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World Gay Rodeo

Finals coming to Mesquite

by David Taffet, Page 8

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Photo courtesy of IGRA World Finals Rodeo. Design by Kevin Thomas

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Cruz, Cornyn score 0 on HRC Congressional Scorecard

I know. You're shocked: Sen. Ted Cruz and Sen John Cornyn both scored zilch in Human Rights Campaign's Congressional Scorecard.

So did every Republican member of the House of Representatives — except Texan Will Hurd, who achieved a score of 30. Hurd is running against lesbian candidate Gina Ortiz Jones for the West Texas seat that stretches from El Paso to San Antonio. It is seen as a swing district, and she's out-raised him so far.

For the senate scoring, HRC looked at three votes, including Affordable Care Act repeal, 10 co-sponsorships including four for non-discrimination legislation, and five confirmations including two for U.S. Supreme Court, two cabinet positions — Betsy DeVos and Jeff Sessions — and a circuit court judge for the 5th District that includes Texas.

On the House side, ratings were based on four legislative votes, including repeal of the ACA and 11 co-sponsorships including five for non-discrimination legislation.

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson scored 88 because of missed co-sponsorships. That doesn't mean she wouldn't have voted for bills that made it to the House floor.

Texas representatives who did score 100 are: Beto O'Rourke, Sheila Jackson Lee, Joaquin Castro, Filemon Vela and Lloyd Doggett. Scores of other local incumbents include Marc

Veasey — 97 and Pete Sessions — 0.

— David Taffet

Firebird owner responds to report of donation to Trump

A report published online Thursday morning, Oct. 11, by the Dallas Business Journal detailing donations by North Texas business and community leaders to Donald Trump has prompted calls for a boycott against restaurants in the Firebird Restaurant Groups.

Mike Karns is the owner and CEO of Firebird Restaurant Group, which includes more than 50 locations for El Fenix, Snuffers, Village Burger Bar, Meso Maya, Tortaco and Taqueria La Ventana — including the Taqueria La Ventana that recently opened on Cedar Springs Road, in the heart of the gayborhood. Firebird also owns Sunrise Mexican Foods.

According to the DBJ report, based on data from the Federal Election Commission detailing on all contributions to Donald J. Trump For President Inc. made between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018, Karns donated \$2,700 to the campaign. In a phone call with me at Dallas Voice Friday evening about 5:30 p.m., however, Karns said that while he had once paid to hear Trump speak he does not consider that a political donation, and that he has not made any political donations to Trump.

Karns also said he doesn't "even know if the



amount they reported is accurate."

After I had spoken with Karns, someone sent me a link to the Federal Election Commission's website that indicates Karns donated \$2,700 to Donald J. Trump Inc., based in New York, on Oct. 24, 2017, and that he made a second donation, also for \$2,700 and also on Oct. 24, 2017, to Trump Victory, a political action committee based in Massachusetts.

(I readily acknowledge that I am not well versed on the technicalities of reporting political donations, so if it turns out this is, in fact, the same donation, I'm sorry. Also, full disclosure here, Taqueria La Ventana on Cedar Springs Road has advertised in Dallas Voice.)

Karns said that "some time ago" Trump was speaking at an event taking place near one of his restaurants in downtown Dallas, and that he went to hear the president speak. "I did pay a fee to go watch him speak," Karns said, "but that was not a political donation. I have not made any political donations to Donald Trump."

Karns described himself as a "proud Republican," but added that while he is "financially conservative," he is also "socially very liberal. I don't believe in subscribing to a certain set of rules and picking out a box based on those rules, then staying strictly in that box.

Karns said that he and his wife Valerie, a designer, live in the Turtle Creek area and are "very big supporters" of Oak Lawn and the LGBT community, which is one of the main reasons he chose to open Taqueria La Ventana on Cedar Springs Road. He said he and his wife contribute to a number of LGBT and HIV/AIDS organizations and events, including DIFFA/ Dallas.

In addition, he pointed out that the Cedar Springs location of Taqueria La Ventana is a member of the North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce, and that the restaurant, as part of its grand opening, hosted a fundraising event for Lambda Legal.

— Tammye Nash



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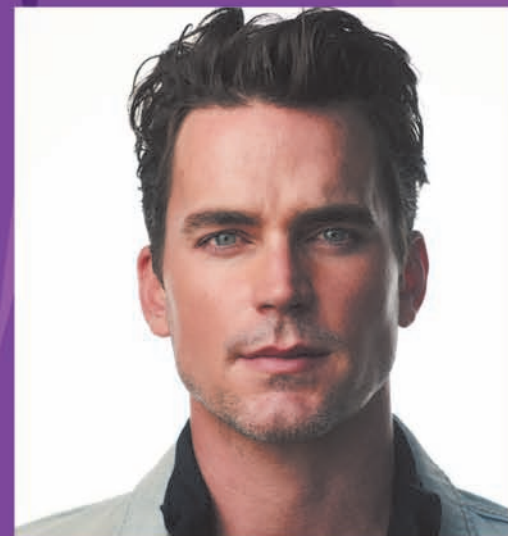
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THE GAY AGENDA



Have an event coming up? Email your information to Managing Editor Tammye Nash at nash@dallasvoice.com or Senior Staff Writer David Taffet at taffet@dallasvoice.com

by Wednesday at 5 p.m. for that week's issue.

OCTOBER

• **Oct. 19: Federal Club happy hour**

Happy hour with HRC's Federal Club from 6-8 p.m. at The Artisan Craft Kitchen, 2330 Flora St. Suite 200.

• **Oct. 20: AIN's Flashback to the 80s**

Totally tubular 80s fundraiser benefiting the clients of AIN from 7-11 p.m. at Loftly Spaces, 816 Montgomery St. \$75-5,000 at Eventbrite.com.

• **Oct. 20: Stranger Than Gaybingo**

Monthly fundraiser for Resource Center takes place from 6-9 p.m. at the Rose Room at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. 214-540-4458. MyResourceCenter.org/gaybingo.

• **Oct. 20: Daddy Daughter Dance**

Cosmopolitan Women's Ministry of Cosmopolitan Congregation presents a Daddy-Daughter dance for fatherless girls from 6-10 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. \$40. cosmo.breezechms.com/form/daddydaughter2018.

• **Oct. 20: Spooktacular V – Diamonds Are Forever**

Shonda Leer hosts and headlines the event that benefits the GLBT Chamber of Commerce Foundation Scholarship Fund from 7-10 p.m. at ilume Park, 3109 Douglas Ave.

• **Oct. 21: Candidate forum**

Congregation Beth El Binah co-sponsors a candidate forum between Rep. Pete Sessions and Collin Allred at 7 p.m. at Temple Shalom, 6930 Alpha Road.

• **Oct. 21: Sue Ellen's Throwback Party**

HER HRC hosts the Sue Ellen's Throwback Party at the former Sue Ellen's, not TMC, 3903 Cedar Springs Road. Will feature live bands from the days of Old Sue's, a DJ, food truck, silent auction and games with prizes. HER HRC will also be presenting the DFW HRC Community Impact Award. Tickets are \$15 at the door.

• **Oct. 21: Book signing by Scott Jones**

Author Scott Jones will sign copies of his book, *OPEN: A Memoir of Faith, Family and Sexuality in the Heartland*, at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. Details to be announced.

• **Oct. 21: Positivitea**

Brunch with "Real Housewife" LeeAnne Locken, entertainment from Hedda Layne and a silent auction benefit the Grace Project of Legacy Counseling Center. \$50. \$100 VIP cocktails and early entry. Tickets at PositiviteaDallas.com.

• **Oct. 22-Nov. 2: Early voting**

• **Oct. 23: Grief support group**

LGBT grief support group for people who have lost a same-sex partner from 7-8:30 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road.

• **Oct. 23: Resource Center tour**

CEO Cece Cox leads a behind-the-scenes tour of Resource Center from 5-6:30 p.m. at 5750 Cedar Springs Road. RSVP to kfields@myresourcecenter.org.

• **Oct. 23: BEN After Hours**

Monthly networking group for GLBT

AGENDA, Page 13

OBITUARY



Longtime Dallas resident and LGBT activist **Paul Horton Rodgers** died unexpectedly in Dallas, Texas, on Sept. 11, 2018, at the age of 70.

He was born in Hereford, Texas, to David M. and Kathryn F. Rodgers, and spent his

earliest years in Dawn, before moving to Lubbock where he graduated from Monterey High School. He attended and graduated from Texas Christian University, where he was a proud member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. He then embarked upon a lifelong career in banking in Fort Worth, and then in Dallas, retiring from J.P.Morgan Chase in 2016.

Paul was an active member of Midway Hills Christian Church, where he served in various capacities for many years. He diligently supported and promoted numerous environmental and social justice causes, both locally and nationally, as well as arts and cultural organizations, including Zero Population Growth, Population Connection, Population Media Center, Earth Day Dallas, North Dallas Shared Ministries, Austin Street Center, Dallas Green Alliance, Latino Voter Empowerment Project, Dallas County Deputy Voter Registrar and Fort Worth Ballet. Paul was particularly interested in working with local, state and national groups that promoted equality and justice for the LGBT community, including serving as one of the earliest board members and as treasurer of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby, now known as Equality Texas. He was president of Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus, was a co-founder of Metroplex

Republicans/Log Cabin Dallas, served on the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance board and was co-coordinator of GLAD (Gay, Lesbian and Affirming Disciples). He was an AIDS Interfaith care team coordinator for Central Christian Church and participated in Oak Lawn Community Services Buddy Project. He was a member of the JP Morgan Chase Pride employee group.

With a lifelong interest in politics, Paul worked on many political campaigns. He believed that the world could be made a better place for all, and he worked to achieve that goal his entire life in so many different ways. Much of his time and energy since his retirement has been invested in organizations that promote that goal, including his church, voter registration projects, North Dallas Shared Ministries, Austin Street Center, the Population Connection and UT Southwestern Clements Hospital.

Paul is survived by his loving husband, Bernard M. "Bob" Stoller of Dallas, and his stepdaughter, Michelle J. Stoller of Richardson, as well as his brother, Jon D. Rodgers, and his wife, Betty, of Edmund, Okla., and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

In accordance with Paul's wishes, no funeral service will be held. His ashes will be interred next to his parents in Lubbock. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made in Paul's memory to Midway Hills Christian Church, North Dallas Shared Ministries, Austin Street Center or a charity of your choice that promotes social justice or environmental protection.

On Oct. 28, a celebration of Paul Rodger's life will be held at 2 p.m. at Midway Hills Christian Church, 11001 Midway Road, so that those whose lives he touched may come together to share in his blessings. The sum of the life of Paul Rodgers is found in his deeds, rather than in these words.

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• **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 Supreme Court candidate Steven Kirkland; **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.

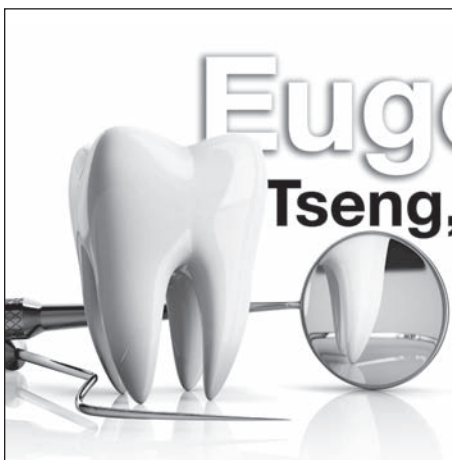
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For the love of rodeo

Competitors from around the world coming to Mesquite for World Gay Rodeo Finals

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer

taffet@dallasvoice.com

The World Gay Rodeo Finals set for the Mesquite Arena on Oct. 25-28 traces its roots back to a charity rodeo in 1976 in Reno, Nev. that raised money for muscular dystrophy.

