

dallasvoice

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AFTERMATH

2 gay couples recover, rebuild after Dec. 26 storm

by David Taffet, Page 8



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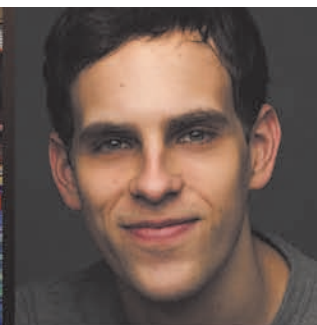
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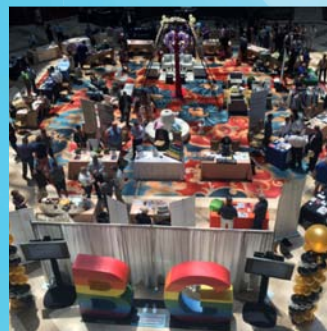
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Tornado damage in Rowlett
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Take Back Oak Lawn presents SOS with check



Lee Daugherty, right, presented Michael Dominguez, founder of SOS — Survivors Offering Support, a check for \$1,910 during the Mayor's LGBT Task Force meeting at Dallas City Hall Wednesday, Jan. 20. The money came from the sale of Take Back Oak Lawn T-shirts. Shirts are still available from Daugherty at Alexandre's. Dominguez, an Oak Lawn attack survivor, founded SOS to help victims of violent crime. The money will be used to help group members with medical bills, counseling or to cover immediate expenses incurred after an attack such as covering rent. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

Arnold Wayne Jones elected vice president of DFW film critics

Dallas Voice Executive Editor Life+Style Arnold Wayne Jones has been elected vice president of the Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association.

Jones has written for Dallas Voice since 2002. Before that he wrote for the Dallas Observer and The Met and was the on-air film critic for Channel 4.

He takes over as vice president of the organization from Boo Allen, film critic for the Denton Record-Chronicle.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association informs members of screenings and other media opportunities. The organization announces annual awards and in December chose Spotlight as best picture of 2015. The critics also present the Russell Smith Award, named in memory of the gay Dallas Morning News Film critic and presented for best cutting-edge indie film.

— David Taffet

Jack and George are this year's Sweethearts Candy sweethearts

Jack Evans and George Harris are this year's Sweethearts Candy Valentine's Day sweethearts. The ad featuring Jack and George was released Jan. 19, which was their 55th anniversary.

— David Taffet

TCU grad writes coming out essay for Outsports

If you want to choke up and feel inspired within a span of a few minutes, I have just the piece for you.

And I didn't even write it.

Recent TCU graduate and champion swimmer Cooper Robinson wrote a touching essay about how he came to accept his sexual orientation for Outsports this week, the LGBT sports site founded by Cyd Zeigler.

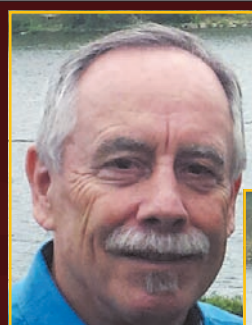
I talked to Robinson by phone from his home in Austin. Even as he's accepted and embraced his gay identity, the full-time student and champion athlete said, writing the essay was not easy. But he still wanted to write it.

"The wheels had been turning in my head for a while," he said. "I wanted to dive in, but I was too nervous. But last semester I started asking people for advice. I wanted to share my story because I knew it would help."

After procrastinating, gathering his thoughts, and processing his story, he finally submitted it to Zeigler. Coming out was a struggle that almost cost him his life. Writing about something so intimate was scary, but if help folks is what he wanted to do, then he certainly got what he asked for.

"I got so many loving and supportive texts," he said.

— James Russell



Happy Anniversary!

**25
YEARS**



Howard & John Fuller-Strauss celebrated 25 years together on January 19. They married January 17, 2014 in Broome County, New York, which is where they also met. Howard retired from L-3/Link in Arlington after 43 years of service and John worked at Linens n Things. They lived in Arlington for 17 years before moving to Ohio in retirement where they live with their cat and two English springer spaniels.

Sheriff Valdez, local business owner address Chamber on open carry law

JAMES RUSSELL | STAFF WRITER
russell@dallasvoice.com

Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez and local business owner Jeff Youngblood discussed the state's new open carry handgun law with members of the North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce at the chamber's luncheon on Thursday, Jan. 21.

At the beginning of her presentation, Valdez asked attendees whether or not they already seen anyone openly carrying a handgun in their establishment. Only one person raised his hand.

Valdez then described where citizens are and are not permitted to carry handguns and the options available for business owners.

The new law, which passed this past legislative session and went into effect on Jan. 1, allows individuals with concealed handgun licenses to carry guns in public view. Despite opposition from law enforcement, Democrats and other groups, the bill passed both chambers overwhelmingly and was signed by Texas' Republican Gov. Greg Abbott.

Business owners have the option to bar the open or concealed carrying of guns in their establishments, but to do so, they have to post a visibly post a notice in both English and Spanish.

"A merchant can ask to see someone's concealed handgun license but the person is not required to provide it to the merchant," Valdez said. "Only law enforcement can take away weapons."

The sheriff also discussed current debates about whether open carry of handguns is permitted in certain government buildings.

Some government entities will not allow guns inside their buildings, and guns are barred from courtrooms, she said. But the law remains unclear on whether or not one can carry it in a government building outside of the court, Valdez added.

The Dallas County Commissioners Court recently decided guns are not allowed in their buildings.

Questions like that one will likely be resolved in court.

Valdez, who was a vocal opponent of the open carry law, said it is likely people who wanted open carry just want to intimidate or show off their weapons. But, she added, the majority of CHL holders are law-abiding citizens and good people.

If a business owner does not care if a customer carries their handgun openly then that's fine, she said, adding, "It comes down to what are you as a business owner comfortable with."

When January Lupe Valdez came and open carry became law, "we were prepared to get complaints. But so far we've had none," the sheriff noted.

Valdez also pointed out that officers in her department are required to prove each year that they can handle weapons safely. "They also get psychological and aggression tests when hired" she said.

Fortunately, Valdez said, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission law pre-empts open and concealed carry laws when it comes to locations where alcohol is sold or served. If an establishment's alcohol sales exceed 51 percent of its total sales, then guns are automatically not allowed there. Bar owners, however, still have to post a TABC-sanctioned sign declaring guns are not allowed.

Youngblood, who owns a Fast Signs franchise in Irving, said business owners have to adhere to certain standards when displaying signs. His company makes the signs in all sorts of shapes, colors and materials, but the state is a stickler about font size and other requirements when it comes to signs banning the open or concealed carrying of a gun.

If business owners do not want guns on their property, they must prominently display a sign stating so in both English and Spanish. The wording must be in all capital letters, each letter no less than one inch tall.

There are still debates when it comes to the right of private business owners, but a business may ban guns inside their office or store. Nonetheless, guns are allowed in a parking lot or garage.

"It's practical. If they are carrying but the business does not allow guns, the customer can return to and leave it in their vehicle," Youngblood said.



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- Thu, 2/4 - Gourmet Pizza Night w/Chef TJ - 6pm
- Wed, 2/10 - Wine Painting Class - RSVP
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THE GAY AGENDA

Have an event coming up? Email your information to staff writer James Russell at russell@dallasvoice.com by Thursday at 10 a.m. for that week's issue.

JANUARY

• **Weekly: Lambda Weekly** every Sunday at 1 p.m. on 89.3 KNON-FM. Councilman Philip Kingston is this week's guest; **United Black Ellument** hosts discussion on HIV/AIDS in the black community at 7 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month at 3116 Commerce St., Suite C; **Fuse game night** every Monday evening but the last of the month at 8 p.m. at the Fuse space in the ilume, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Apt 2367; **Fuse Connect** every Wednesday from 7 p.m. at the Fuse Space. For more information call or e-mail Ruben Ramirez at 214-540-4500 or rramirez@myresourcecenter.org.

• **Jan. 22: Our Bodies Our Lives 2016** Reproductive rights continue under attack. Dale Hansen and Amy Vanderloef appear from 6-8 p.m. DJ Jonathan Graham spins for a dance party from 8-10 p.m. Seven for Parties, 150 Turtle Creek Blvd. RSVP on the group's Facebook page.

• Jan. 22: CinéWilde Presents

Paris is Burning

Doors open at 8 p.m. with pre-show ball hosted by United Black Ellument at 8:30 p.m. and movie at 9 p.m. followed by the annual Community Ball at Texas Theatre, 231 W. Jefferson. Benefits UBE. For tickets visit Bit.ly/1Pf8nhx.

• Jan. 24: East Dallas Christian Church Concert Series

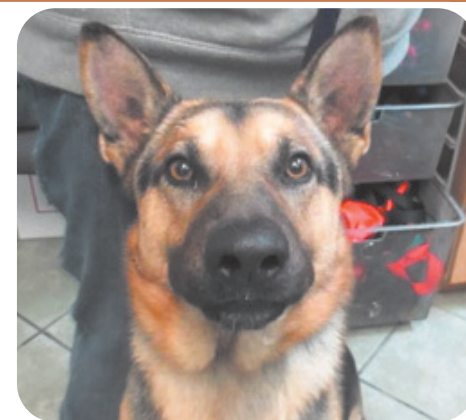
Baritone Matt Woodbury baritone and pianist Keith Critcher perform the works of Brahms, Ibert, Peri, Schubert and Vaughn-Williams and original Woodbury compositions based on the poems of Hafiz and Oscar Wilde. All concerts are free of charge with open seating. Donations will be accepted. 3 p.m. in the Grimes Choir Suite at East Dallas Christian Church, 629 N. Peak Street.

• Jan. 26: *The Courage to Love*

A documentary about the journey of four individuals from the pain and shame of sexual addiction to the hope and healing of recovery. Filmmaker Paul Ginocchio leads a panel discussion after the film. 7 p.m. at Studio Movie Grill, 11170 N. Central Expressway. Free.

pet of the week / BONIFAZ

Bonifaz is a male German shepherd mix, about 2 years old and weighing about 65 pounds. He seems to do fine with cats and with smaller dogs. He already knows how to sit and lay down, and is working on stay. He is a strong boy that likes to chase fast-moving objects, so his new family must be ready to work on leash manners with him.



Other pets are available for adoption from Operation Kindness, 3201 Earhart Drive, Carrollton. The no-kill shelter is open six days: Monday, 3-8 p.m.; closed Tuesday; Wednesday, 3-8 p.m.; Thursday, noon-8 p.m.; Friday, noon-5 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, noon-5 p.m. The cost is \$110 for cats, \$135 for kittens, \$150 for dogs over 1 year, and \$175 for puppies. The cost includes the spay/neuter surgery, microchipping, vaccinations, heartworm test for dogs, leukemia and FIV test for cats, and more. Those who adopt two pets at the same time receive a \$20 discount.



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Sexual Addiction Documentary Film: "The Courage to Love" by Paul Ginocchio



Paul Ginocchio, MFT
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

The Courage to Love: Free screening of the documentary following four individuals on their journey from the pain and shame of sexual addiction to the hope and healing of recovery. Director and producer Paul Ginocchio leads a panel discussion after the film. Jan. 26 at 7 p.m. at Studio Movie Grill, 11170 N. Central Expressway.

• **Jan. 26: Dallas Stonewall Young Democrats**

Performers who do drag, burlesque, belly dancing and other performing arts in our community will ask local elected officials any questions they may have. 6:30 p.m. at Sue Ellen's, 3014 Throckmorton St.

• **Jan. 26: LGBT Family & Friends at Durkins Pizza**

GALA's monthly networking, socializing and happy hour. 5-8:30 p.m. at Durkin Pizza, 8930 State Highway 121, McKinney.

