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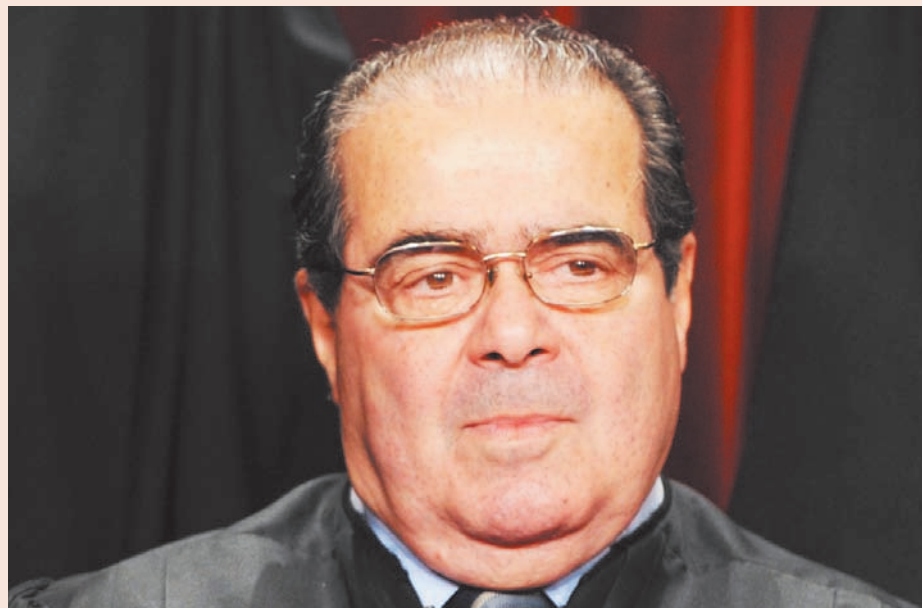
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Justice Antonin Scalia

**Supreme Court Justice
Antonin Scalia dead at 79**

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia died Saturday, Feb. 13, at a ranch outside of Marfa. He was 79.

When President Ronald Reagan appointed Scalia to the bench in 1986, he was known for his conservative views. He was the familiar voice of dissent in many notable LGBT cases, including the *Obergefell* and *Lawrence v. Texas* decisions.

In his *Obergefell* dissent, he wrote the majority "invent[ed] a new right and impose[d] that right on the rest of the country."

His death also roiled the presidential race with GOP candidates and President Obama battling over whether he should nominate the next justice.

— James Russell

**County Clerk Kim Davis
obeying judge's orders**

U.S. District Judge David Bunning ruled that since the five days she spent in jail, Rowan County, Ky., County Clerk Kim Davis has upheld his orders to issue marriage licenses.

The ACLU had filed suit to have Davis reissue licenses after Davis removed her name from the county's marriage licenses. The ACLU wants the

county clerk's name added to those licenses issued since September.

NBC News reports that Bunning ruled the licenses, as issued by Davis, are probably valid under Kentucky law. In December, the state's Republican governor signed an executive order removing county clerk names from marriage licenses.

— David Taffet

**Syringe Access Fund announces
\$2.6 million in grants**

Officials with the Syringe Access Fund announced Tuesday, Feb. 16, that the agency in January awarded 58 grants, totaling \$2.6 million over the next two years, that are focused on policy and implementation support for syringe exchange programs.

Two of the grants are going to Texas agencies: Austin Harm Reduction Coalition in San Marcos and Border AIDS Partnership in El Paso.

The grants come about a month after President Obama signed new legislation removing the federal ban on needle exchange programs, in the wake of the largest HIV outbreak in Indiana's history last year, in which more than 188 people were newly infected, mainly through injecting drugs with dirty needles.

— Tammye Nash

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2015 Broadway Cast of Roundabout Theatre Company's CABARET. Photo by Joan Marcus.

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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.

FEBRUARY

• **Weekly: Lambda Weekly** every Sunday at 1 p.m. on 89.3 KNON-FM. Trans activists Leslie McMurray and Katie Sprinkle are this week's guests; **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.

• **Feb. 19: HRC DFW Federal Club Mixer**
Happy hour from 6-8 p.m. at Cedar Springs Tap House, 4123 Cedar Springs Road.

• **Feb. 20: Gaybingo: Queen of Hearts**
Monthly fundraiser for Resource Center takes place 6-9 p.m. the third Saturday of the month

at Rose Room at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Doors open at 5 p.m. For more information, call 214-540-4458 or email Bscott@myresourcecenter.org.

• **Feb. 20: AOC Benefit Concert at TCU**
TCU's School for Classical and Contemporary Dance's Chi Tau Epsilon Honor Society presents the 2016 AIDS Outreach Center Benefit Concert featuring dance groups from across the region. 7:30 p.m. in the Studio Theatre of Erma Lowe Hall, 3000 S. University Dr., Fort Worth. \$20 for adults. \$10 for non-TCU students. For tickets and more information call 817-257-4255.

• **Feb. 21: Tarrant County Gay Pride Week Association meeting**
Getting ready for fifth annual Easter and Pet Fest / Art Fest and general meeting. 3 p.m. at Barron House, 516 College Ave., Fort Worth.

• **Feb. 21: DRF Quiz for a Cause**
Dallas Red Foundation, Geeks Who Drink — D/FW and Cedar Springs Tap House team up to create a Quiz for a Cause benefiting Dallas DRF and Legacy Counseling at 7 p.m. at Cedar Springs Tap House, 4123 Cedar Springs Road.

pet of the week / MANNY

Manny is an American blue heeler mix that is about 2 months old. He weighs about 8 pounds now, but will grow to be a pretty big dog. Full of energy and very loving, this sweet pup is sure to be your new best friend.

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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Feb. 21: East Dallas Christian Church Concert Series: *Adagios for Reflection: Gratitude in Community...Grace in Humanity*
Performers include Meg Griffith, flute; Michael Scheuerman, clarinet; Daniel Sigale, viola; Keith Critcher, piano; Rev. Dr. Steve Sprinkle, John Ahne, David Lawrence, readers; The EDCC Chancel Choir; and Jonathan Merritt, piano. 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.

Feb. 24: DGLA Happy Hour
Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance begins its celebration of its 40th year. 6-8 p.m. at Urban Vines Wine Bistro, 9219 Garland Road, Suite 1102.

• **Feb. 25: Rainbow LULAC mixer**
Membership mixer 6-8 p.m. at Mario Sabino's, 5404 Lemmon Ave.

• **Feb. 25: A Tribute to Memory Lane**
Tribute to Lee Rodger aka Memory Lane to benefit Legacy Founders Cottage. 7 p.m. at The Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser Ave.

• **Feb. 25: Moving the Food Pantry**
Teams of volunteers needed to move the food pantry from its Denton Drive Cutoff location to 2701 Reagan St. To help, contact Volunteer Coordinator Deborah Cavazos at 214-540-4497.

• **Feb. 27: Dallas Red Foundation Sweethearts Party**
Sweethearts Party benefits Legacy Counseling Center. 7 p.m. at 3700M in the West Village, 3700 McKinney Ave. \$75.

MARCH

• **March 4-6: Dallas Home and Garden Show**
Features 250 vendors, entertainment and more from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on Friday; 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

Feb. 21: DRF Quiz for a Cause



Dallas Red Foundation, Geeks Who Drink-D/FW and Cedar Springs Tap House team up to create Quiz for a Cause benefiting Dallas Red Foundation and Legacy Counseling at Cedar Springs Tap House

on Saturday; and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday at Dallas Market Hall Center, 2200 Stemmons Fwy. Ticket pieces vary. Discount coupons available at Tom Thumb. For more information visit TexasHomeandGarden.com.

• **March 5: Resource Center's Toast to Life Mad Hatter's Ball**
Enjoy a night of food from top local chefs and entertainment by DJ Bunny at this annual benefit for Resource Center programs from 7-11 p.m. at the Empire Room, 1225 N. Riverfront Blvd. For tickets and more information visit Bit.ly/1VnT1vq.

• **March 5: Reverchon Park Roundup**
The 18th annual cleanup includes planting flowerbeds, clearing out trash and removing fallen tree limbs. Pants, long sleeve shirts, sturdy shoes, gloves, rakes and other small tools recommended. 9:30 a.m. registration and orientation followed by 10 a.m. clean up and a complimentary lunch at 11:30 a.m. at 3505 Maple Ave. For more information and to

volunteer e-mail reverchon.roundup@tsrh.org or call 214-559-7825.

• **March 6: You'll Never Walk Alone**
Oak Lawn UMC presents "You'll Never Walk Alone: A Community Gathering of Hope, Unity, and Support for the Oak Lawn Neighborhood." The program expresses the community's appreciation for the leadership displayed by Mayor Rawlings and the Dallas Police Department in the face of recent violent attacks in Oak Lawn. Performances by the Dallas Police Choir, the Oak Lawn Band and Oak Lawn UMC's Chancel Choir. 6-7:30 p.m. at Oak Lawn United Methodist Church, 3014 Oak Lawn Ave.

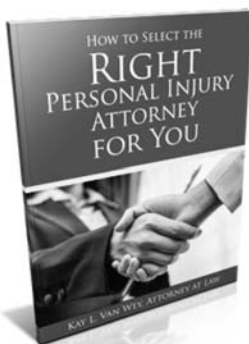
• **March 9: Mother Micheal Community Service Awards**
Awards presented by the Imperial Court de Fort Worth/Arlington with performances by category winners. 7 p.m. at Club Reflection, 604 S. Jennings St., Fort Worth.

• **March 11-13: Texas Bear Round Up**

• **March 20: The Wedding Workshop: An LGBT Community Event**
Three-hour, hands-on seminar featuring wedding industry experts guides couples through all the steps for planning a memorable wedding. 9:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. at the Renaissance Dallas Hotel, 2222 N. Stemmons Freeway. For more information call 214-754-8710 ext. 126 or visit LGBTWeddingWorkshop.com. Admission and parking are free with registration.

• **March 20: The Wedding Party and Expo: An LGBT Community Event**
Presented by the Dallas Voice, the largest LGBT wedding expo in Texas includes exhibitors, a fashion show, food samples, a community marketplace and free cake. Donnie Brown serves as celebrity host. 1-5 p.m. at the Renaissance Dallas Hotel, 2222 N. Stemmons Freeway. For more information call 214-754-8710 ext. 126 or e-mail EXPO@dallasvoice.com. Register at TheWeddingPartyEXPO.com. Admission and parking are free with registration.

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Tis better to give



A look out philanthropy in the LGBT community: How, when and why we give

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
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DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

For many in the LGBT community, charitable giving is a way of life. This is a community that hasn't just thrived on philanthropy. We have survived because of it.