Buck Beal, public relations director for the World Gay Rodeo Finals, spoke about the event from his partner Jody's ranch in Sky Valley, Calif., near Palm Springs, where he was "watering the chickens."

A huge fan of gay rodeo, Beal said it's not just for LGBT folks reared in rural areas. In fact, his own background couldn't be more different. Although his father was from West Texas, Beal was raised in Newport, R.I., where his parents attended the wedding of Jack and Jackie Kennedy. His own interest in horseback riding began when he attended boarding school in Germany in the late 1960s.

But Beal's involvement in rodeo didn't begin until much more recently.

"When I met Jody in 2007, I became a victim of love," Beal said. "His lifestyle has become one of my passions."

Jody was born in Barstow, Calif., off Route 66. He became a nurse, then a surgical nurse and finally the clinical administrator for the men's health program at Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, Calif. That's also the home of the Betty Ford Clinic.

"He bought the ranch in 1986 or so," Beal said, describing the property as a home-steading ranch with "dogs, a whole bunch of chickens and three horses."

LGBT rodeo

Currently, there are about 18 state or regional gay rodeo organizations in the U.S. and Canada — Texas Gay Rodeo Association is the umbrella organization for five local groups from Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, Houston and San Antonio, according to the International Gay Rodeo Association.

Beal said the number of groups has dwindled, and formerly active organizations in

World Gay Rodeo Finals

Mesquite Arena

1818 Rodeo Drive, Mesquite

IGRA-WGRF.com

Oct. 25: Royalty Competition at 7 p.m.

Oct. 26: Opening ceremonies at 7 p.m.

Oct. 27: Rodeo from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

\$20 at the gate

Oct. 28: Rodeo from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

\$20 at the gate

Oct. 28: Awards dinner at 7 p.m. and ceremony at 8 p.m.

Los Angeles and San Diego are gone completely. But the groups still here, especially TGRA chapters, are bustling organizations.

One thing that attracts Beal to IGRA events is the diversity, he said, adding, "Some of the best athletes are women," he said. For instance, he explained, "Bull riding is rough trade," but some of the best bull riders are "petite" women.

Beal said he really enjoys watching the speed events at rodeos — barrel-racing, flag-racing and roping.

"I saw one guy, Greg Begay, rope a calf in 0.7 seconds," he said. He added that he's also seen Begay rope a couple of cowboys he was attracted to — without disturbing their hats. — a very impressive feat on a number of levels, he noted.

Of course, Beal said, his true favorites are the gay rodeo's own special contests — the camp events.

"My favorite is goat dressing," in which two people participate, he said, explaining that one competitor carries a pair of skivvies and the other grabs the goat and holds it still so the first competitor can "dress" it with the tightie-whities.

Another popular camp event is the Wild Drag Race, in which one member of the three-person team is dressed in drag. The goal is for the team member in drag to be mounted on the back of a steer while the other two get the steer across the finish line. "It's only short distance, but there's a lot of drama," Beal said. "Oh, and lots of laughter."

Those event, in one form or another, date back to the very first gay rodeo. "They were added to make our events more fun, because gay events are always designed to be more fun," Beal said.



According to Beal, the finals rodeo has always returned every dollar it has earned to charity, although sometime during the 1980s, the focus changed from muscular dystrophy to AIDS.

This year, the variety of beneficiaries include the Trevor Project; Wish for Wings, a wish-granting agency for Texas children fighting life-threatening conditions; 4 Paws 4 Patriots, matching shelter dogs with vets needing service animals; and Joyful Heart Foundation, which heals, educates and empowers survivors of sexual assault and domestic abuse.

Money raised in a special Going Pink for Rodeo campaign will go to The Moncrief Center in Fort Worth, which provides mammograms for the uninsured.

Matt Bomer, Kim Petras join Black Tie lineup

FROM STAFF REPORTS

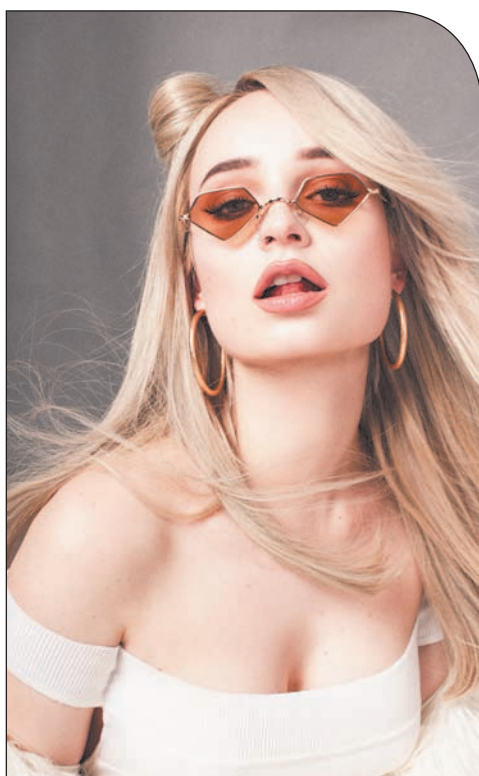
Black Tie Co-Chairs Nathan Robbins and David Gifford-Robbins this week announced two additional headliners for the 37th annual fundraising gala on Nov. 3: award-winning actor/producer/director Matt Bomer and transgender pop star Kim Petras.

The two join other recently announced honorees Madame Secretary star and Black Tie's Media Award winner Erich Bergen, TV personality and Black Tie's Ally Award win-

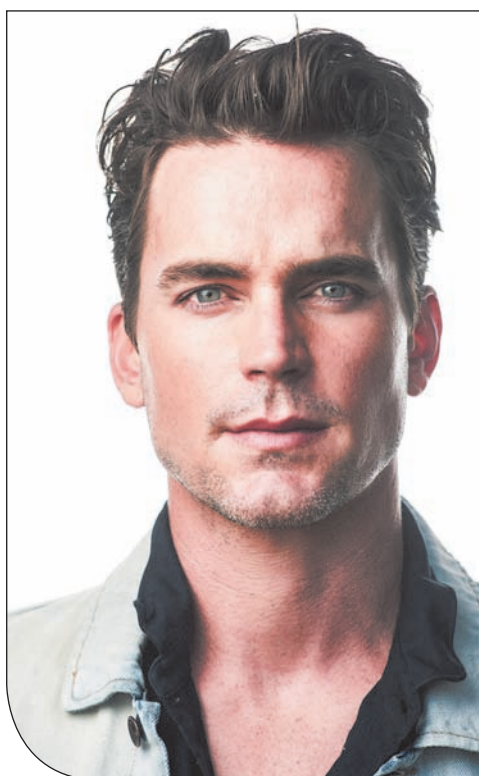
Award, a 2014 Golden Derby Award, three 2015 CinEuphoria Awards, two 2014 Online Film and Television Association Awards and a 2014 TVLine Award, all for his work in the 2014 TV drama *The Normal Heart*, based on Larry Kramer's 1985 play about gay men in New York during the birth of AIDS activism.

He has also been honored by GLSEN, JAKKS Pacific's Norma Jean Gala, the Savannah Film Festival, the Desert AIDS Projects Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards and TAG's Research in Action Awards.

Gifford-Robbins described Petras' music as "an inspiration [that] showcases her brav-



Kim Petras, left, Matt Bomer, right



ery in being visible."

Petras' music gives a nod to influences as diverse as Britney Spears, Baltimore and the "Brat Pack," sharing intimate storylines over explosive production. Petras, who opened recently for gay singer Troye Sivan in Dallas, is known for breaking boundaries in the LGBT community and making headlines in 2009, at age 16, for being the youngest person to undergo gender-reassignment surgery.

Black Tie Dinner has, since its inception in 1982, raised more than \$22 million for local organizations supporting the LGBT and HIV/AIDS communities and for the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. This year's event takes place Nov. 3 at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel. For tickets and more information visit BlackTie.org. ■

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ner Jessi Cruickshank, and local LGBT activist and Kuchling Humanitarian Award winner Kay Wilkinson.

Bomer is "not only amazing actor, he has also become a trusted voice for the LGBTQ dinner, and we are excited that he is bringing that commitment to Black Tie Dinner," Robbins said. "He is a strong advocate and role model for the LGBTQ dinner, and we are honored to bring his story to our dinner this year."

Bomer, who starred in the TV series *White Collar* and with Tatum Channing in the movie *Magic Mike*, has earned a long list of awards and honors, including a 2015 Golden Globe Award, a 2014 Critics' Choice Television

'The Giant' awakes

Deborah Vial comes home to Dallas for album release party, HRC event

TAMMYE NASH |
Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com



Before 2016, Deborah Vial said, "I was blissfully ignorant of American politics." She was one of the people who believed "we paid the salaries of politicians and judges with our tax monies, and they were doing their jobs. They were working for all of us, so we should just let them do their jobs."

But then Donald Trump was elected president, she said, "and my whole world was turned upside down. Suddenly, I felt like I could no longer just stand on the sidelines. Rome had been a republic until Julius Caesar decided he wanted to be an emperor, and we all know what happened after that: They got stuck with Caligula! Yikes!

"It's scary," Vial said of the political climate since the rise of Trump. "Absolute power corrupts absolutely. The day [Trump] said he could shoot someone on 5th Avenue and not lose voters — I realized then we were all in trouble, because he was right. There is a huge population of people who love the idea of a bully/king being in charge. It makes them feel safe."

Vial said she was torn by what she saw happening in the months leading up to and following the 2016 election because she had been raised to believe that bullies and criminals and "mean people" were the bad guys in society. But suddenly, those beliefs were being challenged because the so-called bad guys were taking over.

"Had I been completely wrong?" she asked. "Are the weak [just] meat? Do I need to change every fiber of who I am and become a 'bad' person, too?"

"I tried that hat on for a day or two. It was not comfortable," she declared. "I can't sleep at night with my moral compass spinning."

So she decided to take action. She and her wife, Caron Barrett, traveled from their home in Hawaii to Washington, D.C., for the Women's March in January 2017. They started having weekly "huddles" with like-minded people, and they sponsored screenings of movies like *Equal Means Equal*. They attended "all the sign-waving events."

"It was exhausting," Vial said of her new-found activism. "But I learned a lot. For example, did you know that women are *still* not protected by the Constitution? It's crazy! Most people do not realize that the [Equal Rights Amendment] did *not* pass. ... Former Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia famously stated that women were never *meant* to be protected by the Constitution, that the Constitution says all *men* are created equal. He believed in a literal translation of the Constitution, and I think we are going to run up against that issue with the now heavily-conservative Supreme Court."

Vial said it was the new-found passion for activism that helped reignite her passion

The Deborah Vial Band holds a release party for their new album, *The Giant*, from 8-10 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 19, at Sue Ellen's, 3014 Throckmorton St.

The band also performs Sunday, Oct. 21, at the Her HRC "Throwback Party" at "the old Sue Ellen's," now TMC: The Mining Company, 3903 Cedar Springs Road. HRC presents the Community Impact Award to Dee Pennington during that event.



It was her experience at the 2017 Women's March in Washington, D.C., that inspired Deborah Vial's new song, "The Giant." Vial and her band perform twice this weekend in Dallas.

for music and that birthed "The Giant," the first single of the new album from The Deborah Vial Band, also called *The Giant*.

"Life is cyclical," Vial explained. "And I had kind of cycled out of music and on to other things. I was super burnt-out on music for a few years. I almost wanted to run away from being a singer and re-invent myself. I kept performing sporadically, for fundraiser, but it was limited to just a few times a year."

After the shock of the 2016 election, she continued, "I had folded in on myself, in the darkest depression. I think the definition of depression is something about 'anger turned inwards. But after attending ther Women's March, I was able to push my anger outwards. What I saw in D.C., and globally, was truly giant and empowering."