• **Jan. 27: Gay Singles Night at Two Corks**

Two Corks and a Bottle, 2800 Routh St., Ste. 140 in The Quadrangle, hosts Gay Singles Night. No RSVP is necessary and there will be cheese plates available for purchase. Attendees can also have food delivered. 7:30-9 p.m.

• **Jan. 28: Trans/SOFFA Group Meeting Dallas Transcendence**

New Dallas chapter of trans and ally support group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays monthly at 7 p.m. at MCC of Greater Dallas, 1017 S Elm St., Ste. 105, Carrollton. For more information, contact Paula Ellis by e-mail dallastranscendence@gmail.com or phone at 214-674-9051.

• **Jan. 28: Outrageous Oral:**

A Salute to Baker v. Wade
Dick Peeples, Pam Buchmeyer, Maggie Watt and Mike Anglin speak about the Baker v. Wade case in this edition of the North Texas oral history project. 7 p.m. at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Free.

• **Jan. 28: The Group**

Support group for black men who have sex with men living with HIV meets from 7-9 p.m. every second and fourth Thursday of the month at a private location. For more information call 214-455-7316.

• **Jan. 29: Marketing Your Faith Community to the LGBT Audience**

We'll roll out the Dallas Voice welcome mat to provide an overview of news coverage and editorial; advertising; social media; community event calendars; the Dallas Voice website; eBlasts; and promotions for faith communities. 9:30 a.m.-noon. Dallas Voice, 1825 Market Center Blvd., Suite 240.

• **Jan. 29: LGBT Texas Exes & Longhorn**

The Ex-Students' Association of the University of Texas host a social at 5:30 p.m. at Cedar Springs Tap House, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Free and open to Texas Exes of Longhorn Supporters, with free appetizers and special drink prices. For information [Facebook.com/Events/958269664248016](https://www.facebook.com/Events/958269664248016)

• **Jan. 30: Tyler Area Gays Board Game Night**

6-9 p.m. in the Genecov Room at the Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce, 315 N. Broadway, Tyler. Attendees are encouraged to bring soda, snacks and games. Free parking on Line Street. For more information call 903-312-2081 or visit Tylerareagays.com.

• **Jan. 30: New Texas Symphony Orchestra**

An afternoon of dance music from favorite

Obituary

David E. Hamilton, aka Cati Collins, died Saturday, Jan. 16, at 4 a.m., following a brief battle with cancer.

Hamilton was born Aug. 14, 1954, in Linden, Texas, and after completing his studies at Texas A&M University, moved to Dallas. He worked in the oil industry until his retirement in 2014.

While Hamilton lived in Dallas, "Cati Collins" was born from his love of the theater and a desire to help the Dallas gay community. Cati was a regular cast member at La Folles on Mockingbird Lane, Powers Company on Fitzhugh Avenue and the Blue Parrot on Cedar Springs Road.

During this time, Hamilton joined the United Court of the Lone Star Empire, and in 1986 he was elected Empress XII. He later was elected Empress XVII of Dallas. Hamilton perfected his "Cati" persona and his fundraising talents and in 1999 was crowned Miss Gay Dallas.

He later competed in Miss Gay Texas America, finishing in the top 10. After his retirement, Hamilton volunteered his time at the AIDS Resource Center. He loved the Dallas community and his love and laughter — as David and as Cati — will always be remembered. Rest in peace, David/Cati.



ballets by Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Strauss and more performed with the Dallas Asian American Youth Orchestra. 5 p.m. Latino Cultural Center, 2600 Live Oak St.

• **Jan. 30-31: Travel and Adventure Show**

Meet directly with hundreds of travel experts, try global cuisine and get exclusive deals at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center, 650 S. Griffin St. To register visit Travelshows.com/Dallas. Use the code VOICE to receive \$8 off.

• **Jan. 31: HRC DFW Carnibowl**

Support HRC DFW chapter and win prizes from 1:30-4 p.m. at USA Bowl, 10920 Composite Dr. \$25 for per person or \$100 for a team of five. For tickets and more information visit Bit.ly/1Z8J8YT.

FEBRUARY

• **Feb. 4: Bloomin' Ball kickoff**

Gary Floyd and Denise Lee entertain. Light bites served. From 6-8 p.m. at Craighead Green Gallery, 1011 Dragon Street. \$10 suggested donation benefits AIDS Interfaith Network.

• **Feb. 5: Resource Center Toast to Laife Sponsor Party**

Sponsor appreciation party for Toast For Life — Mad Hatter's Ball from 7-9 p.m. at 3525 Turtle Creek Blvd., Ste. 20BC. For more information to reserve tickets call 214-540-4458 or e-mail bscott@myresourcecenter.org.

• **Feb. 6: Lovebomb 2016 Benefit for Queerbomb Dallas**

Benefit for Queerbomb Dallas' annual event with entertainment and more at Zippers, 3333 N. Fitzhugh Ave. For more information visit On.fb.me/1Pf7ZQf.

• **Feb. 6: Dash for the Beads**

Mardi Gras festival with 5K fun run, one mile walk, costume contest, beer garden with live music. 9:30 a.m. at Kidd Springs Park, 711 W. Canty St.

• **Feb. 9: Ed-U-Care Building Bridge Network**

Training group for caretakers of LGBT seniors hosts a dinner followed by screening of the movie Gen Silent for LGBT senior and caretaker needs 6-8:30 p.m. at The Senior Source, 3910 Harry Hines Blvd. For more information and to RSVP e-mail Sharyn.Fein@educaredallas@gmail.com.

• **Feb. 11: LGBT Retirement Planning Workshop**

GALA presents a free workshop by Prudential Financial for LGBT couples and individuals. 6:30-8:15 p.m. Horizon Unitarian Universalist Church, 1641 Hebron Parkway, Carrollton.

• **Feb. 12: High Tech Happy Hour**

Texas Instruments Pride, the LGBT and ally diversity group, hosts its monthly High Tech Happy Hour to increase professional and social contacts between groups and individuals and to foster community. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Primo's Tex Mex, 1400 Hi Line Dr. For more information e-mail Paul.von.Wupperfeld@pavw@ti.com.

• **Feb. 12-14: HRC Time to Thrive Conference**

Annual national conference promoting safety, inclusion and well-being for LGBT youth features speakers, workshops and more at Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, 1501 Gaylord Trail, Grapevine. For more information and to register visit Timetothrive.org.

AFTERMATH

Gay couples rebuild their lives after Dec. 26 tornado

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

At least two gay couples in Rowlett lost their homes to the tornadoes that hit the area on Dec. 26.

One couple got help from friends until they could get their cars out of the garage and found their wallets in the rubble.

The other found themselves underinsured and started a GoFundMe to help with upcoming expenses.

Hewey and Myer

Joseph Hewey and Chris Myer had lived in their lakefront house in Rowlett for two years when, on the day after Christmas, Hewey heard the tornado sirens. He grabbed his 10-year-old black Lab and put her in a closet under the stairs to keep her safe.

When Myer, who is originally from Kansas, heard what sounded like thunder that just kept getting louder, he knew what was coming. He and Hewey headed for the safety of the under-the-stairs closet with their dog, and by the time they got there, they could hear windows breaking.

By the time the storm had passed, their lakefront home was destroyed.

"We saved maybe 5 percent," Hewey said, noting that the storm had spared a closet where they kept photo albums and other memorabilia.

After quickly surveying the damage around them, the two men checked to see if their neighbors were safe. The neighbors on one side were OK, but they were renters who had no renters' insurance; they lost everything.

When they went to see about the neighbors on the other side of their house, Hewey and Myer ended up pulling the couple out of their rubble that was once their home. The woman was seven months pregnant and went into labor. Emergency vehicles were able to get her to the hospital.

While most of Hewey and Myer's house was destroyed, the garage survived along with their two cars. One, a car they've had for only three days, was unscathed; the other suffered only minor scratches.

But the men said they couldn't open their garage door, and they couldn't find their wallets. So friends lent them money and took them shopping to buy jackets, toothbrushes and a change of clothes to get them through the next couple of days.

The couple stayed with friends for a week-and-

a -
half,
until
they
found a
house in
North Dal-
las to rent.

Hewey said the rental market in the Dallas area is so tight they had a choice of only three houses within the price range their insurance would pay for.

They spent the next week sifting through the rubble.

Both Hewey and Myer work from home and in addition to finding their wallets, they also found the hard drives to their computers. Despite the two days of rain that followed the tornadoes, the hard drives worked when they plugged them into new computers.

Myer is an architect and is designing a new house they plan to build on their lakefront lot, once the debris is cleared. Hewey said he hopes that will be within a year, but he acknowledged they may be looking at close to two years, because of a shortage of contractors as a result of the storm.

"It will take awhile to get back to normal," Hewey said. "But we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. One day it's going to be normal again."

Rainone and Fowler

Alfredo Rainone and Anthony Fowler are also optimistic. They've already talked to a contractor

from their insurance company's approved list and hope to be back in their home in about eight months. That's the timeline their contractor gave them.

"It's been a nightmare," Rainone said. "But we're safe and our dogs are safe."

When the sirens came on, Rainone said he and Fowler didn't pay much attention at first. Then they decided to put the dogs in the laundry room just to be safe. If it wasn't for the dogs, they might have been upstairs when the tornado blew the roof off the house.

"Things were going crazy in the house," Rainone said, "So we jumped into the laundry room with the dogs."

He didn't notice until after the storm that a board had gone through the laundry room wall. One wall to the house was gone and the roof damaged, but their house wasn't damaged as badly as some of their neighbors' homes.

Like Hewey and Myer, once they realized they were safe, Rainone and Fowler went out to make sure their neighbors were safe, too. Rainone said five neighbors came into their house for the evening to arrange for a place to stay — phone service was down, but text messages were going out sporadically.

Rainone and Fowler spent the night in their house, but as the rain continued, the roof collapsed.

"The bedroom caved in around us that night," Rainone said.

Their insurance company said the frame of their house is salvageable. But Fowler said they have learned they were under-insured.

Fowler said he's lived in the house for 29 years and a few years ago, he was over-insured. Because property values in the area have risen so fast and so many homes were damaged in the storm, his contractor told him they'd charge \$119 per square foot to repair the house.

"We're under-insured because the house has been upgraded and prices have spiked," Fowler said.

Their insurance may come up \$30,000 to \$40,000 short, he estimated.

While both men have had careers, they both have health problems now and are on fixed incomes. So coming up with that extra money to pay the gap between costs and insurance payouts will be tough.

The tornado damaged more than just Rainone and Fowler's home. Rainone had a seizure before the couple was able to find somewhere to stay, and he ended up in the hospital.

He's been dealing with other health problems as well: He's HIV-positive and, since the storm, his viral load count began going up for the first time. His doctor is talking about changing his medication, he said, but the problem may be due in part to stress.

Rainone said he checked himself out of the hospital quickly, because he and Fowler needed to find a place to live that would take their dogs. They're now living in an extended-stay hotel in Dallas and plan to stay there until their house is rebuilt.

Since they couldn't move things themselves, they relied on movers. But that didn't end well.

"What the storm didn't destroy, the movers destroyed," Rainone said, noting that their leather sofa, which had survived the tornado, didn't survive being dragged across a concrete walk. And a box packed with crystal became a box full of glass shards when movers tossed it across the yard, he said.

Friends of the couple set up a GoFundMe page to help Rainone and Fowler replace everyday items, like clothing and pet supplies and to pay for things like doing laundry, which can get expensive at a hotel laundromat.

One of their cars was damaged and isn't running, and the other car is having problems since the storm. But more than anything, the two men are worried about getting back and forth from Dallas to their medical appointments.



