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Rose

Brandi Amara Skyy takes a look
inside the Dallas Ballroom community
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Amara Skyy. Design by Kevin Thomas

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Omar Narvaez

Observer names Narvaez best councilman

In its annual best-of issue, The Dallas Observer named first-term councilman Omar Narvaez the best councilman.

The Dallas Observer wrote:

During his first term as a member of the Dallas City Council, West Dallas' Omar Narvaez has distinguished himself as more than just a member of the council's progressive caucus. While he reliably partners with Scott Griggs and Philip Kingston to advance smart policies, Narvaez stands out from the pack when it comes to advocating for the city's poor and addressing historical inequities. In May, he called out Dallas' problem with income inequality as being the result of systemic racism. It wasn't a new idea, but it was jolting to hear it coming from behind the council horseshoe.

Narvaez, who is gay, distinguished himself during his campaign by negotiating a way hundreds of people in West Dallas could stay in and repair their homes. This week, he negotiated with Amazon for a tax break that would bring a distribution warehouse to District 6. To qualify for the tax break, Amazon must pay new employees a minimum of \$13 an hour and hire at least 35 percent of its workforce locally.

— David Taffet

Developments in the North Texas art scene

This week has been a torrent of developments in the North Texas art scene.

Sept. 25, the Nasher Sculpture Center announced the fourth recipient of its prestigious Nasher Prize, presented to an artist with a sculpture concentration who contributes to a conversation about art. The 2019 laureate is Isa Genzken, a German contemporary artist who creates sculpture as well as videos, films, collages and photography. Four years ago, Genzken was the focus of a retrospective, co-sponsored by MOMA, at the Dallas Museum of Art.

Sept. 27, the Goss-Michael Foundation hosted a public reception for Jwan Yosef, with the artist in attendance. The Syrian-born, Yosef, of Kurdish-Armenian descent, grew up in Sweden, and his mixed background informs his interests in materials and our relationship to them, including a preoccupation with Rock Hudson. He is married to actor-musician Ricky Martin. The exhibit runs through Nov. 15.

Now open at the African American Museum in Fair Park is the exhibit Slavery at Jefferson's Monticello: Paradox of Liberty, which focuses on the hundreds of "owned" humans who lived and worked at the home of the man who wrote "All men



Dr. Marc Tribble and Dr. Donald Graneto named to D Magazine's Best Doctors in Dallas for 2017 in Infectious Disease and Family Medicine respectively.



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are created equal." It runs through Dec. 31.

Finally, the Crow Collection of Asian Art has officially rebranded as the Crow Museum, marking its 20th year of operation. The rebranding comes with a huge expansion of gallery space, the return of the Lotus Shop to the Crow space and special exhibits.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Screening of documentary, Denial

Dallas Peace and Justice Center and Planet Transgender are co-sponsoring a free screening of the award-winning documentary, *Denial*, at 7

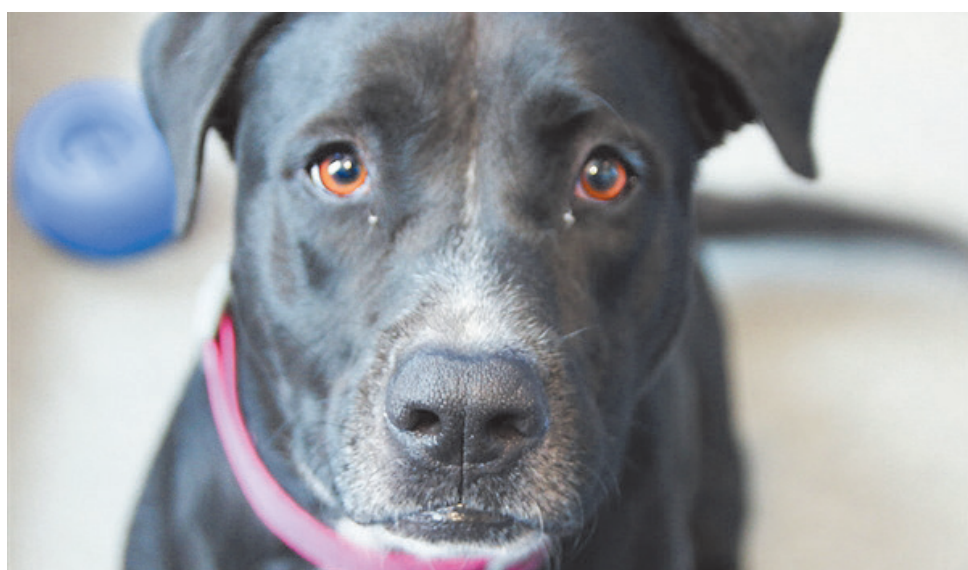
p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 2, at Unitarian Universalist Church of Oak Cliff, 3839 W. Kiest Blvd. The screening is hosted by the First Tuesday Social Justice Film Festival.

Denial stars Christine Hallquist, the former utilities executive for the state of Vermont who is now the Democratic candidate for governor of Vermont — the first transgender person nominated as a major party candidate for governor in any state.

The documentary delves into the consequences of climate change denial, an issue Hallquist has long addressed, but it is also about Hallquist's coming out as a trans woman.

— Tammye Nash

pet of the week / COOKIE



Meet **Cookie**, a 4-year-old, black-and-white labrador mix weighing 70 pounds. She's a fun-loving girl who is extremely friendly and loves meeting new people. She's playful, energetic and affectionate. She enjoys playing in water, playing with toys and running outside. She loves treats, and will sit, shake and come on command. She also enjoys playing with other dogs, so if you have any other pups at home, bring them for a meet and greet to see if they get along. Cookie has been spayed, microchipped and has received all age-appropriate vaccinations. Come meet her today. #165690

Cookie, is waiting for you at the SPCA of Texas' Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas, 2400 Lone Star Drive (near I-30 and

Hampton Road). Hours are noon-6 p.m. Sun-Wed and noon-7 p.m. Thurs-Sat. Regular adoption fees are \$100 for puppies and kittens aged 0-6 months, \$50 for adult dogs and cats aged 6 months or older, \$25 for senior dogs or cats aged 7 years and older and \$25 for VIP dogs and cats (available for adoption for 30 days or more.) Fee includes spay/neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, a heartworm test for dogs six months and older and a FIV/FelV test for cats 4 months and older, initial flea/tick preventative and heartworm preventative, a microchip, 30 days of PetHealth Insurance provided by PetPlan, a free 14-day wellness exam with VCA Animal Hospitals, a free year-long subscription to Activ4Pets, a rabies tag and a free leash. Call 214-742-SPCA (7722) or visit today.

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THE GAY AGENDA



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

SEPTEMBER

• Through Oct. 18: The Journey: A Coming Out Workshop

Did you come out recently or have you been out for awhile. No matter where you are on your coming out journey, you will benefit from this six-week interactive workshop open to all LGBT persons, family and friends facilitated by Rev. Robin Booth, Rev. Jane Graner and CoH member Will Fields on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at Interfaith Peace Chapel, Conference Rooms A/B, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. Register at CathedralOfHope.ChurchCenter.com/groups/coh-care-ministry-groups/the-journey-workshop. For more info email will.fields@live.com.

• Sept. 28-Oct. 21: State Fair of Texas

• Sept. 28-Oct. 27: Screams

Five haunted houses every Friday and Saturday night in Waxahachie on the Scarborough Fair site. \$35.

• Sept. 28: Dallas Southern Pride — iCandy MegaParty

Marty's Live!, 4207 Maple Ave., presents

the Candy MegaParty hosted by Rudeboy Dallas and Nicole O'hara Munro and featuring DJ C Wade and Hypeman Dupree. Admission is free before 10:30 p.m. For details visit [Dallas Southern Pride.com](http://DallasSouthernPride.com).

• Sept. 28: Women's Business Conference

The Dallas Regional Chamber Women's Business Conference from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Hyatt Regency Dallas, 300 Reunion Blvd. E.

• Sept. 29: Dallas Southern Pride — 2018 Black Pride Pool Party

Dallas Southern Pride continues with the 2018 Black Pride Pool Party, 4 a.m.-10 p.m., featuring Michelle and Jazmine Sullivan, at Cedar Canyon Dude Ranch, 4523 N. Houston School Road. For details visit [Dallas Southern Pride.com](http://DallasSouthernPride.com).

• Sept. 29: Dallas Southern Pride — Return of the Masquerade Ball

Dallas Southern Pride weekend continues with the Return of the Masquerade Ball featuring as commentators icons Jack Mizrahi and Jay Blaknik and legendary Dashaun Lavin. Cash prizes award. This event is free all night. For details visit [Dallas Southern Pride.com](http://DallasSouthernPride.com).

• Sept. 29: PFLAG Southern Region Conference

LGBTQ folks and allies across the city of Dallas," said Dallas City Councilman Omar Narvaez. "My heart is heavy knowing he has left this world, and I will miss him."

Narvaez is a past president of Stonewall Dallas.

Milliken was born in Missouri. He graduated from Lebanon High School in Lebanon, Mo., and attended the University of Missouri. He served in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged as a Specialist 5th Class. He retired from Computer Associates as a senior technical writer.

He is survived by his brothers and sisters-in-law Bruce and Janice and Mark and Teresa, and a number of nieces and nephews, including Michelle and Gretchen. His brother James preceded him in death.



