


dallasvoice

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Marking the 25th anniversary
of a crime that changed
activism in Texas
by Tammye Nash, Page 8

MURDERED
Nicholas West 11.30.93

A close-up, intimate photograph of two men with dark hair and light skin, kissing passionately. The man on the left is seen in profile, while the man on the right is facing him. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting with greenery.

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the murder of Nicholas West.
Design by Kevin Thomas

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Dallas observes Transgender Day of Remembrance



More than 100 people attended a Transgender Day of Remembrance commemoration at the J. Erik Jonsson Library on Tuesday, Nov. 20. Names of 369 transgender people murdered around the world were projected and the 22 transgender people killed in the U.S. were read and their stories told.

Among the other speakers were Rachel Gonzalez, the mom of a trans daughter who now serves on the board of Equality Texas, and Stacey Monroe, who almost became a statistic when an armed man came to her house to kill her. Fast action by the police averted that tragedy. Jayla Wilkerson introduced the speakers and read a proclamation issued by Mayor Mike Rawlings declaring Monday, Nov. 19 Transgender Awareness Day.

For visibility, about half the group went across the street to Dallas City Hall Plaza to light memorial candles.

— David Taffet

Williams Institute releases estimate of trans population

Washington D.C. has the highest percentage of transgender residents at 2.77 percent while North Dakota has the lowest with 0.3 percent, according to the Williams Institute.

After D.C., is California with 0.76 percent followed by Georgia and New Mexico with 0.75 percent each.

Texas and Florida are tied for fourth place among states with 0.66 percent.

Oregon is 0.65 percent followed, surprisingly, by Oklahoma (0.64 percent). The liberal meccas of Mississippi and Alabama come in at 0.61 percent compared to New York with 0.51 percent.

— David Taffet

LGBT Victory Fund releases Rainbow Wave numbers

The LGBT Victory Fund released numbers on the Rainbow Wave of candidates in the November election. Of 432 LGBT candidates who made it on to the Nov. 6 ballot, 244 won on election night.

Most of the candidates ran as Democrats, but 23 ran as Republicans and of those, four won. More LGBT candidates ran in what Victory Fund called "high equality states," but even in "low equality states," such as Texas, about half won their races.

More gay men ran than lesbians, but lesbians won a higher percentage of their races.

Of the total number of LGBT candidates, 25 percent were people of color and 56.5 percent of them won their races.

LGBT candidates ran in 14 federal races and won 10 of those Congressional seats. In West Texas, Gina Ortiz Jones conceded to Rep. Will Hurd on Monday, Nov. 19.

In 133 statewide races across the country, 106 LGBT candidates scored a win. And in 78 local races, LGBT Victory Fund counted 45 wins. That total doesn't include one local race: Scott Prescher won a seat on the Watauga City Council.

Three transgender candidates won elections. Until Danica Roem became a Virginia Delegate, New Hope Mayor Jess Herbst was the highest elected trans official in the country. Over the weekend, Brianna Titone was declared the winner in her Colorado State House race.

— David Taffet

Lambda Legal sues Social Security for spousal benefits

Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Social Security Administration on Tuesday, Nov. 20 on behalf of a 65-year-old gay man seeking spousal survivor's benefits based on his 43-year relationship with his husband, who died seven months after Arizona began allowing same-sex couples to marry, according to a Lambda Legal press release.

The lawsuit filed on behalf of Michael Ely in the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona argues that SSA's imposition of a nine-month marriage requirement for social security survivor's benefits is unconstitutional where same-sex couples were not able to be married for nine months because of discriminatory marriage laws.

"The federal government is requiring surviving same-sex spouses like Michael to pass an impossible test to access benefits earned through a lifetime of work," said Lambda Legal Counsel Peter Renn. "Michael and his husband got married as soon as they could, less than three weeks after Arizona ended its exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage, but they were only able to be married for six months before Michael's husband died of cancer. Now, the Social Security Administration is allowing the heartbreak of discriminatory marriage bans to persist by holding same-sex couples to a standard that many could not meet, insisting that they have been married for nine months even where it was legally impossible for them to do so."

The couple married as soon as they could.

— David Taffet



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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.