How you can help

MetroTex Realtors has activated a national disaster relief fund to help with immediate needs of those impacted by the Dec. 26 tornadoes. The National Organization of Realtors sent \$200,000 to MetroTex Realtors to help people who lost their homes with rent, mortgage payments or temporary housing. Anyone affected by the tornadoes may apply for \$1,000 in assistance, according to MetroTex President Russell Berry.

The money became available the second week of January and about half of it has been distributed, Berry said. The remaining money will be available until the end of the month.

Berry said it's easy to apply for help on the Texas Association of Realtors website. The application is under the "Our Impact" pull-down menu.

Berry said one of the challenges has been where to send the checks, since mail can't be delivered to the affected homes. "Most of the communities are at a standstill," he said.

About 1,100 homes were affected in Dallas, Collin, Rockwall and Ellis counties. Most people have cleared out the debris from their homes and are waiting for it to be hauled away.

"Insurance companies have done a great job getting people into housing," Berry said.

But rental rates, which were already high, have risen higher because of demand. And people who prefer to buy new rather than wait to rebuild are finding there's little inventory. In cities like Rowlett, there's virtually none.



Tony Fowler, left and Alfredo Rainone. (Courtesy Alfredo Rainone-Fowler)

Berry said he's hearing most people are planning to rebuild and insurance companies are doing a good job of paying to replace and restore houses to what people had — up to the insured value.

As Fowler watched everything being thrown out from his house, he said he felt unnerved.

"I felt like I died watching everything thrown

out," he said.

Rainone hopes their ordeal will be over in the eight months promised.

"All I want to do is go home," Rainone said. "You don't realize what you have til it's gone or what it meant to you."

The Fowler-Rainone GoFundMe page can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/pzgq3uyk>.



Hewey and Myer's home

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All in the family

New chapter of support group focuses on transgender people and their families



Susan Blanchard, left, and Finn Jones initially struggled with Jones' transition.

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

After 13 years of marriage and a lifetime of struggling with her gender identity, Paula Ellis finally came out to her wife.

"I said, 'I am a woman.' It didn't go well," Ellis said.

The couple didn't have that much support living in rural Oklahoma. The closest city was Tulsa, home to such notably conservative institutions as Oral Roberts University.

"There was no support for [my wife] where we lived. I had the support—I had to drive far, but I had it. She didn't have anyone," Ellis said. "Things could have ended better or more amicably. It was critical for her to talk to someone or spouses."

While groups like Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays have long provided a critical bridge between supporting both individuals coming out as lesbian, gay or bisexual and their families, no such group has formally existed for the transgender community.

But as Ellis learned, transitioning impacts everyone.

"One of the things that happens when you're married is relationships break," Ellis said. "Spouses and parents feel like they're losing someone. There is no one for families to talk to. Many are new to the coming out process or transgender individuals.

"It's important to find people who can tell them these experiences are not unique. They need a place to learn and talk," she added.

As head of the Resource Center's Gender Education, Advocacy & Resources program, Ellis organized events, meetings and talks. But she also took it upon herself to reach out to other area transgender resource groups. Among the many active groups was DFW Trans-Cendence in Fort Worth, founded by Finn Jones and the Rev. Susan Blanchard.

She was struck by their kindness and commitment to one another.

"A couple of the members roped me into a Facebook conversation with a member who was struggling," Ellis said. The long conversation addressed the person's problems and fears.

After a period of juggling GEAR, a job and a personal life, Ellis decided to leave GEAR to establish a Dallas chapter of Trans-Cendence. Whatever she had planned, it would complement area groups like GEAR, Trans Pride Initiative and others.

Still, planning means organizing little details like paperwork. It also means hunting for a venue, preferably free, accessible via public transportation and a space large enough to hold a crowd.

After months of work, Dallas Trans-Cendence will host its first meeting next Thursday, Jan. 28 at the MCC of Greater Dallas in Carrollton, just a few blocks from the DART rail stop.

Addressing a need

Blanchard and Jones were already together when Jones told Blanchard he was transitioning.

Her dream of growing old with Jones suddenly seemed distant.

"When you're in a relationship with someone and they tell you that they are changing their gender to match who they feel they are on the inside, you grieve because you had a whole dream in your head of how life would be," Blanchard wrote in an email to Dallas Voice.

She knew Jones would remain the same, at least personality wise, Blanchard wrote, "But there are some changes and that makes you grieve the loss of what was. In addition, you grieve because some family and friends will reject your partner or child, and you grieve the loss of those relationships."

"All of that changes when someone transitions," she wrote.

But when Jones began his transition, the question was not if Blanchard supported him, but how to keep the family together.

"I couldn't find resources out there to help me through [Jones' transition]. I had my own counselor, but she has not been through the same situation," Blanchard wrote.

Blanchard knew another couple going through a transition. They began calling themselves "SOFFAs," or significant others, family, friends and allies.

"When we started this group, we SOFFAs wanted to make sure that that didn't happen to anyone else...all of us were partners of trans guys and we helped each other by listening to the experiences we each had," Blanchard wrote.

In an informal setting, the spouses and partners shared the hurdles, complicated feelings and tears.

"We felt like we weren't alone. That there were people who understood us [who could talk about] what it is like to be in a relationship with a trans guy," Blanchard said.

As awareness of the group spread, other people started attending as well. The draw was primarily having a safe space and community to share one's feelings.

"Having someone to talk to, to grieve with, to normalize things for us, helped many of us to process what was going on," Blanchard wrote.

Typically, the meetings are divided in two sections. The first half is reserved for speakers or group discussion. The next half is reserved for a trans discussion group and a non-trans discussion group. The talks could be about anything: sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or personal stories.

What is key is including everyone.

"Our meetings will include all types of identities. People who do not fit in the binary or even

Poll: LGBT issues important to Iowa caucus voters

LISA KEEN | Keen News Service
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LGBT issues have come up relatively little so far in the current presidential primary campaigns. But a poll out of Iowa last week says such issues do have an important influence in who likely caucus goers will choose to support.

The first crucial voting begins Feb. 1 in the Iowa caucuses, followed by the New Hampshire primary on Feb. 9.

According to a poll published Jan. 14 by Bloomberg Politics and the Des Moines Register, support among likely Democratic caucus participants in Iowa is basically split between former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Clinton has 42 percent and Sanders has 40 percent. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley has 4 percent, and the margin of error is plus-or-minus 4.4 points.

Importantly, the other 14 percent are undecided.

The Register survey of likely Republican caucus goers found 25 percent prepared to support U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, 22 percent behind real estate mogul Donald Trump, 12 percent for U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, and 11 percent for neurosurgeon Ben Carson.

Twenty points are spread out in low single digits among the rest of the Republican field: U.S. Sen.

Rand Paul of Kentucky, former Govs. Jeb Bush of Florida and Mike Huckabee of Arkansas, Govs. Chris Christie of New Jersey and John Kasich of Ohio and former Hewlett Packard executive Carly Fiorina.

Former Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore is still in the race but has not polled even 1 percent from the beginning of his campaign.

The Register's survey, taken Jan. 7-10, asked 503 "likely" Democratic caucus-goers how important "social issues like abortion and gay marriage" are to their decision about which candidate to support: 81 percent said they were either "extremely important" or "important."

Still, the influence of these social issues was smaller than every other issue the Register asked about: "The economy" (99 percent), "National security" (96 percent), "Civil rights" (95 percent), "The gap between rich and poor" (94 percent), and "Taxes" (90 percent).

The answers of 500 Republican likely caucus-goers were similar on "abortion and gay marriage": 80 percent said the issues were "extremely important" or "important" to their choice of candidate.

The influence of other issues was somewhat similar with one exception: "The economy" and "National security" (both 99 percent) were the top influencers, "Taxes" (94 percent), and "Civil

rights" (86 percent). "The gap between rich and poor" trailed far behind (55 percent).

The Register included data on Iowa frontrunner Cruz specifically, showing that 78 percent of likely Republican caucus goers find it "attractive" that Cruz is "guided by Christian values in opposing abortion and gay marriage."

Only 18 percent found his position "mostly unattractive" or "very unattractive." Ninety-four percent said they found it "attractive" that Cruz "could be counted on to base his decisions on the U.S. Constitution."

The position of the candidates on "gay marriage" or other LGBT-related concerns has come up relatively few times during the several nationally televised debates. Most times, the reference is just in passing, such as during the Jan. 17 Democratic debate when Clinton, talking about young voters, said that there has been an "assault" by Republicans on the rights of gays and lesbians.

Cruz, during the Jan. 14 GOP debate, tried to diss Trump by saying his opponent represented "New York values." He said, "Everybody understands that the values in New York City are socially liberal and pro-abortion and pro-gay marriage."

In less publicized moments, some candidates have elaborated on their well-known positions on marriage for same-sex couples: Republicans against and Democrats for.

USA Today pointed out in November that Rubio was making confusing statements on the issue in Iowa. In one interview, he suggested it was right for Kentucky county clerk Kim Davis to disobey the U.S. Supreme Court decision striking state bans on marriage for same-sex couples. Later,

at an event for religious leaders, he said "civil disobedience would be Biblically justified" if "we are no longer able to change the systems and the laws we have in place."

Whatever the muddle might mean, Rubio's polling in Iowa is roughly the same as it is nationally: about 12 percent and in third place.

Meanwhile, the polls of party voters nationally have been somewhat volatile. According to one poll, Clinton led Sanders by 20 points last month, but she held only a seven-point lead as of Jan. 10. In another poll, her lead has increased from 19 points in December to 25 points now.

After leading Cruz by only five points last month, in surveys of Republican primary voters nationwide, Trump now leads by 13 points.

Gay political data analyst Nate Silver's website, fivethirtyeight.com, says a careful analysis of 55 polls of Iowa Democratic caucuses, suggests Clinton has a "65 percent chance to win" in Iowa. It says Sanders' chances are 34 percent.

A similar analysis of 65 polls of Iowa Republicans finds Trump has a 43 percent chance of winning Iowa; Cruz 42 percent, Rubio 8 percent, and Carson 4 percent.

Fivethirtyeight analysis currently forecasts Trump has a 56 percent chance of winning the New Hampshire primary, Rubio 12 percent, Cruz 9 percent, Kasich 8 percent, Christie 7 percent, Bush 5 percent, and Paul 1 percent.

Fivethirtyeight's analysis of the New Hampshire Democrats gives Sanders a whopping 71 percent chance of winning there. Clinton has a 29 percent chance, and O'Malley has less than a 1 percent chance.

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Liberty Ridge Farm: Faith or discrimination?



While I've never been there in person, Liberty Ridge Farm looks like a beautiful place, based on the photos on their website — lush green grass, handsome horses and goats, a rainbow of various flowers, hearty corn stalks taller than your head.

It's the kind of place a couple looking to get married might want to hold their event. And Liberty Ridge Farm offers that experience: "Panoramic views, beautiful barns, and acres of picturesque countryside makes Liberty Ridge Farm an ideal location for those bridal couples looking for country rustic charm," their website reads.

To be clear, though, you can't get married there. Your vows have to happen somewhere else.

But you can reception there all you want.

That's because in 2012 a lesbian couple, Jennifer and Melisa McCarthy (not to be confused with Jenny "anti-vaccine lunatic" and Melissa "hilarious actress" McCarthy, who are cousins, not spouses — at least not each other's spouse) wanted to have their wedding at Liberty Ridge. And Liberty Ridge said, "Uh, no thanks. That's gross. Because God."

So the McCarthys sued. And the law was on their side. It took a couple of years, but they won.

According to the ACLU, "[A]s the New York State Division of Human Rights ruled in 2014, under New York's Human Rights Law, public businesses cannot discriminate on the basis of



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

race, sexual orientation, national origin or other protected classes."

Not satisfied with that ruling, the owners of Liberty Ridge Farms, Robert and Cynthia Gifford, appealed, saying they weren't discriminating based on sexual orientation,

they were just making a decision "based solely upon the Giffords' religious beliefs regarding same-sex marriage," according to ThinkProgress.