The all-new Screams, with five completely redesigned and enhanced haunted houses, opens tonight (Friday, Sept. 28), on the grounds of Scarborough Renaissance Festival, located just off I-35E at Exit 399A in Waxahachie. Screams is open each Friday and Saturday night, from 7:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m., through Oct. 27. See listings for details and watch the Oct. 12 issue of Dallas Voice for a profile of Screams' new creative director, Ray Don Mitchell. (Photo courtesy of Screams)

• **Weekly: Lambda Weekly at 1 p.m. on Sunday on 89.3 KNON-FM with David Taffet, Lerone Landis and the late Patti Fink.** This week's guest is Texas Pride Impact Fund president **Roger Wedell**; **Core Group Meeting** every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.; **Fuse game night** every Monday evening except the last of the month at 8 p.m. at the Fuse space in the 3918 Harry Hines Blvd.; **FuseConnect** every Wednesday from 7 p.m. For more information call or e-mail Jalenzski at 214-760-9718 ext. 3 or Jalenzski@myresourcecenter.org; LGBT square dancing group **Pegasus Squares** meets every Sunday from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church, 4105 Junius St. For more info, email pegasussquares@gmail.com; **Dallas Frontrunners** meet for a walk or run on the Katy Trail at Oak Lawn Park, Turtle Creek and Hall Street, every Wednesday at 7:15 p.m. and every Saturday at 9 a.m.; **Leadership Lambda Toastmasters** practices and develops speaking and leadership skills from 6:30-8 p.m. on Tuesdays at First Unitarian Church, third floor of the Hallman Building, 4012 St. Andrews; **Gray Pride support group** from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. followed by mixer every Monday at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road; **Lambda AA** meets at 7 a.m., noon, 6 p.m. 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. and has a men's meeting at 10 a.m. on Saturdays and meets at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Sunday at 1575 W. Mockingbird Lane #625. Call 214-267-0222 for details; **LGBT Sex Addicts Anonymous** meets at 6 p.m. every Friday at 1919 Independence St., Room 19, Plano. 972-316-9188 for details; **Leadership Lambda Toastmasters** gay-identified Toastmasters group meets from 6:30-8 p.m. every Monday at the First Unitarian Church, 4015 Normandy Road (does not meet on Mondays that are holidays); **United Black Ellument** hosts discussion on HIV/AIDS in the black community (UBE Connected) at 7 p.m. every fourth Tuesday of the month at 3918 Harry Hines Blvd.; **DVtv in Spayse**, news and entertainment discussion live streaming every Friday, 4-5 p.m., on the Spayse Station YouTube channel.

Coalition for Aging LGBT will be among the presenters at the conference from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at Celebration Church, 908 Pennsylvania Ave., Fort Worth.

• Sept. 29: Dallas Meditation Center Fall Festival

The Dallas Meditation Center, a non-faith-based mindfulness center with roots in the Oak Lawn community, will hold its second-annual Free Fall Festival from noon to 9 p.m. at 810 W. Arapaho Road, #98, in Richardson. This open house event will exhibit activities, classes and programs offered at the center, like mindfulness meditation classes, yoga, qigong, Tai Chi,

music concerts and other holistic wellness-oriented programs.

• Sept. 29: Classic Chassis

Classic Chassis Car Club heads to the State Fair of Texas to display its members classic vehicles from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at State Fair of Texas, Fair Park, Classic Corral A.

• Sept. 29: TAG Garage Sale

Tyler Area Gays holds a garage sale from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at 1917 S. Beckham Ave. in Tyler. Hangers, plastic bags, clothes racks and volunteers needed.

OBITUARY



Michael Milliken, 71, died on Sunday, Sept. 23, after a battle with lung cancer.

In 1996, Milliken co-founded Stonewall Democrats with Christie Kinsler. That group has become the largest

Democratic club in Texas. He also was a long-time member of the Oak Lawn Committee and was instrumental in raising money to build the Legacy of Love Monument at the Oak Lawn Triangle on the corner of Cedar Springs Road and Oak Lawn Avenue. He weeded and landscaped the monument, and every time a car crashed into it, he cleaned up and oversaw repairs.

"Michael Milliken left behind a legacy that will be known by generations of



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Get Together

Walk, Burn, Pose

How two visionaries ignited the Dallas Ballroom scene

BRANDI AMARA SKYY | Contributing Writer
brandi@brandiamaraskyy.com

The first thing that pops up in most people's mind when you mention the Ballroom community is Jennie Livingston's controversial 1990 documentary, *Paris is Burning*. But more often than not, *Paris is Burning* is the intro and outro of their knowledge and exposure to Ballroom.

Well, that is until Ryan Murphy's 2018 FX hit *Pose*.

But between these two towering pillars in mainstream pop culture, there have been a handful of other more intimate documentaries, like Wolfgang Busch's *How Do I Look*, and Nicolas Jenkins' *Walk* — an 11-minute documentary that showcases 30 years of the Ballroom scene in New York City, available on Vimeo.

And in 2016, Twiggy Pucci Garçon and Sara Jordenö brought another benchmark to the scene with *Kiki*, a highly acclaimed and awarded documentary following seven youth over their four-year journey within the Kiki subculture of the Ball community.

It's easy to look at what's happening in the Ballroom scene on a national level and wonder where Dallas fits into the narrative. But if you can rattle off names like Pepper LaBeija and Venus Xtravaganza, then the names Father Larry Ebony, Tony Mugler Vuitton the Icon, Father Shemar Garçon, Legendary Tre Milan 007, Dre/Pierre Gotti, and Papa JRock Juicy — who is helping usher in the new generation — should just as easily roll off the tongue.

Because as far as Ballroom goes in Dallas, these are its key and iconic players. Father Larry Ebony is a Ballroom LEGEND, living in Fort Worth, who founded, along with Richard Sears, The House of Ebony in New

York. He's been in and helping build the Ball scene for 40 years, and as he declared in a September 2017 interview with Dallas Voice, "I am the father of all fathers. I am everybody's father!"

And while the Ball community in Dallas may not have Father Larry Ebony's kind of legendary status (yet), we're getting there.

Dallas' Ball community has been around for at least a decade and is home to about 14 houses. The three largest are The House of Garçon, The House of Ebony and The House of Mizrahi.

Before moving to Dallas, Father Shemar Garçon was heavily involved in the Ball scene in Atlanta. When he came to Big D in 2008, he attended Dallas' first and only Masquerade Ball, which, according to Dallas Southern Pride's Development Director PJ Moton, "was seen as an iconic event nationwide in the ballroom community."

What Shemar experienced and saw that night was a community more fractured and less organized than the one he left in Atlanta, but one that was at the same time so full of life, love, community — and potential.

When mutual friend — and Dallas Ball and Pageant Icon — Raquell Lord Balenciaga introduced Father Shemar Garçon and Tony Mugler Vuitton, a new Dallas powerhouse was born.

Tony Mugler Vuitton the Icon has been in the Ball scene for more than 20 years in hubs like Atlanta, New York and D.C., and he is the Father of house Vuitton. Originally from Dallas, Tony moved back home in 2010 and has been influencing and impacting the Dallas Ball community since.

At last year's Lipsticks Ball Hall of Fame awards ceremony, Tony was inducted as one of the inaugural Legendary leaders and influencers in the Dallas Ball community. And this past Labor Day, he was awarded The Icon Award for all his contributions, service and achievements in the Ball community at Atlanta's Stewart Ebony "I Am" Ball.

Together, Shemar and Tony created mini balls once a month throughout Dallas as practice spaces for the big ball, The Lipstick

POSE, Page 12



Father Shemar Garçon, left, and Tony Mugler Vuitton The Icon helped build Dallas Ball Community (Tammye Nash/Dallas Voice)

Dallas Black Pride Weekend

FRIDAY

- Ball/House Pageant Communities' 7th Annual Conference on Health Disparities and Leadership
Presented by Abounding Prosperity Inc.
For information call 214-405-5475
- UBE The Glow Up Kiki Ball
Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road
From 7-11 p.m.
Sponsored by Papa JRock Juicy
Visit UBEDallas.org/kiki/
- WETT: Official Dallas Lesbian Pride
Sue Ellen's, 3014 Throckmorton St.
Rolling out the red carpet at 10 p.m.
Presented by Betty Neal. Featuring Ruby Scott, Cris Dee, Tommie Ross, Nishia Jackson, RP Yava, Tyra Rahrah and DJ Unladylike.
- iCandy Megaparty
at Marty's Live! 4207 Maple Ave.
Admission free before 10:30 p.m.
Presented by Marty's Live. Hosted by Rudeboy
Dallas and Nicole O'hara Munro, and featuring DJ C Wade and Hypeman Dupree.

SATURDAY

- The State Fair Classic
Grambling State Tigers vs. Prairie View A&M Panthers
Cotton Bowl, inside the Fairgrounds 4 p.m.
Tickets are \$34 at the gate. Features the Battle of the Bands
- Black Pride 2018 Pool Party
Cedar Canyon Dude Ranch,
4523 N. Houston School Road, Lancaster
4-10 p.m.
Presented by Dallas Southern Pride, and featuring K. Michelle, Jazmine Sullivan and Stasha Sanchez

- Return of the Masquerade Ball
Longhorn Ballroom, 216 Corinth St.
From 11:45 p.m.-8 a.m.
General admission is free. General tables on the floor at runway level are \$200 each. VIP Section 2, 3 and 4 tables overlooking the floor and runway are \$424.35 each, or an entire section of three tables for \$1,200. VIP tables on the stage — four are available — are \$500 each.
Presented by Dallas Southern Pride and Abounding Prosperity Inc. featuring as commentators Icons Jack Mizrahi and Jay Blaknik, along with Legendary Dashaun Lavin.
- Pride Turnabout
The Woodman, 2738 Carpenter Ave.
From 10 p.m.-2 a.m.

SUNDAY

- 2018 Unity BBQ
Bachman Lake Park,
3500 W. Northwest Highway.
From 3-7 p.m.
Presented by Dallas Southern Pride
Admission is free
- Miss Wanda's Soul Food Cooking
S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road
From 9 p.m., with shows in the Rose Room at 11 p.m., midnight and 1 a.m.
Presented by Jasper's Productions.
Featuring comedian Miss Wanda.
- Trap and Pride Pool Party
SISU Uptown, 2508 Maple Ave.
From 5-10 p.m.
Presented by Gritent/Mostakzet. Featuring Kourtney White, Jay Kash, YoungBeezy Jeezy, UGO, GayborhoodDallas, DallasUnleashed and DJ Unladylike
Admission is \$10
- Host hotels for the weekend are Aloft Dallas Downtown, 1033 Young St., and Springhill Suites Dallas Downtown/West End, 1907 Lamar.

Mother figure

Stasha Sanchez takes her role as mother to more than 50 kids and as a performer seriously

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

"I have kids all across the map. I am their mother figure," titleholder and long-time performer Stasha Sanchez says.

And "mother figure" is a role she takes very seriously.

"A lot of these kids, they don't have any parents they can talk to. So that's an important role that we take on for them," Sanchez said.

And no topic is off limits; if it is something that affects her children's lives, it's something she wants to be able to talk to them about. And her status and longevity in the community gives Sanchez a way to reach out to the younger generation.

"When you are onstage, performing at clubs and Pride events and other venues, people see that; they gravitate to it," she said. "They come to see you as a mother figure and they feel they can talk to you."

"We lose younger generations by not actually speaking to them about important topics," Sanchez continued. "Sure, they want to see singers and the rappers and

the video girls. So if we use that — the music industry, the entertainment industry, the Ballroom scene — then we can reach them."

But, she stressed, you can't condescend to the younger people, not if you want them to listen.