It was after that march, Vial said, that she and Barrett began writing "The Giant," and the lyrics — warning the corrupt powers-that-be that "You're gonna burn with the fire of fury; you're gonna know what it means to worry; you woke the giant in me" — over a pounding beat turned into what can surely be called an anthem for the

women's rights movement (even though Vial herself is quick to stress that she would "never be so presumptuous as to label anything I write to be worthy of being anthemic.")

Making the album

While it was the indignation and the power of the Women's March that sparked the fire, the flame was fanned, Vial said, at her 50th birthday party last year on the island of Maui.

"Caron hired my all-time favorite musician, Beth Hart, to play [at the party]. Being around Beth again — I had opened for her in the past — re-ignited my passion for writing and performing. I had never lost my passion for singing; I sing all day around the house. But I just felt like I had nothing more to say, nothing to write about," she said. "The last thing Beth said to me when we drove her to the airport was, 'Girl, this is what we do. It's never over.'"

"That hit my reset button. This is IT. This is Life. No quitters allowed."

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Swinging Shonda Leer

Drag entertainer Shonda Leer headlines Spooktacular to fund Chamber scholarships

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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"On Halloween night, 1962, his life changed forever," North Texas GLBT Chamber President and CEO Tony Vedda said, explaining the story of Shonda Leer, the drag queen headlining the chamber's upcoming fundraisers, Spooktacular: Diamond Are Forever. "And it was all because a British secret agent stumbled into the back room of a club on Christopher Street. Spellbound by the woman on stage singing Patsy Cline's 'I Fall to Pieces,' the agent could hardly believe how much the stunningly beautiful Shonda Leer sounded like the country superstar.

"When the song ended the man ducked backstage to get an autograph, and he noticed a Patsy Cline record album by a turntable. Quickly he learned Shonda sounded so perfect because she was only moving her mouth along with a recording of the song, a fairly new trend known as lip-synching," Vedda continued. "But that wasn't Shon-

da's only secret. Peeking through the half-opened door of a cramped dressing room, he witnessed a luxurious wig fall to the floor. She was a man, baby!"

The story as told by Shonda Leer herself, also known as Mike Henley-Hudson, is less dramatic, but certainly compelling. "After moving to Dallas in 2003, I was approached by the United Court of the Lone Star Empire," Henley-Hudson said, adding that the court convinced him to begin performing, doing male lip synch. But then for the court's annual turnabout show, they convinced him to perform in drag.

"That's when I officially started," and when Shonda Leer was born, he said.

And Henley-Hudson hasn't stopped since. As a member of the court — officially Prime Minister for Life — Shonda has helped the organization raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for non-profits throughout the local LGBT community.

So after Henley-Hudson had attended Spooktacular for two years as a guest, Vedda approached him to come work for the chamber and host this year's event. What could he say but yes?

Besides, he said, "I love to be on stage, and I'm not shy."

With the theme being "Diamonds Are

Forever," Henley-Hudson said Shonda will be performing music from the James Bond film, including one big production number. He said this year's show will be over-the-top and fabulous, and he hopes to raise enough money to increase the money awarded this year through the chamber's scholarships.

For its fifth anniversary, the chamber created the LEAP program — Leadership Education & Advocacy Program — to award scholarships. For its 10th anniversary, it created the GLBT Chamber of Commerce Foundation, whose mission is to fulfill the educational and philanthropic goals of the Chamber. Last year, the two merged.

Since awarding its first scholarships in 2011, the chamber has given \$75,000 to students. In addition to those scholarships, the foundation produces the annual Texas Business Equality Conference and provides "Welcome Everyone" counter signs and window stickers for businesses to let the public know they doesn't discriminate. The program's been picked up by the LGBT chambers in Houston, Austin and San Antonio as well as the Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce.

This is the chamber's fifth Spooktacular Halloween event, and money raised will



Shonda Leer

fund 2019-20 scholarships. Applications will be available in February. ■

Spooktacular takes place from 7-10 p.m. on Oct. 20 at ilume Park, 3109 Douglas Ave. Tickets are \$50 and available at GLBTChamber-Foundation.org/Spooktacular.



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So Vial and Barrett started writing. As Barrett explained, "A lot of times, I come up with the music, and I have this melody in my head. I sing the melody to Deborah, and I sound like a wounded seal. And she takes it and runs with it and turns it into magic.

"And sometimes, Deborah has lyrics, melodies or a chord structure, and we just sit down and figure out what she has come up with, and we put the puzzle together," Barrett said.

"Doing a record is a giant endeavor — financially, emotionally and artistically," Barrett added. "One of the most important things is to put your ego away and be open to the process. The people involved will have input, and sometimes that gets confused with criticism. It's not; it's about putting together a team that is all on the same page of crafting songs and getting the right sound for songs."

Vial noted that they recorded *The Giant* entirely at their home, "aka Happy Wahine Studios," with the help of Grammy Award-winning producer and engineer Eric Helmkamp, who is, Vial said, "pure

magic in the studio."

Vial said, "Caron has a *ton* of music, but I was really lost lyrically on a lot of the pieces she wanted me to write. Eric came in and took away the rub that can occur in coupledness. Eric and I would have writing sessions around the kitchen counter, so he really contributed heavily to the lyrics of many of the songs, which was *really* different for me. Previously, I coveted my lyrical contributions, but working with a co-writer was an awakening."

The Giant includes 13 more original songs, including one called "Not Takin Your S#!t," which Vial wrote especially for the Willie K Blues Festival on Maui. "I'm not a blues singer, but he invited us to perform [at the festival several years ago], so we decided to write our own idea of a blues song. Instead of 'my man left me and took everything,' we wrote a 'I'm taking everything, including all your friends, the car AND the dog' song," she said.

Others — "Perfect World," co-written with Kennedy Cantu, for example — are more emotional.

Bringing it back home

It was here in North Texas that Vial got her start as a singer, performing with the band Fatal Attraction, which turned into Blanche Fury, and Vial declared, "Dallas is home. I will never be *from* Maui; I will also be *from* Dallas. I come back at least twice a year to see family and friends, but I always stop by Sue Ellen's."

Vial performed at Sue Ellen's for about seven years, and said it was the men and women who came out for her Friday night performances on the patio there that "propelled me forward through life."

This weekend, The Deborah Vial Band returns to Sue Ellen's — in the bar's new location on Throckmorton on Friday night, and around the corner at the original location on Cedar Springs on Sunday — for an album release party and for the Human Rights Campaign's Throwback Party, honoring local community leader and one of Vial's longtime friends, Dee Pennington, on Sunday.

"Caron is a big HRC donor, so she is always up for anything HRC," Vial said. "As

for me, how could I miss a party on the old Sue's patio? Are you kidding me? I practically grew up on that patio!

"I remember the first time [Sue Ellen's manager] Kathy Jack told me I could start singing on the employee parking lot out in front of Sue's. It was just an asphalt parking lot with mobile metal barricades around it," she remembered. "Cameron, Darla and I set up our equipment, and the Sue's staff put out a bunch of cheap tables and chairs, which were always uneven because they were sitting on top of 30-year-old, pockmarked asphalt. And Friday night on the Sue Ellen's Patio was born, in all of its non-glory. And then we got *real concrete*, with fancy iron railings!"

Vial said it is also important to her to be in Dallas performing to honor Pennington, too. "HRC is giving Dee a Community Impact Award, and she could not be more deserving," she said. "She has spent her lifetime promoting LGBT events and causes." ■

The Giant, the new album from The Deborah Vial Band, is available on CD Baby, iTunes and other digital formats.

Gay pastor/author holding book-signing at COH

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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Scott Jones was a minister at Cathedral of Hope in Oklahoma City, but he was ordained a Southern Baptist minister who first served at Royal Lane Baptist Church in Dallas. But this isn't a story of a minister who came out and lost his family and his job in one fell swoop. It's a story of a pastor coming out and finding the right congregation with supportive help along the way.

Jones has told his story in a new book, *Open*, and he will be at Cathedral of Hope on Sunday, Oct. 21 to sign copies of the book. He will return later to do the same at Royal Lane Baptist.

"I grew up in Oklahoma," Jones said. "I didn't come to a full understanding of myself until I was in my late 20s." He said he always knew he was attracted to men. But he wanted to be a minister, so he decided he'd try to make it work with women.

"I was dating women and wasn't very good at it," he admitted. In fact, he had been engaged to a woman in college, but she ended the relationship.

So it was while serving as the youth minister at Royal Lane Baptist Church from 2003 to 2005 that he began coming out.

At the time the church was affiliated with the Southern Baptist Conference but had a number of LGBT members who served as deacons and in other positions of responsibility within the church. Then in 2010, Royal Lane was kicked out of the Southern

Baptist Conference because they posted on their website that everyone was welcome at their church.

"I'd like to think my personal story helped them come to their decision," Jones said.

He said when he came out to the church's senior pastor, rather than banish him, the pastor simply asked Jones not to rush things. "So," he said, "I spent that time slowly exploring my identity and sexuality."

While he was still at Royal Lane Baptist, Jones spoke to Cathedral of Hope's youth minister, who let him know the Rev. Jo Hudson was looking for someone to fill the position of pastor at Cathedral of Hope Oklahoma City.

"I found it really liberating," Jones said. "After years of lying and worrying about being out and what would happen, I was fully myself and accepted. Church members joked with sexual innuendo in a free, open environment."

Jones met his husband in Oklahoma City. Michael was an Oklahoma State University student participating in the Souforce Equality Ride, and Jones was coordinating a visit to Oklahoma Baptist University.

"This really handsome guy came through the door," Jones said. "Lightning struck."

They were married in a religious ceremony in Oklahoma City presided over by Harry Wooten, Royal Lane Baptist's minister of music.

From Oklahoma City, Jones thought his ministry would take him to a big city on the east or west coast. Instead, he said, "I left Oklahoma City for First Central Congrega-

tional in Omaha."

He said the 162-year-old mainstream downtown UCC church, one of the oldest in the city, is the perfect fit for him. "We're this weird post-gay congregation," he said. "They like that I read a lot. My personality. My husband."

Because he was openly gay as he was looking for a new church, many churches passed him over. First Congregational narrowed its choice of pastors to the gay candidates, he said, because "this highly-qualified pool was being overlooked."

Jones said he and Michael had their legal wedding on a foot bridge over the Missouri River that connects Omaha with Iowa. He said a line was drawn on the bridge marking the state line. Iowa was the second state to legalize same-sex marriage, so couples from Nebraska would step over the line and marry on the bridge on the Iowa side.

Jones said early in his tenure, he began attending the men's group that met on Thursday mornings, but the group wasn't sure what to do with Michael. "Spouses come once a month, but couldn't *he* come to the breakfast?" members of the group debated. (They finally agreed he could).

Jones and his husband wanted to have a child, and for five years they attempted to adopt through the state. When they finally decided that wasn't going to work, they went another route.

"Make sure everyone you know knows you want to adopt," Jones advised. The best man at his wedding used to work with a woman whose sister was pregnant and who wanted to give her baby up for adoption. The adoption took place in Kansas in 2015, where the state had recently made adoptions easier and Kansas had already legalized same-sex marriage through a court ruling before the *Obergefell* decision settled the question nationwide.

"We were there when he was born in a small-town Catholic hospital," Jones said of his son.

And his church's reaction? They were ec-



Scott Jones

static. In fact, the church threw a gigantic baby shower and opened a college fund for their son.

"At that point, we felt we joined a club we didn't know existed," he said. "A woman we barely knew said, 'Hey, I've got extra breast milk.' ... Something UCC worked for was coming to fruition," and everyone in the church was excited about it.

Because of that, he said, their son has a large number of surrogate grandparents and aunts and uncles.

Jones said there were hard parts in his coming out process. His Southern Baptist grandfather, who was a deacon could never accept that his grandson the minister was gay. When he came out, he said, he expected his sister to be happy for him — she wasn't — and he expected his mother to not be OK with it — she was. When he was in 8th grade, she once told him if he was gay, she'd kill herself. She later told him she doesn't remember saying that.