See the difference? "Hey judge, it isn't about their sexual orientation, it's about our religious belief about marriage. Granted, our belief just happens to hinge on the sexual orientation of the people getting married, but that's a minor technicality, right?"

Wrong. They lost again. On Jan. 15 the appeals court ruled that the Giffords were in the wrong and that their argument was bullshit.

That doesn't mean it's over, of course. According to their lawyer, Caleb Dalton of the virulently anti-gay Alliance Defending Freedom, "The government went after both this couple's freedom and their ability to make a living simply for ad-

hering to their faith on their own property. The court should have rejected this unwarranted and unconstitutional government intrusion, so we will consult with our client regarding appeal."

The headline on the ADF's press release is very revealing: "NY court: Farmers can't obey their faith in their own backyard."

According to ADF, when the McCarthys first called about using Liberty Ridge Farm for their wedding, "Cynthia politely told McCarthy that she and her husband don't host and coordinate same-sex ceremonies but left open an invitation to visit the farm to consider it as a potential reception site. Instead, McCarthy and her partner filed a complaint with the Division of Human Rights."

What? They filed a complaint about discrimination? But Cynthia Gifford was polite! How dare they!

Make no mistake that this case will ramp up efforts across the country to pass so-called "religious freedom" laws. The anti-gay right has gotten quite used to discriminating for any reason with impunity. Now that LGBT people are winning more civil rights, the anti-gay wing is doubling down on legislation that declared discrimination against LGBT people a "religious freedom."

D'Anne Witkowski is a freelance writer and poet and a writing teacher at the University of Michigan. She writes the weekly "Creep of the Week" column for Q Syndicate.



FAMILY, From Page 10



Paula Ellis

are gender fluid or queer are welcome. There are some people whose gender is fluid or don't identify or even understand gender," Ellis said. "We will not just be talking masculine or feminine topics. We make it clear we do not define one another. I can tell my story, what worked for me while transitioning."

Rooted in research

"When you're transitioning, support groups keep families together. You're more likely to avoid alcoholism, depression, homelessness," Jones said.

Two research studies on transgender stigma back up Jones' claims.

The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding, a 2011 report by the Institute of Medicine, revealed negative attitudes and misunderstanding about transgender people leads to high rates of alcoholism, suicide and HIV infection.

A study in American Journal of Public Health conducted by Walter Bockting, clinical psychologist and co-director of the LGBT Health Initiative at Columbia University Medical Center, affirms the IOM's research. Among those surveyed by Bockting, half of transgender women and a third of transgender men said they struggle with depression from the stigma, shame and isolation caused by how others treat them.

Providing resources to families, friends and significant others decreases the stigma against transgender people, increases understanding and contributes to positive self-esteem.

"We've seen those success stories in our group. One couple's relationship is better than ever," Jones said.

Blanchard and Jones' relationship is better as well.

"Personally, I think Finn and I are stronger as a couple because" we have a support group, Blanchard wrote.

Jones and Ellis make it clear their group is not meant to compete with other transgender awareness and support groups in the area. That's why they are not focusing on youth, for one.

Ellis said a number of factors, including liability issues, factored into the decision. But they also do not want to overlap with Youth First's "great outreach" to transgender youth.

"We want to help all trans people regardless of identity find the best path for themselves, and to help loved ones make the journey with them," Ellis said.

While Jones may eventually see his group move toward youth work, he agreed that their focus should remain specifically on families.

"We don't want to infringe upon other support systems in the area. But we saw a need for supporting families," Jones said. "Education is going to change the tide. We just came around at the right time."

Dallas Trans-Cendence meets on the second and fourth Thursdays monthly at 7 p.m. at MCC of Greater Dallas, 1017 S Elm St., Ste. 105, Carrollton. For more information, contact Paula Ellis by e-mail dallastranscendence@gmail.com or phone at 214-674-9051.

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'Rent' boy

Exactly 20 years after his life-changing work in the groundbreaking musical 'Rent,' out actor Anthony Rapp — now on tour in the new classic 'If/Then' — is older, wiser ... and not living in the past

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES
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For musical theater junkies, Anthony Rapp is American royalty. If Patti LuPone and Bernadette Peters are the reigning queens, Mandy Patinkin the king and Lin-Manuel Miranda the crown prince, Rapp is an earl if not a duke. He co-starred in the original cast of Jonathan Larson's *Rent* — one of those game-changer musicals (like *Hamilton!* or *The Book of Mormon*) that impacted the culture at large in countless ways, bringing younger audiences to musical theater while tackling contemporary issues (AIDS, gay romance) in powerful ways.

While *Rent* certainly transformed Rapp's life, it wasn't the beginning of his career... nor anything near the end. He was one of Elisabeth Shue's charges in *Adventures in Babysitting*, a colleague of Russell Crowe in *A Beautiful Mind* and most recently reunited with his *Rent* co-star Idina Menzel for *If/Then*, the latest musical from the Tony- and Pulitzer-winning team Brian Yorkey and Tom Kitt (*Next to Normal*). While not the huge hit *Rent* was, consider this: For nearly 20 years, the highest charting Broadway cast recording was *Rent*; it was finally eclipsed in 2014 ... by *If/Then*. That's quite a feather in the B'way cap.

If/Then is putatively the story of Elizabeth, who one day is presented with two paths: One in which she becomes "Liz," and one where she becomes "Beth." In both timelines, Rapp plays Lucas, her bisexual bestie, whose one life is radically altered by Elizabeth's choices.

We chatted with Rapp (for the third time) about going on tour again, as well as how his life has changed since *Rent* and his dedication to LGBT rights.

IF/THEN

Winspear Opera House,
2403 Flora St. Jan. 27–31.
ATTPAC.org

Dallas Voice: *If/Then* is about how one choice can echo in unexpected ways. Do you think much about those kinds of dual paths in your own life? Anthony Rapp: I tend not to dwell in the past and live in the moment. But I do really appreciate that the show is so much about the ripple effects of how we all intersect with each other. The decisions you make can have profound consequences on my life... or not. But I think that's really important to think about. The show makes no moral judgment, it just presents it to make of it what you will. What I do with you, for you or because of you can have a huge impact on [both our lives], and I should take that into account.

Yeah — on the surface, Elizabeth's choices are at the center of the plot, but Lucas' outcome is vastly different: In one, he's a gay dad with an adoptive son; in the other, he becomes a biological father but the pregnancy is terminated. Do you have your own preference for Lucas' life? Interesting. The experience of playing the Liz [storyline] is a little happier; there are things a bit tougher in the Beth storyline, but they enrich his life in different ways. I really honestly don't know which is the better outcome, though one is, at least on the surface, a happier ending.

Yorkey and Kitt are two of the most exciting of the new breed of musical composing teams, and of course Jonathan Larson is practically legendary. What are your favorite songs from the shows you've done? "You Don't Need to Love Me" [which my character Lucas sings in *If/Then*] is a beautiful song. And "You Are What You Own" [from *Renf*] is a great pop-rock anthem, and written with my voice in mind, which is always a huge honor. It was great how it fit into the arc of the show.

But "Always Starting Over" — while not my song — is [probably my favorite]. It was written for Idina to sing, and as long as I had been with the show, it was one of the last things to go in. I was in the room when Tom Kitt played it for Idina for the first time, and it felt like I was watching history being made. It was like I was in the presence of

'THEN,' AGAIN | Anthony Rapp co-stars with Jackie Burns in the national tour of 'If/Then,' recreating his Broadway role. (Photo courtesy Joan Marcus/ATTPAC)

■ RAPP Page 20

Bible versus

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES
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Second Thought's 'Martyr' presents a modern-day 'Crucible' of extremism

Ben (Garret Storms) is a fairly typical high school kid: Moody, disrespectful to his mom, awkward, probably a C+ student. One day, he refuses to disrobe for swim class, and starts quoting Bible verses, though he's never shown any interest in religion before. His mom (Lulu Ward) and teachers (Allison Pistorius, Andrews W. Cope) are concerned, but hope it's just a phase. But Ben's fundamentalism mounts; he's proselytizing to a disabled classmate (Ruben Carranzana) who clings to Ben's promises of faith healing with puppy-dog loyalty. Ben begins to see himself as some kind of messianic figure. And we all know how productive religious fervor is.

Martyr, the season-opener from perpetually provocative Second Thought Theatre, is sort of a modern-day take on Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*: How desperate are we to trust in people's humanity that we can't see their flaws — their evils — when confronted directly with them? It's a portrait of Christian fanaticism taken to its logically extremist ends; if only it felt more satiric and less journalistic.

German playwright Marius von Mayenburg's 2012 play (here in a 2015 translation by Maja Zade) feels contemporary and relevant but also expressionistic: A sparse set, with characters who tend to wear their archetype-ness broadly: A priest (Paul Taylor) who seems to encourage Ben's zealotry while exploiting his mother; a headmaster (Thomas Ward) who huffs indignantly at "scandalous" teaching methods (sex ed! evolu-

tion science!) while lasciviously hitting on his female staff; a tiger mom who defends her son blindly while ignoring his clear signs of being a sociopath. These all come together in a perfect storm of witch hunting and blame-gamesmanship, where someone has to be at fault. And it can't be the kid or religion, because, well, God.

Storms — with his wispy teen peach fuzz and gangly discomfort with his own body — carries the heaviest load, portraying a character who is both pitiable and loathsome, but also opaque. Von Mayenburg doesn't answer a lot of questions here. There is a suggestion that Ben's crush on a flirtatious female classmate (Mikaela Krantz) is misdirected same-sex longing (the old "the most homophobic person in the room is secretly gay" trope), but while he's clearly sexually confused, we never fully know the source of his radical devotion. We just see how destructive it is.

And while not set in the U.S. per se, it's impossible to watch *Martyr* and not consider how eerily close Ben's rantings come to Mike Huckabee/Ted Cruz stump speeches, or how the demonization of free thinking mirrors the Texas ban on schoolbooks with actual learning in them. Director Blake Hackler subtly but persuasively reminds us that martyrdom is the ultimate distraction from rational thought ... which is exactly why it's so dangerous to an enlightened society. ■

MARTYR
Bryant Hall on the Kalita
Humphreys campus, 3636 Turtle
Creek Blvd. Through Feb. 6. 2TT.co.



ZEALOT | Ben's (Garret Storms) religious fanaticism masks unease about his sexuality, while Georg (Ruben Carranzana) pursues his man-crush in 'Martyr.' (Photo by Karen Almond)

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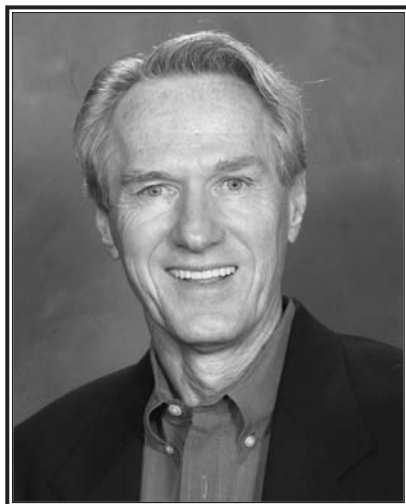
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LIFE+STYLE

profile



The “shred” will put you through the sweat fires of hell, but despite her extreme workouts, Jillian Michaels wants you to know she is no monster. To set the record, ahem, straight, the out fitness guru is opening the doors to her very “normal,” sometimes-emotional, not-at-all-what-you-thought life during E!’s *Just Jillian*, where she laughs (you read that right) and... cries?!

You heard that right. Jillian Michaels — the Butt Kicker from *The Biggest Loser* — cries actual human tears.