"You want to help these kids. You want to teach them," Sanchez said. "But you have to always remember that they are adults, and you have to treat them with respect. That's the only way they are going to listen. And that's important to me, that I treat my children with respect, so that they respect me." Sanchez said that her role as mother includes making sure her children "stay on top of things" like health issues, financial issues, education and more.

"I want my children to always think about taking care of themselves, about not losing sight of themselves in this lifestyle. I want them to know yes, you can be free and have fun. But you have to be responsible too," she said. "And there's more than just one thing to pay attention to."

"People feel the way we live, the way we are — well, some people treat us wrong for it," she said. "We are losing trans women to violence all the time. But suicide is happening more and more in the younger generation. All of it — social media bullying, violence, suicide — I think that the more of us that come together, the more chance we have to find a real solution. And I feel

MOTHER, Page 12



Mother Stasha Sanchez

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'A life too short'

Trans woman among four women murdered by Laredo serial killer

SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN AND MATT SEDENSKY
Associated Press

LAREDO — Janelle Ortiz dreamed of becoming famous. Melissa Ramirez imagined a day when the street wasn't home and drugs not her preoccupation. Claudine Luera just ached to see her children do better than she had.

All of these women, bound by difficulties in life, met an eerily similar death: They were shot in the head and left on rural Texas roadsides, allegedly by a Border Patrol agent who has been described as a serial killer. Relatives of the dead are now grieving for loved ones who, they say, were more than the troubles they endured.

"They had families. They were loved. They were someone. They were human," said Colette Mireles, a sister of Luera.

The suspect's motive remains unknown. Authorities said the three women and a fourth woman, Guiselda Alicia Cantu, were sex workers, and that Border Patrol supervisor Juan David Ortiz knew some of them.

Each lived a life littered with hardship. Gracie Perez remembered her sister-in-law, 29-year-old Ramirez, telling her she was raped when she was 13. She dropped out of high school, experienced depression and eventually began living on the streets. Her five children were left in the care of others. She struggled with a drug habit.

Despite all of that, her relatives remembered someone always trying to make others laugh. "She wanted to be a better mom, a better person," Perez said. "She didn't want to be running the streets anymore."

Janelle Ortiz, 28, — a trans woman initially misgendered and dead-named by officials and the media — envisioned a future where her personality and gift for talking with nearly anyone transformed her into someone famous.

Rosenda Ortiz, her younger sister, remembered the difficult childhood they shared, with them constantly being thrust into new homes. She said her sister was strong and had a big heart, always asking what others needed.

Rosenda Ortiz hoped that one day she'd



Pallbearers carry the casket of Janelle Ortiz down the steps at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church following her funeral service, Friday, Sept. 21, in Laredo. (Courtney Sacco /Corpus Christi Caller-Times via AP)

be able to get a home of her own and invite her sister to come live with her.

"He was not known as a prostitute or a sex worker," Rosenda Ortiz said, using pronouns she knows her transgender sister would have chided her for. "He was just a human being like the other victims. He was just living his life."

Funeral services were held Friday, Sept. 21, for Janelle Ortiz and Luera. During

Janelle Ortiz's service, the Rev. Edmundo Lopez Jr. said, "We've seen so many families afflicted, hit down, a life too short."

Mireles last talked to her 42-year-old sister two days before her body was found. She was "over the moon" upon hearing that one of her sons was doing well in school and was already ironing out plans for prom with his girlfriend.

Sedensky reported from New York.

Texas funds trans project

A study to find populations vulnerable to HIV is turning into the Texas Transgender Alliance

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Carter Brown said a new project to compile a resource list of service providers to the transgender community throughout the state is a remarkable undertaking — not just because of the scope of the project, but because of where the funding is coming from: the state of Texas.

Brown, the founder of the group Black Transmen, is just the person to help coordinate the effort. After starting his Dallas organization, Brown began searching for other local groups in other cities serving the black trans community and found none. So he expanded his reach throughout the

country and now stages an annual conference for black trans men and women attended by people from around the country.

Working with Brown is Lou Weaver, transgender programs coordinator for Equality Texas. He explained the state's goal in creating the project.

The Texas Department of State Health Services — better known as DSHS — is identifying groups across the state falling through the cracks when it comes to HIV care. Getting people into treatment and on medication lowers the community viral load and decreases the number of new infections.

The transgender community has a high rate of HIV infection; the state health department's interest is based on science.

Weaver and Brown, working with DSHS and the University of Texas in Austin, are identifying groups and individuals serving the transgender community and turning that list into the Texas Transgender Alliance. The project runs through this year.

Brown and Weaver hope that after creating this list of resources for members of the trans community, they will be able to continue to maintain and update the list on an ongoing basis, creating a permanent resource.

"There are a lot of trans people in rural areas," Brown said. "What I'm finding is information is not easily found for people who need these resources."

There's a number of reasons for that.

Many of the groups that formed are online on Facebook and the groups are closed to protect members' identities.

He said some areas have surprisingly good access to resources. Small cities like Lubbock and Amarillo and cities with universities have good health and support groups for the trans community. But since many of those resources are on college campuses, those who aren't students have some difficulty accessing those services.

Support groups are just the beginning of what Brown and Carter are looking for. Counselors, doctors, legal services, employers, churches — all of these groups and individuals provide services to the transgender community.

For DSHS, all are ways to help find people to offer HIV test. For Brown and Weaver, these are services that can improve the lives of transgender people.

Finding good medical care can be daunting even for trans people living in cities. Plano has a trans-specific clinic. Parkland Hospital has a clinic in Dallas and one in Grand Prairie that count transgender healthcare among their specialties. And compiling a list of doctors who provide competent transgender healthcare, Brown said, comes down to asking members of the community, "Who's your doctor?"

But in rural parts of the state, that care is simply unavailable in many places.

Brown explained that transgender health-

care is not just checking correct hormone levels. As example he gave is high blood pressure, a common condition in the black community.

"Testosterone will thicken blood," he said. "It's important to know how hormones will interact."

He also warned that some people take a certain amount of hormones after asking friends what dosage they're on. Height and weight as well as other medical conditions should be taken into account by doctors prescribing hormone therapy.

Brown said creating the Texas Transgender Alliance would allow groups to share ideas and resources. One goal is to "empower the trans community to take more responsibility for their own health and well being."

Weaver said a goal is to make sure local groups throughout the state remain connected.

"We're telling people in rural areas: You're not alone," he said. "We can help provide tools they need."

He said as a trans man living in Houston, he can't tell someone in another part of the state what they need. But he can help provide resources to help them get access to the tools they need.

To add a group or service, send information to TexasTransAlliance@gmail.com or leave a message on the Texas Transgender Alliance Facebook page.

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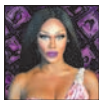
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like I need to use my voice. People listen to me, and I need to use my voice and take advantage of this space I am in to make a difference."

These days, especially in the lead-up to midterm elections that have the potential for dramatic impact of the future direction of the country, Sanchez said she also talks to her children about the importance of taking part in the process of government.

"I tell them, if you want things to be better in your life, then you have to get up and go vote. I say if you want things to change, then your voices have to be heard," she declared. "We have to push that. We have to make sure they understand. I tell them, we've come a long way, but we have a long way to go. So vote!"

Sanchez said she was born and raised in Jacksonville, Fla., and started her career on stage there. She moved to Orlando for about three-and-a-half years before settling in Atlanta.

"I've been in Atlanta ever since," she said. "This is home. I have been able to show myself and my talent here, and it's been a real blessing for me."

"I've always known I wanted to be a star," Sanchez continued. "My parents always told me, 'Whatever you do, put your best foot forward.' And I listened to them; whatever I do, I strive to do my very best. Entertaining is definitely it for me."

Sanchez has been performing for more than 20 years, and she has been involved in the Ballroom community and pageantry for most if not all that time. Performing, she said, "has taken me all over the world."

In 2008, she went to California to film the video for Janet Jackson's "Rock With U." Janet, she said, "came to the Stars of the Century Show, which I am still part of. It's at the Heretic night club in Atlanta. Niesha Dupress is the overseer, and I am the show director now."

She was also invited to attend the Life Ball in Vienna, one of the biggest HIV/AIDS benefits in the world. "That came from me performing the balls," Sanchez said. "I worked with Fergie there. It was amazing to be there."

Sanchez has a resume loaded with titles, too, dating back to 1997 when she was Miss Duval.

"Yes, I've won a few of them," Sanchez said of her titles. But some of the ones most dear to her are Miss Black Universe, Miss Black America, Miss Sweetheart International, Miss Gay UsofA and, most recently, Miss Continental.

One reason the titles are important, Sanchez said, is that they give her a platform from which to address the many issues that

are important to her. The titles help her raise money for nonprofit organizations, and they get her invitations to conferences where she can "sit on panels and tell my story."

The chance to participate in such a conference is one of the main reasons Sanchez is in Dallas this week. She will be speaking at the seventh annual Southern Regional Ball/House and Pageant Communities Conference on Health Disparities and Leadership, which began Thursday, Sept. 27, and concludes today (Friday, Sept. 28). The conference is presented by Abounding Prosperity Inc., a nonprofit that provides services addressing "health, social and economic disparities among black men with a particular emphasis on gay, bisexual and male to female transgender individuals."

"We'll be discussing a variety of topics, including HIV and AIDS — things that I talk to my children, to other young people about," Sanchez said. "The conference gets people's attention. It gets them to come and learn about these topics, and about our history — about the role trans women have played in all the progress we've made. Without transgender women fighting at Stonewall, we wouldn't be where we are now."

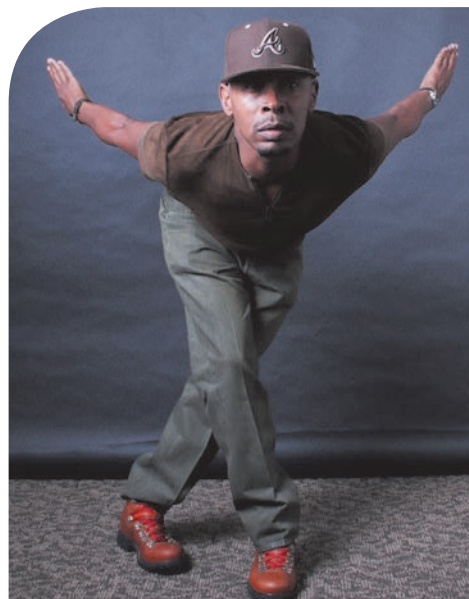
But while the daylight hours are dedicated to the conference, the night is when the partying begins. (See events listings in this issue for details on all the Black Pride and Lesbian Pride events taking place this weekend.)