Jones reminds us that coming out can be hard, but even a Southern Baptist minister who happens to be gay can end up in the right congregation. ■

Jones will be at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road, at the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services on Sunday, Oct. 21 to sign copies of his book. The book is available at LiteratiPressOK.com.

Judges overturn jury decision after receiving PAC donation

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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Two appeals court judges received contributions from the Texas Apartment Association's Political Action Committee before overturning a monetary

jury award in a case involving an apartment complex owner, according to attorney Lin McCraw.

Judges Molly Francis and Craig Stoddart, who are both up for re-election this year, were two of three appeals court judges who heard the appeal after receiving the donations. Last week the full court refused to hear the case en banc and are considering

reprimanding McCraw.

In June 2014, Tracy Childers and her friend Mary Trout were raped in Childers' apartment and physically battered by Jarad Alan Wade, who got into the apartment by climbing through a window Childers thought was securely locked.

Wade was arrested by Garland police and is serving a life sentence. Once he was convicted, Childers and Trout turned their attention to the negligence of the apartment complex that improperly fixed the window that allowed Wade access.

The maintenance man who had attempted to fix the window explained that the

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Lin McGraw



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window frame was broken and had been repaired with caulk. The latches supposed to keep it securely closed were attached to soft caulk rather than locking into a metal groove.

Texas law requires property owners to maintain proper door and window locks on their rental units as a matter of safety. And the jury in the negligence suit awarded the two women actual and punitive damages. But the apartment complex appealed, and Francis wrote the opinion overturning the case.

According to McCraw, an appeal isn't supposed to be a new trial, and the court doesn't hear new evidence. What the appeal must be based on is whether the lower court judge made a mistake in a ruling during the trial, or the court may order a new trial when additional evidence is uncovered.

Neither is the case in Childers' lawsuit.

McCraw said there would have been a reason to appeal, for example, had Childers and Trout had argued the complex didn't provide a security patrol on premises, and the judge ruled that there should have been. But they didn't. He said the case was a simple "premises defect" lawsuit rather than a more complex "negligent security case."

Had the women based their case on the apartment's failure to provide an on-premises security officer, they would have had

to prove there was some heightened threat in the area requiring that extra level of protection. But they didn't. They based their claim on the apartment's failure to provide basic security — locking windows — that is required by state law and local ordinance.

In overturning the suit, McCraw said, the judges put every renter at risk in the state of Texas. By overturning the lower court's ruling, Francis has, in essence, overturned state law requiring landlords to provide properly working door and window locks on their rental properties, the attorney said.

McCraw also questions whether the case would have turned out differently had the rape occurred in Highland Park and the victim been a straight young girl rather than two lesbians.

He said the three judge panel that hears a case is supposed to be chosen at random, but is done entirely in secret. And judges, he explained, normally recuse themselves from hearing a case if there is any reason to doubt their impartiality. The donation to Frances and Stoddart, McCraw said, provides that reason to doubt, and while there was nothing illegal or improper about the donation, those judges shouldn't have ruled on a case involving a member of the apartment association that made the donation.

Left with few options, McCraw is considering filing an appeal with the Supreme Court. ■



AGENDA, From Page 6

Chamber members from 4:30-6 p.m. at Two Corks and a Bottle, 2800 Routh St.

• Oct. 25: Point Foundation scholarship fundraiser

The Point Foundation holds the 2018 Dallas Cornerstone reception, from 6-8 p.m. at the Mayfair Sky Club at Turtle Creek, 3401 Lee Parkway in Dallas. John N. DeCiccio Point Scholar Jimmy Ding, who was raised in Flower Mound and now attends the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, will be attending, and interested individuals will have the opportunity to join Point Foundation's Cornerstone Society for a \$500 donation. Registration is free, but pre-registration, online at PointFoundation.org/Dallas-18, is required.

• Oct. 25: GALA Quarterly Quorum

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance of North Texas presents its Quarterly Quorum,

featuring a screening of the documentary *Out of Order*, followed by a question-and-answer session with community leaders, from 6-9 p.m. at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

• Oct. 26: After Dark: Under the Stars

Deserts, cocktails and a performance by Matt Alber benefits the Turtle Creek Chorale from 8-11 p.m. at 3015 at Trinity Groves, 3015 Gulden Lane.

• Oct. 26-28: Lez Talk

A women's empowerment conference bringing together lesbian, transgender, bisexual, pansexual and demisexual women and allies at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. \$50-1,000.

• Oct. 27: Trunk or Treat

Cars in their Halloween costumes at 4 p.m. at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

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Lesbian organizations in Dallas

BY KAREN S. WISELY | Courtesy of the Dallas Way

There is very little written documentation of lesbians in general and lesbians in Dallas specifically, which might make some think lesbians played little to no role in shaping the history of the LGBTQ

Dallas community or the world. Yet, anyone who has been in Dallas for 30 years or more knows, the many contributions the women's community has made to the LGBTQ rights movement. The rights and privileges the LGBTQ community has now were built on the shoulders of great men and women, who sacrificed their families, friends and jobs to ensure freedom for all.

The first lesbian organization in the United States that has been documented was the Daughters of *Billitis*, which was formed in San Francisco in 1955. Their philosophy was to work with gay men's groups to educate, not protest, but there was conflict between the men and women in the clubs, with the women usually given unimportant roles in the joint endeavors. Finally in 1970 the founders of *Billitis* decided to leave the organization, adopting a philosophy of aligning themselves with the growing feminist movement where they could work for women's rights and also for lesbian rights.

The first documented gay organization in Dallas was the Circle of Friends, which started in 1965 in Phil Johnson's house in 1965. From the beginning, women were welcomed and there was always at least one woman in the group. In 1975, in an effort to become more inclusive, the group changed its name to the Dallas Gay Organization, and in 1976 to the Dallas Gay Political Caucus as members expressed a desire to be more politically active.

The name changed once again in 1981 to the Dallas Gay Alliance (DGA), and that name remained until 1993, when the "L" was added — creating the Dallas Gay and



Deb Elder

Lesbian Alliance, or DGLA, with little drama.

In 1986, annoyed with the DGA leadership because of its continued sexism and refusal to use the word *lesbian*, a small group of members, led by Vivienne Armstrong and Louise Young, broke off and formed their own organization: the Dallas Lesbian/Gay Political Coalition (DLGPA).

The fissure that had always existed between women and men continued, although the groups did work together politically — reluctantly sometimes — to fight for the rights of all gays and lesbians.

But by 1984, AIDS had hit Dallas hard, bringing the community together in a way nothing else could. Gay men were dying, but lesbians were losing their brothers and friends to the disease. The gay community leaned more and more on the lesbian community as their leaders began to fall, and the women rose to the challenge, taking on leadership roles in many organizations that provided support physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Today, organizations in the LGBTQ com-



Louise Young, left, and Vivienne Armstrong

munity are consciously diversifying their memberships and becoming more inclusive of all — not just lesbians, but people of color, bisexuals, transgender people and queer people. But in the 1980s, lesbians wanted their own organizations dedicated to the needs and wishes of the lesbian community.

In Dallas, one such organization was Lesbian Visionaries, formed in 1987. It started with a meeting of friends — Deb Elder, Lauren Ramsay, Patty Sipe and Kathy Cloninger — who determined the foundation from which the organization could grow. The first meeting after that, 50 women came to talk about common individual and community goals. They determined that they wanted to "[e]stablish a networking group of formal and informal lesbian leaders to stress the need for coalition and organization of the lesbian community; provide through this group a forum for discussion of lesbian issues (as in 'what are our issues?') and provide energy to a process of creative visualization and planning for action," according to minutes of this first meeting.

Several other known lesbians were mentioned as possible members and leaders of the new organization, as well.

Lesbian Visionaries grew out of this meeting with a goal to "determine what lesbians need and want as individuals and as a community," Deb Elder, a spokesperson for the group, told *Dallas Voice* in March 1987. Within a year, the Lesbian Information Line (LIL) telephone line was in place to provide information about upcoming events and activities for women. The organization also worked with Among Friends to bring to fruition the first statewide lesbian confer-

ence, held in May 1988 in Dallas.

There are many other organizations that were formed by and for lesbians in Dallas, but their histories remain largely unwritten. The Women's Motorcycle Club was the first such organization, and aside from riding their bikes together, the members put on shows to raise funds for the AIDS community. Lory Masters and Molly Behannon established The Extra Mile Award, an annual program to recognize women who had "gone the extra mile" in service to the community.

Other organizations that were created included, Women Together, North Texas Women's Softball Association and The Women's Chorus, which is still active and still singing today. Each group mentioned, and many others that weren't, all deserve their own column or book, but there is little to no documentation about most of these groups — other than the word-of-mouth stories of those who "remember when."

But soon there won't be anyone still alive who "remembers when" and the stories of these groups. That's why it is so important to record that history now, to go back and collect your memories and talk about them.

The Dallas Way can help you do that. We gather, organize, produce the history of the LGBTQ community, through taped interviews, oral histories and taking in stories that you have written yourself. Everything is sent to the University of North Texas for archiving and put on the Texas History portal, where it cannot be destroyed or forgotten.

This article is based on Karen S. Wisely's thesis prepared in 2011 for her Master of Arts degree from the University of North Texas.

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communityvoices

The Kavanaugh Window

If you've ever wanted to commit sexual assault, now is your chance. I mean, has there ever been a better time, especially for men assaulting women? We are in the midst of the Kavanaugh Window, where no accusation of sexual assault, no matter how credible, will be believed.

After all, any woman accusing any man, especially any powerful man, will just be accused of jumping on the #MeToo bandwagon.

So go get your 'sault on. And, honestly, the weirder the better. Sexual assault is shame-inducing and demoralizing all on its own, but if you can make the experience extra embarrassing, then that makes it even less likely to be reported at all!

Not that you have to worry, because people won't believe her even if she does report. You could do something really crazy — like ask her, "Who has put pubic hair on my Coke [can]?" Or tell her that you want to rub her [expletive] with a falafel.

Shout out to Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and celebrity "news" host Bill O'Reilly, who were accused of those very things respectively. And terrible things happened to them like ...let me check my list ... getting confirmed to the Supreme Court and continuing to be paid outlandish sums for pretending to be a journalist. Harsh!

Or maybe you committed a smidge or two of sexual assault in your past, say as a young child of 17 who couldn't have possibly known that trying to make sex with a girl who didn't want to make sex with you was in any way wrong.

Well, you're in luck, too, because attempted rape doesn't count if you were in high school. (It's also super helpful to be white and rich.)

Now, if you're a man and you want to sexually assault other males — well, that is not recommended, but who knows? Maybe the sexual assault tide raises all sexual assault boats. Then again, some men tend to take that sort of thing marginally more seriously, or at least are a lot less concerned about punishing a homo than, you know, a "normal" guy who rapes.

If I seem angry, then sorry, not sorry — BECAUSE I AM ANGRY, AND YES, I AM YELLING!

With Brett Kavanaugh confirmed to the Supreme Court, where he and Clarence Thomas can drink all the Cokes they want as



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

they vote to take away a woman's right to make decisions about her own body, after being nominated by president who has himself been accused of sexual assault and harassment many times over and who was caught

on tape bragging about grabbing women "by the pussy," we are saying to women and men who have been sexually assaulted, "You do not matter. We do not see you; we do not hear you; we do not care."

#HimToo is trending on Twitter — the idea is that men are the real victims here. Men have to live in constant fear that they will be falsely accused.

In reality, men are much more likely to be sexually assaulted themselves than falsely accused of sexual assault. The idea that women make this stuff up for attention is insane. But it's a lot easier to believe that than to actually address America's systemic rape culture problem.