As if that revelation wasn’t enough, there were many more made during this recent chat with Michaels, who talked about her reputation being “destroyed” by *The Biggest Loser*, why she uses the word “fag” and how, after a long road to self-acceptance, Madonna empowered her to confront her sexuality.

—Chris Azzopardi

Dallas Voice: After watching *Just Jillian*, a lot of people will be surprised to find out that you’re not who they thought you were. Jillian

Michaels: Very much so, yeah. Here’s what I love about it: Everyone is like, why would you do this? And they have these preconceived notions about reality shows and all this drama and “It’s all fake and it’s all mean spirited,” and that’s not at all why I wanted to open up my life. I feel like the comedy of errors as we go about our daily routine is quite enjoyable. And everybody has the same struggles, right? Whether it’s in their work, marriage, family, parenting, as a friend, you go on this journey where you laugh and you cry, and hopefully you learn something with the characters on the show. For me, in my career, it’s always been “Jillian’s the fitness guru,” but the bigger conversation is using fitness as a tool to help somebody build a better life.

Was being out on TV — with a family, even: your partner, Heidi Rhoades, and your two children

Jillian Michaels is working it out

The reality TV star and fitness guru reclaims gay slurs, thanks Madonna and discusses showing her fans a new side

— something you ever imagined for yourself?

I'm sort of in that very pivotal generation, right? I'm on the younger end of Gen-X, and for me, growing up gay was not cool. Gay was gross. Gay was despicable. People said the word "faggot." People said "dyke" — I heard that a lot in high school. And it was very scary. I have watched as a people and as a country and a culture over the course of my teenage-into-adulthood life and I do still think there is a tremendous amount of homophobia that exists. And I've never been out there with my gay flag; I wanted to take an approach of, "Hey, I don't need to win you over and I don't need to fight with you and I don't want to combat you." But what I do hope is that people observe me, observe my family, and go, "Oh my god, this isn't at all what I thought it was. This is actually pretty similar to my family; they're going through things that my family goes through." And that's always been my approach. I don't need to make these big statements. I'm just going to live my life and my truth and hopefully as you observe that it will become a little more — and I have so much trouble with this word — normalized for people who don't perceive it as the norm.

I was struck by the use of "queer" in the show. Some people who are older than us hear queer and still find it offensive, whereas our generations have embraced the term as being all-encompassing of any sexual orientation that isn't straight. Where do you stand on labels? Do you have a preference? What's interesting is, I take a very African-American-using-the-N-word approach with those terms. I've claimed them all. I use "homo" and joke about it. I use "dyke" and joke about it. My gay male friends and I use "fag" and joke about it. We've taken them all back and made them our own.

What we've tried to do is take some of the venom out of the terms by reclaiming them — and I hate to draw this reference — but in the same way the black community has taken back the N-word. We don't allow them to harm us or hurt us and there could be a whole psychology about why we do, but we all do. It's like, I own these words, they're my words, and I've suffered enough to be able to take them on and wear them with pride, so to speak. None of those words actually have any venom in them for me anymore and I don't really care who's swinging them at me — it doesn't mean anything to me. People can judge it but that's just something that I've done; it is what it is.

What is the biggest misconception about you?

God, I mean, it's the obvious. And I hate the obvious and I think it's cliché, but I think people never really understood *The Biggest Loser*. *The Biggest Loser* was a life-or-death intervention that existed on a ticking clock on top of which you would see 45 minutes of a television show which is shot over 10 days and so you never saw what I was doing, why I was doing it, what else I was doing, the end result of what I was doing. The intentions were never displayed and it was far more entertaining to have a good guy and a bad guy, and I think some people really saw through that and that's great; some people did not and that's that.

But what is kind of cool about this show is you see just me — the good, the bad, the ugly. I'm a very real person. So, for those who have idealized me, they'll be disappointed; for those who've hated me all these years, I think they'll be surprised.

Do you regret doing *The Biggest Loser*? Good question. There's this Latin quote that I heard and it summarizes the show perfectly: "That which

■ JILLIAN Next Page

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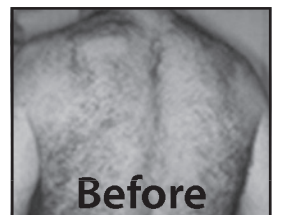


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L+S profile

■ JILLIAN, From Previous Page

nourishes me also destroys me.” I’m super grateful for the platform I was given. Obviously I owe everything to that diving board, that jumping-off point. But there does come a point where you definitely overstay your welcome, where something starts to become more limiting, it starts to do more harm than it does good, and that was definitely a source of frustration for me. I don’t think it’s a secret — I have been vocal about it — but to say that I’m not grateful for the opportunity and for all it’s done for me would be obtuse, absurd and obnoxious, but I’m not gonna lie and say it didn’t also cost me a host of problems on the back end.

Now, I’m hoping this show is really just my best foot forward and the thing is, I am sarcastic and I am obnoxious but I’m also loving and I’m also passionate and I’m also caring and I’m all those things. At least now if people hate me, they’ll hate me for a legitimate reason! At least they’ll hate me for a reason that’s real.

And unless those tears are CGI, you cry. Quite a bit, in fact. Actual human tears, I think.

[Laughs] No, no, no. It’s just tear-gas shit they sprayed at me during the interviews.

You’ve been called a bully to overweight people and I know that must be hard to hear for somebody who was bullied. What does that feel like?

It’s a shame. For somebody who comes to an environment where they’re literally committing suicide with food, let’s cut the shit. Some of them are 400 or 500 pounds, they’re killing themselves with food and the amount of time they have left is five or 10 years — if they’re lucky, 15. It’s suicide with food. In some cases I would have a week with one of these people, so I will try everything under the sun, but if I can’t do it with hugs, love and kisses, then I’m gonna do what it takes. What people should really pay attention to is, I was less concerned with being likable than getting done what I needed to get done.

So this goes back to the whole “I didn’t know Jillian Michaels was sensitive” thing, but you’re a fan of Tori Amos, which we discover in the first episode. That is some deep sensitivity. What kind of influence did she and her music have on you? And what Tori song got you through your teen years?

God, so many of them. I was very much that kind of bullied emo kid. And a lot of teenagers go through that emo phase and it manifests in different incarnations for every generation, but in some of those darker moments during that very kind of impressionable and pivotal part of my life, her music was something I could really relate to, especially “Cornflake Girl.” She’s sort of the outcast, and that whole song was, to me, about being an outcast, being on the outside. Or “Silent All These Years” where she finally finds her voice. And it took me a long time. As much as I’m very outspoken now, I wasn’t always so. I didn’t always have that inner sense of strength and authenticity and passion. I was extremely shut down and shamed — and geez, there are so many. “Past the Mission.” I could go on and on. “China.” Literally on and on.

When did you find your voice? It was a series of things... it was a process. Basically it was a combination of getting involved in martial arts and having these small successes within martial arts, which empowered me to start taking steps in my personal life, in my relationships, in my professional life, and then, honestly, when it comes to accepting my sexuality — I didn’t even know I was [gay] until later in life. I mean, I realized I was bisexual at about 18 but I didn’t even realize I was gay until into my 20s.



I think what helped that, and I know this sounds ridiculous, but Madonna and her “Justify My Love” video made a really big difference for my generation because [being gay] wasn’t something that was disgusting and gross — just something that became cool overnight, thanks to Madonna. That allowed me to feel less ashamed — it became almost cool to explore it — and, unfortunately or fortunately, that exploration was not just an exploration, it wasn’t just me experimenting. It turns out that was what was going on with me throughout all my teenage years. I really didn’t know. I really thought something was wrong with me. I didn’t know that I liked women, but I knew I didn’t like men. I knew when I was a kid I didn’t want to be physical with my boyfriends. Didn’t wanna make out with them. I couldn’t figure out what was wrong with me.

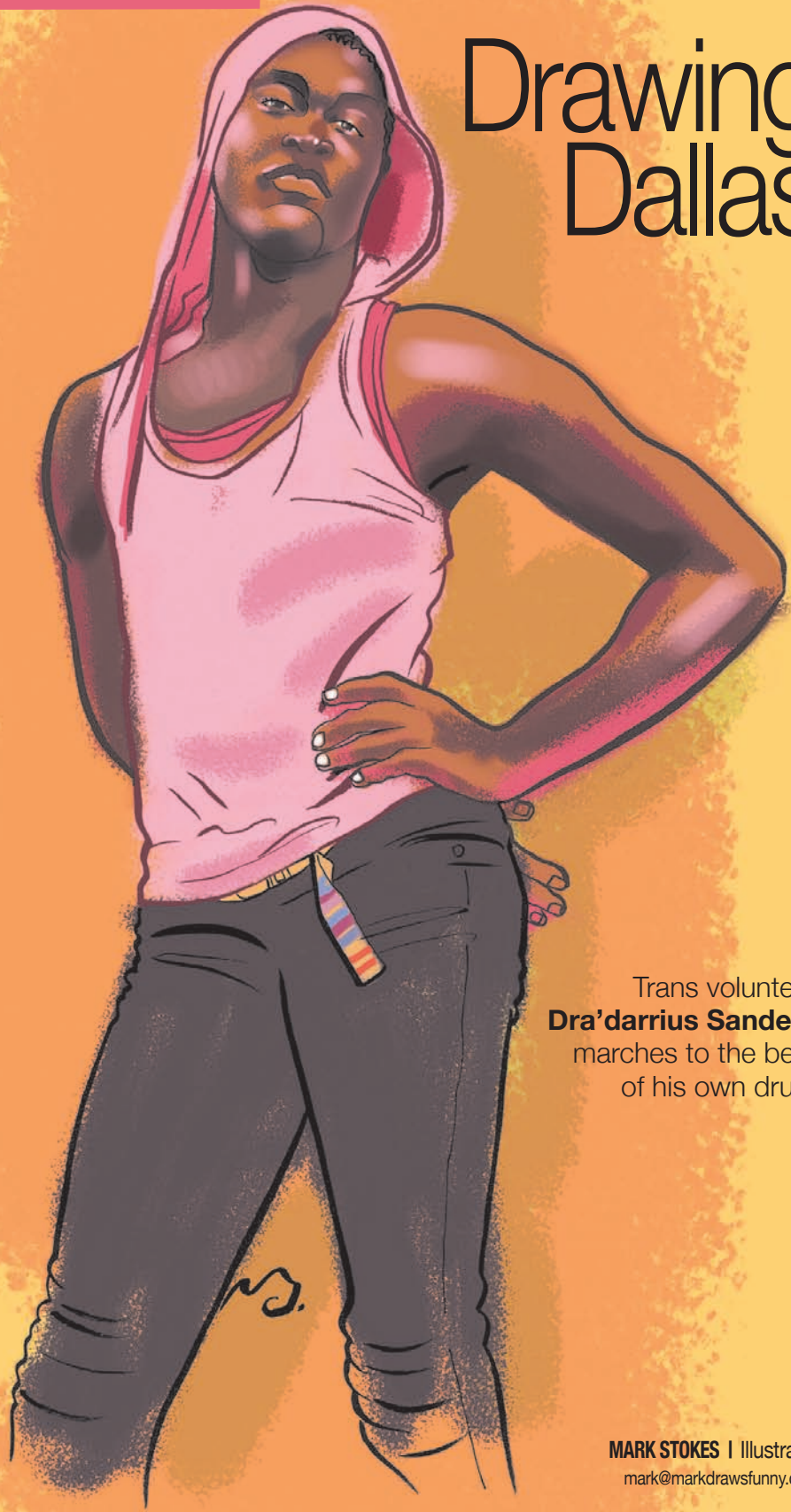
Then when I became 18 and I was kissed by a girl, like a Katy Perry song, I shit you not, I was like, “Oh my god, this is what’s been going on all these years.” The light bulb went off in me and I’m like, “I’ve been fucking gay this whole time,” and I, honest to god, was in such deep denial that I had no idea until that moment.