Sanchez will be performing Saturday at the Black Pride Weekend Pool Party, taking place from 4-10 p.m. at the Cedar Canyon Dude Ranch, 4523 N. Houston School Road in Lancaster. The event will also feature K. Michelle and Jazzmine Sullivan.

But even when she is performing, Sanchez said, she still wants to be the role model, the mother figure so many of the young men and women around her are looking for.

"I have more than 50 something children," Sanchez said. "I have to take on their energy, their downfalls, the cheering when they do great. It can take a toll on you, sure. But as I long as I stay prayed up, I'm good."

"The energy you give off, is the energy they take on, so I have to be aware of that," she added. "I like to have fun with my kids, but I also make sure they take care of business. Being a leader, you have to know how and when to address a situation. It's hard sometimes, but I choose faith through anything and everything I do. By choosing faith, I set my own atmosphere. Things can feel shaky sometimes, but when you choose faith, when you stay prayed up, it all works out."



Tony Mugler Vuitton The Icon, left, and Father Shemar Garçon (Tammye Nash/Dallas Voice)



Ball, that Shemar created in 2010 for Dallas' Black Pride weekend — a feat Shemar says "wouldn't have been possible" without the legends that came before him, specifically that fateful night at the 2008 Masquerade Ball.

But it wasn't any easy road. Both Tony and Shemar recall that when Shemar started dreaming big and talking to others about the potential for Dallas to build a strong Ball community, many told him it wouldn't work, that "Dallas wasn't ready for that."

Luckily for all of us, they didn't listen and instead persevered and stayed true to the community they both envisioned.

And in 2010 both cemented their legacy in shepherding in and solidifying the Dallas Ballroom scene when they — along with other community ball leaders like Father Larry Ebony and Tre Milan — established The Dallas Ballroom Alliance Gulf Coast Chapter, with Shemar as the chair. The Alliance is made up of all the house leaders in Dallas, who meet once a month to discuss any issues that come up in any of the houses and how they can work together to promote events and continue to educate the community. The Ballroom community and scene has been growing ever since. In 2014, Resource Center's U-BE (United Black Ellument) hosted Get Yo Life Dallas Ballroom Scene Practice, a tradition that continues today with their Friday night Voguing Academy. What once was a strictly underground scene is now going mainstream and commercial. But while the glitz, glam and pageantry is nice, what both Tony and Shemar really hopes goes viral is their community's message and movement of unity, education, love and art.

"Dallas has a strong bond," Tony says,

and that sense of family and community is what fuels them to keep going.

When I asked Father Shemar Garçon what he wanted the Dallas community to know about the Ball scene that's happening in their own backyard, without hesitation he answered, "It's not for a particular race. We are representing everybody. It's about art."

A few years ago, I stumbled across a Facebook post from a fellow Dallas performance artist that said, "I wish there was a Ball community in Dallas."

Well, there is. A strong one. But as people who are on the outside looking and searching for an in, the onus is on us to look beyond Paris getting burned and see what else is catching flame — especially in our own LGBTQ community and city.

Because 2018 is a big year for the Ball and Pageant community and all the black, brown and queer people of color within it — not just on a national scale of representation but for our local Ball scene as well.

Due to the demand from the community, this year marks the return of the iconic Masquerade Ball — the ball that you could say started it all — after a decade long hiatus with Icons Jack Mizrahi and Jay Blahnik as part of the massive Dallas Southern Pride celebration happening this weekend. The Ball is Saturday, Sept. 29, and the night before — Friday, Sept. 28 — U-BE is hosting The Glow Up Kiki Ball, sponsored by Papa JRock Juicy.

But the whole weekend kicked off off Thursday, Sept. 27, with the seventh annual Ball/House and Pageant Communities Conference, hosted by Abounding Prosperity.

So if Paris is burning and Pose is what's lit on the runway, then Dallas is well on its way to being a raging wildfire.

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AGENDA, From Page 6

For information or to donate items for sale visit TylerAreaGays.com.

• Sept. 29: TAG Game Night

Tyler Area Gays hosts game night from 6-9 p.m. at the Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce offices, 315 N. Broadway Ave., Ste. 100. Food, drinks and games provided. For information visit TylerAreaGays.com.

• Sept. 29: DMAP Cedar Springs Mural - Community Imagination Session #2

Dallas Mural Art Project is planning its second mural which will be on the wall of 4000 Cedar Springs Road. Seeking diverse input from the community about this mural celebrating the 50th anniversary of Stonewall from 1-3 p.m. at Nelson-Tebedo Clinic, 4012 Cedar Springs Road.

• Sept. 30: Dallas Southern Pride — Unity BBQ

Dallas Southern Pride's Black Pride Weekend continues with the Unity BBQ from 3-7 p.m. at Bachman Lake Park, 3500 W. Northwest Highway. For details visit DallasSouthernPride.com.

OCTOBER

• Oct. 1: Marcia McNutt speaks

Marcia McNutt, the first woman to lead the National Academy of Sciences will speak at 7 p.m. at SMU McFarlin Auditorium, 6405 Boaz Lane. Free.

• Oct. 2: Get Out the Vote Training

Texas Competes presents a two-hour Get Out the Vote training session from 6-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. The event will include information on how Equality Texas' plan to mobilize equality-minded voters in the November elections. For information visit TexasCompetes.org.

• Oct. 2: Denial screening

Denial starring Vermont gubernatorial candidate Christine Hallquist hosted by First Tuesday Social Justice Film Festival at 7 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church of Oak Cliff, 3839 Kiest Blvd. Free.

• Oct. 3: Texas Equity PAC

Fundraiser for 14 candidates endorsed by the Texas Equity PAC of Equality Texas including LGBT candidates Lupe Valdez for governor, Steven Kirkland for Texas Supreme Court, Mark Phariss for Texas Senate and Julie Johnson for Texas House of Representatives from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the home of Eric Johnson and Dr. Mark Parker, 3525 Turtle Creek Blvd. Apt 11A. Contribution levels begin at \$20 per candidate (\$280) to co-host level at \$100 per candidate (\$1,400).

• Oct. 3: Lunch & Learn

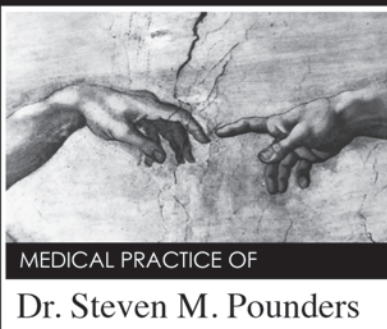
Coalition for Aging LGBT is among the presenters at an annual health benefits review from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Senior Source, 3910 Harry Hines Blvd.



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Even hateful speech is free

The U.S. Court of Appeals

recently ruled that the city of Nashville violated the First Amendment rights of two anti-gay preachers by not allowing them to protest outside a city park where an LGBT Pride festival was being held in 2015.

John McGlone and Jeremy Peters had been using “amplification equipment” — aka bullhorns — to spread their anti-LGBT hatefulness outside the Pride festival that day when they were forced — I am assuming by Nashville police officers — to leave. The two men filed a lawsuit in April 2016 claiming the city had violated their right to free speech by making them leave. The city argued in court that the protesters’ message was interfering with the message of the Pride festival.

The trial court had sided with the city, but the appellate court reversed that ruling, issuing a decision that said, according to a report from the Associated Press, “explanation makes it clear that they wouldn’t have been excluded if they weren’t spreading an anti-homosexuality message.”

One judge on the appellate court dissented from the majority ruling, saying that the preachers’ use of bullhorns was “sufficiently disruptive.”

Believe it or not, I kind of agree with the appellate court ruling: Let the homophobes protest.

Don’t get me wrong. I consider these so-called preachers to be assholes of the highest order. I think their fire-and-brimstone theologies and their warped ideas of God and sin are hateful and completely unchristian.

But I also believe they have a right to hold — and to publicly espouse — their religious beliefs, regardless of how hateful and ridiculous they are. They have as much right to free speech as we do when we gather in the park for Pride festivals or march down the street in a Pride parade. They have as much right to protest outside a Pride festival as we have to protest Robert Jeffress’ anti-gay sermons at First Baptist Church here in Dal-



Tammye Nash
From Where I Stand

las.

Is there a limit? Yes, of course. We all know the rule about yelling fire in a crowded theater. Some of these “preachers” certainly go too far; some are downright dangerous. Anyone who exhorts others to violence — whether in God’s name or not — crosses the line.

Let me back up a little: I can’t really say that I think the appellate court made the right decision in this specific case, because I don’t know all the facts of this specific case. I mean, the “preachers” were using bullhorns, and I would imagine they had no permits from the city. Maybe the city of Nashville has an ordinance against protest-

what we think — even if what we have to say is flat-out wrong. Even if it’s crazy B.S. Even if it’s rude or distasteful to civilized people.

Even if what we have to say is hateful.

I looked up these two particular so-called preachers. John McGlone has a website that outlines his history and his beliefs. In detail. And I can tell you that as far as I am concerned, the things he has to say are wrong. And crazy B.S. And rude. And distasteful. And, yes, vile and hateful.

But I still believe he has the right to say those things, even standing on the sidewalk outside the Pride festival. And I believe that because I believe we have the right to have



ing without a permit. Or maybe there’s a noise ordinance that prohibits bullhorns on city sidewalks.

So I’m setting aside the particulars of this case. I’m just talking here about speech — free speech vs. hate speech vs. dangerous speech.

Freedom of speech is one of the bedrocks of this country. It is integral to every other freedom we are guaranteed. We all have the right to think what we want, and to say

our Pride festivals, out in the fresh air, in a public park.

And I believe they can spew their hate because I believe I have the right to sit here and type this column and say those two so-called preachers are flaming, ignorant assholes. That’s called freedom of speech. ■

Tammye Nash is managing editor of Dallas Voice. The opinions expressed in this column are hers and do not represent official company policy.

Gays on film

QCinema returns to Fort Worth with thrillers, comedies and more

STEVE WARREN | Contributing Writer
thinhead@mindspring.com

The 20th annual installment of QCinema, Fort Worth's international LGBT film festival, returns to Cowtown Oct. 4–7, with a slate of more than a half-dozen feature films about 10 short films, ranging from documentaries, lesbian comedian, gay thrillers and more. We managed to snag a look at some of the entries and offer this preview of some of the highlights. All films screen at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (you can see a complete lineup at Qcinema.org).