Thankfully, if you search for #HimToo on Twitter you find mostly Tweets that begin "This is my son" with pictures of people who are, in fact, not the users' sons, in order to mock a post purportedly by a mother who tweeted a picture of her son in a sail-

or suit, claiming that "he won't go on solo dates due to the current climate of false sexual accusations by radical feminists with an axe to grind. I VOTE."

The responses — including one from her son refuting Mom's claims — are truly hilarious.

And, man, I need to laugh, because I feel like breaking something. But I can't come up with anything worth breaking compared to democracy. America is broken. And as far as I can tell, this break isn't going to ever fully heal.

I'm not saying America will never walk again. But if we ever get back on our feet, we will always have a noticeable limp.

We will always have a reminder of what happened when we were careless. When we were cruel. When we didn't #BelieveWomen. When we didn't #BelieveSurvivors. When we went home with the drunkest guy at the party — the guy who'd spent the night boasting about sexual assault, making fun of disabled people, praising Nazis, and gambling with other people's money — handed him the keys and said, "I'll sleep while you drive."

Wake. Up. And. Vote!

Everything — and everyone — depends on it.

D'Anne Witkowski is a poet, writer and comedian living in Michigan with her wife and son. She has been writing about LGBT politics for over a decade. Follow her on Twitter @MamaDWitkowski.



Wilde about Rupert

At a crisis point in his career, out star Rupert Everett decided to make his own luck by writing, directing and starring in the life of Oscar Wilde

Rupert Everett not only stars as the fading dandy Oscar Wilde in 'The Happy Prince,' he wrote it and makes his directorial debut ... all the great success.

At the height of Rupert Everett's stardom, he was costarring alongside Julia Roberts in *My Best Friend's Wedding* and opposite one of his best friends, Madonna, in *The Next Best Thing* and voicing the character of Prince Charming in the *Shrek* movies. But the most interesting thing on Everett's resume is not a movie role, rather for what he did in 1989, which was unprecedented then: he was one of the first major actors to come out of the closet.

And if he had to do it all over again, would he have done it when he did?

"Yes, because I loved going to clubs and discos and stuff like that. And there was never that question for me to lead that kind of closeted gay life that might be quite fun, you know, where you're just in your own space, and you order in, or whatever it is," Everett says, breaking out into a mischievous laugh. "I loved the whole gay culture. So, for me, to even consider

anything other than being out wasn't an option. Also, if you're going to lie about yourself, it's a tough thing. It's a negation of yourself."

We're chatting this day because Everett is promoting his latest film, *The Happy Prince* — a movie based on the later years of Oscar Wilde's life, which Everett wrote, directed and stars in. Why the fascination with the Victorian bon vivant?

"My fascination with Oscar Wilde began when I was 6 years old and my mother read me *The Happy Prince* at night in bed," he recalls. "I remember it very well. I was enraptured by the story and inconsolable at the end. Coming from a military family with a distinctly pre-Freudian worldview ... it was probably the first time I heard about love and suffering and that there was a terrible price to be paid for it. *The Happy Prince* was a turning point."

Everett moved to London in 1975, and as difficult as it is to imagine now, gay sex

had only been legal for seven years. "The police — making the most of the ambiguity in the 1967 law — continued to raid and arrest people for homosexual acts in public and so there was a palpable feeling that we were stepping in Oscar's freshly trodden footprints on those unlucky occasions when we were herded into paddy wagons and taken down to the police station for the night," Everett says. The knowledge even informed his career choices.

"Later I became an actor and performed in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. It was a great success. When an actor discovers a writer who really works for him — that he can perform well and make his own — it is the beginning of a treasured relationship," he says. "Something between me and the text sparked. A few years later I performed *The Importance of Being Earnest* [in French] at the Theatre National de Chaillot in Paris and then made two films from Wilde plays: *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance*

of Being Earnest."

It was around that time that his career "dried up — literally evaporated overnight," he says. And so Everett realized he needed to make his own opportunities.

"I began to write; I decided to create a role for myself. If no one else would employ me I would employ myself," he says. "Oscar Wilde seemed to be the ideal character — not the Wilde of folklore, the iconic family man, the life and soul of the café royal, but a different Wilde — the fallen star, the last great vagabond of the 19th century, punished and crushed by society, yet somehow surviving. I would write the *Passion of Wilde*!"

Writing it was one thing; getting it made was another.

"After I had been turned down by almost every director of note, I decided to make the film myself," Everett says. "If

On the edge of victory

From tragedy to triumph, Randy Gardner's life and career could make for a play... and in fact, it is



In 1979, the American figure skating pairs team of Randy Gardner and Tai Babilonia were at a peak — of skill and of popularity. Fast becoming household names, they had won four U.S. Figure Skating Championships, placed fifth in the 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, and were favored to win Olympic gold in 1980 in Lake Placid. But first there was a crucial performance to conquer: the final round of the

World Figure Skating Championship. The YouTube video showing that particular performance shows a team at the top of their game. The resolution may be a bit grainy, the hairstyles a wee dated, but it's all there: Gardner and Babilonia's opening power moves — a powerful throw triple Salchow; a confident split double twist; an elegant swan

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What a pair!

Out North Texas-based figure skater Tim LeDuc and his pairs partner Ashley Cain are heating up the ice

Despite the misconception that figure skating is super gay, the actual, competitive skating world is a conservative one with precious few out athletes. At the Winter Olympic Games earlier this year, there were only two openly gay skaters: Canadian pairs champion Eric Radford and America's own Adam Rippon.

But you don't have to look further than North Texas to find out pairs figure skater Timothy LeDuc who, with his partner Ashley Cain, are representin' for equality on and off the ice.

Autumn has been more than just a whacked whirlwind for the twosome. In just one week they achieved twin wins on the International Skating Union's Challenger Series, taking home their first international gold medal at the U.S. International Figure Skating Classic in Salt Lake

City (Sept. 14), then whipping around the world to grab gold at the Ondrej Nepela Trophy in Bratislava, Slovakia (Sept. 21).

That's enough to make you flutz your lutz. But Cain and LeDuc did a quick hair flip and booked it back from Europe to Euless, where they train. (Coaches Darlene and Peter Cain — Ashley's mother and father — have built their program into a well-known elite facility at Dr Pepper Star Center that attracts top-tier skaters from around the world.) But despite the flurry of achievement, they took just two recovery days before heading right back into training. This season, U.S. Figure Skating awarded Cain and LeDuc two plum assignments on the prestigious Grand Prix circuit. First up — starting Oct. 19 — is the highly coveted Skate America title in Everett, Wash.

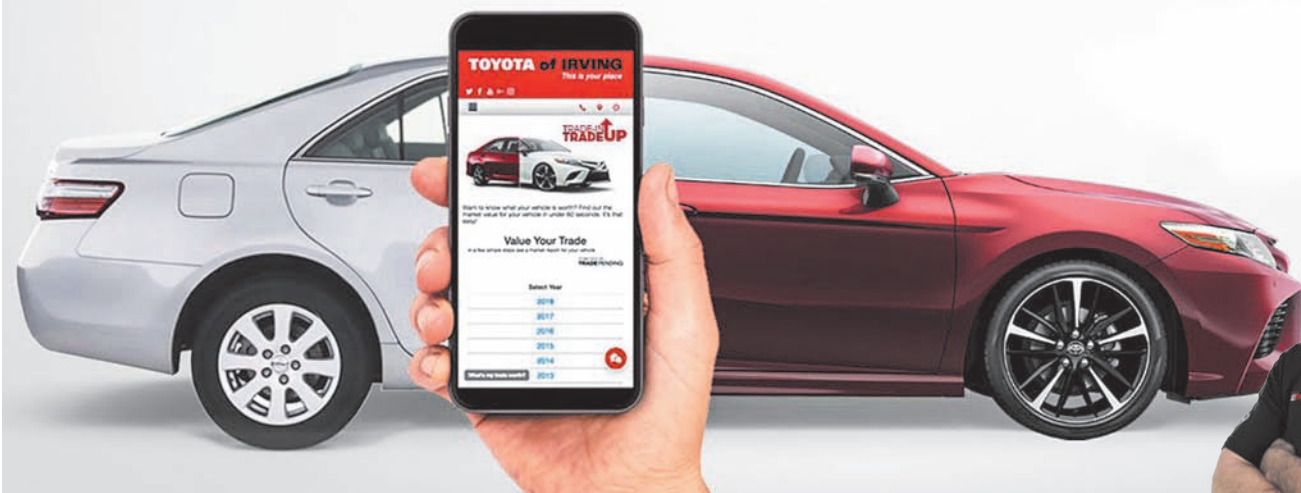
Although still a new team (they began



LeDuc and Cain are quite a pair! (Photo courtesy Robin Ritoss)

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competitions we've hit them all and done them like we practiced. We do not want to miss our jumps."

With so many hours training and competing, what do they miss? For Cain it isn't romance. She was recently engaged to a model-handsome young man who works in the oil industry. Somehow, with all the travel and busy schedules, plans are moving ahead for the June wedding. And LeDuc won't be left out. He'll be right there... as a bridesmaid!

LeDuc's life off-ice takes him in another direction. "This year I've spent a lot of my free time volunteering," he says. "DFW

Fuse is a program of the Resource Center and I'm one of their corporate volunteers. We have programming six days a week. It's an empowerment program for boys who like boys ages 18 to 29 and focuses on safer sex and finding a safe place in the community that is away from drugs and alcohol."

A confident, out gay man who is also a competitive figure skater would have been verboten not so long ago. Rippon certainly left the 2018 Winter Games with a bronze medal and a burgeoning international fan base. He may have also helped kick open the closet door for other

skaters. Team USA ice dancer Karina Manta recently came out as the "first queer woman to be an active competitor in figure skating," says LeDuc, and "part of the first openly gay team in the sport." Her partner, Joseph Johnson, is also openly gay and the team will be competing at Skate America. It's doubtful there will be a gay wave sensed around the skating world, but, baby steps. "There is more openness now" says Cain. "You can feel it at competitions."

With a fierce ally in Cain, LeDuc has very definite ideas about engagement

■ PAIR Page 23

their partnership in May 2016), Cain and LeDuc are no longer the rookies. Since winning bronze medals at the 2017 U.S. Nationals and placing fourth at the 2018 competition this past January, they immediately took Silver at the Four Continents Championships in Taipei City and were on the reserve list for the Pyeong-Chang Olympics and 2018 Worlds. They haven't stopped since.

With two new gold medals this season and added recognition on the international scene, Cain and LeDuc are ready to up the ante going into the Grand Prix competitions.

"We're really excited going into Skate America" LeDuc says. "We've had a great season so far. Our names are out there, and we're confident with our programs. We want to keep the season building, and we really think we can bring home two medals at both our events."

Cain is also feeling good about the program elements. "I'm so happy with where our jumps are" she says. "At the last two

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Valley of the dolls

A new old 'Doll's House' at WTT; being gay in Uptown; DTC returns to Truvy's

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

Who can honestly account for micro-trends in theater? Mass hypnosis? Zeitgeist? Cultural tipping points? What could really explain why WaterTower Theatre opened this week a new adaptation of Ibsen's 1879 drama *A Doll's House* just weeks before Stage West presents its version of Lucas Hnath's *A Doll's House, Part 2* (which purports to update the story of Nora); and just a few months after Blake Hackler wrote his own redux of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (rebranded *Enemies/People*) for Second Thought? I guess chalk it up to the adage, where there's a will, there's a Norway.

There certainly could be a baseline to explain, or even just dimly illuminate, this explosion. Ibsen is credited as the father of modernism in theater, whose plays attacked social issues among mostly ordinary (though comparatively well-heeled) people like sexual equality and the environment at a time when most plays were silly melodramas, light musical revues or high-falutin tragedy among royals. And here in the first quarter of the 21st century, those same issues resonate, perhaps even more strongly. Look no further than Brett Kavanaugh, Harvey Weinstein and climate change deniers to swallow your hearty dose of sad reality.