NOVEMBER

- **Through Jan 11: Branch Out Dallas**
The City of Dallas will provide residents a tree at no cost. Register online at GreenDallas.net or for assistance go to any Dallas Public Library.
- **Nov. 27: Family Night at Durkins Pizza**
Gay and Lesbian Alliance of North Texas holds its monthly Family Pizza Night at Durkins Pizza, 8930 State Highway 121 in McKinney, offering family-friendly networking, socializing and happy hour, with owner Michael Durkin donating 10 percent of profits for the evening to GALA Youth.
- **Nov. 27: 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.

- **Nov. 29: State of the Arts**
Dallas LGBT equity in the arts presented by Art & Seek with panelists Erica Felicella, The Cedars Union; Olivia Grace Murphy, Flexible Grey Theatre Company; and Jerome Larez, Artitude. from 7-9 p.m. at the Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Flora St.
- **Nov. 29: Queerbomb kickoff meeting**
Calling all Dallas queermos, trans folx, faeries & LGBTQIA of every stripe, flavor and manifestation to be a part of the biggest, best QueerBomb yet from 7-9 p.m. at Buzzbrews Kitchen, 4334 Lemmon Ave.
- **Nov. 29: Red Ribbon**
Commemorate World AIDS Day in support of programs and services of Resource Center with chef-crafted bites, desserts and cocktails from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

at The Stoneleigh Hotel, 2927 Maple Ave.

- **Nov. 30: End AIDS Together**
CURE presents Robert Suttle, assistant director of the SERO Project, is the keynote speaker with a reception at 5:30 p.m. and program at 7 p.m. at Central Congregational Church, 5600 Royal Lane.
- **Nov. 30: Deck the Plaza**
Visit Dallas and the city of Dallas present Deck the Plaza, a holiday celebration featuring lighting of the holiday lights at Dallas City Hall, beginning at 4:30 p.m. The event will include interfaith speakers, an appearance by Santa Claus, music by Dallas Winds and by the Castro band, as well as hot chocolate, apple cider, cookies and the lighting of the 40-foot tree.

- **Nov. 30: DRAG me to dinner at BuzzBrews**
Kick off the holiday season with drag dinner hosted by Raquel Blake. Collecting cash donations and non-perishable food items for Legacy Founders Cottage from 6-10 p.m. at BuzzBrews, 4334 Lemmon Ave.

year's walk features a chipped 5K and a fun run/walk. Also includes the Pooches on Parade costume contest.

- **Dec. 1: TAG holiday party**
Tyler Area Gays potluck holiday party. Bring an unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots. From 6-9 p.m. at Genecov Room, Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce, 315 N. Broadway, Tyler.
- **Dec. 2: First night of Hanukkah**
- **Dec. 2: Women's Chorus holiday concert**
The Women's Chorus of Dallas presents its holiday concert Sleigh Ride with a full orchestra from Texas Chamber Music Project and acclaimed high school choir Singing Girls of Texas at 7:30 p.m. at Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. \$15-45. TWCD.org.
- **Dec. 2: The Dallas Way brunch**
The Dallas Way's 6th annual winter brunch fundraiser to help preserve and share Dallas LGBT history from noon-2 p.m. at the home of Lory Masters, 4035 Mendenhall Dr. \$50 reservation. \$60 at the door. TheDallasWay.org.
- **Dec. 4: Joe Biden speaks**
Former Vice President Joe Biden speaks about his bestseller *Promise Me, Dad* at 7:30 p.m. at the Theater at Grand Prairie, 1001 Performance Place, Grand Prairie. Tickets available at AXS.com.

OBITUARY



"Zeke", left

Curtis Edward "Zeke" Brewer, 69, died suddenly on Nov. 11.

Zeke was born in Pampa. He received a Masters of Arts degree from Christian Valley University. He lived in Australia for about 30 years, founding a church there that grew to 3,000 members to become the largest Baptist church in Australia. He became a dual citizen of the U.S. and Australia. After coming out, he worked on signage for the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, and his last job was the interior redesign of the Gold Coast Airport.

After retiring, he began volunteering, tutoring refugee children in composition and staffing the suicide hotline for Wesley Mission Brisbane. He cofounded an

organization called Q Space for gay and transitioning teens that received national attention from the Australian government. He enjoyed time at the beach, in the rain forest, hiking and motorcycling around the Gold Coast.