***Devils Path*, pictured above.** For quite a while *Devil's Path* is a can't look at it/can't look away kind of movie: You keep wondering whether it's going to get good... then it does and ... wow! It surprised me so many times I'd feel like a hypocrite if I didn't recommend it.

Noah (Stephen Twardokus) tells us he has always felt safe in the woods but not around people. He looks like he's afraid of everything. But the part of the woods he hangs out in (filmed in California's Russian River area) has a lot of people because it's a notorious gay cruising spot. "Sometimes I like to watch," he admits.

One day, Noah sees a good-looking guy, Patrick (JD Scalzo), and sets out to meet him. Patrick pegs Noah as a "Midwestern small town guy who believes in love,"

while he's just there for a quickie with no strings, so no thank you: "Love is a chemical reaction of the brain. It's not real."

After Noah is attacked by one man and he and Patrick are chased by two others, they wind up lost in an area where two young men recently disappeared. Their pursuers are still after them so they go deeper into the woods until they don't know the way out. Noah's content to spend the night there, but Patrick wants to return to civilization before dark.

Got the picture? Good. Now forget it, because most of it isn't true. It's a setup that sets you up for the twists to come.

Twardokus, who co-wrote the screenplay with director Matthew Montgomery, gives a terrific performance, although he looks a bit older than I imagine Noah is supposed to be. Scalzo makes a fine foil for his partner's histrionic gymnastics. *Devil's Path* is a little indie that could. And does.

Oct. 5, 8 p.m.

Dykes, Camera, Action! It's amazing how much you can cram into an hour when you know what you're doing, and Caroline Berler obviously does. You could take a whole course in the History of Lesbian Cinema and not learn more than you do from watching this one film.

Back before they kept stats on the number of movies made by women (because

there weren't enough to move the needle), a good percentage of the few female filmmakers were lesbian. But Berler begins in the '60s, when Hollywood required queers in movies (*The Fox*, *The Killing of Sister George*) to meet a grim fate, a hold-over from the Production Code. In the '70s, lesbians like Barbara Hammer (*Sappho*, *Dyketactics*) and Su Friedrich (*Hot Water*, *Scar Tissue*) started making experimental films, while lesbian vampires became a thing in horror movies (*The Vampire Lovers*). The '80s brought lesbian narratives by men with big budgets (Robert Towne's *Personal Best*, Tony Scott's *The Hunger*) and women with smaller ones (Donna Deitch's *Desert Hearts*). The '90s began the New Queer Cinema, but at first it was all male. Later came the likes of Rose Troche's *Go*

Fish, Lisa Cholodenko's *High Art* and Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman*.

I would have included Nicole Conn's *Claire of the Moon* and the Wachowskis' *Bound*, but I'm amazed at how comprehensive Berler's film is, how many clips she was able to obtain, how many interviews she's included with filmmakers and scholars (including lesbian critic B. Ruby Rich), who sound intelligent without coming across as dry and intellectual.

The filmmakers talk about works that inspired them, but mostly how they were driven to create the films they wanted to

see because they didn't find themselves represented on screen. For some filmmaking was a form of activism, although proportionately a bit too much time is given to the Lesbian Avengers, in the streets and on the screen.

Incredibly, this is Berler's first film. You can call it beginner's luck but I call it starting at the top.

Oct. 6, 2:30 p.m.

***Freelancers Anonymous*.** So here's my regular-guy side having a perfectly enjoyable time watching this lesbian comedy, when my critic side starts whispering about flaws in the script. As the movie goes on and the flaws get bigger, the whisper becomes a roar, and the bad outweighs the good. Still, if you're not part-critic, you still might love it.

Billie (Lisa Cordileone, a Toni Collette type) is tired of getting screwed over and quits her miserable job. She and Gayle (Natasha Negovanlis) are planning their wedding. A flier sends Billie to a meeting of Freelancers Anonymous (FA) at the church where she's to be married. She pushes the aimless group to find investors and develop an app that will connect people with jobs, and she plans a launch party to coincide with her wedding.

The movie is set in an almost all-female world. The few male characters never

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From abominable to brilliant

'Smallfoot' is disastrous, while Emma Thompson soars in 'The Children Act'

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

Of the five major U.S. studios making animated feature films — Disney/Pixar, Fox, Universal, DreamWorks and Warner Bros. — the red-headed stepchild of the lot is clearly the latter. It's kind of amazing, actually; WB is the studio that gave us Bugs and Daffy and Pepe and Porky, as well as the Animaniacs, Pinky and the Brain and amazing memories of Saturday mornings in front of the TV. But those are shorts; long-form cartooning has seemed out of their grasp. Pixar gave us *Toy Story* and *Up* and *Coco*; WB gave us *Osmosis Jones* and *Scooby-Doo: The Movie*.

And now, *Smallfoot*.

On its surface, *Smallfoot* could easily be compared to comic creature fantasies like *Shrek* or *Monsters, Inc.* — sort of subver-

sive "what ifs" about legends and fairy tales. (What if an ogre in a kingdom made lots of pop culture references? What if monsters in a different dimension really do feed off the screams of children?) In *Smallfoot*'s case, the question is: What if yeti (aka sasquatch or bigfoot) really exist, and think humans — i.e., smallfoot — are mythical creatures?

It's a pretty modest premise, one that gets played out in agonizingly boring and humdrum ways.

The yeti live in a happy community atop (apparently) Tibet, believing their mountaintop is actually an island floating on clouds held up on the backs of mammoths. They raise the great snail (what we would call the sun) by banging a gong every morning. They all perform mostly menial jobs and obey without question

■ BRILLIANT Page 18



Emma Thompson, right, gives a towering performance alongside Stanley Tucci in 'The Children Act.'

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speak. I get it — payback for 90 years of talkies in which female voices have been suppressed. But aside from Billie, Gayle and Gayle’s mother, there’s no indication of the orientation of any characters; no romantic subplots; total asexuality.

And we see very little affection between the leading ladies. When they’re together they argue, lie to each other and bemoan financial problems. They might as well be married already!

And the people in FA — five women and one man before Billie joins them — seem to spend all day, every day meeting at the church without doing anything, except eating when one of them brings pastry. A good running gag has them wearing nametags even though they all know each other. The farcical climax isn’t set up properly so there’s no reason for people to be running around, except that it’s theoretically funny.

In a collaborative medium like film, it’s hard to believe no one pointed out the script’s deficiencies to writers Cordileone and Amy Dellagiarino and director Sonia Sebastián. Their film is still watchable and sometimes enjoyable, with some original, creative touches; but the script wouldn’t get a passing grade in Screenwriting 101.

Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m.

the pronouncements of the Stonekeeper (Common), their priest and absolute ruler.

Migo (Channing Tatum) lives in happy complacency, until he witnesses a plane crash with a man inside and realizes the legendary smallfoot exists — disproving the prevailing religion and increasing knowledge of the world outside. Only he’s not believed and banished from the kingdom until he admits his deception. Unwilling to do so, he decides to venture down the mountain and return with evidence.

That evidence ends up being Percy (James Corden), a TV nature show host anxious to boost his ratings with an important discovery. He and Migo carve out a rough alliance where Migo takes him to his kingdom and Percy films it all for a special on the existence of the yeti.

If it sounds blah, it’s even worse than you’re imagining.

There’s virtually nothing about *Smallfoot* worth recommending. The animation is barely a notch above the Rankin-Bass *Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer* TV special, and the character designs are hideous: Noseless, domino-toothed, genitalia-free giants with misshapen bodies that enlarge into enormous feet far in excess of what we think of as “bigfoot.” The songs (written by director Karey Kirkpatrick and his

brother Wayne, who did smashing work with the Broadway musical *Something Rot-ten!*) are listless and forgettable. The script is witless (I chuckled twice). The vocal performances banal. Worst of all, it doesn’t even make for good family entertainment; talk about cultural appropriation! The setting is China and there’s nary an Asian face, voice or name in the entire damn movie. The only thing it makes you do is believe that something abominable really is out there... in theaters.

Smallfoot is a happy film that fills you with anger; *The Children Act*, on the other hand, is a sad film that fills you with emotion.

Emma Thompson plays Fiona Maye, a family court judge in London tasked with deciding the fates of children, even though she and her husband of 20 years, Jack (Stanley Tucci), have none of their own. She’s supposed to be an expert on families and marriages but cannot see that her own is falling apart due to her obsession with work. Jack decides to move out for a trial separation, just as Fiona is faced with an emergency appeal: A hospital wants to perform a blood transfusion on Adam (Fionn Whitehead), a 17-year-old Jehovah’s Witness whose parents refuse to authorize the procedure. Fiona must decide what’s in Adam’s best interest, so

she meets him, which triggers a series of events the suppressed judge struggles to handle.

The Children Act is based on a novel by Ian McEwan (he also wrote the screenplay), it exudes McEwan’s brand of emotional turbidity beneath a steely mask of social propriety. (He also wrote *Atonement*, *The Comfort of Strangers* and *On Chesil Beach*.) The feelings are baroque, but the setting is often prosaic.

That’s where the casting of Thompson comes in. I cannot imagine another actress of her generation or stature who could deliver quite so layered a performance. There’s an off-handedness to her persona — less patrician than, say, Helen Mirren, but also less grounded than Julie Walters that allows her to hover in between strata. She projects intelligence behind a taciturn facade. A moment near the end, where director Richard Eyre just parks the camera on her and allows her, wordlessly, to work through her complex reaction to what has befallen, could be studied in acting classes for generations.

Tucci, although given minimal screen time, is a perfect match for Thompson’s style, and Whitehead delivers a sweet and sad performance. But Thompson’s work here is the touchstone for *The Children Act*.



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Keira Knightley werks it

'Colette' actress on playing bisexual author Colette, making a lesbian sequel to 'Bend It Like Beckham' and her drag-inspired Sugar Plum Fairy



You know what's to love, actually? How Keira Knightley has now played enough feminist roles to know her character, Juliet, in the bubbly holiday classic *Love, Actually* doesn't exactly fall into that category. In the Christmas rom-com, Juliet is the object of not one but two men's desire, and copious close-up shots insist on telling us what we've already known: Keira Knightley is breathtakingly beautiful.