The current political system would certainly justify someone like Joanie Schultz, artistic director at WTT, to write her own adaptation of the first feminist stagebound

tract since *Lysistrata* for the MeToo era. (And updating really is called for over mere revival; Ibsen might have been modern, but modern to 140 years ago; the contemporary audience has different sensibilities.) And so, we are treated to a brisk 90-minute revisit to the Helmer house, in a Norwegian town where Nora (Kate Paulsen) appears to be a spendthrift and flibbertigibbet, whose wasteful purchases of trinkets and indulgences lead her loving but chastising banker-husband Torvald (Sam Henderson) to castigate her like a child run loose in a candy store.

The sudden arrival of Nora's childhood friend Kristine (Gloria Benavides), rebounding from the financially devastating death of her husband, leads Nora to confess that she's not the improvident spender she appears. She's actually secretly paying off a loan she fraudulently obtained when Torvald was near death to pay for his recovery and his from her husband. Now her lender, Krogstad (Clay Wheeler), is threatening her with exposure unless he can convince Torvald to spare his job.

The coincidences and conceits fly fast and loose in *A Doll's House*, the plot barely rises above a *Perils of Pauline*-level knuckle-biter, but that's because its goalposts are character and society more than story. Nora is a bit naive and behaves rashly; she's also trying her best in a world where women without men or money are all but invisible. She forged her dying father's

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Terry Martin plays nine roles in 'Absolute Brightness.'

signature to save her husband's life and has paid back the loan arduously — how can that kind of sacrifice be condemned by the law?

While Krogstad is a blackmailer, it's Torvald whom we come to see as the actual villain, a man who infantilizes women (Nora is always his "squirrel" or his "songbird") and smothers her self-realization behind a patriarchal facade. Why shouldn't Nora be allowed to make mistakes... or even behave nobly? There are moments in this smart, lovely production when Torvald seems not some 19th century snob but a Ted Cruz Republican aghast at the very notion that a mere woman should be allowed to accuse an *actual judge* of sexual assault!

Unfortunately, Henderson's performance strikes many discordant notes along the way; he seems wooden and robotic, not patronizing and superior. But Paulsen — with her darting eyes, suppressed nervousness and eventual resolve — carries the show (though Benavides does noticeably excellent work in her scenes). Her Nora, despite some frustrating decision, undergoes a transformation by the end, one made more believable by her performance than in Ibsen's plotting. Her refusal to be someone's thing anymore — a doll being toyed with in a stranger's house — feels very contemporary. It also stings when you look at the Supreme Court and

realize not a whole lot *has* changed besides her.

The opening night of *A Doll's House* was preceded by the dedication of the space at WTT as the Terry Martin Mainstage, in honor of the company's former artistic director. But to see the real Terry Martin tearing it up himself onstage, head over to Bryant Hall on the Kalita Humphreys campus this weekend for the last few performances of *The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey* (which is performed, in rep with *Straight*, as part of Uptown Players' Gay History Month Festival). Nine characters — male and female, young and old — appear in the play... all of them in the person of Martin.

One-actor plays are often labeled (when done well) as tour-de-forces, but Martin's skill as an actor doesn't make this a showy vanity project but a thoughtful, often humorous look at a hate crime and its unexpectedly transformative effect on a Jersey town.

The story is told from the POV of Chuck DeSantis, an experienced police detective, who is approached by Ellen, a blowsy salon owner and her moody daughter Phoebe about the disappearance of a boy who had been living with them. Leonard was only about 13 — a flamboyant, demonstrative kid who had already lived a hard life, but who embraced the rainbow with gus-

■ DOLL Page 24

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I had been in possession of a crystal ball I would not have embarked on such a journey. It took 10 years to get to preproduction.

“I didn’t think of immersing myself fully in the beginning, because I never wanted to be the director,” he continues. “I had written a couple of books [about Oscar Wilde, in 2000 and 2005], and I really wanted to write a script in which I could act and maybe resuscitate my career to a certain extent. So, Oscar Wilde seemed to be the perfect character in that he’s a great inspiration to me — the patron saint figure in a way. After sending the screenplay to a number of directors and seeing them all pass on the project, I realized if a screenplay is not directed it is nothing. You can’t publish it in a magazine. It’s nothing. And I thought, I’m going to do it myself. And that’s what happened.”

The version of Oscar Wilde’s life that Everett tells is both depressing and sad, as it focuses on the final years of his life, following his late-release from jail, after having been sent there for engaging in sodomy. Much of the film features Wilde on his deathbed, recalling the horrible atrocities that befell him.

“I focused on the latter part of Wilde’s

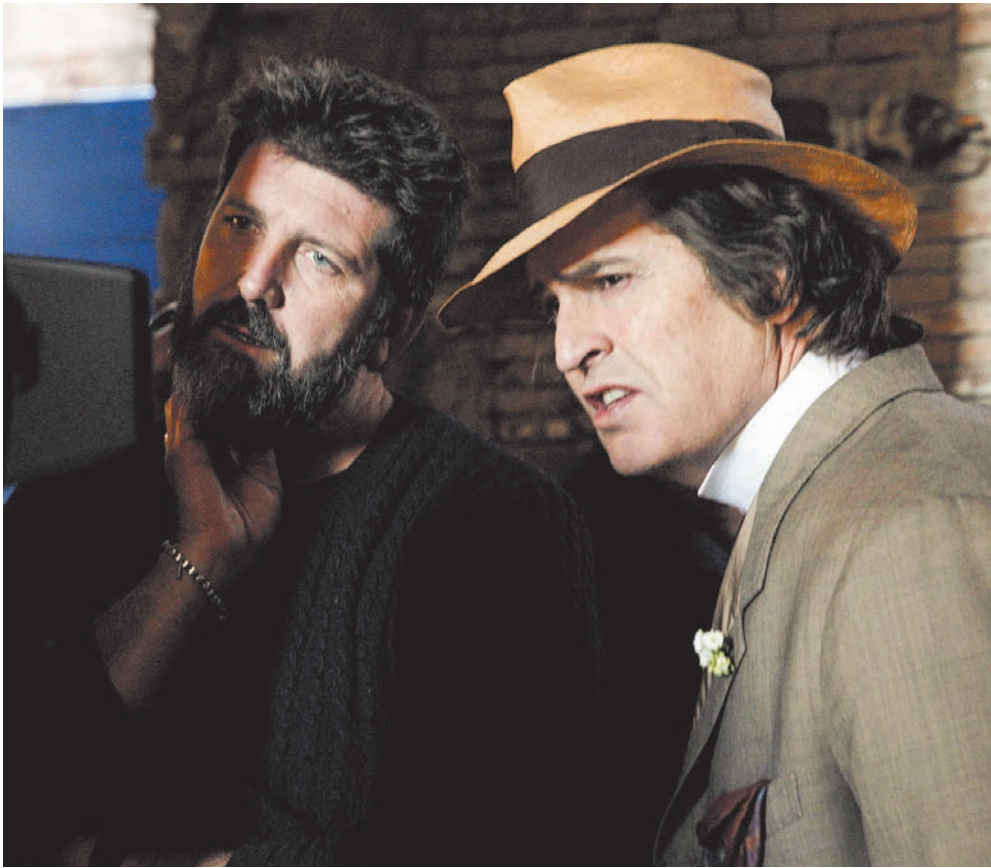
life partly because the other three films about him focus on the successful part of his life, and I think that is a little bit of an easy get out for people to just look at the good part,” Everett says. “What society did to him was this: They put him in prison, and then they imprisoned him in liberty, and it happened just for the fact of being a homosexual man. So, for me, as a homosexual man, this is the important part of the story. It’s like the Passion of Oscar, like Christians have The Passion of Christ. And seeing Wilde go from one stage to another is a great inspiration. And I think he was also amazing in his exile. He was never a victim.”

Having made his directorial debut, albeit with reservations, would he direct another film?

“I would,” he says. “It’s kind of like childbirth when you’re directing a movie. You think when you’re in labor, ‘Oh, god, I’m never doing this again.’ But as soon as the baby is out of the bag, you think, I can’t remember all that pain. I’m now bristling with new ideas.”

At 59, this summer Everett moved back to England to help take care of his elderly mother.

“It’s is like going back in the closet!” he



Everett directs himself in ‘Happy Prince’

says with a chuckle. “You go immediately back to the relationship you had when you were 14, and my mum doesn’t realize that I’m 59, and she kind of orders me around.

I have to close windows, open bottles and do everything. That is quite difficult. But it’s nice.”

— Tim Nasson

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lift — followed by the last few moments of their polished precision. Synchronous, skillful, sublime. They *nailed* it.

Their dominating performance in that final round became only the second U.S. pair to ever win a World Figure Skating Championship — a title second only to the Olympics as far as prestige goes. They were at the top of their talent and athletic ability.

And yet Gardner couldn't come out. "I was keeping a secret, and I was OK doing that," he told us in a recent phone conversation. "The skating overshadowed everything."

It was a different time back then. Even post-Stonewall, out athletes were few and far between, and those few who came out (or were outed) were publicly ostracized, losing friends, sponsorships and careers. (The 1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal also saw another American athlete achieve great acclaim: Bruce Jenner. He wouldn't come out as trans until 2015.) The AIDS crisis was just beginning in 1980, triggering a new wave of hatred and fear of gay men. Let's just say closet doors weren't exactly busting open.

Gardner did eventually come out publicly, in 2006, after an incredibly successful career... and several decades of a life far from ordinary. He's in a new confessional performance piece called *Go Figure! The Randy Gardner Story*, co-written and directed by Joshua Ravetch (co-author of Carrie Fisher's *Wishful Drinking*).

Go Figure! focuses on Gardner's fascinating career — everything from his and Babilonia's beginnings as a preteen skating pair (they have been close ever since; she even appears in the show with him) to their most crushing moment: the 1980 Olympics. Favored heavily to win the gold, Gardner and Babilonia were forced to withdraw when Gardner sustained an injury. It was supposed to be the pinnacle of their career; instead, it was their lowest moment.

"It was devastating," Gardner says. "I went on autopilot. The thing in my mind was 'Am I ever going to skate again?'"

The play covers other parts of Gardner's life as well: coming out; surviving gay-conversion therapy; and, at age 40, discovering he was adopted... and that his conception was the result of his mother being raped. Hardly the stuff of sunny self-reflection.

"It's emotional. I choke up sometimes doing it," Gardner says. "But if you're gonna get up there and tell your story, you might as well dig deep."

While his story does have its heavy parts, it's tempered by appearances by Babilonia and former skating icon Dorothy Hamill (of the famous "Dorothy Hamill wedge" hair style that was the "Rachel"

of its day), along with tales of meeting luminaries and the sometimes-wild world of figure skating.

"I laugh a lot in it, and the audience laughs along with me," Gardner says. "It's not just an hour and half of sadness."

Once Gardner did come out, when he was free of career pressures and the world was a different place, it was a relief. "I was comfortable with myself, I was ready, and I didn't fear anything," he says. "No regrets."

— Jonanna Widner ■

within the community. "To focus solely on gay liberation ignores the intersectionality of a lot of people. So to go after gay and queer liberation you have to also tackle racism and patriarchy and some of the capitalism that really pushes down queer people," he says. "I'm just dipping my toe into the water, but activism is something I definitely want to become more involved with in the future."

Cain and LeDuc are a true team, bringing beauty, brains and ability together in a seemingly perfect package. But they're

also fun and authentically goofy. The sport of figure skating is glam and glitz mixed with plenty of grit. After exhausting days at the rink, Cain and LeDuc often help themselves, and the other skaters, decompress with self-deprecating foolishness. A particularly popular method of letting off steam and thawing the ice? Perfecting a flawless runway walk. Shantay, you stay.