In the early days of the AIDS epidemic, gay men were the hardest-hit demographic. And it was the LGBT community that stepped up first to care for those who were falling ill and dying. It was this community that created the nonprofit organizations — many of which continue to this day, 30 years later — that provided care and comfort of all kinds. We donated our time and our money to those organizations because they were keeping our people alive.

The LGBT community has always been a main go-to source for politicians looking to fund their campaigns, even when they didn't want anyone else to know where the money came from. Our community's political donations have helped make it possible for progressive elected officials to take office at all levels of government from city councils and local school boards, all the way up to the White House. Those progressive officials have passed laws protecting LGBT equality, and put in place, in many instances including at the U.S. Supreme Court level, a judiciary that enforces and upholds those laws.

Our charitable giving has paved the way for our progress. It has helped make our community, and in fact the world around us, a better place to be. LGBT philanthropy isn't just concentrated within the LGBT community, but even if it were, there is no shortage of options.

HIV/AIDS, cancer, civil rights, politics, education, animals, the environment — the list goes on and on. So how do we choose where and how we give? Dallas LGBT activist/philanthropic couple Marla Custard and Karen McCrocklin said that choice is intensely personal.

Making the choice

"Our community has gotten so diverse and so large. We don't always know what's going on everywhere," McCrocklin said, adding that like many people, she and Custard often rely on friends for advice on the best direction for their charitable

efforts. One recent example is their efforts to help Resource Center complete its capital campaign to build a new facility near the intersection of Cedar Springs and Inwood roads.

They had heard of the effort, of course, but hadn't fully comprehended the scope of the project and its purpose. "We were late to the party in a way," McCrocklin said. But once they gained "a depth of understanding about it," Custard added. "We were like, oh my god, this is amazing!"

But the couple didn't just settle for donating to the campaign themselves. They brought together a diverse group of friends for a dinner party to listen to a presentation on the center and its plans, thus inspiring many of their friends to donate, too.

It was a personal call that sparked their interest, so they made some personal calls, too. "A personal call can be a great inspiration," Custard said. "It was such a gift for us when we took the time to learn about the capital campaign and the whole project, and I wanted to turn around and give that gift to others, too."

McCrocklin noted that the dinner party didn't just generate financial donations for Resource Center's capital campaign, it also "contributed to the collective energy of the project. It helped get people excited about what's happening."

Giving outside the community

McCrocklin and Custard said their first instinct is always to direct their philanthropy to efforts within the LGBT community. But there are other causes — like The Nature Conservancy — that also catch their attention.



Above, Gay and Lesbian Fund for Dallas presented the Trinity River Audubon Center with a check for more than \$145,000 after an event held at the center. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice). Right, Marla Custard and Karen McCrocklin.

Gay and Lesbian Fund for Dallas is an organization that gives LGBT people a chance to aggregate their charitable donations and direct them to non-LGBT nonprofits as a way of putting a face on the community and hopefully breaking down some of the stereotypes and bigotry the larger community often directs toward the LGBT community.

But GLFD keeps its priorities in order: To be a recipient of GLFD funds, the organization must include sexual orientation as a protected category in its policies.

Brian Walker, co-chair of an upcoming event to benefit the SPCA, explained that once GLFD identifies an area or organization it would like to help, the group's members look for ways their donation can make a significant impact.

For example, proceeds from the SPCA event, Project Ruffway, will go towards purchasing an emergency rescue trailer. The vehicle will be retrofitted with air conditioning and allow vets to provide onsite emergency medical care to animals being rescued.

The truck will be wrapped with the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Dallas logo to highlight the philanthropic giving that goes on in the LGBT community. "We'd never done anything for animals before," Walker said. "As we looked, we zeroed in on the SPCA."

And who in our community doesn't love the SPCA, Walker added.

In 2013, GLFD wanted to do something for education. Members first considered a project for DISD, but decided the school district was too large for anything the group could do to make a significant impact. Then as they looked further, they discov-

ered that the Trinity River Audubon Center was hosting lots of school groups.

The GLFD fundraiser held at TRAC funded a Plexiglass pond that tens of thousands of students and other visitors see at the center each year. The pond is labeled as a gift from the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Dallas.

GLFD raises funds for other projects on an ongoing basis rather than through one-time-only events. For example, more than \$50,000 per year for the Dallas Museum of Art is either funneled through GLFD or given directly to the museum. And GLFD will be listed as a producer of the upcoming Dallas Theater Center production of *Dream Girls* because of donations to the theater given through the group.

In some instances, small donations become part of a larger campaign. Walker called it the power of leveraging. The goal, he said, is bridge-building and goodwill between the LGBT community and the rest of the city.

GLFD's ongoing campaign to raise money for KERA results in the opportunity for GLFD to promote future events through the station, which announces "GLFD is a proud to present the following program" and then mentions details of the next GLFD event.

Walker said he expects Project Ruffway to raise the \$125,000 the SPCA needs for the rescue truck. More than \$32,000 has already come in, and ticket sales, a silent auction, additional donations and a matching grant should make up the balance.

What's surprising, he noted, isn't that the LGBT community in Dallas is doing this as an ongoing project to make a difference in the city, but that Denver is the only other city in the U.S. doing the same thing.

Queer your taxes



Tax season brings new guide, few changes for LGBT people

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

It's tax season. Do you know where your receipts and pay stubs and 1099s are?

Do you even know what you can and cannot deduct?

Well good news: The National LGBTQ Task Force has launched a handy new income tax preparation guide for the LGBT community. Despite all the help you may receive from a trusted advisor or handy program like Turbo Tax, it wouldn't hurt to take advantage of this free guide.

The new publication is part of their "Queer Our Taxes" effort, a public education and advocacy campaign focused on securing economic justice for LGBT people.

"LGBTQ people are disproportionately more

likely to live at or below the poverty line — they are also often the most in need of income tax information and least able to access it. The straight forward information in this guide will empower LGBTQ people to get credits and deductions that lift millions of people out of poverty," said Meghan Maury, criminal and economic justice director at the Task Force in a statement.

"Most LGBTQ people don't know that you can deduct out-of-pocket costs for transition-related care including surgery," she added. "Many of us also don't know that you may be able to claim a large credit for adoption related expenses."

Even as the U.S. Supreme Court's *Obergefell* decision on marriage equality streamlined the process for joint filings, adoption forms and other barriers to access — and tax deductions — Maury said the guide should benefit all members of the LGBT community.

Jon Chester, who owns Sterling's Bookkeeping and Tax Service, a full-service bookkeeping firm in Dallas and Hurst, said marriage equality ushered in a lot of excitement.

Newly married couples have access to more tax deductions and credits than before. But some couples still don't know the challenges facing them.

"Couples want to file separately, but they forget it's a community property state," Chester

Audits: Keeping tax breaks without sacrificing peace of mind

SKIP STARK | H&R Block

Last year, the IRS audited more than 1.3 million taxpayers and assessed \$33 billion in taxes.

Taxpayers who fear an IRS audit may hesitate to claim all the tax breaks to which they are entitled, choosing to "play it safe, which can mean leaving their money on the table.

In the face of these IRS audits, how can taxpayers keep their tax breaks without sacrificing their peace of mind?

- First, report all your income. The IRS can easily check income reported on tax returns against what employers, banks, brokers and more report.

- Second, carefully document your expenses and eligibility for any tax credits or deductions you take. The IRS compares deductions taken by taxpayers in the same income bracket to find

inconsistencies including mileage and charitable donations. Taxpayers who made large donations, particularly non-cash donations, may have additional record-keeping requirements to substantiate those deductions.

- Third, know when and where to get help when you need it. Some taxpayers may need help understanding whether they are eligible for a certain tax benefit, while others will need help knowing which documents and receipts they need to back up their tax return. Others might feel like they can prepare and file their taxes on their own, but may want help when it comes to navigating an IRS audit.

Skip Stark is a senior tax advisor 5 and ACA specialist for H&R Block, the world's largest tax services provider. He has been providing expert tax advice and preparation support for taxpayers at 5610 Lemmon Ave. in Dallas since 1994.

said. Community property states like Texas require both people in a couple have a claim to one-half of the property acquired or owned.

First-time couples may also encounter either a hitch or a gift while filing: According to the Tax Policy Center, a couple may receive a marriage penalty if they pay more income tax filing jointly as a couple than they would if they had remained single and filed as individuals. Conversely, a marriage bonus occurs if a couple pays less tax filing jointly than they would if they were not married and filed individually.

According to a checklist compiled by TurboTax, married couples may be able to take advantage of the marriage bonus since tax rates are

typically lower for couples who are "married, filing jointly."

Despite how it may seem, not a whole lot has changed since the *Obergefell* decision.

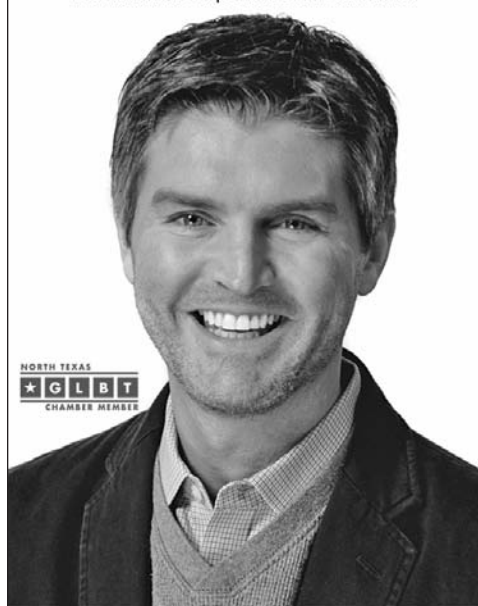
There may be no change in the law, but the Internal Revenue Service is looking to clarify the stipulations concerning charitable gift giving.

"Charitable contributions over \$250 now require a letter from a charity acknowledging the gift," Chester said.

The clarification was requested after numerous instances of taxpayers abusing the charitable gift donation system, mainly by claiming deductions without proof.

The last day to file taxes is April 18. ■

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Advancing LGBT businesses in 2016



North Texas GLBT Chamber's priorities include considering impact of marriage equality

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

The North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce celebrated its 10th anniversary last year, and now it's back to business, with Executive Director Tony Vedda and chamber members working to continue advancing the interests of LGBT business owners in the region throughout 2016.

Popular networking programs continue as well, including the chamber's regular lunch program featuring area leaders discussing topics relevant to local business owners. The first lunch program in January featured Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez and local business owner Jeff Youngblood discussing the state's new law allowing licensed handgun owners to openly carry guns, also known as the "open carry" law.

The Pitch Perfect program also returns this year, giving LGBT-certified suppliers a chance to practice their sales pitches before a team of corporate purchasing executives. Suppliers will get five opportunities this year to pitch their products to chamber members.

This year's hosts include American Airlines, Brinker International, FedEx Office and Southwest Airlines.