Thanks Madonna! Honestly, you’re absolutely right.

Are you gonna get married on this show? Are we gonna see that? You gotta watch! Have to watch. That’s all I’m gonna say. And here’s the thing, because another journalist who’s gay was like, “Don’t you think that you’re disrespecting the right we all fought for?” And here’s my answer: We fought for the right to choose and so therefore it’s my choice to say, you know, I’ve had some bad experiences with marriage.

How do you feel about comments like that? The reality is that gay rights is the civil rights movement of today, right? Women have fought for rights. The African-American community has fought for rights. Every minority has fought for rights. This really is our moment for the gay community — the LGBT-whatever, put all the letters in there. With that said, Malcolm X didn’t like Martin Luther King; there’s always a lot of kind of inciting as progress is being made as to how we need to go about making that progress, so I think being a public gay figure, there’s always a lot of criticism about what I say, what I didn’t say, how I did it, how I didn’t do it. If I live my life to make all these people happy, that’s obviously an impossibility — can’t please everybody all the time — so I live my life in my truth. I hope it’s enough. I hope that it’s enough for me and for my family, and that’s really all I can do.

Drawing Dallas



Trans volunteer
Dra'darrius Sanders
marches to the beat
of his own drum

MARK STOKES | Illustrator
mark@markdrawsfunny.com

Name and age: Dra'darrius Sanders, 21
Spotted at: Hall and McKinney
Striking 6-foot-3 Dra'darrius was born in Monroe, La., the eldest of quadruplet — yes — brothers. Dra'darrius is transgender, as is another sibling; another is gay and another is bisexual.
Dra'darrius designs fashions, and he studies modeling and cosmetology (French tip nails are a specialty). “I was always wearing my mom and sister’s heels.” He is also a dancer who has participated in the Rap-Battle Dance Off, and he enjoys spending time with his large family.
A generous soul, Dra'darrius volunteers at the homeless shelter and he loves to work with kids. He is also a member of the transgender support group at the Resource Center. Future plans include acting and modeling, and he hopes to become a professional fashion designer, especially for women’s footwear.
His motto: “Be true to yourself, and don’t take crap from people.”

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■ RAPP, From Page 14

something special, the missing piece no one knew was missing. And the same thing happened [on *Rent*] with “Take Me or Leave Me.” For a long time, the script just said “insert song here.” And then Jonathan came in with the song written for Idina. So I got to see Idina have two songs written for her.

You’ve been in film, been in a band, done musical theater... At this point, what do you think of as your profession? I think of myself as “slash” artist: Actor-slash-singer-slash-writer-slash-director. I like doing concerts, too, which is not the same as being a musical theater actor. I don’t write a lot, but it has made a big difference

in my life. My book [the memoir *Without You*, focusing on his experience working on *Rent*] has had an impact in ways I’ve never expected. I’ve always liked interacting with students, but because of the book I have been invited to many schools to meet [with young people].

In addition [to my career], I’ve long been something of an activist — not the kind Lucas is, in the streets with signs — but I try to use platforms to talk about [important topics]. I’ve always been especially interested in LGBT youth issues, in part because of how *Rent* reached out to them. The issues have changed in many communities over the years, but are still very serious. And of course I’ve been active in HIV/AIDS awareness, which is

in some ways related to LGBT youth issues and *Rent*.

Speaking of gay rights, how amazing is it still that we have marriage equality now? Incredibly. I was actually shooting an independent film about a gay wedding and we were filming the wedding scene on the day the Supreme Court’s decision. That was pretty fantastic.

You created your role in *Rent* in your early 20s on Broadway; did it again in your mid-30s as a film; and finally in your late 30s in a national tour revival. How did the experience on that project change for you over time? When we first did *Rent*, I was going through stuff that was so profoundly intense — the illness and

online exclusive

To see a video and listen to some of the music from ‘If/Then,’ visit DallasVoice.com/Photos.

death of my mother, as well as [the death of] Jonathan Larson, my friend and collaborator. The differences between Jonathan’s life and mine was paper thin, which impacted me so much. Then Adam Pascal and I went on a reunion tour. Doing the show again was more about bringing to life the full experience of show and less about myself. It was almost like revisiting a younger version of myself, but I had also settled into it. It’s like a marinade — it just gets deeper and deeper and more flavorful and richer. When it’s good material, like *Rent*, when you revisit it, it is that much [more profound].

You’ve been a working actor since childhood. How do you look at your work differently now that you’re approaching middle age? This feels like the “bonus round” stuff. Being a part of *Rent* was the biggest thing I ever did, and everything has been a fallout [from that]. Everything now, it all feels like a continuation of the hard work I put in early on. ■

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FREE AT LAST: ‘SLAVE LETTERS’



Mark-Brian Sonna’s MBS Productions has long specialized in world premiere plays — usually locally written, and often with a gay theme. But his latest, *Slave Letters*, is something of a departure. Sonna conceived and staged this presentation for Black History Month, based on actual correspondence between slaves during the time of slavery.

“That question popped into my brain about a year ago,” Sonna says. “Thanks to Duke University archives, I found some letters, then went searching online for others.” Among the 80 or so letters Sonna unearthed were those to husbands sold to other plantations from their wives, from slaves being put up for auction asking for specific plantation owners to buy them, status updates from slaves to their masters on how a farm is running in their absence, from escaped slaves back to their families and many more. In all, the show consists of 19 letters and 10 songs — truly the fully spectrum of the black experience in pre- and post-colonial America.

“Not all the letters are tragic — some are genuinely funny,” Sonna says. “How we find humor in the most dire situations is a testament to the human spirit.”

—Arnold Wayne Jones

Stone Cottage Theatre, 15650 Addison Road.
Jan. 28–Feb. 14. MBSProductions.net.

Friday 01.22

Tug Party and Underwear Auction launches new HIV awareness group in Dallas

The Dallas chapter of Team Friendly — a group founded by a former internationally recognized leatherman to change the dialogue on HIV/AIDS awareness — only started last fall, so to get its activities underway, raise awareness of its mission (and raise money), it hosts its first official benefit event, the Tug Party and Underwear Auction. Featuring 14 models of a wide range of body types and tastes, including 2015 International LeatherSir Tug Whitehead (hence the name), it features hot guys and a good cause. Lipps La Rue will serve as the mistress of ceremonies.

DEETS: Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. 7–10 p.m.



LIFE+STYLE

best bets

Friday 01.22 —
Sunday 08.21

Intimate exhibit, including a Vermeer, focuses on 17th century Dutch art

For the Dutch, music was the ultimate art form, and so paintings — especially during the transition from Catholicism to Protestantism — are replete with musical allusions, from fiddles to flutes to harpsichords and even song books (pictured below). A new exhibit at the Dallas Museum of Art — comprised of barely a half-dozen paintings, including a delicate and rare Vermeer — focuses on this trend. Best of all, Dallas has access to these rare works through August.

DEETS: Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. DMA.org.

Friday 01.22

Turn it out for Community Ball and 25th anniversary screening of the cult classic ‘Paris Is Burning’

Long before Madonna knew how to vogue, New York drag queens in the “ball” culture were turning it out with elaborate shows that embraced glamour and “difference.” CineWilde screens a new digital print of the 1990 film with a pre-show talk by United Black Ellument, plus a post-screening Community Ball. Turn it up and turn out in all your glam, grrrl!

DEETS: The Texas Theatre, 231 W. Jefferson Blvd. Doors at 8 p.m. TheTexasTheatre.com.





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calendar highlights

ARTSWEEK

THEATER

The New Moon. Before his legendary pairing with Richard Rodgers — or even his near-legendary one with Jerome Kern — Oscar Hammerstein II teamed up with operetta composer Sig Romberg for this 1928 hit. Lyric Stage presents this rarely-revived musical in concert form, with Jay Dias leading the 35-piece orchestra and Andy Baldwin directing his recent *Grand Hotel* co-star Christopher J. Deaton. Irving Arts Center's Carpenter Hall, 3333 N. MacArthur Blvd. Jan. 21–24. LyricStage.org.

Sexy Laundry. The return of the hit from earlier this year, a co-production from WaterTower and Stage West, reuniting original cast members Bob Hess and Wendy Welch. Moves from the Addison Theatre Centre to Fort Worth. Stage West, 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. Through Jan. 31. StageWest.org.

Death is a Bad Habit! Pegasus Theatre, renowned for its patented In Living Black and White shows, returns for an historic 30th anniversary season with this world premiere murder mystery-comedy featuring the bumbling part-time detective Harry Hunsacker. *Final weekend.* Eisemann Center for Performing Arts, 2351 Performance Drive, Richardson. PegasusTheatre.org.

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change. Gay playwright Joe DiPietro co-wrote this popular musical revue about relationships. Last week, B.J. Cleveland became a last-minute replacement for Doug Jackson, who fell ill. He co-stars with Amy Mills Jackson, Max Swarner and Kim Swarner. Theatre 3 in the Theatre Too space, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through March 6 (extended). Theatre3Dallas.com.

Clarkston. Dallas Theater Center presents this world premiere from gay playwright Samuel D. Hunter, about a



'LORD OF THE FLIES' | WaterTower Theatre opens its latest production, an adaptation of William Golding's Nobel Prize-winning novel, on Monday, followed a weekend of previews.

relationship between gay co-workers in a Costco. Wylly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Jan. 31. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

Lord of the Flies. Kelsey Leigh Ervi directs this adaptation of the Nobel Prize winning allegory about young men stranded on an island who create their own civilization. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison

Road. Jan. 22–Feb. 14 (in previews through Jan. 24). WaterTowerTheatre.org.

Oil, a new play set in Texas about family intrigue and fortune-grubbing. Theatre 3, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through Feb. 14 (in previews through Jan. 24). Theatre3Dallas.com.

Martyr. The first show of Second Thought Theatre's 2016 season, about a teen (Garret Storms) who begins spouting fundamentalist philosophy and the effect on those around him. Directed by Blake Hackler. *Reviewed this week.* Bryant Hall on the Kalita Humphrey Campus, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through Feb. 6. 2TT.co.

DANCE

BodyTraffic. Three-year-old Los Angeles-based dance troupe BodyTraffic makes its Dallas debut with this evening of contemporary dance, presented by TITAS. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Jan. 22. 8 p.m. \$12–\$200. ATPAC.org.

FINE ART

Jackson Pollock: Blind Spots. An exclusive exhibit of the innovative American painter's late work, a departure from his classic "drip" paintings, but also showing the span of the artist's work. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through March 20. Special exhibit fee. DMA.org.

Vermeer Suite: Music in 17th Century Dutch Painting. A lovely original Vermeer (one of only three dozen in the world) is among the seven paintings in this intimate exhibit that explores themes in Dutch art. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through Aug. 21. DMA.org.

Castiglione: Lost Genius. Masterworks on paper from the Royal Collection. Kimbell Art Museum, 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth. Through Feb. 14. Free. KimbellArt.org.

Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter's Eye. Kimbell Art Museum, 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth. Through Feb. 14. \$18. KimbellArt.org.

N.S. Harsha: Sprouts, reach in to reach out. A site-specific mural, the first in Dallas for the Indian artist, transforms the main corridor of the DMA. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through Feb. 21. DMA.org.



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Amy Stevenson hosts the weekly Mama's Party cabaret at the Uptown Theatre in Grand Prairie on Monday nights.

FRIDAY 01.22
COMMUNITY

Tug Party and Underwear Auction. Fundraiser for Team Friendly DFW, a new group devoted to HIV awareness. Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. 7–10 p.m.

Panoptikon. The weekly retro disco dance party, presented by Lord Byron. Red Light, 2911 Main St. Doors 9 p.m.