— Coy Covington ■

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to. When he goes missing, DeSantis agrees to look into the matter but doesn't make it much of a priority... until Ellen hounds him. Just because he was a little gay orphan doesn't mean his life wasn't worth celebrating. He's owed justice. And by the end of its 75 minutes, justice is achieved.

As a mystery, the play is adequately plotted, but it's the way playwright James Lecesne doles out the information — in clues projected on a screen and laid out on a table live as evidence — and how Martin will spin around to become different char-



The cast of 'Steel Magnolias.'
(Photo courtesy Karen Almond)

acters (a nosy neighbor, an elderly immigrant clockmaker, a hostile classmate) to become yet another Jerseyite that keeps the play so vivid and surprising.

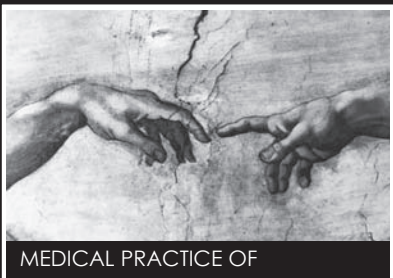
There's just one set for *A Doll's House* and *Absolute Brightness*, as well as another play closing this weekend, Dallas Theater Center's *Steel Magnolias* at the Wyly. I know a ton of people who, upon learning that DTC was reviving this community-theater staple for its season-opener, sniffed and sneered at the craven unambitiousness of this comedy-drama buzzsaw about six women in a Louisiana beauty parlor, circa mid-'80s. Yes, it's mawkish. Yes, it's about as familiar as pumpkin-spiced latte. But it's also a solidly constructed tearjerker with tons of memorable lines. (If you're gay, you don't need me to tell you any of them; you already know, Steve.) This gossipy Southern clucker may not be Tennessee Williams — heck, it may not even be Tennessee Ernie Ford — but its charms ooze through.

And not, in this production, where you might expect. The casting of Liz Mikel as Truvy seems misguided; she's such a stentorian powerhouse, you never believe she's the conspiratorial confidant with whom people share their intimate secrets, and Tiana Kaye Blair seems wrong as the headstrong young girl who won't let a weak body slow her down. But they are compensated by good work from Sally Nystuen-Vahle as the ornery Ouizer and Ana Hagedorn as the bubblegum-brained new cut-and-curl girl at Truvy's. By the end, when the light comedy takes a dark turn, I dare you not to choke up. Manipulative? Maybe. But effective.

A Doll's House at the Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through Nov. 4. WaterTowerTheatre.org. *The Absolute Brightness* of Leonard Pelkey (*Gay History Month Festival*) at Bryant Hall on the Kalita Humphreys campus, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd, Through Sunday. UptownPlayers.org. *Steel Magnolias* at the Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Sunday. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

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Friday 10.19 — Saturday 10.20

Jaston Williams delves once again into the Texas psyche in 'Clear to Partly Crazy'

Jaston Williams has made a career out of parsing the lovable idiocracy that is the Lone Star State, most memorably in his series of plays (co-written with acting partner Joe Sears) about Greater Tuna, the third smallest town in Texas. But he's also ventured out on his own with several one-man shows, the latest of which, *Clear to Partly Crazy*, debuts at the Eisemann this weekend. Williams dissects dear-to-his-heart Texas topics, including cheerleading, tornadoes and insane relations. The premiere will get three performances only this weekend.

DEETS: Eisemann Center for Performing Arts, 23521 Performance Drive, Richardson. Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m., Saturday matinee at 2 p.m. EisemannCenter.com.

LIFE+STYLE

best bets

Friday 10.19 — Sunday 10.28

Here we go again! 'Mamma Mia' boogies into Brick Road

It's been a minute since Dallas audiences have seen actress-singer Patty Breckenridge onstage, but that draught was bound to end, given the right circumstances. And what could be better circumstances than having her pair with



Friday 10.19 — Sunday 11.04

Dallas Opera continues season with an all-time favorite: Bizet's 'Carmen'

The bread-and-butter of opera companies, it's said, is the A-B-Cs: *Aida*, *Boheme* (or *Butterfly*)

and *Carmen*. This Bizet classic, about a seductive gypsy woman who cannot be tamed, even by the man who loves her, features the "Habanera," perhaps the most famous aria in all opera. Stephanie d'Oustrac plays the title role, and DO favorite Stephen Costello plays Don Jose. Emmanuel Villaume conducts.

DEETS: Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Oct. 19, 21, 24, 27, Nov. 2 and Nov. 4. DallasOpera.org.

fellow local legends Cara Statham-Serber and Sara Shelby-Martin for the campstastic jukebox musical *Mamma Mia!* Breckenridge

plays the mom of a daughter about to get married, and Statham-Serber and Shelby-Martin play her besties, all of whom sing ABBA songs! It's the latest production from the new Plano-based company Brick Road Theatre.

DEETS: Courtyard Theatre, 1509 H Ave., Plano. BrickRoadTheatre.org.



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calendar highlights



Magicians and showmen perform amazing acts of legerdemain in 'The Illusionists' at Bass Hall this weekend.

ARTSWEEK

THEATER

Clear to Partly Crazy. Legendary Texas playwright and actor Jaston Williams (of *Greater Tuna* fame) in the North Texas debut of his newest one-man memoir for three performances only. Eisemann Center for Performing Arts. 2351 Performance Drive, Richardson. Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinee at 2 p.m. EisemannCenter.com.

Gay History Month Play Festival. Uptown Players presents two more plays in commemoration of Gay History Month: *The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey* and *Straight*. Both are in Bryant Hall on the Kalita Humphreys campus, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. *Final weekend.* UptownPlayers.org.

The Illusionists: Live from Broadway. A magical evening of daredevils, card tricks, sleight-of-hand and mystery. Infectiously fun. Bass Performance Hall, 535 Commerce St., Fort Worth. Oct. 19–20. BassHall.com.

On the Verge. Victorian women travel through time as explorers. *Final weekend.* Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Drive. WingspanTheatre.com.

Radiant Vermin. Philip Ridley (*The Pitchfork Disney*, *Vincent River*, *The Fastest Clock in the Universe*) wrote this 2015 play, presented by Kitchen Dog Theater and to kick off its 2018–19 season. Trinity River Arts Center, 2200 N. Stemmons Freeway. Through Oct. 28. KitcheDogTheater.org.

Steel Magnolias. The classic tearjerker and gay fave, about six women in a beauty parlor in

Louisiana. *Final weekend.* Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

OPERA

Carmen. The classic by Bizet, about a fiery woman and the man who cannot resist her. Presented by the Dallas Opera. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Through Nov. 4. DallasOpera.org.

The Flying Dutchman. Emmanuel Villaume conducts Wagner's mysterious romantic fantasy, with Greer Grimsley as the cursed captain. *Final weekend.* Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. DallasOpera.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.



SATURDAY 10.20

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.

FUNDRAISER

Flashback to the '80s. A retro fundraiser for AIN. Lofty Spaces, 816 Montgomery St. 7–11 p.m.

MONDAY 10.22

CABARET

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

TUESDAY 10.23

FILM

Gods and Monsters. Bill Condon won an Oscar for his screenplay about the final days of pioneering film director James Whale (Ian McKellen), who was openly gay in early Hollywood. Screens as part of the Tuesday Big Movie New Classic Series, which now includes a matinee. Landmark's Magnolia Theatre in the West Village, 3699 McKinney Ave. Screens at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 10.24

COMMUNITY

The Queer Off!! Weekly variety show with 14 contestants, 12 weeks and one eventual winner. Sue Ellen's, 3014 Throckmorton Road. 10 p.m.

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.

STATE FAIR

State Fair of Texas. Annual celebration of livestock, fried foods and other aspects of Texas culture. *Final weekend.* BigTex.com.

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

FRIDAY 10.19

COMMUNITY

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

THURSDAY 10.25

CABARET

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

this week's solution

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Ask Howard

How to do the wrong thing right

Pumpkins, grinning pumpkins everywhere! How in the hell did the most ridiculous of holidays ever invented — and not even a *real* holiday, mind you, but just some prefabbed nonsense for hawking tooth decay along with otherwise utterly useless, giant orange bulbous squashes — end up hogging the lion's share of calendrical shelf-space? Halloween, for four solid months — from the very stroke of July 5 all the way up through to Nov. 1 — has the holiday merchandise run-of-the-show all to itself, impeded only by those insignificant “holiday” glitches known as, respectively, Labor Day and Columbus Day, both of them cash-cow duds, with the latter conjuring up no celebratory imagery whatsoever, and the former (if celebrated at all outside guild halls and political rallies) requiring only some charcoal briquettes leftover from the 4th of July, and maybe an appearance of Old Glory herself.... also recycled from the 4th. All the way forward from Independence Day fireworks up to icicles and frostbite, no matter which way I look or wherever I am, fang-mouthed, tiresome jack-o-lanterns stare hollowly back at me these dwindling days of October, reinforcing my every fresh concern about my evermore tired, old dazed orange American Shorthair, Boo, who, at the edge of 18 now (which equates to a mere sprightly 89 in human years) is suddenly showing every hoary minute of his octogenarian decrepitude.

Way back in the summer of 2001, the Katy Trail — which runs alongside my building — was still under construction and on weekends was virtually empty of all humans, allowing me to enjoy the former train tracks for my own private contemplations; whereupon one sunshiny, autumnal Saturday afternoon, I spotted glimmering in the distance an orange kitten perched primly in the middle of freshly paved asphalt, prettier than a pumpkin tartlet, apparently there awaiting patiently for my august arrival. “Murp!” he greeted me. “Well, hey there, little Boo,” smiled I, cupping him up and tickling his velvety ears. “Where’s your mother?” I glanced about. “Or anybody at all, Boo, for that matter?” (Where the “Boo” came from, I haven’t a clue.)

Boo wasn’t in the slightest distressed; obviously, he hadn’t been abandoned too very long — a couple minutes, at most. Strangely, too, I’d been expecting for weeks to find a kitten, even anticipating what color it would be, albeit admittedly, orange never quite manifested into focus as one of my options. Who can explain premonitions? Yet, as if by the wave of a magic ginger Ron Weasley wand, here now was amber-eyed, orange Boo; thus, home we sauntered, up to my upper-floor high-rise corner apartment, from where Boo has but rarely deigned to view that world he left beneath him since. Being most miraculously spared from certain roadkill death in a gutter or ditch, I chose for Boo an emperor’s name: Diocletian. (Look it up, bois.) Nevertheless, His Imperial Majesty has always been called just, simply, “Boo,” who took to his newfound, charmed existence in the same way, oh, the late Alva Vanderbilt — chief squanderer of America’s greatest family fortune ever— describes her first traveling experience via private railroad car: “It requires no getting used to; one takes to it immediately.”) Indeed, the first five years of

Boo’s new life were nothing less than gilded... until, one fine spring day entered “the creature.”

But first, a question: Occasionally, in between my cracks of infidelity-versus-endowment questions, I’ll receive a few random, category-defying, pet queries; not often, but enough here and there to choose selectively for this issue’s uncharacteristically G-rated column — we’re going inspirational here, men, and for those of you nearing retirement, pay closer attention; heck, my words may even be helpful to some of you, for once. We’ll come back to grizzled Boo, plus his ball-an-chain nemesis in just a tomcat moment here; meanwhile, let’s get all animalistic right to it.

Dear Howard: I’ve been styling hair for more than 30 years. My retirement’s looming, so I’m trying to figure out some kind of geezer “hobby/business” that’ll serve the dual purpose of both keeping boredom at bay and my bank account bob-bob-bobbing along, except, I’m too old to hook. All joking aside, my only real extracurricular *passion* is dogs, particularly Miniature Dachshunds. I’ve owned at least one, if not a pair of them at a time, ever since I was 9. I’ve already got a well-fenced-in backyard; basically, I’m just a CKC certification application away from being able to open a Miniature Dachshund adoption agency: Toy Dachshunds are what they’re more commonly called, but that’s purely a marketing term, not a recognized designation. CKC, by the way, stands for Continental Kennel Club.