Thanks to increasing popularity, the Business Exchange Group has added a new after hours program. Vedda described the Business Exchange program as a "closed category" business program.

As group members become acquainted with one another, they develop a trust for one another.

"[The groups] allow members to develop networking skills and build a referral network," Vedda said. "The idea is to teach people to talk about themselves and their businesses to develop a network."

Because the North Texas chamber is one of the most well-known LGBT chambers in the country, Vedda said, "Over the years people have contacted us for help" in either creating or organizing new LGBT chambers. Calls have come in places as far away as Kansas City, Mo., he said. The calls are continuing to come in this year.

Right now, Vedda said, North Texas chamber members are working with a group of LGBT business owners in Houston to restart the LGBT chamber of commerce there.

"Starting a chamber of commerce is like starting a business," Vedda said. "But it's tax exempt and not-for-profit."

Members also need to be engaged and recognized. The chamber's annual Business Excellence Awards is one of the model events that does just that.

On Friday, April 15, the chamber will honor businesses, and three legislative advocates for LGBT equality are among those receiving awards. Recipients include former Dallas City Councilman Jerry Allen, Plano Mayor Harry LaRosiliere and the Texas Association of Business. (A fourth award winner has yet to be confirmed.)

Whether at the statehouse or at city hall, each recipient defended LGBT equality in the face of pressure from its opponents, Vedda said.

The Texas Association of Business, for instance, during the most recent session of the Texas Legislature, "came out in full force," alongside Equality Texas and the American Civil Liberties Union of Texas, against a proposal that would have allowed business owners to deny services and goods to LGBT people and others based on the business owners' "sincerely-held" religious beliefs.

"It was a big step for them to come out against an anti-LGBT bill," Vedda said of the business organization.

The Texas Association of Business, the state's largest business trade group, is seen as traditionally conservative and "they don't normally step into social issues" like LGBT equality, Vedda said. But as LGBT rights become mainstream, the business community is realizing that discrimination hinders economic growth and drives away potential employers.

"I would say the LGBT business movement has made strides in the past seven years under President Obama. A change in access is dependent upon who is president," Vedda said.

"But if all business and politics is local, the chances are what's happening in D.C. is not happening here," Vedda said. "When you have states or cities taking strong stances against the LGBT community, you are telling LGBT groups and people as well as businesses and visitors that they are not welcome."

And the impact of such statements trickles down, affecting all businesses — whether LGBT-owned or not.

One thing is for sure, Vedda said: Marriage equality will no doubt have a huge economic impact, and the chamber will be tracking that impact.



North Texas GLBT Chamber Executive Director Tony Vedda, left. Below, Ron Waterson, left, and Larry Paschall at the 2015 Chamber banquet.



"It'll be interesting to see where we are at the end of the year and if the community continues to be one of leaders" Vedda said. "It'll be inter-

esting to see the impact on welcoming communities compared to unwelcoming communities too."

Business Notes

New manager at Dish

Michael Giese has moved from the Preston Hollow location of DISH to become the new general manager at the Cedar Springs location of the popular restaurant, which features Drag Brunch on the last Sunday of each month. For information visit Dish-dallas.com or call.

AIDS Arms receives award for HIV care

AIDS Arms' Trinity Health and Wellness Center and Peabody Health Center received the Peter M. Fox Excellence in HIV Credentialing Award from the American Academy of HIV Medicine. The award is given to those HIV practices where all eligible medical providers hold an American Academy of HIV Medicine credential.

In order to be credentialed, all physicians and nurse practitioners must pass a stringent exam, maintain continuing education and provide excellent medical care to people living with HIV. All eligible practitioners at both of AIDS Arms clinics

are certified HIV Specialists.

In 2015, sixteen HIV practices nationwide received this recognition. Only five organizations, including AIDS Arms, have been recognized so far this year.

JP Morgan Chase developing new regional campus

JP Morgan Chase announced in January it would build a new campus in Plano's Legacy West development. The banking and financial services company's new regional campus will consolidate multiple offices and buildings housed throughout the region. More than half of the company's area employees will relocate to the \$2 billion campus. The first employees are expected to begin moving in during the second half of 2017.

Texas Competes, the statewide LGBT organization committed to workplace equality and fairness, noted that JP Morgan Chase is one of many corporations that has signed the Texas Competes pledge to "promot[e] a competitive, economically vibrant Texas."



GIVING, From Page 8

Time is money

But donating money isn't the only way the LGBT community gives back to the larger North Texas community. As Custard and McCrocklin noted, donating your time is just as important — sometimes even more so — than donating your money.

"For these nonprofit organizations, sometimes money is time," Custard said, recalling her grandparents who lived in rural Mississippi and always made a point to contribute to their community, "even before they had money to give. They believed things like education and the arts were vital to the community and that philanthropy was a way of investing in their community.

"I believe that, too," she continued. "You should invest in your community, whatever that community and whatever that investment looks like for you. You give what you have to give, whether that's time or money. With my grandparents, when they had little, they gave a little. When they had a lot, they gave a lot."

McCrocklin agreed. "Whether you are donating time or money, the desire to help comes from the exact same place. And what and how you give can change over time. I know when I had less money to give, I tended to give more of my time. Now that I have more money, I have less time to give. But that just means I am able to give more money instead."

Gay For Good members know about giving of their time, performing monthly volunteer projects for non-LGBT nonprofit organizations. Unlike GLFD, which hasn't branched out to cities across the country, G4G is in 11 cities. The Dallas group started several years ago when a G4G volunteer from Boston moved to Dallas and started the local chapter.

This month G4G will be painting and repairing the exterior of Legacy Founders Cottage in Oak

Cliff.

"We've done everything from sorting clothing at Genesis Woman's Shelter to cleaning cages at the SPCA," G4G board member Erin Moore said.

While Project Ruffway will have result in a GLFD logo wrapped around a vehicle that will be seen widely as it travels around Dallas County, G4G spreads its message with one-on-one contacts.

Moore said the group often volunteers alongside church groups. While they're working clearing a bamboo stand along the Elm Fork of the Trinity River or cleaning horse stalls at Equest Equine Assisted Therapy, the volunteers wear their Gay For Good t-shirts and tell other volunteers who they are.

"We're more grass roots-y," Moore said.

But over a year of volunteer projects, they come in contact with hundreds of people they never would have met elsewhere.

Taking care of the community

Custard and McCrocklin said they used to focus a lot of their charitable efforts on national-level LGBT organizations and events. Over the past few years, however, their focus has shifted more and more to the local community. That is, after all, what it's all about.

"It's important to invest in your community," Custard said. "But it's just as important to be invested in your community. It all relies on the idea that if we want to see something happen, we have to make it happen. Friends are family in this community, and you have to take care of your family. We have created this wonderful fabric of friends taking care of friends."

McCrocklin added, "We really are each other's families. And that is part of our lives and our experience. It's how we've grown up over the last 40 years. And it really is a great gift."

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■ commUNITY voices



Politicians' pledges to block the nominee — any nominee — are partisan efforts to block the will of the people who elected Obama

With the sudden death of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia on Saturday, Feb. 13, the attention of the nation has focused like a laser on the court — its composition, the docket of cases now before it and the historic process ahead of Justice Scalia's successor being nominated and confirmed.

In his 30-year tenure, Justice Scalia certainly left his mark on the court and on the laws that impact the way people live every day. From his defense of rights of free speech and against unreasonable search and seizure, to his heated and harmful opposition to equal rights for LGBT people and people living with HIV, as well as to racial and reproductive justice, Justice Scalia certainly will go down in history as one of the court's most conservative, outspoken and angry voices.

Given that Justice Scalia also was well-known for lauding the "originalist" view that what matters most are the words of the U.S. Constitution and what they meant at the time it was ratified, it besmirches his memory to have members of the Republican leadership in Congress immediately question a sitting president's entitlement to exercise a right explicitly guaranteed by the Constitution — to nominate justices to sit on the Supreme Court.

U.S. Sens. Mitch McConnell, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio issued statements within hours of the announcement of Justice Scalia's death that they will oppose any nominee made by President Obama, even before knowing who it may be, because they believe the next president — not our current one — should get to appoint Justice Scalia's successor.

Referencing the nation's shameful legacy of



Jon W. Davidson
Contributing Columnist

Anthony Kennedy was appointed to the court after being confirmed during the last year of President Reagan's term — a confirmation voted for by Senator McConnell.

Sixteen other Supreme Court justices likewise were appointed during the last year of a president's term, including six since 1900.

The Senate gets to advise and consent on who becomes a federal judge, but it would be a craven abuse of senators' constitutional role to block any appointment for eleven months because they do not want a sitting president — who was re-elected by the nation to fill a second four-not-three-year term — to put forward a nominee to be judged fairly rather than rejected out of hand on partisan grounds.

Justice Scalia's death brings to 82 the number of open seats on the federal judiciary. Thirty-one of those federal seats have been vacant for so long, and the caseloads so high, that they have been classified as "judicial emergencies."

When Donald Trump urged the Senate on Saturday to "delay, delay, delay" in voting on a nomination, he was simply describing what has already been a shameful record of Senate attempts to limit the right of our nation's duly-elected chief executive to fill judicial vacancies, subject only to senators' approval of their qualifications.

Last year, the Republican-controlled Senate confirmed just 11 federal judges, the fewest since 1960.

counting African-American slaves as less than a full person, acerbic tweets questioned whether those senators believe that black presidents only get three-fifths of a term. At a minimum, the senators seem to have forgotten that Justice

Only one court of appeals judge was confirmed, the worst record since 1953. All told, it took these 11 judges an average of 283 days from their initial nomination to their final confirmation.

There is too much at stake to countenance such obstructionism any longer.

President Obama has stated that he intends to name a nominee after the Senate returns from its current recess. We at Lambda Legal call upon those in the Senate to do their job and, as the president has urged, "give that person a fair hearing and a timely vote."

The Constitution embodies and seeks to safeguard our nation's highest values, including a commitment to protecting individual rights against overreaching majority will. We need a nominee and a new justice who understands and will enforce that commitment.

We need someone who will be fair-minded and approach the decisions they make without the prejudgment modeled by some senators. The judicial philosophy of any nominee also must include a commitment to render decisions impartially and in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the United States, not based on politics.

Moreover, in order to ensure that the best possible candidate is put forward, we trust that President Obama will again look broadly in seeking the right nominee. While he has made important strides, people of color and women continue to be under-represented at all levels of the federal judiciary, and there is still only one "out" LGBT judge on any federal appellate court.

President Obama has appointed two justices to the Supreme Court who have greatly diversified the character of the body. We hope that his next appointee will expand that base even further, and that the Senate will rise above the knee-jerk response of some of its members to ensure this country has the full deliberative judicial body it deserves.