The 33-year-old actress was just 17 when 2003's *Love, Actually* was filmed. Since then, her genre-spanning roles throughout her 23-year career have often positioned her as a heroine in girl-power period films, women characterized by their liberated state of mind (2008's *The Duchess*) and patriarchal-defying genius (2014's *The Imitation Game*, as Alan Turing's mathematician-fiancée, Joan Clarke). Real-life bisexual novelist Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, who ghost wrote for author-husband Henry Gauthier-Villars (known as "Willy"

and played by Dominic West) until she reclaimed her autonomy *and* byline, is right within Knightley's wheelhouse of women smearing their male oppressors. Take Colette, whose 1944 book *Gigi* was adapted into a movie musical that won nine Oscars in 1959, including best picture.

Written and directed by out director and fellow Englander Wash Westmoreland (*Still Alice*), *Colette* is a tribute to his late husband and collaborator, Richard Glatzer, who died from the progressive neurodegenerative disease ALS. In the hospital before he passed away in 2015, Glatzer, who could not speak, typed "C-O-L-E-T-T-E" to Westmoreland on an iPad to communicate that his — but in many ways, *their* — next project should be "Colette."

Recently, Knightley called to talk about her special connection to gay directors such as Westmoreland (and James Kent, who directs her in the forthcoming *After-*

■ KEIRA Page 22

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It's about time

Out actress Marisa Diatolevi enters her matriarch phase in the time-traveling comedy 'On the Verge,' which says a lot about being a woman in any era

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

What could a play written by a man in 1885 about women from the 1880s time-traveling to the year 1955 have to say about feminism in 2018?

As it turns out, a whole helluva lot.

At least, that's what Susan Sargeant, founder and artistic director of WingSpan Theatre Co. — which concentrates on plays focusing on women (though often written by gay men) — figured out when programming her fall production. She chose *On the Verge; or, The Geography of*

Yearning, which opens this week at the Bath House Cultural Center. Despite being about seemingly prim Victorian women, it's actually a relevant and timely exploration of feminism as seen through the prism of the ages.

"It's about these three women explorers from the year 1888, and as they are exploring through their mysterious terrain, you realize, and they do, that they are traveling not just through space, but through time," says Marisa Diatolevi, one of the three actors who make up this triumvirate of adventurers.

The characters face obstacles because of the era they live in that doesn't value "the weaker sex," and so two of them decide

to settle in the mid-20th century. But one does not.

"My character is more of the matriarchal type — the staunch explorer who continues on," Diotalevi says. And it's a journey she would embrace for herself.

"[Despite everything going on in politics today], I think I would rather live now [than any time in the past]," she says. "I was just recently talking to a friend about the Pride parade. I never go anymore, but I used to go *all the time*. It used to be that *one day* when you could go out and be proud [to be gay], but now [I don't feel I] need that one specific day to hold hands with my girlfriend. And in 1888... the corsets? Nuh-uh!"

Women still face challenges — especially in entertainment, where maturity is not always valued. Diotalevi has enjoyed a long career as one of North Texas' most celebrated and talented comedic actresses ("Gosh, I have no idea how many shows I've done — I wouldn't know if it was 30 or a hundred!"), but the roles "have thinned out a bit — this is the last show I've done in about 18 months, and that one was in Fort Worth."

But her reputation precedes her — Diotalevi got this role without having to audition.

"You know, it's funny: Susan called me for this role and said she wanted me to do it," she says. "I think she did that with everyone in the cast. I trust directors that I work with, so when she said, 'I thought of you for this role,' I trust her that I'm going to be what she wants. And I can usually read a script and [know what part I'm suited for.]"

She was especially drawn to *On the Verge* because of how the playwright, Eric Overmyer, luxuriates in the magic of language.

"The show is very wordy — beautiful words. I like big words and fun words and interesting-sounding words. It's just wonderfully written," she says. And the themes are as important.

"Susan said that she picked it as appropriate for the MeToo moment we are having right now. Susan is Miss Dramaturg — she comes in to every rehearsal with a book six inches thick and you can find any information you need. These women are invented characters, but based on real explorers. Mary Kingsley, who my character is based on, wrote these travelogues of West Africa and wrote books [about exploring], but nobody cared because she was a woman. An avuncular figure took her aside and told her, 'Take measure-



Marisa Diotalevi, above, is one of three actresses (including Jennifer Kuenzer and Barrett Nash, opposite) representing Victorian-era explorers in WingSpan's upcoming production of 'On the Verge.'

ments, young lady,' because that was what women were expected to do — gather the data, while the men took all the credit."

A tragedy is not just that women are overlooked by history, but that their approaches to the task itself are so different than men.

"That's what I find kind of interesting about men explorers versus [their female counterparts]," she says. "These women are just having a great time and their attitudes are not of superiority. They are not power-driven, or ego-driven or out to conquer a new land. They are being giddy about [their adventures] and enjoying themselves, not for the purpose of colonizing. There is no power struggle."

Though she's now playing more mature roles, that position is well-earned: She's mother to a 16-year-old daughter which, she jokes, exacts a toll.

"This is what comes of hard livin'!" she says. "I recently began to feel like I am looking older... especially when the pictures came out for this show. I told everyone, 'Didn't I do my age makeup well!?' " she laughs. "I keep forgetting how old I am!" (For the record, she's 48.)

Still, she relished her longest-running role — that of mom — though she concedes it's one of the most challenging she has ever tackled.

"The teenage years!" Diotalevi exclaims. "No one prepares you for them! They turn on you when they are teenagers. I heard a comedian say the other day the reason God made teenagers the way they are was so it would be easier to let them go when [they graduate high school]. So she's off to college in two years ... and it's frightening."



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math), her enthusiastic response to a *Bend It Like Beckham* sequel where best friends Jules and Jesse are lesbian lovers, and her desperate plea to drag queens. ■
— Chris Azzopardi

Dallas Voice: You're so good in this I wouldn't be mad if all you do is play period bisexuals for the rest of your career. Keira Knightley: Well, thank you very much! I'll quote you on that.

Is there a special relationship between gay directors and female actors such as yourself that helps in telling a story like this one? That's an interesting question! Yes, I think so. I think that there's that quality of having to fight for your space and fight for your right to be who you feel you are and fight for your voice. So yes, I think there's a similarity in those two aspects, and one I think, probably, Wash identified with in the story of Colette.

When it comes to the male gaze, is there a difference in having a gay director direct a sex scene? Yes and no. He did actually turn around when I think it was me and Eleanor [Tomlinson, who portrays bisexual American heiress Georgie Raoul-Duval] and he was like, "You know, it's really great 'cause there's no male gaze here," and I'm like, "Wash, there are *only* men in this room!" He's like,

"Yes, no — you know what I mean!" [Laughs] So yes, because sex is sort of taken out of it in a way, because obviously he doesn't find me attractive, and that's great [laughs]. But I still think male sexuality in all of its forms is probably slightly different from female sexuality, so there are probably still subtle differences. But it *is* very nice to know that when I took my clothes off he didn't get off on it at all.

Are there any other films you've worked on where you felt having a gay director helped in doing the story justice? Yes. I worked with... oh my god... my brain's just literally gone blank and I've forgotten every single other person's name that I've ever worked with before. Wait, what the fuck? He directed *Aftermath*. I can see his face. Oh my god, this is really annoying because literally I just spent eight weeks with him and he's the loveliest man in the entire world.

But I don't know whether it's sexuality that does it or just — I think it's the individual. Possibly gay men, because of their fight for their identity and to be accepted and accepting of themselves, understand that there's a level of emotional intelligence, which often — not always — a heterosexual man will simply try to shut down. So I think that helps if you're dealing with emotions, which you are when you're making a film. It helps to have an emotional vocabulary and intelligence and



Knightley worked with gay director Wash Westmoreland, whose partner Richard Glatzer suggested the biopic soon before he died.

openness. And look, I'm a heterosexual woman, so maybe I'm completely talking out of turn, but I do feel, because there is still a process of acceptance that gay men go through, that emotionally they can be very, very intelligent and open and accepting.

Did Colette's approach to sexuality speak to you in any profound or personal way? Yes, because she was entirely natural to herself and she acted without shame. What

a wonderful, positive way of looking at your sexuality and the people that you fall in love with. I really respected that about her. I loved that she was herself and that any rule that didn't fit she just broke and made the life that she wanted to live. I think that's a wonderful, empowering story, both from a feminist point of view and from the point of view of her sexuality.

Speaking of feminism, I have a feeling Co-

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lette wouldn't love your character in *Love, Actually*. Probably not. [Laughs]

The men in that movie seem to have all the power, while your character is silent, cute; lots of close-ups of you looking pretty. How do you reflect on that role and what it says about women? I hadn't really until you just said that! But yes, I can see that. I was 17 when I played that one and I was so excited about just getting a role in a Richard Curtis film. You know, I think there were some pretty good strong women in that. Not *that* one, but the Martine McCutcheon character and the Emma Thompson character, which is so heartbreaking. I don't know. I'd have to look at it again with that frame of my mind. I do, however, know Scarlett Curtis, who is Richard Curtis' daughter and a radical-feminist activist, so he's done something right there.

As for Emma Thompson, she sobs to Joni Mitchell. And her story doesn't have the happiest or even most empowered of endings. But strong people are allowed to break down; it doesn't mean you don't have emotions. You just have to then pick yourself up and stand up again. See, the problem is, I haven't actually seen it since it came out, which was over 10 years ago, so actually I don't remember quite enough to be able to argue either way. You really, really know it, so I feel like I'm just gonna have to go with whatever you say. [Laughs]

You played gay computer scientist Alan Turing's fiancé in *Imitation Game*. Have you ever fallen in love with a gay man before? No, luckily. I feel very fortunate in that, 'cause that would be tricky!

Rumor has it that *Bend it Like Beckham* was originally written as a lesbian love story? I never read that version of the script! I mean, not as far as I know. But you might have information that I don't have. No, the only version of the script that I ever read was the one that we shot, so it was as it was.

A lot of people in the LGBTQ community wanted Jess and Jules to be a couple in the end. Fuck, yeah! That would've been amazing. I think they should've been too. I think that would've been great. We need a sequel.

You've worn some fabulous period wigs over the years – is that your real hair in *Colette*? No, I don't think so. I think we had wigs, always through. Because there were so many different styles, and short, long. I think when it's long we used some of my hair with some extensions, and then when it was short, it was a wig.

Do you realize how many drag queens are gonna be jealous of the one you wear in your role as the Sugar Plum Fairy in your forthcoming film *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*? Oh, dude, yes. Hell yes. You know, we actually designed it with them in mind. I was so pleased. It was my first time where I could actually be like a drag queen, and I was so excited. We were all talking about it at the time; we were like, "Come

on, this is the most amazing drag outfit," and honestly, I was really excited because normally you have to be so subtle in films and I got these really long, fake eyelashes — I can't remember whether we used them — but with bits of glitter over them, and we were all like, "This is perfect drag queen attire." It was so amazing, and I think there are some amazing drag queens out there who are gonna wear it even better than I did. I hope that this film inspires some amazing costumes.