FILM

Paris Is Burning. CineWilde, the monthly gay LGBT film series, present this classic of drag documentaries in a 25th anniversary digital print. The screening will be preceded by a pre-show ball sponsored by United Black Ellument, and followed by second annual Community Ball. Arrive decked out and ready to turn it out! Texas Theatre, 231 W. Jefferson Blvd. 8 p.m. doors, 8:30 p.m. pre-show; 9 p.m. screening; 11 p.m. community ball. TheTexasTheatre.com.

DIGS

Las Colinas Home Show. Irving Convention Center, Showcase of home improvement professionals and exhibitors. 500 W. Las Colinas Blvd. Jan. 22–24. TexasHomeAndGarden.com.

SATURDAY 01.23
COMMUNITY

Casserole Cook-Off. The Dallas Bears change up the typical chili cook-off with this new event, a preliminary party before Texas Bear Round Up in March. The Round-Up Saloon, 3912 Cedar Springs Road. 2 p.m.

MONDAY 01.25
CABARET

Mama's Party. Local singer Amy Stevenson hosts her ongoing cabaret series, always with special guests and a good time. Uptown Theatre, 120 E. Main St., Grand Prairie. \$10.

TUESDAY 01.26
FILM

Dr. Strangelove, Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb. Stanley Kubrick's legendary Cold War classic, a dark comedy about a rouge general who sets out to launch a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. Peter Sellers plays three roles. Screens as part of the Tuesday Big Movie New Classic Series at Landmark's Magnolia Theatre in the West Village, 3699 McKinney Ave. Sponsored by Dallas Voice. Screens at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

THEATER

A Year with Frog and Toad. The Dallas Children's Theater's sweet-natured adaptation of the children's book, equally good for kids and adults. Rosewood Center for Family Arts, 5938 Skillman St. Jan. 26–Feb. 28. \$15–\$28. DCT.org.

WEDNESDAY 01.27
THEATER

Romeo & Juliet. The Dallas Theater Center's production of Shakespeare's romantic tragedy, directed by Joel Ferrell. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Jan. 27–Feb. 28 (in preview through Feb. 4). DallasTheaterCenter.org.

THURSDAY 01.28
CABARET

Judy Chamberlain Jazz. The jazz vocalist's weekly cabaret performance in the back room of Zippers Hideaway, 3333 N. Fitzhugh St. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY 01.29
COMMUNITY

Texas Exes LGBT Network Mixer. Alumni of the University of Texas are invited to help engage LGBT/ally students, grads and supporters with a mixer. Free appetizers served. Cedar Springs Tap House, 4123 Cedar Springs Road. 5:30 p.m.

THEATER

Seven Guitars. One of August Wilson's acclaimed plays, portraying the African-American experience. This one, set in 1948, tracks how the death of a famed blues guitarist affects a group of friends. Jubilee Theatre, 506 Main St., Fort Worth. Jan. 29–Feb. 28 (in previews through Feb. 4). JubileeTheatre.org.

this week's solution

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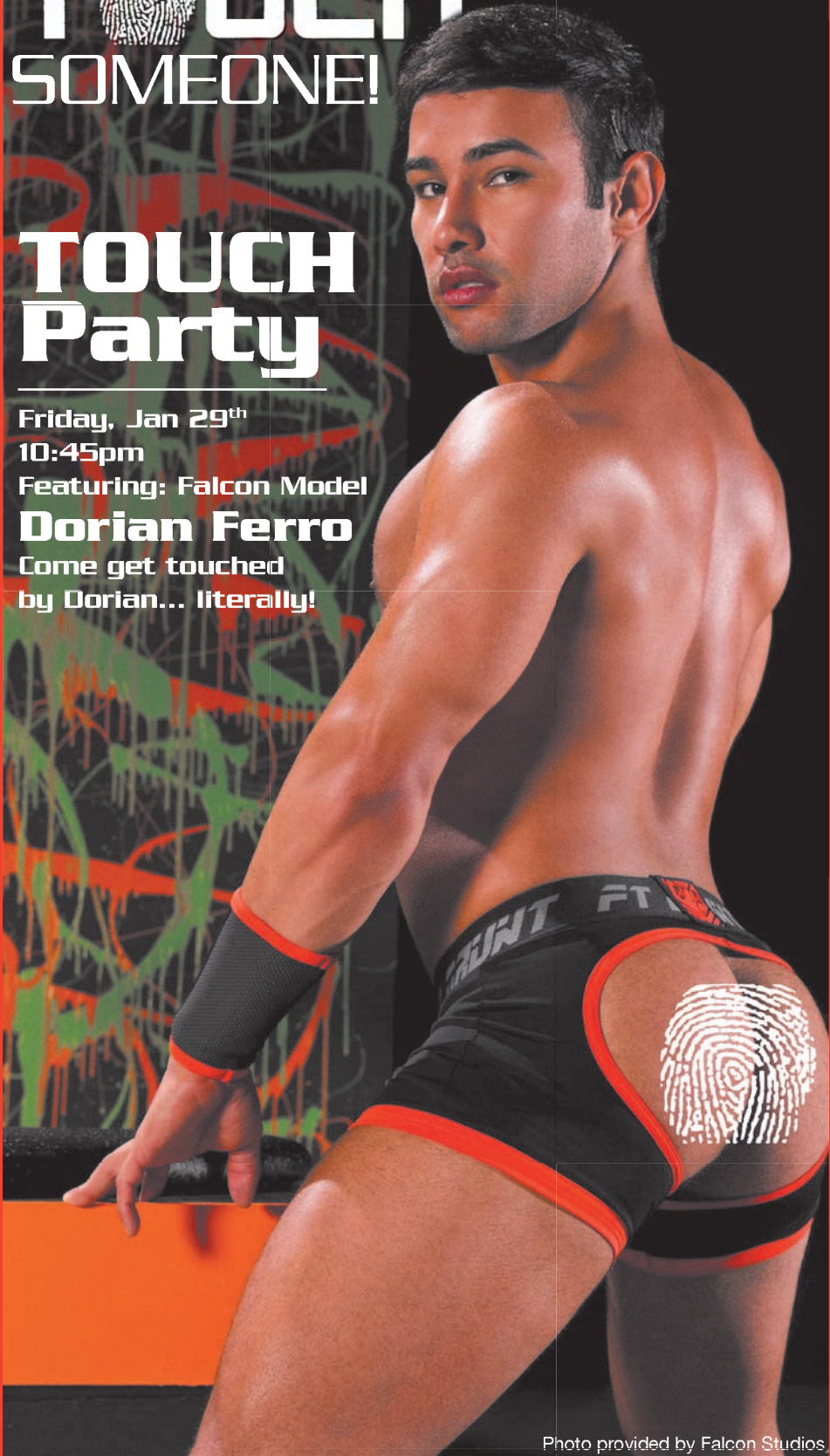


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Cassie Nova

Cassie gets all literary on your asses!

Hello, my babies. I hope this New Year is doing you fine. So far I think we are off to a rocky start. David Bowie, Alan Rickman and even Grizzly Adams have all gone to the clearing at the end of the path. I know people die all the time, but this year we keep losing people I genuinely like and will miss. It's a shitty way to start the year. Hell, by the time this goes to print, Lord knows who will be dead. I hope we all make it. Death hasn't worked this hard since the *Final Destination* series had its last sequel. I know Death never takes a holiday, but can you please take out a few folks that I won't miss? (Here is a hint: it rhymes with "Donald Trump.")

Speaking of The Donald, I do this bit at my shows where I ask the audience to focus all of our psychic

energy to kill people ... you know, trying to make their heads explode. I know it sounds horrible, and it is, but if it ever works, I promise we will only use our power for good. Ted Cruz, Ethan Couch, a few of the Kardashians and all of ISIS ... betta watch out! It will look like a scene from *Scanners*: BOOM! Exploded heads!

As you can tell, my head is in a weird place. I just finished a Stephen King book from 1985 called *The Long Walk*. It is not one of my favorites. One hundred young boys have to keep walking till only one is left. When and if they stop walking, they are killed by expressionless, rifle-toting army guys. It's like *Chariots of Fire* meets *The Hunger Games*. It's the feel-good book of its year.

Like a lot of Stephen King books, I did not like the ending. Stephen King is notorious for people not liking his endings. But damn if I won't read anything that man writes. For me personally, even if I don't like or love the ending, I am always entertained with the journey. He has a beautifully clear way of telling a story that makes it easy to imagine anything he

writes. *The Stand* and *The Gunslinger* series are brilliant examples of why I love reading his books.

Stephen King introduced me to the author of *Hellraiser*, Clive Barker ... by which I mean, I saw a sticker once on a Clive Barker book that quoted Stephen King as saying, "I have seen the future of horror and his name is Clive Barker." That was all I needed to hear. I bought Clive's book *Cabal* and one of his collections of short stories called *Books of Blood*. I was hooked. Anywhere I went, I always had a Clive Barker book with me. Including when I went to work, and at the time I was working at Hunkey's.

Yes, I worked at Hunkey's when I was a young, pretty twink. One day while on break, I was sitting in a booth reading *The Great and Secret Show*, when one of the regulars — a big, handsome, muscled-up guy named Michael — sat down with me. He asked if I liked Clive Barker, I said, "Duh." He said, "He's a friend of mine." I was like, "No way!" He was like "Way!" It was a very Wayne/Garth moment. He proceeded to tell me that his boyfriend and Mr. Barker are actually really good friends and that Clive would be staying with them the following month when he was in town for a fanboy convention. I just about lost my shit. I told Michael that he had to bring him by Hunkey's. I said I would buy them lunch, rub their feet, handies all around — whatever it took to meet him.

I had a feeling that Clive Barker might be gay from reading so many of his stories. He was the first and only writer I had read that had gay characters. They usually met a horrible demise — not because they were gay, but because they were in a Clive Barker story. As a young gay man in the very early '90s, I didn't have a lot of books that I gravitated to that had gay people in them, so this was a huge deal for me. And now I had a chance to meet someone I completely admired, I was stoked to say the least.

A few weeks later, it happened. I was standing behind the counter when Michael, his boyfriend and Clive Barker got out of a car across the street. I was so giddy and ridiculous. I told my boss Rick I was on break and met them at the door. He was so nice, and short. I guess in my head I had always pictured him as really tall, but he was normal height.

I sat with them and we all had lunch and talked. I asked a few questions as a fanboy but tried not to geek out too much on him. I wanted him to like me so I held back some of my crazy. Michael told me they were going out that night bar hopping and asked if I wanted to join them. I was like, "Sure, I guess." But inside I was freaking out. As we sat there at Hunkey's, Clive drew a cool man/monster on my ticket pad. Besides being a great writer he is also a great artist. I was smart enough to put the carbon paper behind it before I gave it to him. So now I have two original pieces of his artwork and autograph. It's purdy cool.

That night, I met up with them and we made the rounds. I had been doing drag for about year and a half at this point and knew just about everybody at all the bars so it felt like we got the VIP treatment where



ever we went. We drank and danced and had a ball. Then I asked if he wanted to go to the Round-Up. I explained that the Round-Up was a country and western bar. He said, "Of course I want to go to the Round-Up. I am in Texas and want the full Texas experience."

When he saw the dance floor full of good-looking cowboys two-stepping together, his jaw dropped. He was in awe. He said that he had been to gay bars all over the world but this was the first place that he saw men dancing so closely together. He loved it. So I asked him if he wanted to dance. He said yes, but that this was his first time and I should be gentle. I made no such promise and we attempted to two-step to the beat. We probably looked like a hot mess but we had a blast.

My night with Clive Barker was interesting, fun and took some crazy turns. The night ended with me satisfied and a little pissed off, but that's a story for another time. Long story short, you never know where reading will take you. So read a book, bitches!