Jon W. Davidson is legal director and Eden/Rushing chair for Lambda Legal.

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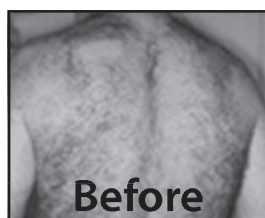


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many are rejecting a created image of Jesus that is contrary to the image that we find in the Christian scriptures. In my opinion, Christianity today has created an image and understanding of Jesus that is not pretty.

It is imperative that progressive Christians work to reclaim the identity of Jesus and to explore how Christianity has been hijacked and misrepresented to the masses.



Who is Jesus? I hope you will join me on Sunday at Cathedral of Hope as together we ponder this essential question. Join the conversation at **#7Questions** and **#DallasVoice**.

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Out choreographer Jamal Story takes to the heavens for Black History Month with aerial ballet for Dallas Black Dance Theatre

Jamal Story is the first to admit that, as a gay man in the dance world, he's lucked out professionally. In addition to touring with Madonna as one of her dancers, he also serves as dance captain for Cher.

"Friends of mine say, 'If you'd only worked for Janet [Jackson], you'd have the ultimate gay triumvirate. But Janet only hires female dancers,'" Story laughs.

Getting to hang with two women who really helped define what Story calls "commercial dance" has been an honor and a revelation.

"Cher is exactly who you think she'll be: Equal parts girly-girly and tough broad," he says. "But she and Madonna couldn't be more different, though both are extraordinarily hardworking individuals and have a high sense of attention to detail. They are clear to the inch what their representations need to be. That was wonderful for me [to learn from them]."

But as wonderful as that kind of success has been, where Story really feels at home isn't on a huge stage, twerking and writhing for throngs of rabid fans (even though, he admits, "that energy is astounding"). As an artist, though, "commercial dance is totally different from what I do."

Story's passion has always been honoring the long tradition of dance pioneered by African-American artists from Alvin Ailey to Joan Myers Brown. And he wants to share that passion with the widest audience possible.

"There are five black dance companies in America that are over the age of 30 — all founded by black women artistic directors," Story says. That elite club includes Dallas Black Dance Theatre, founded in 1976 by Ann Williams (she retired in 2014). "They are the ones with a specific black repertoire aimed at maintaining the works of black choreographers and black themes."

This weekend, Story joins that repertoire. He's one of the featured artists creating an original work for DBDT's program called Cultural Awareness, a mini-festival mounted specifically for Black History Month.

"The cornerstone of the dance landscape [among these companies] is the tradition of preserving black dance in America," Story says. "That includes a lot of the legendary ballets of Alvin Ailey, but in addition there is a large group of choreographers over the decades who have explored [that tradition]. I was trained under the aegis of that repertoire, and want to give audiences a window into that repertoire. I wanted to stay connected to that."

Story's affiliation with DBDT "has been a minute," he jokes. He was an apprentice and guest artist while attending Southern Methodist University, then moved to Los Angeles where he continued to study black dance. So this program is something of a homecoming for Story, though he is excited to push some boundaries with his new piece, *The Parts They Left Out*, while still honoring the tradition of black dance.

"I don't find it's necessary to reach too far or hard to get to the energy of that black dance legacy — enough of it has been with me in my dancing

for so long it's *there* ... it's not something I consciously think of," he says. But he's elevating the level of work at DBDT... literally. His piece is almost entirely an aerial ballet. (He thinks it's a first for the company.)

Training his dancers to move from terrestrial to ethereal dance presented a host of challenges.

"The first thing is getting over a sense of the height," he explains. "I don't have the dancers too high in the air — every apparatus is accessible from the ground. But there is the idea that you are not connected to terra firma. What that means on a technical level is, the skills you have with your work on the floor is all compromised — you have

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
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The air up there

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a different sense of your body in space." For example, on the ground an arabesque requires standing on one leg while the second creates a perpendicular line. Since there's no ground to push off of in the air, you have to rediscover that line. And you have to rely heavily on your upper body. "On the floor, it's a lot about your legs, a connective sense of the instrument moving in space; dancing in the air requires extraordinary upper body strength," he says. "Add to that aerial *partnering*, and you're having to manage another body in the air."

As technical as the work is, though, to Story it's still secondary to the meaning. *The Parts They Left Out* it explores specific figures in Greek mythology "with a little more fleshing-out of the stuff that gets left out in the oral tradition of [ancient history]," he says. "In most cultures, the oral testimony is very important at first, and *then* it's written down. But it leaves lots of room for questions. My preoccupation was in the implication of Greek history and how it was comprised of brown people." Looking into different theories on the origins of man and studies of mitochondrial DNA, Story says "it becomes clearer and clearer that the ancient Greeks were probably people of color and their myths would be part of our canon as well."



FROM CHER TO ALVIN | Jamal Story, above, choreographed an aerial ballet for DBDT's Cultural Awareness program for Black History Month. (Photos courtesy Brian Guillaux, DBDT)

And that, Story insists, is something everyone can be proud of. ■

STAGE REVIEWS: 'I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard,' 'Her Song'

One booze-filled night, David (Barry Nash), a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright whose output seems to have diminished in recent years, alternates giving his actress-daughter Ella (Jenny Ledel) a pep-talk with passive-aggressively undermining her self-confidence. David is a bootstraps guy, the kind who willed his career as a writer after cozying up to a famous queer mentor. Theater critics are queers, too ... and pedophiles, and micro-penisised losers and every other Trumpian epithet this profanely self-important windbag can come up with. We've all met men like David — those with their best years behind them, who lord past successes over those in their orbit like a sniper waiting to take out a warlord, or a lion trying to preserve his place in the pride.

Ella, poor thing, has been subjugated by him, masking her confusion between chardonnay and a smiling expression. But even she is primed to crack, especially as the two wait for reviews to come in of the edgy off-Broadway production of *The Seagull* in which she has a supporting role.

I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard is classic Kitchen Dog fodder: A scabrous, angry, contemporary dark comedy. We've seen shows like this before, of course — they're a kind of subgenre of Britain's midcentury kitchen sink dramas, with (201) area code and seemingly vulnerable women at their heart — but that doesn't undermine the craft which has gone into making this one. An intimate two-hander, it relies entirely on the casting, which pits the iron-nosed Nash against Ledel, one of Dallas' best younger actresses (she reminds me



most of Clare Danes, without the tics). They wit and parry in this talky, self-referential play (it's *about* theater, and often *reflects* theater as well, especially *Death of a Salesman's* sense of delusion). It's bitter and funny and uncomfortable, and suited well to KDT's temporary space at the Green Zone in the Design District.

It's a far cry from the retro supper club and cabaret that Echo Theatre is presenting at the Bath House. **Her Song** is a revue of classics from the Great American Songbook, all written (in whole or part) by women. More than just a concert, it's a theatrical experience, with a script and characters and a setting (around 1935) where dames and fellas romance each other in the glow of a gin joint. (There's even cocktails and food available for the patrons, which might be helpful staying warm: They cranked up the A/C on press night to the point of discomfort.) The songs represent an intriguing collection of standards, all delivered with panache and old-timey bravado.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

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The soft side of Anne Steele



SCOTT HUFFMAN | Contributing Writer
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Anne Steele knew at an early age that she would be a performer, and she pursued her calling with success. Her musical career has included gigs as a recording studio artist, cruise ship entertainer and award-winning NYC cabaret performer. Career goals achieved, as expected.

What Steele never anticipated, however, was that she would also become a wife and parent. And about that, she simply couldn't be happier.

"There are not a lot of sad songs in me anymore," says Steele, who brings her What's Mine tour to Dallas on Feb. 27. "It's funny: When Adele's CD came out, I keep thinking about how she can still draw on so much sadness even though she's with someone. She's happy. She has a baby and life is good. She can still find that. I don't know if it makes me a shallow person, but I can't really find that anymore."

For her Dallas debut, Steele intends to introduce herself as any singer might — through her song

The out songstress is ready to show Dallas 'What's Mine'

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choices. Expect the vocalist, who is married to R Family Vacations co-founder and SMU alumna Kelli Carpenter, to perform mostly a selection of upbeat tunes, including pop covers, standards and original songs from her 6-track EP *What's Mine*, some of which Steele wrote herself.

"This is all new to me," Steele says of songwriting for the EP, a process which, incidentally, was influenced by the VH1 reality series *Make or Break: The Linda Perry Project*. "I had in my head that I wanted to write a gay anthem and I wanted to write a love song about Kelli. I ended up doing neither because she [Perry] kept saying, 'Don't force yourself to write something. Just write what you know.'"

On the spot, Steele took Perry's advice to heart. She began thinking about her youth in a small Indiana town. She recalled feeling as if she didn't quite fit in there, despite not being sure why. Steele's payoff was shockingly immediate, and the exercise produced the EP's title track.

"I turned off the show," Steele recalls. "I sat down, and I literally wrote the song right there. I had been struggling to write, and I wrote it top to bottom, right there. That's what *What's Mine* is about — knowing eventually I would find what was mine: my people."

And it is to her people that Steele attributes most of the credit for her career success. Through cruise ship gigs and cabaret performances, the singer has built an ardent LGBT fan base — interestingly, one more centered on gay men than lesbians.

"I hate to limit it because it's certainly not only gay people, but I have a strong gay following," Steele says. "I am super proud of that. I would say that it's not so strong in the lesbian community. I am generally drawn to gay men. I feel like gay men sort of get me and my music."

Currently, one of Steele's favorite songs to perform is Sara Bareilles' spunky anthem "Brave." Steele believes it describes per-

fectly the way she feels. Moreover, she believes the song translates easily to each member of her audience, regardless of sexual orientation. Steele often uses the song to close her sets.

"For a long time in my life, I was not happy with who I was," Steele confides. "I worried about people finding out I was gay. I worried about being overweight or not having the right hair color. I worried about a number of things that are not important. Now I get on stage and tell people my story. If you don't tell your story, who is going to tell it for you? That song to me is all about being brave. You don't have to be gay to get it."

Steele was recently a featured artist in the *Cyndi Lauper & Friends: Home for the Holidays* concert, an annual event benefitting the True Colors Fund for LGBT homeless youth. Steele was thrilled to perform and at one point shared the stage with Cyndi and Boy George. While she considers the evening a career highlight, another moment in her life is the one which Steele remembers most fondly.

"I was most proud of standing in front of my parents and Kelli's parents and all of our friends and pledging to love her for the rest of my life," Steele says with conviction. "Kelli's really good friend had just been appointed by President Obama to be a judge in New York. She is the first Filipino-American woman to be appointed as a federal judge. We were her first wedding. It was amazing to have her there and to think about her accomplishment and to see where we've come as a country in order to be married. Just to see those boundaries fall down."