You sound like you could be an avid watcher of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Everybody's a fan!

Yeah, there's a bit of *Drag Race* watching. And then there's a great drag night in East London, which I used to go to when I could go out before I had a child, which was always fun. So can I just put that out there: Please, please let there be a drag queen somewhere who will be in a Sugar Plum Fairy outfit.

As a teenager, you were told your kiss with a gay female friend you went to prom with wasn't appropriate. What did that experience teach you about LGBTQ discrimination, and how did it influence you as an ally for the community? I thought it was bullshit at the time. Bullshit... bullshit! Our

picture was not put up [on the event's photo wall] because it was deemed not appropriate. I'm not sure it was that particular experience that influenced me; I just remember thinking that was stupid and I think I've thought that — always along the line — any discrimination against people because of their sexuality has been utterly ridiculous. It was the way I was brought up, and so I've never questioned gay rights. So yes, that was one of them; but no, I don't think that was my sort of awakening. I've always had family with many gay friends and people in the LGBTQ community have always been around me all my life, and have been wonderful friends.

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The fire that time

Book recounts mass-murder of gays in New Orleans

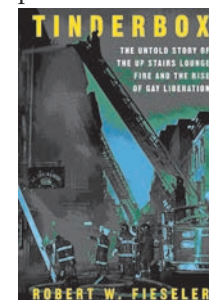
***Tinderbox: The Untold Story of the Up Stairs Lounge Fire and the Rise of Gay Liberation* by Robert W. Fieseler (Liveright 2018) \$26.95; 343 pp.**

Sunday afternoon, June 24, 1973, started like every other Sunday at the Up Stairs

Lounge in New Orleans' French Quarter. Bar manager Buddy Rasmussen opened the place for its weekly Beer Bash, at which patrons could drink all afternoon for a lowered price. Buddy had come with his lover, Adam, and as other regulars filtered in, the music started, drinks flowed, and the Up Stairs Lounge filled up — mostly gay men and a few allies, all for a good time.



That the Up Stairs Lounge even existed was remarkable: just a few years after Stonewall, gay men were still openly persecuted. It was unlawful in many places for a man to dance with another man; gay sex was once punishable by life in prison. But there was the Up Stairs Lounge, quietly advertising with a canopy out front and welcoming to the public, although there were rules in place.



It was, perhaps, the breaking of one of those rules that started the trouble: early that evening, witnesses remembered a fight over hustling (forbidden activity in the lounge) and two men were kicked out. Though no one will ever know for sure, it's believed that one of them walked down the street, purchased a container of lighter fluid, returned and dumped the can's contents onto the wooden steps of the hundred-year-old building. He dropped a flame and walked away. Within seconds, writes Fieseler, "No one was going into the Up Stairs Lounge... nor was anyone coming out."

And if that doesn't chill you, there's a lot more about *Tinderbox* that will, starting with what immediately follows those words: page after page of stomach-twisting details of death by fire and the horror of publicly burning alive. Fieseler shares the details and oh, my, they're wretched. (They were also recounted in local filmmaker Robert L. Camina's documentary *Up Stairs Inferno*, and will be covered in a musical Uptown Players is staging in 2019 called *The View Up Stairs*.)

That's only part of the shock of this book. It continues with controversy within religious organizations, gay-friendly and otherwise, and birthing pains of activism that seem as painful to read as they must've been in life. As he's telling the story, Fieseler continues to remind readers that officials seemed not to care about solving this crime, despite that there were survivors to mourn the 32 who died in the fire — until the Pulse nightclub shooting, the largest mass-murder of gay people in U.S. history. And then there were the families who turned their sons away, even in death.

Through all this, Fieseler asks — and answers — why we largely don't know the whole of this tale. His answers are multitudinous, compassionate, important in a historical context, and emotional. He says, of this account, "With the last bodies laid to rest, the story faded from minds," but *Tinderbox* makes it one you won't likely forget.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer

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**Friday 09.28 —
Sunday 10.05**

‘Angels in America: Perestroika’ opens at Kalita

It has been more than 20 years since *Angels in America, Part II: Perestroika* has played in Dallas — back then, the Dallas Theater Center put it on at the Kalita Humphreys Theater. Now, on the heels of the acclaimed production on Broadway, Uptown Players stages it, a follow-up to its 2016 presentation of *Part I*... and once again, it’s at the Kalita. The same cast and creative team has reunited for this document of AIDS and forgiveness during the Reagan Era. The show plays for only two weekends, but also kicks off Uptown’s Gay History Month Play Festival.

DEETS: Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. UptownPlayers.org.

**Friday 09.28 —
Sunday 09.30**

TBT stages the beautiful 19th century ballet ‘Cleopatra’

As they say, “denial” ain’t just a river in Egypt. Indeed, it was the seat of power for Cleopatra, one of the most intriguing figures in world history. Texas Ballet Theater stages the ballet *Cleopatra*, featuring music by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, this weekend in Fort Worth (no shows in Dallas this time!). And in a rare treat, the music will be provided live from the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra.

DEETS: Bass Performance Hall, 535 Commerce St., Fort Worth. TexasBalletTheater.org.



**Friday 09.28 —
Sunday 09.30**

Dallas Black Pride continues this weekend

Dallas Pride is more than just one weekend in North Texas, if you include Dallas Black

Pride, which returns this weekend for its 21st incarnation. The celebration of queer people of color (presented by Dallas Southern Pride) features music, a pool party, a unity barbecue, a masquerade ball and more. Don’t miss out on the fun.

DEETS: Dallas Black Pride Weekend, at various venues. Visit DallasSouthernPride.com for a complete lineup and schedule.



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calendar highlights

ARTSWEEK THEATER

The Cuban and the Redhead. World premiere of a musical about Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. Presented by Pegasus Theatre. *Final weekend.* Eisemann Center for Performing Arts, 2351 Performance Drive, Richardson. PegasusTheatre.org EisemannCenter.com.

An Octoroon. Stage West presents the regional premiere of this controversial satire based on a 19th century play about a white man who falls for a woman who is one-eighth black. *Final weekend.* Stage West, 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. StageWest.org.

How Is It We Live, or Shakey Jake + Alice. A world premiere play by Len Jenkin. Undermain Theatre, 3200 Main St. Through Oct. 7. Undermain.org.

Once. The Tony Award-winning musical, based on the indie Irish film about a tentative romance between a busker and a shy girl. Theatre 3, 2900 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through Oct. 7. Theatre3Dallas.com.

Steel Magnolias. The classic tearjerker and gay fave, about six women in a beauty parlor in Louisiana. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Sept. 28–Oct. 21. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

BALLET

Cleopatra. Texas Ballet Theater presents Sir Ben Stevenson's dramatic one-act ballet, accompanied by live musicians from the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra. Bass Performance Hall, 535 Commerce St., Fort Worth. Sept. 28–30. TexasBalletTheater.org.

FINE ART

An Enduring Legacy: The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Collection of Impressionist and Modern Art. The recent death of Dallas arts patron Margaret McDermott, at age 106, led to a bequest of 32 works from her private collection, housed in her own home until recently, and now on display with three previously-donated works to the DMA. Dallas Museum of Art 1717 Harwood St. Through Feb. 17, 2019. DMA.org.

The Nature of Arp. Exploration of the work of the influential 20th century artist. Nasher Sculpture Center, 2001 Flora St. Through Jan. 6, 2019. NasherSculptureCenter.org.

Dali: Poetics of the Small, 1929–1936. Before he was an acclaimed surrealist of monumental work, Salvador Dali was a craftsman of small, classic (and modernist) paintings. Meadows Museum of Art on the SMU campus, 5900 Bishop Blvd.

EXHIBITIONS

Ultimate Dinosaurs. Exhibit analyzing the history of the creatures that would come to occupy Jurassic Park. Perot Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 N. Field St. Through Jan. 6, 2019. PerotMuseum.org.

Slavery at Jefferson's Monticello. Archeological exhibition that details life for possessed peoples who worked the plantation of the third president of the United States. African American Museum at Fair Park. Through Dec. 31.

PRIDE

21th Annual Dallas Black Pride. Weekend of events celebrating queer people of color. Includes a football game, parties, BBQ and more. Visit DallasSouthernPride.org for details. Through Sept. 30.

STATE FAIR

State Fair of Texas. Annual celebration of livestock, fried foods and other aspects of Texas culture. Through Oct. 21. BigTex.com.

FRIDAY 09.28

COMMUNITY

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

SATURDAY 09.29

COMMUNITY

FrontRunners. Gay jogging/walking group meets weekly at 9 a.m. in Oak Lawn Park at Hall Street and Turtle Creek Boulevard for a run along the Katy Trail.

HALLOWEEN

Screams. Annual Halloween-themed park on the Scarborough Faire grounds, 2511 FM 66, Waxahachie. Through Oct. 27. ScreamsPark.com.

Dark Hour Haunted House. Primetime for the best scary-creepy mansion tour in North Texas. 701 Taylor Drive, Plano. Weekends and Halloween through Oct. 31. DarkHourHauntedHouse.com

MONDAY 10.01

CABARET

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

this week's solution

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browse

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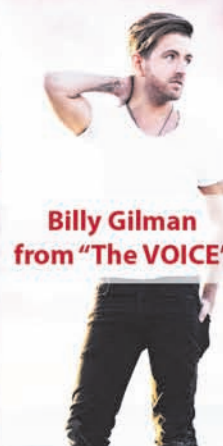
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Cassie Nova

Cassie takes un-Belize-able vacation



Hello, er'body. About a year ago, two of my best friends went to Belize to visit some other friends who had a house built there, right on the beach. They came back with such an infectious enthusiasm for the tropical paradise that we almost immediately started planning a big group vacation. I think that by February or March we already had the trip planned and nearly paid for. There were nine of us going but it was surprisingly easy to coordinate with our whole group so excited for the trip. The hardest part was waiting until September, for our big Belize Labor Day vacation!

I was a little nervous about the trip. I've never really been outside of the U.S. Belize is in Central America, and technically considered South America but I was going to get out of my head and enjoy whatever came my way. I have to say, Belize was awesome. It is breathtakingly beautiful, the people were lovely, the food great and everything was surprisingly cheap.

