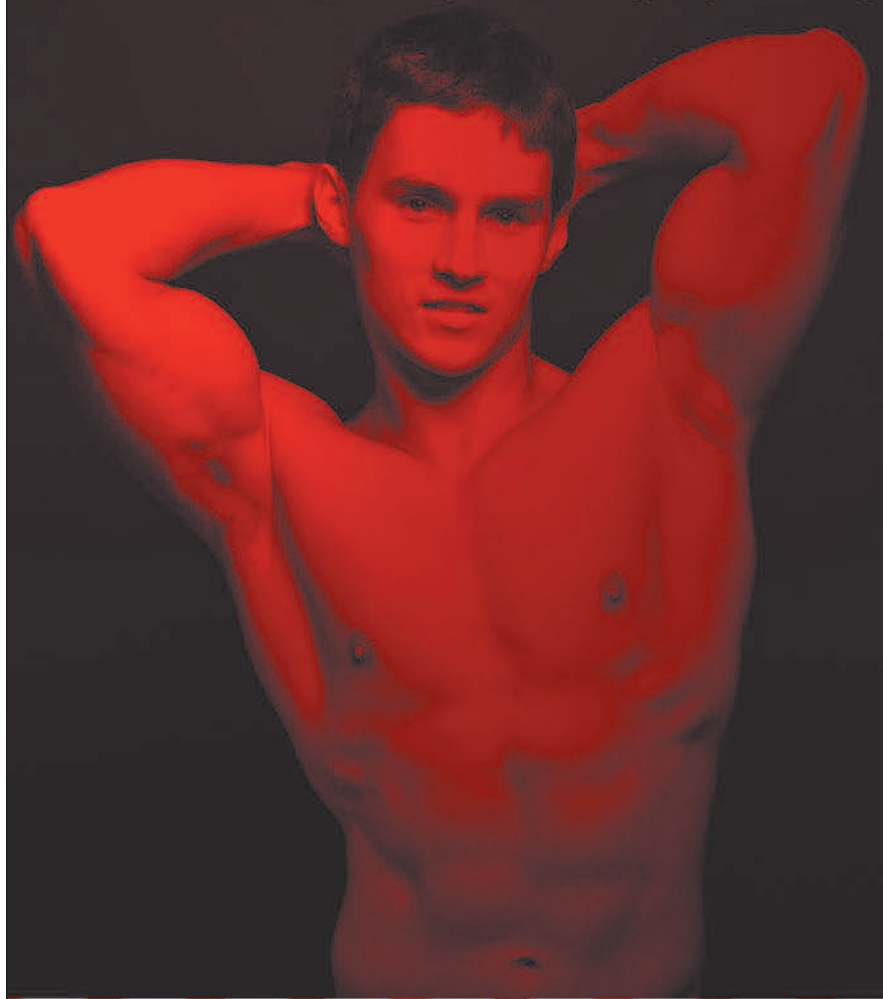
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Solution on Page 32

Across

- 1 Bushy do
- 5 Just right
- 9 *Desperate Housewives*, and others
- 14 Navratilova, for one
- 15 "That smarts!"
- 16 Belief statement at Metropolitan Community Church
- 17 Menu option
- 18 Load of money
- 19 Ban targets
- 20 Start of a song title of 44-Across
- 23 Future queen of *Star Wars*
- 24 Type of sci, in college
- 25 Penetrating path
- 28 Type of top
- 29 Trojans' org.
- 33 More of the title
- 34 Unit of flagellation
- 36 Lubricant
- 37 Start of a Sappho title, perhaps
- 38 End of the title
- 39 ___ Cologne
- 41 Airport in Israel
- 42 Abercrombie & Fitch event
- 44 Cyndi, who was awarded the 1st Human Rights Prize for work with LGBTQ youth
- 45 Anthem starter
- 47 California's Big ___
- 48 Wilde man
- 49 "Yeah, right!"
- 51 Bottomless
- 52 Another song by 44-Across
- 57 "Don't Cry ___ Argentina"
- 58 Make money
- 59 Features of Disney's *Dumbo*
- 61 Ready to shoot off
- 62 Lacking manners
- 63 Do a nocturnal activity
- 64 Wet-eyed
- 65 Direction from Susan Feniger
- 66 William of *Edmond*

Down

- 1 Symbol of Tammy Baldwin's party
- 2 Rainbow banner, e.g.
- 3 Singer Norah's father
- 4 Excessive ejaculaion?
- 5 On deck, on a pirate ship
- 6 Board type
- 7 Sometime defender of gay rts.
- 8 Woman or man of parts
- 9 Grinch's look
- 10 Raise to the status of Carter Heywood
- 11 Long, long time
- 12 Like boobs that don't sag
- 13 '60s radical org.
- 21 ___ of *Grass*
- 22 Todd Oldham designs
- 25 Prefix for Da Vinci's land
- 26 Failure to accept others, and others
- 27 Mary's *MTM* girlfriend
- 28 More sad about having no porn movies?
- 30 Sedan alternative
- 31 Senatorial staffers
- 32 Ready for anything
- 35 *Citizen Kane* model
- 38 They help porn stars stand erect
- 40 Dorothy Gale lived with her
- 43 Bangkok continent
- 44 Pupil of composer Loewe?
- 46 Talk too much
- 50 Like a nocturnal emission?
- 51 *Aida* composer
- 52 Went lickety-split
- 53 Shirley's la Douce role
- 54 Having no play
- 55 One of the Three Bears
- 56 Actor McCormack
- 57 Target for Richard Simmons
- 60 Oink pen



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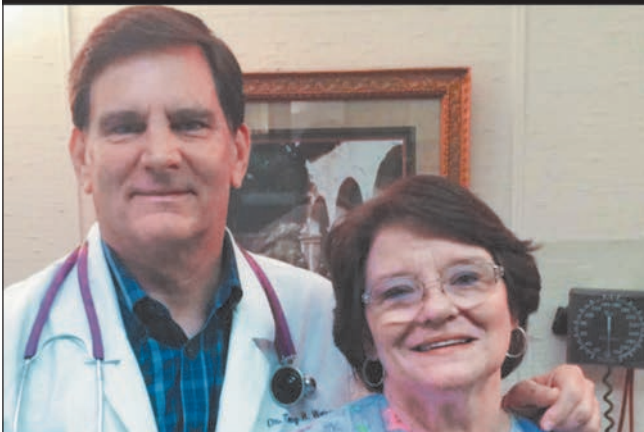
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