As for her career, Steele believes she is exactly where she is supposed to be. For that she is grateful.



"I think my career came out like this because it was meant to be like this," Steele says. "I think that I'm built to do what I'm doing now. I used to have all these huge Broadway dreams. I've talked to people who work on Broadway and they are all very happy in the moment for the time they are working. But I don't ever have to worry about losing my job. My job is controlled by me. The fact that I've been able to work travel into my life is amazing. I do have to work for money, but I have the freedom to pick and choose what I want to do. And that is a gift."

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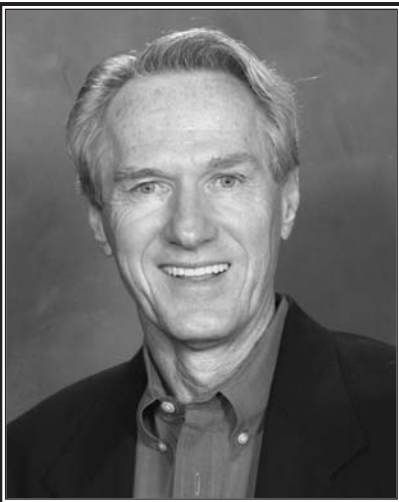
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'An Act of Love' documents a minister defrocked for sanctifying his gay son's wedding

When Tim Schaefer asked his dad, Frank (a Methodist minister), to officiate at his wedding in 2007, the proud papa eagerly agreed.

It's the kind of request that happens a lot in families with a member of the clergy. What set this request apart, however, was that Tim wanted to marry his boyfriend ... long before the Supreme Court made it legal across the U.S., and certainly in contravention of church doctrine. Frank did the wedding anyway, only to be defrocked years later.

Now, a documentary tracking the Schaefer's experience, titled

An Act of Love, is making its way around festivals (It premiered in October). But Tim, who works at the inclusive Royal Lane Baptist Church in Dallas, has arranged for two local screenings of the film: On Feb. 22 at the Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth at 7 p.m. and at Royal Lane Baptist Church on Feb. 24 at 6 p.m. Both will be accompanied by a post-screening discussion and are free (donations will be accepted).

We spoke with the Schaefer men about the film, their relationship and how far the church still needs to go.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Defrocked minister Frank Schaefer, in a scene from the documentary 'An Act or Love.'

How did this documentary come about? Frank: In December 2013 — right after I was defrocked — [filmmaker] Scott Sheppard contacted me and offered to make a documentary based on our family's story, especially the trial and aftermath. What moved me to work with Scott is his passion for the church — he is the son of a United Methodist minister.

Tim, you now work at Royal Lane Baptist Church; what was your own religious background like growing up? Tim: I grew up in the United Methodist Church. As a son of the minister, I was expected to be very involved in the life of the local church, which I was. I never heard the issue of homosexuality being discussed in my local congregation — it was only when my father took me to an annual regional legislative session of the UMC that I learned of the denomination's anti-LGBTQ positions. When the pieces of legislation dealing with gay and lesbian persons came up for debate, the language was vitriolic. Both pastors and lay representatives were saying the most horrible things about gays and lesbians.

So when did you come out to your family? What was that like? Tim: When I was in high school, I was out to several of my friends. By my senior year, my entire school knew that I was gay, as did some members of my church. To them it was no big deal, however, I had not yet come out to my parents, because I wasn't sure how they would react. I had shared with some of my close friends that I had struggled with my sexuality to the point of seriously considering killing myself. One of my friends told her mother, who outed me to my father over the phone, fearing that I might harm myself. I remember very vividly the conversation that followed when my father confronted me with the question of whether I was gay. After telling them my story, my parents and I sat in silence for quite a while. I think they were stunned. When my dad finally spoke, he told me that he was so hurt — not because I was gay, but because I had carried all that pain by myself and didn't feel I could come to them for help.

Frank, what was your initial reaction when Tim asked you to perform the wedding within the church? Frank: When Tim called me to



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CAMPAIGN NEWS:

Members of the art selection task force, looking over blueprints to select spaces for art installations at the new community center.



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asked me to officiate at his wedding, I didn't even hesitate. I said: "I would be honored to do this." After years of affirmations, I knew I had to walk the walk, not just talk the talk, even if my career was on the line.

Tim: I was initially nervous to ask my father to perform the wedding. It was important for me to have him perform it, but I also knew the consequences he faced if it became public knowledge. In the end, I decided that it wasn't fair to make the decision for him, so I asked him, and without hesitation he said yes.

Were you both fully aware of the controversial nature of performing a same-sex wedding in the church? Frank: After I had agreed to perform Tim's same-sex wedding, I came to the conclusion that I had to inform my bishop and district superintendent. I did so in writing and was surprised that I didn't face discipline at the time of the wedding [2007]. I was equally surprised when I finally did face discipline almost six years [later].

How has your relationship changed since coming out... or since the marriage ceremony?

Frank: If anything, our relationship grew stronger. As I went through the process parents of gays and lesbians typically face, Tim's outing story caused me to become his cheerleader. Most of all, I sensed that Tim needed affirmation. He needed to find and accept himself for whom God made him to be, so I showed him love and support as a father as well as a representative of the Church, which should have shown him this kind of support.

Tim: I agree. This has brought us closer. I had kept a part of myself hidden from my family for so long, that it became easier to communicate more

openly with them once I was out. Since then, both of my parents have supported me wholeheartedly. My father somewhat unwittingly became a national gay rights activist as a result of the ensuing trial and defrocking, and that makes me feel extremely proud of him.

Now that same-sex marriages are the law of the land, do you feel like pioneers, trailblazers... or like martyrs for the cause?

Frank: Our story has certainly become significant within the North American church, especially United Methodist circles. A lot of our LGBTQ members and their allies have been cheering us on and have taken new hope from the uncompromising stance a father and clergy person has taken to oppose the exclusionary policies and doctrines of the church. Our story seems compelling also to many conservatives as the act of love toward my son is an undeniable expression of true family values.

Is there still a lot of "hearts and minds" work that needs to be done within the church to convince hardliners of the moral sanctity of same-sex marriage (as opposed to its legal recognition)?

Frank: Yes, unfortunately. Most religious groups are lagging behind the recent developments with regard to LGBTQ and marriage equality. There remains much work to be done and hopefully, *An Act of Love* can play a big part in keeping the dialogue going within the church which will eventually, no doubt, lead to more acceptance of and rights for our LGBTQ constituents.

For more information about the screenings, visit Brite.edu/an-act-of-love or EventBrite.com and search "An Act of Love."



Caste off

DFW's South Asian Film Festival explores the taboo of being gay in India in 'Aligarh'

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

Apurva Asrani remembers the day (really the moment) that he first heard a story that would encapsulate the risks of being gay in India ... and forms the core of his first screenplay.

"I was on a news debate about societal attitudes towards homosexuality [when] the news [broke] of the death of Prof. Siras," he says. "It

was then that I [first] learned about this college professor."

In a scene almost out of *Lawrence v. Texas*, Prof. Siras became a *cause celebre* when two cameramen broke into his house and filmed the middle-aged academic having sex with a male rickshaw puller. Instead of taking action against the intruders, the conservative university where he worked, Aligarh, suspended Siras, who was

■ ALIGARH Next Page

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■ **ALIGARH**, From Previous Page

humiliated and harangued for the next two months, until he died.

"The story broke my heart," Asrani says, "and made me very angry." As the news quieted down, people began to forget about it ... including Asrani. Then last year, a stranger sent an email to Hansal Mehta, a film director for whom Asrani had worked as an editor. The sender suggested that Siras' story would make a good film.

"When I heard about this email, I thought it was providence that this story should find its way back to me," Asrani says. "So I began to write it as my debut feature script."

The resulting film, *Aligarh*, receives its North American premiere this Sunday at DFW's South Asian Film Festival. It's a major coup for the gay-run festival, as the film is creating a buzz just as it rolls out for an international release.

The buzz has been, unexpectedly, both positive and negative. Some of Siras' family members have slapped the filmmakers with a lawsuit for defamation for calling Siras "gay." And India's Censor Board of Film Certification has bestowed an A (adult) certificate — the U.S. equivalent to an MPAA R-rating — meaning given the film *and its trailers* may not be

shown to children and family audiences. "There are also groups in the area where the film is set, protesting against associating their city with homosexuality," Asrani says.

But the objections have only served to raise the profile of the film ... and trigger an outpouring of acceptance as well.

"All of this has brought our prejudices into the forefront, and somewhere, that is exactly what the film intended to do," Asrani says. "Simultaneously, our first trailer has met with an amazing response. Within three days, it went viral. So many people made it their own cause. They protested against

SOUTH ASIAN FILM FEST

Angelika Film Center Plano,
7205 Bishop Road, Plano.
Feb. 19–21. *Aligarh* screens
Feb. 21 at 4 p.m. DFWSAFF.com.



First-time screenwriter Apurva Asrani

the censor board, they sent us messages of love and support. I had so many messages from closeted gay folk thanking me for bringing a non-stereotypical gay protagonist into the mainstream."

It's a personal achievement for Asrani as well, who is openly gay. (He and his partner celebrated their ninth anniversary earlier this week.)

"It has taken time, but we now enjoy the support of both our families. But for most gay people in India, the blessings of one's parents is a distant dream. What adds to society's lack of understanding is the terrible stereotyping of gay characters. They either portray us as over-the-top buffoons — used as an object of ridicule — or as uni-dimensional sex maniacs," Asrani says. "There are maybe one or two gay portrayals done with a *sliver* of dignity, but society doesn't want to see us in the mirror they hold up ... unless of course it's one of those funny mirrors."

Asrani also brought his own experiences with discrimination into the script. In one scene, Siras' irate landlord asks him to vacate the house — not by calling him gay, but by pretextually insisting "bachelors aren't allowed to live here." "That's how it's done here," Asrani sighs. "We can't even call homosexuality by its name. We are too embarrassed to do that."

A subplot deals with India's caste system ("The university's lawyers deem his union with the rickshaw puller as dirty," Asrani explains. "They first wondered how he could have gay sex, and that too with a lower caste Muslim!"), but that is not the film's central theme.

"At the heart of the film is a dignified senior citizen who wants to exercise his constitutional right to his privacy and dignity. Siras is not a crusader; he is a shy poet, in love with his writing, with old Hindi film music and his two glasses of whisky. The case our film makes is that nobody has a right to invade or probe into his private sanctum."

In some ways, that makes the marketing of the film in India — its tagline includes the hashtag #ComeOut — even more amazing.

"The #ComeOut campaign [is] not referring to only LGBTQ people, [but] the entire nation that is silent on this massive human rights violation," Asrani says. "It is urging everyone to come out and support equal rights. 'Coming out' as gay, lesbian or bisexual in a country that can send you to jail for 20 years isn't an easy task. But I think it's high time we all realized that we are more vulnerable in our closets than we are on the outside, standing tall with our brethren."