We took two planes and rented a huge van to get from Belize City to Hopkins, about a three-hour drive. The drive through the mountains and rainforest was crazy beautiful. We kept thinking that a T-rex or other dinosaurs were going to pop out from behind the trees. It seriously looked that much like a *Jurassic Park* movie... until it got dark, then it got a little creepy. The roads there are not the best. There were long stretches of perfectly paved roads with a surprise speedbump every once in a while.

There is an Eli Roth horror movie called *The Green Inferno* where a group of American dogooders strap themselves to bulldozers in the Amazon rainforest to try to stop deforestation and end up getting eaten by the cannibal natives. It's super gory. I kept thinking that if this van breaks down, we gonna get ate! So

every time I started to get too into my head about something stupid, I would tell my brain, "I can always out stupid you with something even more stupid!" I would sing *Baby shark do do do do do do*. If you don't know the "Baby Shark" song, you are lucky. It will get stuck in your head and you won't be able to think of anything else. So, dark creepy road = *Baby shark do do do do do do*...

We stayed next door to our friends that live at the Rising Sun. It is a resort-esque house owned by the nicest couple you could ever meet. The house is huge and had its own beach with a two-story dock complete with a hammock for relaxin'. By the time we got to the house on the first day, it was already dark and on the dock over the ocean you could see so many stars that it took your breath away. They handed us a drink as soon as we got there. It was called a Panty Ripper — sounds gross but tasted amazing. Pineapple juice and local coconut rum.

Speaking of drinking, they have a local beer called Belikin. We loved it, so with nine of us on this trip, we went through 12 cases of Belikin and 27 bottles of liquor. That's a normal amount, right? Bloody Marys for breakfast, Panty Rippers for lunch and beer all day... that sounds about right. We are not alcoholics... *Baby shark do do do do do do*.

On five of our seven days we went on excursions: fishing, snorkeling, cave tubing, zip lining and snorkeling again. We crammed as much fun and adventure into this trip as we possibly could. In case you hadn't heard, because I tell everyone, I caught a fucking shark when we went fishing. It was only a nurse shark but it was between five and six feet long. Luckily our fabulous boat captain let it go before it could be pulled into the boat to terrorize our poor friend Tyler. Tyler's terrified

scream when a fish would get pulled into the boat might be my absolute favorite thing that happened in Belize. Sorry, Tyler, but you was funny as fuck.

We snorkeled every chance we got. Our first trip out, we swam with a sea turtle. If you know me, you know what a big deal that was. Our entire group swam with a sea turtle; it was awesome. Our friend who lives in Belize has gone snorkeling hundreds of times and said that was the first time he has ever seen a sea turtle while snorkeling. It was fate — I like to think that Miss Turtle showed up just for us.

Since I was a kid, I have had a huge fear of sharks. When we were snorkeling, I would be totally fine underwater. It was so peaceful and beautiful. Bobbing above the waves I would have these mini panic attacks, and believe it or not that stupid "Baby Shark" song would help me. Every time the *Jaws* theme would pop in my head, "Baby Shark" would override it. If I started to think about a megalodon, I would "Baby Shark" it and be filled with a ridiculousness that helped me get out of my head and really enjoy myself.

Cave tubing was very cool. It is exactly what you think it is: You on a big tire inner tube with a helmet with a light on it, bobbing through an underground labyrinth. It was a little bit scary — I see *waaayyy* too many horror movies. I kept thinking those creatures from the movie *The Descent* were gonna be around the next corner or climbing the walls above us. I figured so long as I wasn't in the very front or the very back I would be fine, so I paddled like a bitch to keep myself somewhere in the middle.

Our guide told us that the caves were used by the Mayans years ago for bloodletting rituals. Their priests would go into the caves and cut themselves and once they lost enough blood they could communicate with their

gods. They saw the caves as a passageway to the underworlds. I saw them as spooky as fuck. Plus it was a workout. The first half we paddled against the flow of water for quite a while. The second half we just floated and bobbed along and enjoyed the ride. Sometimes our guide would have us turn off our lights and just sit in total darkness. "Baby Shark!!!" It really was cool though, I'm so glad we did it.

I don't want you all to think that the entire trip was absolute perfection. Have you heard of sargassum? We were calling it stargasm, cuz you know... gays. Anyhoo, sargassum is a seaweed that grows way off in the ocean and because of global warming is growing out of control. Pieces of it, huge pieces, break off and float to the coasts. Some days the beaches would be covered in it, other days, not so much. The biggest problem with it is that once it hits the shore it starts to decay, releasing sulfur. So the entire trip, every once in a while you would smell farts. Most of the time, there was a breeze and the wind would flush away that farty smell, but inland everywhere... farts.

Then on the last day in Belize, I got food poisoning. Every restaurant we ate at was a small family owned place with a four-burner stove and tables in the sand. The one time we ate at a "fancy" restaurant I got sick. Seriously, it was coming out of both ends and I may or may not have left a pair of underwear somewhere in Belize. But even with that happening and the sometimes farty smell, it was one of the best times I have ever had in my life. I have some of the best friends in the world and we made memories that will be with us forever. You betta Belize it!

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

Family Pride Zone

at the Miller Lite Music Festival in the Park



Making the **SCENE** the week of **Sept. 28–Oct. 4:**

- **Alexandre's:** JaQuay and the Elm Street Kids on Friday. Vero Voz y Compania on Saturday. Wayne Smith on Sunday. K-Marie on Tuesday. Vero Voz on Wednesday.
- **Club Changes:** Wall of Food, Cowtown Leathermen and Imperial Court fundriaser for LGBTQ Saves at 9 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Club Reflection:** Imperial Court cookout from 4-7 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Dallas Eagle:** United Court Show at 7 p.m. on Saturday. United Court pays Match Game from 6-9 p.m. On Sunday.
- **Deja Vu:** Megaparty: Intoxicated with Black Pride on Sunday.
- **Havana:** Sun+Fun on the patio at 3 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Henry's Tavern:** Plano Pride Night on Wednesday.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill:** Dreamgirls at 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Marty's Live:** Showcase with Chanel Champagne on Monday.
- **Pekers:** Totally Twisted Karaoke on Friday.
- **Round-Up Saloon:** Saturday Karaoke at 7 p.m. Yoshi's Line Dance Lessons at 8:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **S4:** Jaxson's single release party doors at 9 p.m. Performance at 10:45 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Sue Ellen's:** WETT, the official Dallas Lesbian Pride with Cris Dee, Miss Diva USofA 2018 Ruby Scott, Tommie Ross and Nishia Jackson at 10 p.m. on Friday. The Mojo Dolls on Saturday. The Southpaw Preachers and The Anton Shaw Band on Sunday. Come meet the bulldogs and volunteers of No Borders Bulldog Rescue from 4-7 p.m. on Sunday.
- **The Rose Room:** Comedian Miss Wanda's Soul Food Cooking Show at 11 p.m., midnight and 1 a.m. on Sunday.
- **TMC: The Mining Company:** Team Metro Beauty and the Briefs underwear auction from 6-9 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Urban Cowboy:** That Time of the Month Drag Brunch at 1 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Woody's Sports & Video Bar:** Show tunes at 9 p.m. on Tuesday.
- **Zipper's:** Sounds by Rudeboy Dallas from 9 p.m.-2 a.m. on Monday.

DSO Gala (Photos Courtesy of DSO)



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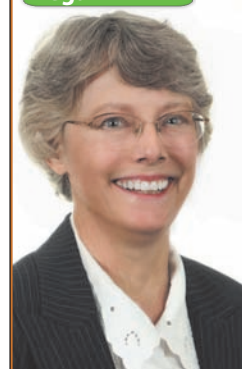
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Dancing around the truth

Solution on Page 26

Across

- 1 Like Barber's "Adagio for Strings"
- 5 Beachwear for a hunk
- 10 Fruity drinks
- 14 Auto dash dial
- 15 Greek poet who didn't look at porn
- 16 "___ l'amour!"
- 17 Start to climax
- 18 "___ there yet?"
- 19 Kind of stimulating
- 20 Start of a quip
- 22 More of the quip
- 24 Mardi Gras, e.g.
- 25 Nook at the Cathedral of Hope
- 27 Hustler's stick
- 28 NNW's opposite
- 29 Albee's *Fam and ___*
- 32 Bygone nuclear agcy.
- 33 Billy Budd, for one
- 34 Pears and Cameron
- 36 Portable beds
- 37 More of the quip
- 41 Really big tale
- 42 Tennessee Williams title critter
- 43 33 1/3, for a Johnny Mathis LP
- 44 *In Cold Blood* writer, briefly
- 46 Sweaty guy on a sweaty guy on a wrestling mat
- 47 Symbol of punishment
- 50 "Xanadu" band, for short

- 51 Source of Mary's fleece
- 53 Speedy train
- 55 End of the quip
- 57 Burt, the source of the quip (1936-2018)
- 60 Alternative to "Go straight"
- 61 1996 Madonna movie
- 63 Second year student, for short
- 64 Like hand-me-downs
- 65 Word that may follow sperm or organ
- 66 Stable female
- 67 Like hotties in a gay bar
- 68 Burke or Close
- 69 Nose activator

- 12 Compare online stats, e.g.
- 13 Wall Street bears
- 21 More like a cunning linguist
- 23 Premature ejaculation meas.
- 26 Say "No, thanks" to
- 30 Went down on
- 31 One way to cook your meat
- 34 GI under a corporal
- 35 Scrap of cloth
- 36 USA spies
- 37 Appreciation expression on Broadway
- 38 Porn star also known as Dirt Nasty
- 39 Rink star Babilonia
- 40 Kofi of the UN
- 41 Homo ___
- 44 Pampering, briefly
- 45 Like *Finding Nemo*
- 47 Get ready to shoot off again
- 48 Experienced hand
- 49 One of Santa's reindeer
- 52 It leaves a salty taste in your mouth
- 54 Burt posed for an iconic centerfold for this mag
- 56 Warhol, who was shot in a film title
- 58 Thames school
- 59 Craft store bundle
- 62 Button you use to turn down REM

Down

- 1 Everyone can go down on them
- 2 What knights stick in their foes
- 3 The song "Do Re Mi" explains this
- 4 Cry over spilt milk
- 5 Ethnic cuisine type
- 6 Game-ending sound, for Sue Wicks
- 7 Last letter on Lesbos
- 8 Like a crescent moon
- 9 Film directed by Randal Kleiser
- 10 Declare openly
- 11 Gus Van Sant, for one



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