Now for a little geek speak. Many people have asked me what I thought of the new *Star Wars*. I loved it. It was just enough of the familiar to make me excited for the new. It had characters I already loved and introduced me to characters I wanted to know more about. Even though the story line with the new Death Star aka Starkiller Base, seemed very familiar, I was grinning ear to ear.

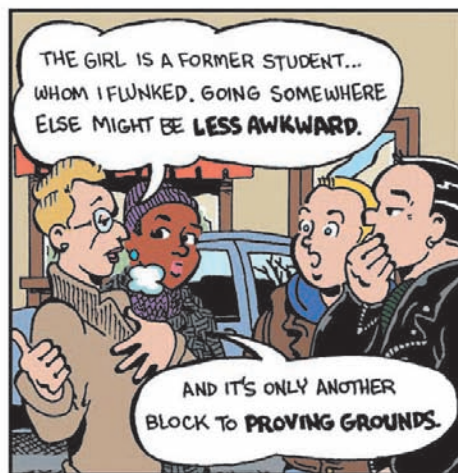
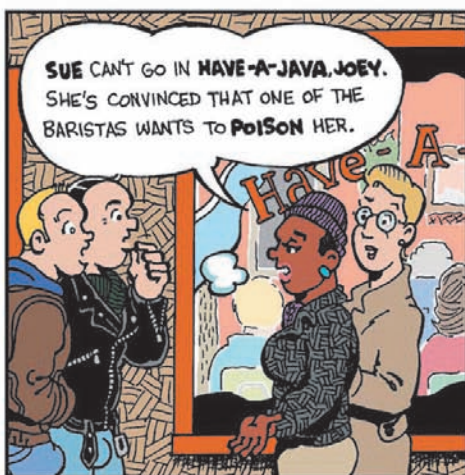
I was so glad to see it did not have the same cartoony effects the prequels had. The prequels are *good* movies, not great. It is still hard for me to watch Darth Vader, after he finds out Padme is dead, look up to the heavens and scream, "Nooooo!" like he did in *Revenge of the Sith*. It was corny and hard to watch. I had always had a little bit of a crush on Daddy Vader till that moment.

Now with Kylo Ren, I fear I may have another crush. Yes he was a moody little bitch of a villain but he gives off this whole, "I have a huge dick" vibe. He struts like he is packing and I am giddy with excitement to see what's coming next.

I also want to thank everybody for not putting any spoilers out there till after I saw the movie. *Star Wars* fans are the best and wanted everyone to experience it on their own. I was lucky, I know there are a lot of assholes that love to spoil shit for others, but for once, I made it to a movie, spoiler free.

Remember to always love more, bitch less and be fabulous! XOXO, Cassie Nova

If you have a question of comment, email it to AskCassieNova@gmail.com.





Layla Larue, Mimi Imfurst and Cassie Nova, backstage at The Rose Room.

Making the **SCENE** the week of Jan. 22-28:

- **Alexandre's:** Jason Huff on Friday. Chris Chism and the Band on Saturday. Bernie Siben on Monday. Alicia Silex on Thursday.
- **Brick/Joe's:** Joe Posa as Joan Rivers with special guest Tony Tripoli, head writer for Fashion Police, at 7 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Cedar Springs Tap House:** Book a table now for the Super Bowl.
- **Changes:** Divine Miss Divas show at 10 p.m. on Friday. Wall of Food meeting at 8 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **Club Reflection:** Trinity River Bears meeting at 2:30 p.m. and cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday. Imperial Court show at 7 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Dallas Eagle:** Sir Tug's Wintertime Underwear Auction at 8 p.m. on Friday. United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Donna Dumae's Birthday Show on Saturday at 7 p.m. benefiting AIDS Services Dallas. National Leather Association executive committee meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill:** Cassie's Freak Show with Fantasha, Alexis, Bianca and Ava Victoria on Monday.
- **Marty's:** Showcase with Chanel Champagne on Monday.
- **Pekers:** Miss Gay Texas Pageant System presents Sex in the City at 8:30 p.m. on Sunday benefiting CURE, Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund and Miniature Schnauzer Rescue of North Texas.
- **Round-Up Saloon:** Dallas Bears Casserole Cook-Off set-up at 2 p.m., contest at 3 p.m., judging at 4 p.m. and winners announced at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Sue Ellen's:** Scotty Isaacs featuring Laci Taylor on Friday. Smokin Rita on Saturday. Kathy & Bella at 3 p.m. and Bad Habits at 6 p.m. on Sunday.
- **The Rose Room:** The Dallas Way at 6:30 on Thursday.
- **Woody's Sports & Video Bar:** Championship Games on the big screen on Sunday.

To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/category/photos. Scene Photographers: Winston Lackey and Chad Mantooth.



"Let me take a selfie" — Valerie and J.D. at The Round-Up Saloon.



Party time at Club Stallions.



Alex at Tallywhackers.



Michael at TMC.

Happy birthday Alyssa (at the Brick)



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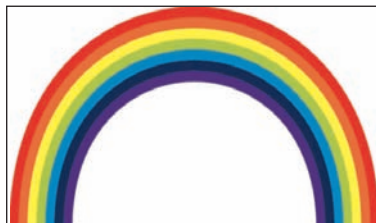
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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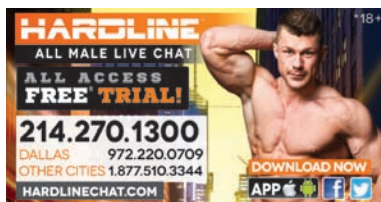
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Pegasus Squares,

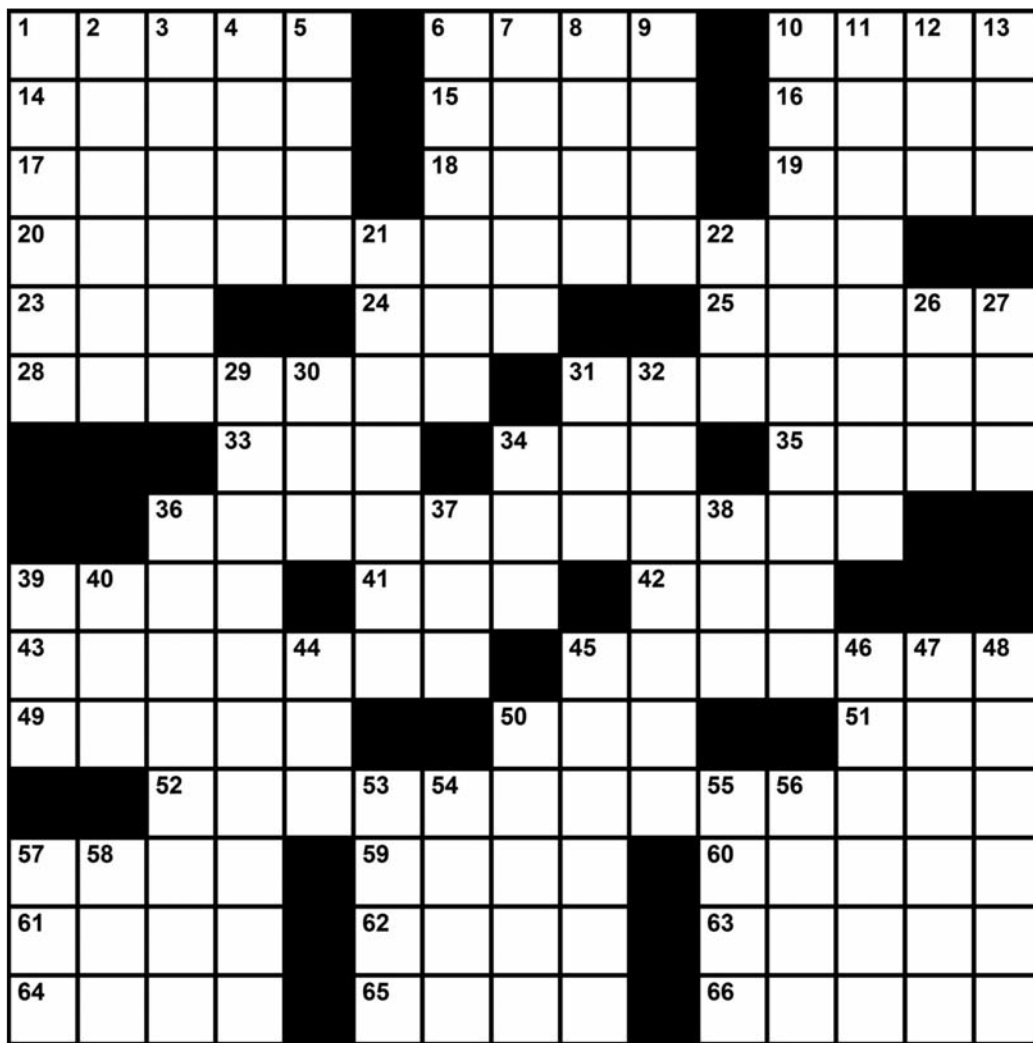
an LGBT Square Dance Club,
meets every Sunday from
2:30pm-4:30pm at the Dallas
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q-puzzle



In Gay Colors

Solution on page 23

Across

- 1 Brown's *Cat on the* ____
- 6 Cicero's singular
- 10 Asks from one's knees
- 14 *After Delores* author Schulman
- 15 Big ones in porn films, sometimes
- 16 Focused on one's work
- 17 Not novel
- 18 Lesbos love
- 19 Delany of *Desperate Housewives*
- 20 Obsession with facial hair
- 23 Almost ready for the tooth fairy
- 24 Make airtight
- 25 Charades, basically
- 28 Prick
- 29 Peace Nobelst Wiesel
- 30 Eurythmics' "Would ____ to You?"
- 33 Pub round
- 37 Kind of man, in Oz
- 38 Life style of hairy gay guys
- 40 One to ten, e.g.
- 42 Saltine brand
- 43 DeLaria of *Orange Is the New Black*
- 44 Journeys like a post-Trojan War epic
- 46 Buck feature
- 48 *Lady Sings the Blues* star
- 49 Queens ballpark
- 50 Sci-fi that uses technology and aesthetic designs

- 54 Artist Aaron, who's style has been described as a combination of 20-, 38-, and 50-Across
- 58 Do road work
- 59 "Let me repeat ..."
- 61 160 square rods
- 62 Disney's ____ and the *Detectives*
- 63 Lets up
- 64 Bear's den
- 65 Where you can eat a hero
- 66 Bitchy warning
- 67 Mireille of *World War Z*

Down

- 1 One that comes quickly
- 2 Eat pasta, with "up"
- 3 Buffalo's lake
- 4 Barney, who romanced Romaine
- 5 Aileen Wuornos portrayr Charlize
- 6 Boat bottom bumpers
- 7 Be in harmony
- 8 What an athletic supporter might do?
- 9 Help out
- 10 Whoopi's ill-fitting garb in *Sister Act*?
- 11 Online prostitution?
- 12 Big name in cutters
- 13 Terence of *Billy Budd*
- 21 Stray on the range
- 22 Earhart's "Friendship" and others
- 25 Gide's subway
- 26 Homer-erotic tale?
- 27 Of a coin factory?
- 28 Brief moments in the "Kama Sutra"
- 31 Turning tray for Anthony?
- 32 Incenses
- 34 Void's partner
- 35 It can bear fruit
- 36 Brown quickly
- 38 It's a bust
- 39 Place for Young men?
- 41 One from the land of the circumcised
- 45 Lays eyes on
- 47 Some like it hot
- 49 Biathlete, for one
- 50 Went lickety-split
- 51 Meek and mild
- 52 Apt anagram for vile
- 53 Org. that could help you see Uranus
- 55 "____ do anything better than you"
- 56 Dixie Chicks, e.g.
- 57 Word on either bride's towel
- 60 Data transmission letters

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