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Lesbian rockers Hunter Valentine bids (sort of) adieu with So Long for Now Tour appearance at Trees

The queer all-girl rock group Hunter Valentine has been touring and recording (and making appearances on programs like Showtime's *The Real L Word*) for more than a decade; just last Sunday, the group released its latest EP (on, appropriately enough, Valentine's Day). But all good things must come to an end ... or at least go on hiatus. The members are coming to Trees Feb. 26 as part of their So Long for Now Tour, so this could be your last chance (at least for a while) to catch them. (Also appearing on the bill are Faded Grace, Hush Money and Cruella.)

DEETS: Trees, 2709 Elm St. Doors at 7 p.m., show at 8 p.m. \$11. TreesDallas.com.



WaterTower Theatre opens 14th Out of the Loop Fringe Festival, dedicated to alt-theater

There's a lot more going on in the world of theater than what Broadway, off-Broadway and even well-funded regional companies are producing. That's why a fringe fest is an excellent opportunity for discovery, as WaterTower has demonstrated over more than a decade. Out of the Loop is back with a crowded lineup of performances (music, comic, dance, dramatic) over 11 days, including work from queer artists like Ebony Stewart to WTT's first-ever 24 HR Play Fest, a quasi competition where playwrights, directors and actors write, rehearse and mount all-new works on a common theme with only one day's prep. Get a season pass and discover what's really going on in theater.

DEETS: Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Visit WaterTowerTheatre.org for a full schedule.

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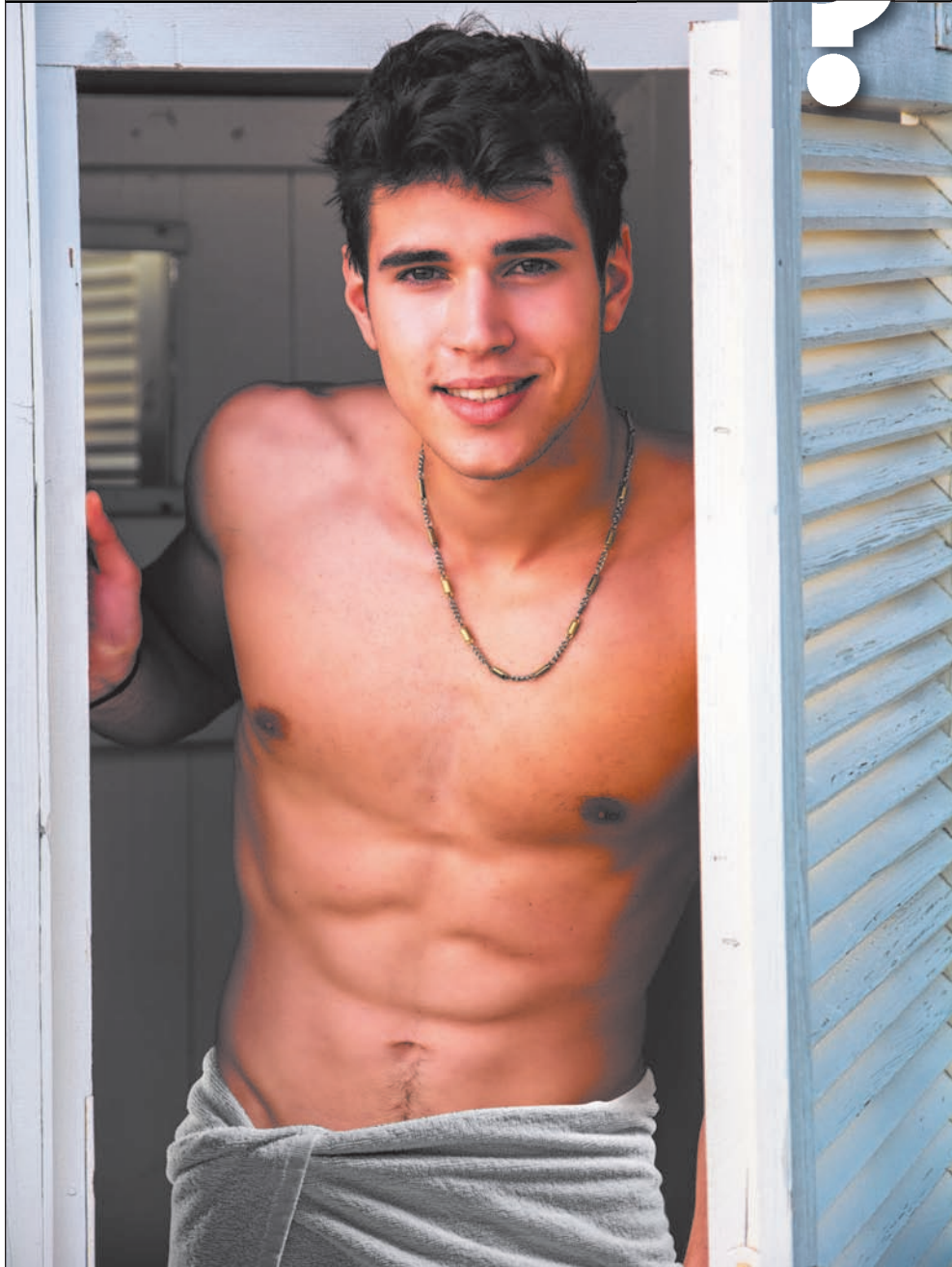
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calendar highlights



Valentine's Day may be over, but you can still find your Queen of Hearts at Gaybingo Saturday in the Rose Room, a monthly *fun*-draiser for Resource Center.

ARTSWEEK

THEATER

Dangerous Obsession. Theatre Britain continues with its expanded season with this psychological thriller about a mysterious stranger who unsettled a married couple. Cox Building Playhouse, 1517 H Ave., Plano. Through Feb. 28. Theatre-Britain.com.

I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard. The third show of Kitchen Dog's 25th season, a dark comedy about an actress and her playwright-dad. *Reviewed this week.* The Green Zone in the Design District, 161 Riveredge. Through March 12. KitchenDogTheater.org.

The Echo Room Presents: Her Song. A new tradition from female-centric troupe Echo Theatre, this revue features music and dance celebrating songs from the Great American Female Songbook, with music direction from Scott A. Eckert. The show will feature a cash bar, as well as food from chef Doug Brown, and guest stars at each performance. *Reviewed this week.* Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Drive. Through Feb. 27. EchoTheatre.org.

Long Day's Journey into Night. Eugene O'Neill monumental family drama. Undermain Theatre, 3400 Main St. Through March 6. Evening shows at 7:30 p.m. (earlier time). Undermain.org.

Rodgers+Hammerstein's Cinderella. The tuneful fantasy, with a new book by Douglas Carter Beane. Theatre Arlington, 305 W. Main St., Arlington, Through March 6. TheatreArlington.org.

Isaac's Eye. A dark comedy about the unscrupulous steps some people will take to achieve fame — even Isaac Newton. Presented by Amphibian Stage Productions. Milburn Theatre, 120 S. Main St., Fort Worth. Through March 6. AmphibianStage.com.

Clever Little Lies. Gay playwright Joe DiPietro's story of love, marriage and secrets. Features Bill Jenkins and Linda Leonard. Circle Theatre, 230 W. Fourth St., Fort Worth. Through March 5. CircleTheatre.com.

Romeo & Juliet. The Dallas Theater Center's production of Shakespeare's romantic tragedy, directed by Joel Ferrell. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through Feb. 28. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

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. Through Feb. 28. JubileeTheatre.org.

Love, Loss and What I Wore. Nora and Delia Ephron's confessional comedy about relationships. Greenville Center for the Arts, 5601 Sears St. Through March 6. ContemporaryTheatreOfDallas.com.

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change. Gay playwright Joe DiPietro co-wrote this popular musical revue about relationships. Theatre 3 in the Theatre Too space, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through March 6 (extended). Theatre3Dallas.com.

Tick.. Tick... BOOM! Before *Rent*, Jonathan Larson composed this reflected three-person chamber musical about relationships. Directed by Lon Barrera. Bedford Boys Ranch, 2821 Forest Ridge Drive, Bedford. Through Feb. 28. OnstageInBedford.com.

Dont u luv me? Dallas Children's Theater presents this timely piece about violence in teen dating; feature Haulston Mann. *Final weekend.* Rosewood Center for Family Arts, 5938 Skillman St. \$15–\$28. DCT.org.

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. Through Feb. 28. \$15–\$28. DCT.org.

CONCERTS

Blue Man Group. The alternative music/comedy ensemble performs. Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. Feb. 19–21. BassHall.com.

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. An original Vermeer (one of three dozen in the world) is among the paintings in this intimate exhibit that explores themes in Dutch art. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through Aug. 21. DMA.org.

Salvador Dali: The Argillet Collection. Milan Gallery, 505 Houston St., Fort Worth. Through Feb. 29.

MilanGallery.com.

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

FILM
2nd Annual DFW South Asian Film Festival. A film festival dedicated to moviemaking from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal features a wide slate of programming, including gay-interest films. (See story, Page 19.) Feb. 19–21. Opening night at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, 2201 N. Field St.; screenings at the Angelika Film Center Plano, 7205 Bishop Road, Plano. Visit DFWSAFF.com for complete schedule.


An Act of Love. A documentary about the Methodist minister defrocked for officiating at a same-sex marriage. Screens twice this week, with Q&As after: Feb. 22 at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth at 7 p.m. and Feb. 22 Royal Lane Baptist Church in Dallas at 6 p.m. See story, Page 18, for screening details.


FRIDAY 02.19
COMMUNITY
Panoptikon. The weekly retro disco dance party, presented by Lord Byron. Red Light, 2911 Main St. Doors 9 p.m.

DANCE
Dallas Black Dance Theatre: Cultural Awareness Series. A special weekend of performances during Black History Month. Includes three world premiere pieces. See story Page 14. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Feb. 19–21. DBDT.org.

SATURDAY 02.20
SPORTS
FrontRunners. Gay jogging group meets at 8:30 a.m. at the statue in Lee Park for a run along the Katy Trail.

COMMUNITY
Gaybingo. Valentine’s Day may be past, but don’t put

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away that box yet — this month’s theme for Gaybingo is Queen of Hearts. Station 4, 3911 Cedar Springs. 5 p.m. doors, 6 p.m. curtain. \$25–\$45. MyResourceCenter.org.

MONDAY 02.22
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 02.23
FILM
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest. In 1976, this quirky drama became the first film in more than 40 years to win all five top Oscars (picture, director, actor, actress and screenplay), a feat not repeated again until 1991’s *The Silence of the Lambs*. Based on Ken Kesey’s counter-culture novel, set in an Oregon mental institution, with a classic performance from Jack Nicholson. 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.