Best of all, I’ve discovered the web moniker, DachshundCentral, was available, so I bought the rights to it. Now, all I need’s a couple sire (father) dogs and a matching number of child-bearing dams (mothers), plus a pretty “Little Wieners” website, and I’m off to the races — a part-time business that not only keeps a happy grin on my face with my pants still on, but at last I’ll get to be a proud family man as well, after all! Do you see a downside here, Howard, that maybe I’ve somehow missed? — **Wienerlicious**

Dear Weenie Bob: None that I can think of; however, the accumulative total of factoids I’ve on file that involve men enjoying fun together with canines is, I’m quite certain, 100 percent unusable over at your place — nonetheless, I still can happily assist you here with just the three, basic common-sense necessities for making your DachshundCentral website successful:

1. **Focus.** As in never lose sight, or even stray very far from, your website’s central tentpole, which, in your case, is selling lots of wiener pups.
2. **Passion.** As in, is waking up every morning (at the age of 60-plus) to a blizzard of yapping, elongated hound dawgz your idea of Heaven come to Earth? And, most importantly:
3. **Humor.** As in, if your website’s dull, dreary and dry as a old gnawed bone, so then the clientele you attract shall be of its equal. All I’m saying, Wienerlicious, is mull over Howard’s three power points *before* you begin purchasing those starter sires and dams.

OK, now, with that done, sweet readers, let’s fast-forward five years: It’s 2006. Boo had



recently turned 5-years-old when entered the serpent into Eden. To describe Roo perfectly in one word: Scrappy. I was traveling a lot, and had only intended to pick up Boo an extra bag of dry provisions for an upcoming trip to New York, rather than a diseased, deaf and half-starved new little baby brother, hairless as a sub bottom’s sphincter, and equally vociferous with his trembling screams. I spotted him in the adoption cage next to the cash register, curled up whimpering in an empty food dish. I popped open one of Boo’s FancyFeast tins. “There’s no food in this cage, Sir.” The cashier didn’t glance from his scanner. “It don’t need none. He’s the only one left. A new replacement herd comes in tonight. He’s awfully affectionate but, well, you know. Just look at him.” He nodded a pimply chin to the opened can. “Did I scan that already? They found him in some abandoned apartment building, almost passed him by for dead... probably should have now, I guess. Today’s his last day.”

“His last day?” I stared. Slowly, it sunk in: “On Earth? You mean, he goes from here straight to the gas chamber?” The cashier shrugged, “We can only hold ‘em 30 days. Nobody wanted this runt, man. The cards didn’t go his way. Some of ‘em just pull deuces.”

“This runt just pulled four aces,” assured I, lifting out Roo and his near-devoured FancyFeast tin, both, in the palm of one hand. It’s amazing what love and good nutrition can achieve, and how quickly, too! I suspect Roo must have subliminally known how close was his call, for there has never been an animal on this planet happier than he to be alive: His glass is always half-full, his day is always sunny, and his tail always uplifted in an eternal candy cane of feline euphoria. Whereas Boo was pointedly imperious from birth and as far as he was concerned, into the purple born, Roo was his constant reminder that not all those deposits in their litter box were just Roo’s, alone. Anyone who walked through the door, Roo scampered to them delighted as a dachshund; and Boo to the furthest closet. Life of nary a want on this Earth, nor a bubbly little Beta brother too dumb to even grasp his peck-

ing-order placement in the pyramidal scheme of things, was Boo’s daily hierarchal cross to bear.

Of my two toms, if faced with that rhetorical *Sophie’s Choice* quandary, I’d have to pick Boo: One is obligated to save the defenseless first, after all. Roo The Scrappy would be equally as content living in a dumpster as the sky ark, provided he could forage enough victuals amongst the trash to keep his Abyssinian belly from growling. Boo, in contrast, has always been too much a hothouse succulent to ever survive in an atmosphere less rarified than his aerie he was raised in; Boo would readily opt for suicide off our 16th floor terrace rather than move down anywhere, ever, with the likes of his embarrassing brother. And now to see Boo, hardly the great lion in winter anymore himself, if ever he was, liking to be nearby me, close enough to touch me at all times now; he can no longer even make it atop the bed, not even using his despised cat stairs. Diocletian The Imperial, who came to within but hours of experiencing the real world for actually being the fearsome hungry, deadly guttural place it truly is, instead never knew an inkling of any world’s existence other than one pampered with splendor, but who must now, ultimately, face what even I, this giant, fur-less creature who propels effortlessly about on but two legs (and daily fed him, petted him and tickled that favorite spot on his ears) could not shelter him from: My great, amber-eyed, hollowed-out orange pumpkin, imperceptibly shriveling day by day, grimly braving through it, his senior-cat onset of blindness and deafness, the gradually amplifying loss of weight and short-term memory, the tremoring motor functions and arthritic gait. Boo endures it with a majestic, graceful dignity, his long, slow goodbye paralleling, in perfect reverse, Roo’s extraordinarily tenuous start, and if Boo makes it to Halloween, he’ll be lucky. Boo, who has always hit jackpot. And with eight more lives still to fulfill, well, he’ll be lucky again.

— Howard Lewis Russell

Have a question about love, sex, etiquette or anything else hat needs a special spin from Howard? Send your problem to AskHoward@DallasVoice.com and he may answer it.



Vickie and Brian hanging at Toyota of Irving's 50th anniversary celebration

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

- **1851 Club:** Kiana Lee hosts **All Star Drag Show** at 10:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.
- **515 Bar:** **King & Queen of the Rodeo Show** from 9 p.m.-midnight on Friday.
- **Alexandre's:** **Walter Lee** on Friday. **Anton Shaw Band** on Saturday. **Wayne Smith** on Sunday. **K-Marie** on Tuesday. **Vero Voz** on Wednesday. **Chris Chism** on Thursday.
- **Cedar Springs Tap House:** **Drag on Tap** at 9:30 p.m. on Monday.
- **Club Reflection:** **Party on the Patio** hosted by **Sapphire Taialar** and **Xavaria** with music at 9 p.m. and show at 11 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Dallas Eagle:** **United Court** show at 7 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. **Dallas Bears** night at 9 p.m. on Saturday. **Onyx Lone Star Anniversary** at 10 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Deja Vu:** Fall is in full effect. Catch the vibes on Sunday night. For no cover, text 972-765-6923 for promo code.
- **Henry's Tavern:** Fourth Wednesday **Plano Pride Night**.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill:** **Cedar Springs Zombie Pub Crawl** on Friday.
- **Liquid Zoo:** **Drag Brunch and Halloween Show** with **Kiana Lee**, **Ronnie Skyy Mikyles** and **Riley Finley** at 2 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Pekers:** **Karaoke** at 9:45 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.
- **Round-Up Saloon:** Saturday **Karaoke** at 7 p.m. **Sunday Funday Dance Party** at 4 p.m. **Mancandy** at 8 p.m. on Sunday. **Tuesday Night Dance Competition** at 9:30 p.m. **The Showdown** at 11 p.m. on Tuesday.
- **S4:** **Cedar Springs Zombie Pub Crawl** on Friday.
- **Sue Ellen's:** **Deborah Vial Album Release Party** from 8-10 p.m. Friday. **Cedar Springs Zombie Pub Crawl** on Friday. **Miss Marcy and Her Texas Sugar Daddys** on Saturday. **DJ Sno White** on Sunday.
- **The Rose Room:** **Josephine O'Hara Andrews** on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- **TMC: The Mining Company:** **Cedar Springs Zombie Pub Crawl** on Friday. **Her HRC** presents **Sue Ellen's Throwback Party** from 1:30-8 p.m. on Sunday. **Deborah Vial**, **Tiffany Shea Band** and **Southpaw Preachers**.
- **Urban Cowboy:** **Halloween Fantasy Pageant** at 6 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Woody's Sports & Video Bar:** **Cowboys at Washington Viewing Party** from 3-7 p.m. on Sunday.

Scene photographers: **Kat Haygood** and **Chad Mantooth**



The new Charlie's Angels? Cassie and Josh get curly, much to Jenna's horror



Layla Larue at The Rose Room

Burgers and Burgundy DIFFA fundraiser



Chris Parker, Cameron Hernholm, Aaron Williams



Isaac Boroughs, Myko Jesionek, Jeff Fielder



Clint Thomson, Jeff Fielder, Nura and David Putnam



John Tesar, Jenifer Strauss



Corey Anderson, Will Kolb



Matthew Minick, Joe Pacetti



Don Gaiser, Chris Parker, Thom Hanson



Old Major, Justin Brunson

Trailblazer Luncheon

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and Patron Party Benefitting The Family Place

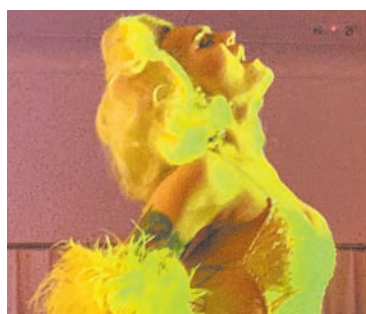


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Amy Turner, Mike Baughman



Trailblazer Kate Rose Marquez, Dean
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Trevor Party



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Going Either Way

Solution on Page 27

Across

- 1 Lickety-split
5 Places where the salami isn't hidden
10 Fruit of the ____
14 Magazine magnate Henry
15 Like Emma Donoghue
16 Dave Pallone and others
17 Up to snuff
18 With 61-Across, she plays Annalise Keating on *How to Get Away With Murder*
19 Pick up
20 She played Jules in *The Kids Are All Right*
23 Albee for short, et al.
24 Ariana Grande to Frankie
25 To be, in Toulon
27 The color purple, for example
30 Use your hands instead of your mouth
33 "Reduce Speed", on a sign
34 Oral secretion
37 Cheerleader's shout
39 *Summer and Smoke* heroine
41 Muse for Millay
42 Sally on *Brothers & Sisters*
43 Story teller
44 Place where you go straight
45 Like a 90-pound weakling
46 "Rainbows Reign!" and more

48 Elton John

collaborator Taupin

50 From ____ Z

51 "Ay, there's the ____" (*Hamlet*)

53 Neighbor of Leb.

54 Divided terr.

55 She plays Callie Torres on *Grey's Anatomy*

59 Pleasure orall

61 See 18-Across

62 Young women who have balls

65 Julia of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*

66 Turn inside out

67 Phantom of the Opera name

68 Cleo told them "Bite me!"

69 Uncool crowd

70 Sticking in your proboscis

Down

- 1 Home state of J. Nabors
2 Part of a sentence (abbr.)
3 Sometime defender of gay rights
4 Someone who strips?
5 Madonna and Mariah
6 St. Patrick's land
7 Nala or Simba
8 Lesbos, for one
9 Pillow covers
10 Landau's *Ed Wood* role
11 Poet Khayy·m
12 Early role for *A Beautiful Mind* director
13 Co. with a butterfly logo

21 Date for Nero

22 River in the land of Colette

25 Director Stephen

26 Words on many Warhol canvases

27 Put in a position?

28 Place for Young men?

29 Jazz singer James

31 Memorial with Mychal Judge's name

32 Realm of C.S. Lewis

33 With 38-Down, she played the title role in *Frida*

35 Won over

36 ACT UP members, e.g.

38 See 33-Down

40 What Michelangelo put out

42 PBS relative

47 Bruin Bobby

49 Pull a boner

52 Cry at La Scala

53 Trump look, when mocking sexual assault victims

56 Leather pokers

57 State with certainty

58 Genie portrayer Barbara

59 Two cups of suntan spoiler

60 Article written by Frida

63 The four characters in this puzzle's theme

64 Where to see two bears at night

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