THURSDAY 02.25
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.

CONCERTS
Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1. The Dallas Symphony Orchestra presents one of the great technical concerti on the canon for four concerts, with Behzod Abduraimov at piano. Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. Feb. 25–28. DalSym.org.

THEATER
One-Act Festival. Six plays by six women over six nights, including a regional premiere from Obie Award-winner Charlayne Woodward and local playwright Vicki Caroline Cheatwood. Presented by TeCo Theatrical Productions. Bishop Arts Theatre Center, 215 S. Tyler St. Feb. 25–March 6. BishopArtsTheatre.org.
Out of the Loop Fringe Festival. WaterTower Theatre’s 14th annual celebration of intimate and quirky performances, including music, solo performances and comedy. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Feb. 25–March 6. Visit WaterTowerTheatre.org for full lineup of performances.

FRIDAY 02.26
CONCERTS
Hunter Valentine. Edgy all-girl rockers has a new album out and will appear in Dallas with the So Long for Now Tour. Trees, 2709 Elm St. \$11. 7 p.m. doors, 8 p.m. show. TreesDallas.com.

DANCE
12th Annual Weekend Festival of Black Dance. A celebration of dance. Presented by the Black Academy of Arts & Letters, 605 S. Griffin St. Feb. 26–27. TBAAL.org.



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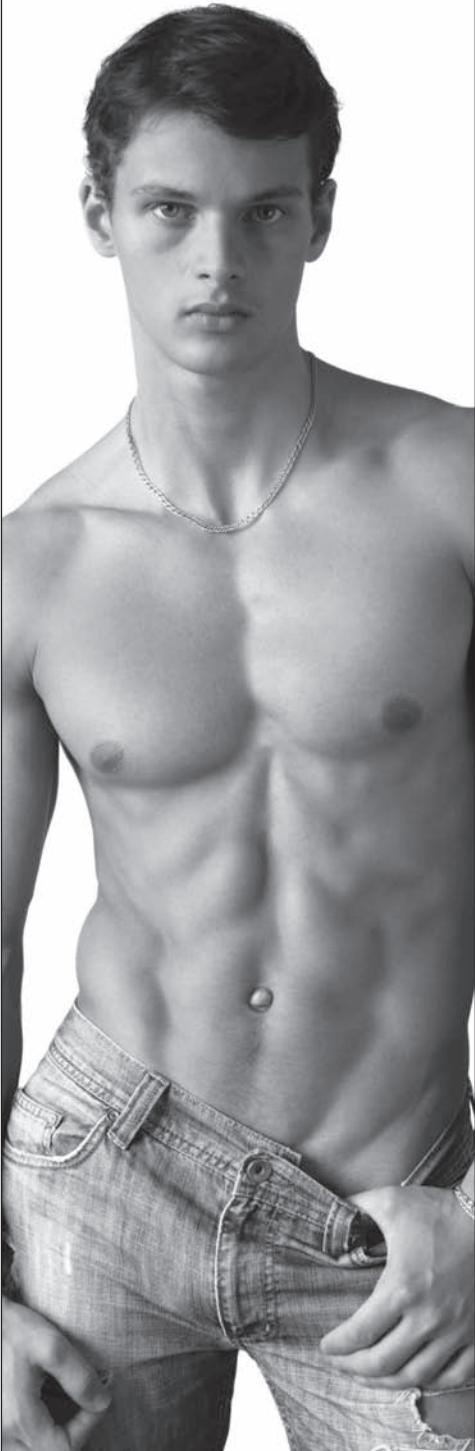
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Cassie Nova

Time for more dragvice from Miss C!

Hello, my lovelies. Just FYI, my birthday is next week (Feb. 27!) — Pisces in the house, and I guess I need to come to terms with the fact that I am getting old. It's a bitch. My laugh lines are becoming laugh canyons. My metabolism is slowing to a turtle pace, and all I ever want to do is take a nap. People say you are only as old as you feel. Well I have days when I feel 25, then I have days when I feel 85.

I miss the days of going out, dancing and drinking and still getting up early and having a productive day. Not anymore. Now, if I overindulge too much with the drinking, I am worthless the next day. For every hour of fun, I now need a day to recover. It's just not worth it.

On the upside, I have never been happier with who I am or with life in general. I find myself taking life as it comes and enjoying the moments more. Youth really is wasted on the young. Those ungrateful fuckers.

It has come to my attention recently that I have been neglecting my duties of having an "advice" column. Well the truth, is I don't get as many questions as I once did. Apparently I have solved all of your problems and you no longer need me in that capacity. Just kidding, I still get people asking for advice every once in a while, so I will get back to my roots and help my peoples. So you asked for it.

Dear Cassie, I have had some really bad experiences with past relationships. Six months ago, I met what seems like a really great guy! He accepts me

and really cares about me. We have really bonded, but I have been offered a tremendous promotion in a new city. So you can imagine how awkward this makes me feel. Should I stay or should I go? Reminds me of that song. Thanks, TCG.

Dearest TCG,

I would say to follow your heart and do what you feel is right but your wording, "what seems like a really great guy" makes me think you are not sure about him. I understand that past relationships seem to have made you jaded or weary of this new guy but you need to do what is right for you. Long distance relationships can work but only if the feelings are there on both sides. I need more information before I can give you a legitimate answer. Are you in love? Do you get butterflies? Is he worth the effort or are you using him as an excuse not to jump on this great opportunity with your job? Life is not always a romantic comedy, sometimes you have to move on and hope that the relationship follows. Good luck, Cassie.

Dear Miss Nova, I have always considered myself to be an ally. I know that I have made mistakes along the way, but I have always tried to learn from them and to push myself and other allies to do better. Recently I had a conversation with a friend of mine about allies. The topic came up of what made someone an ally, and what made someone a bad ally. We couldn't come to an agreement, so I thought I'd ask you. What makes someone an ally? What makes someone a bad ally? (I know it seems like a bad ally isn't an ally at all, but that is part of the question, can you be an ally and be a bad one, or does it just make you not an ally at all?) Respectfully, Forrest.

Hey Forrest Hey,

It sounds to me like you and your friend were having a competition to see how many times you could say ally. So now it is my turn. I think an ally is an ally,

good or bad. My idea of a bad ally is someone who only aligns themselves with others for personal gain. When you're talking about straight people being an ally for the gay community it really depends on intent. Many times it is just a matter of educating folks on what is right. In this age of being so completely politically correct, a person's intent can be overshadowed by their wording. Find out what they truly mean and educate them on what is right and why. Oh yeah, ally, ally, allied ally and ally. Good luck my friend, Cassie.

Miss Nova, Girl, my husband of four years has decided he wants to try his hand at a cleaning business. He has become very successful and does a magnificent job cleaning other people's stuff. Meanwhile, meanwhile ... did I say meanwhile? our place could use the same attention?! I work 50 hours plus at a non-profit kitchen and work 20 hours part time and he is finally making some coin. Do I steal his money or gag him with a mop? I wanna know! Thank you in advance, Miss Lybarger.

Ok Miss Lybarger, Calm dafuk down. If he is making good coin maybe you should hire someone to clean your house. I bet he probably knows someone.



No one wants to come home from a hard day of working and do what they have been doing all day. Hell, when I get home from a show, the last thing I want to do is be entertaining and charming.

My husband gets asked on the regular, "Is Cassie always fun, I bet she is always a good time." He tells them point blank, "Nope! At home she is boring as fuck." I save all my energy and sass for the show.

You did say "our place" so maybe y'all could both clean the place together. Tell him you will do all kinds of nasty stuff to him if he does the dishes or vacuums. Try a little positive reinforcement. It works for training a puppy and most men are at least as smart as a puppy. Good luck! Cassie.

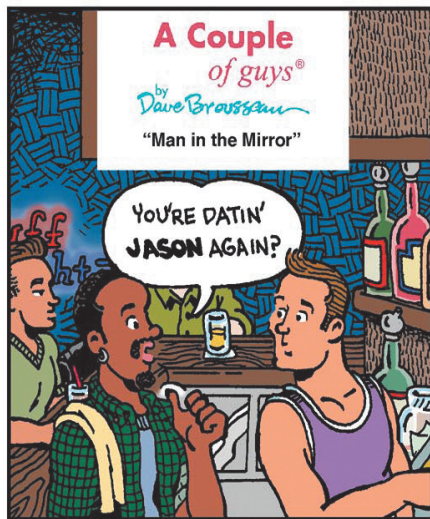
Dear Cassie, Let me start by saying I love your column! I usually get at least two laugh-out-loud moments and I smile the entire time I'm reading it. We recently moved back to Texas from Minnesota and chose Oak Lawn because to leave a place as blue as Minnesota and move to almost any place in Texas other than here might cause my head to explode! You validate our choice every week.

Have you ever thought about doing a "How to Become a Diva" class for us middle aged white ladies? Every time I get dressed to go someplace special I feel like I could do so much better! Sending love and light your way and fuck those cracker bitches in Walmart and Ted Cruz and Donald Trump... I mean that in the nicest way. Smiles! Suzy.

Dear Crazy Ass Suzy, Thank you for your kind words, I truly appreciate it. As far as having a class to become a diva, it sounds like you have all the sassiness a diva needs, so you are on your way. I would suggest going to see some of my fabulous make-up artist friends that work at places like Mac or Sephora. Go see Chanel LeMasters, Raquel Blake or Daphne Rio St. James. They do an incredible job of making gals like you look mo fabulous. I would do it but I only have one shade of makeup and that's *whore*! So if you wanna look like a hard ass street walker, I'm your guy otherwise go see the real professionals. Good luck!

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

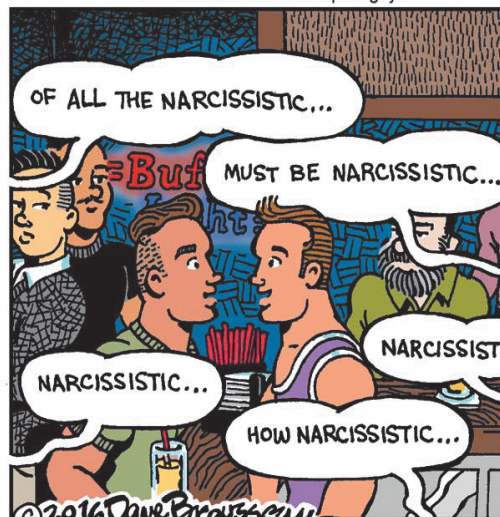
If you have a question or comment, email it to AskCassieNova@gmail.com.



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Joseph, Meredith and Ashley at S4.



Fun at Dallas Eagle.

Making the **SCENE** the week of **Feb. 19–25**:

- **1851 Club**: Miss Gay Mid-Cities hosted by Kaliah Nixx and Gemini Alexander Brooks at 6 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Alexandre's**: Walter Lee on Friday. Chris Chism and the Band on Saturday. Alicia Silex on Thursday.
- **Brick/Joe's**: The Return of the Bay Boyz of Dallas. Hypeman Dupree's Pajamie Jam hosted by Ida Mae Watergate at 11 p.m. on Friday.
- **Club Reflection**: Cowtown Leathermen cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday. International Gay Rodeo Association show at 7 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Dallas Eagle**: DFW Leather Corps club night at 7 p.m. on Friday. United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Angels v. Demons at 7 p.m. on Saturday. Cher-E-Oke with Wayne Smith at 8 p.m. on Tuesday.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill**: Dream Girls with Chanel, Alexis, Kandi, Raquel and Sassy on Thursday.
- **Marty's**: Monday night showcase with Chanel Champagne.
- **Pekers**: A Tribute to the Singers We Have Lost hosted by Linza Serell benefiting Miniature Schnauzer Rescue of North Texas, C.U.R.E. and Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund at 8:30 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Round-Up Saloon**: Kelexis Davenport hosts Mr. Gay Dallas USofA and Miss Gay Dallas USofA Newcomer Pageants at 10 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Sue Ellen's**: Panty Raid on Friday. Mojo Dolls on Saturday. Kathy & Bella at 3 p.m. and Bad Habits at 6 p.m. on Sunday.
- **The Rose Room**: Rising Star with Layla and Kelexis on Thursday.
- **Urban Cowboy**: Imperial Court candidate show at 7 p.m. on Saturday.

To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/category/photos. Scene Photographer: Chad Mantooth.



Kylie with Jeff Lewis from Bravo's *Flipping Out*.



Looking fabulous at S4.

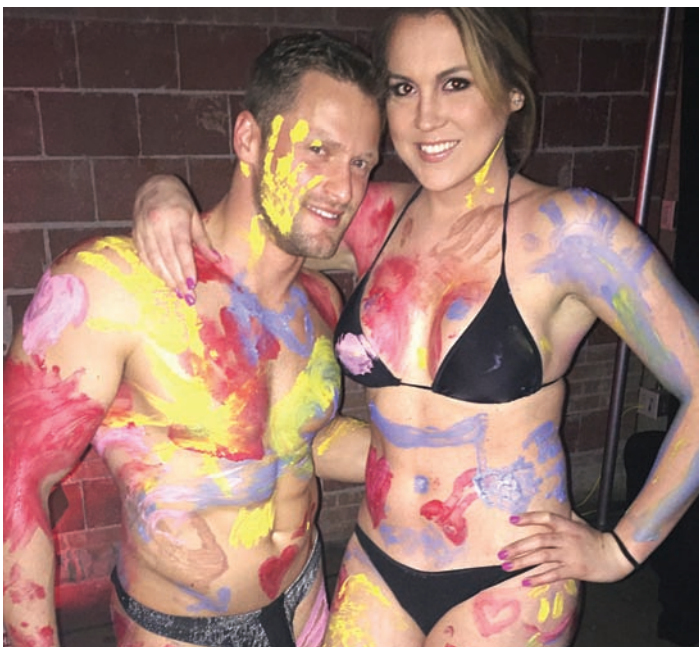
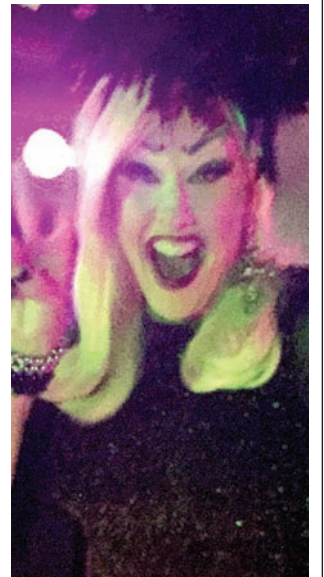


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J.C. and Mindy at Sue Ellen's.

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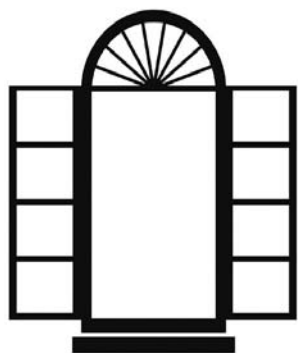
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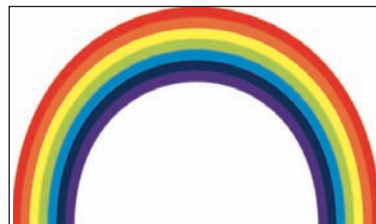
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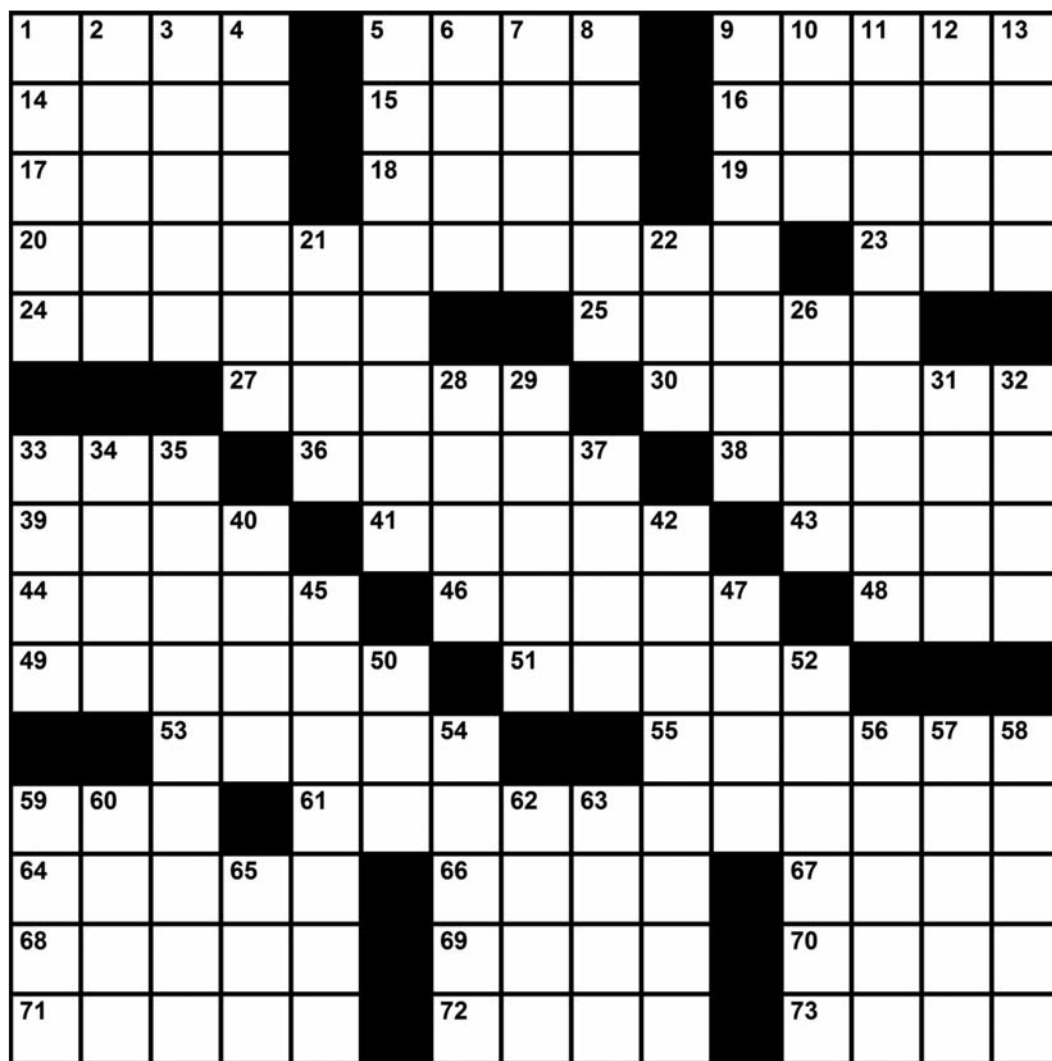
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Gay Things You Do Playing Football

Solution on page 23

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- 5 Famed Loch
- 9 Sits for 63-Across
- 14 "Queen of Country" McEntire
- 15 Prefix with potent
- 16 Give the slip to
- 17 Give relief to a thief
- 18 One of Bernstein's strings
- 19 Beat off
- 20 He reaches between the center's legs
- 23 Aunt in a Disney film
- 24 Merchant of films
- 25 Less likely to come out
- 27 Computer command
- 30 Make possible
- 33 Christopher, to Madonna
- 36 Former NFL player Tuaolo
- 38 Seat at the Stonewall Inn
- 39 Where boxers are visible
- 41 Sound from guitarist Townshend
- 43 Engage in some watersports
- 44 One who gets screwed by an agent?
- 46 Triangle-shaped peninsula
- 48 ___ Miz
- 49 *Gulliver's Travels* brutes
- 51 Philippines island

- 53 The Gay Nineties, for example
- 55 Alexander conquered it
- 59 *Gone With the Wind* extra
- 61 Where football players get naked together
- 64 Video category for porn
- 66 Royal threesome
- 67 Go down
- 68 Release from bondage
- 69 "How queer!"
- 70 Sea eagle
- 71 "See ya"
- 72 Actor Auberjonois
- 73 Cannon of Hollywood

Down

- 1 Persian Gulf figure
- 2 [ELK] - [K] + [LEND] - [D]
- 3 Erection supporter
- 4 Governor of 55-Across
- 5 Stein, for one
- 6 Arab head
- 7 Stuck-up sort
- 8 Nancy's older son, on *Weeds*
- 9 Tony of Hollywood
- 10 Cheer for Lorca
- 11 Winners of this wear matching rings
- 12 Rosie O'Donnell's *Exit* to ___

- 13 Ward of *Once and Again*
- 21 Wear down
- 22 *Evita* narrator
- 26 Chows down
- 28 Randy Shilts' area
- 29 Chase behind
- 31 Dance legend Fuller
- 32 Shade trees
- 33 Noise of an ass
- 34 Costa ___
- 35 Where football players pat each other
- 37 Shakespeare's Hathaway
- 40 Sticky stuff
- 42 A pink triangle symbolizes this
- 45 Alarm cock?
- 47 Cicero's way
- 50 U. of San Francisco, e.g.
- 52 Wore away
- 54 Score for Billy Bean
- 56 "Pardon me"
- 57 "___ roll!"
- 58 Navratilova's winter home
- 59 Male actor named Julia
- 60 John Travolta's *Hairspray* role
- 62 Hourly pay
- 63 Actor Richard
- 65 Hwy. to the Hampton

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