He met his husband, Will Fields, in Bible college but, because of their theology, the two were driven apart. They each served as best man at the other's wedding and then had no contact for 30 years. After reconnecting by email two years ago, Zeke returned to Texas to visit Will. In July 2017, Zeke moved back to Dallas so they could be together. The couple married in November 2017, and Zeke died less than a week before their first wedding anniversary.

Zeke is survived by husband Will Fields, daughter Shelly Swindle, son and daughter-in-law Jordan and Molly Brewer, son and daughter-in-law Nile and Jessica Brewer, sister and brother-in-law Beverly and Jerome Humphrey, and grandchildren Nathan, Logan, Marina and Noah.

Zeke's ashes will be spread in Australia. No funeral is planned.

DECEMBER

- **Dec. 1: World AIDS Day**
- **Dec. 1: AOC's Hope Walk**
Hope Walk, benefitting AIDS Outreach Center in Tarrant County, steps off from Trinity Park Pavillion, in Trinity Parl just off 7th Street in Fort Worth, at 8 a.m. This
- **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 artist, activist and attorney **Jayla Wilkerson**; **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.

• **Dec. 6: BTD Wrap Party**
Black Tie Dinner check distribution party from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at a location to be announced.

• **Dec. 6: GALA holiday party**
From 7-10 p.m. at event1013, 1013 E. 15th St., Plano. Tickets are \$25, available at GALANorthTexas.org.

• **Dec. 6: Chris Howell Foundation fundraiser**
The Chris Howell Foundation, an organization focused on HIV education and prevention, hosts its first fundraiser

and toy drive from 7-11 p.m. at Renaissance Hotel Dallas, 2222 N. Stemmons Freeway. The event will have a casino theme and will feature a special performance by KeKe Wyatt and live music by RC and The Gritz. Toys will benefit the Boys and Girls Club of Dallas. For information visit ChrisHowellFoundation.org.

• **Dec. 7: An enchanted Evening Under the Mistletoe**
Federal Club party from 8-11p.m. At the Old Red Museum, 100 S. Houston St.

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25 years later

Tyler Area Gays will hold a memorial service marking the 25th anniversary of the murder of Nicholas West on Friday, Nov. 30, at 6 p.m. in at the memorial to West in Bergfield Park, 1510 S. College Ave. in Tyler.

How the murder of Nicholas West changed LGBT activism in Texas

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
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Dianne Hardy-Garcia was in her first month as executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas in November 1993. She was excited about her new job and determined to make a difference for Texas' LGBT community.

"We had all these ideas of what we wanted to push for, the big one being nondiscrimination," she recalled this week from her home in California.

Then she got a call from Wesley Beard. And everything changed.

Beard, a young man who ran an antiques auction business in Tyler, was calling to ask for Hardy-Garcia's help. His friend, Nicholas West, had been brutally murdered. And no one seemed to care.

"Nicholas' murder definitely put us [LGRL] on a different path," Hardy-Garcia said. "That was the beginning of a major focus for LGRL — hate crimes — for years to come."

The murder

It was a Tuesday evening, the last day in November 1993, when 23-year-old Nicholas West drove his red Nissan pickup truck to Bergfield Park, near the center of Tyler, an East Texas town with, at the time, a population of almost 80,000. The park was where gay men in town went to meet other gay men, and friends said at the time that West, the adopted son of a part-time church music director and former Baptist missionary, went there often.

Donald Aldrich, 29, and his friends Henry Dunn, 19, and David McMillan, 17, went to the park often, too. But they didn't go looking to meet a friend; they went looking for victims.

Aldrich, on probation for two separate felony convictions — one for burglary and the other for robbery — the night that he,

Dunn and McMillan kidnapped West from Bergfield Park, drove him to a clay pit outside of town and tortured him before shooting him to death. It was Aldrich who lured West in by pretending to be gay, but all three of the assailants participated in hitting and kicking West once they reached the clay pit, and all three participated in pistol-whipping him and forcing him to take off his clothes, leaving him wearing only the underwear he had soiled out of fear.

Both Aldrich and Dunn shot West numerous times as he lay, face down and nearly naked, on the muddy ground. They shot him in the hand, severing one finger almost completely. They shot him in the arms and in places along his torso and in the abdomen where they could cause extremely painful but not deadly wounds.

It was Dunn that eventually delivered the fatal wound, shooting West in the back of the head.

The three assailants left him lying dead on the ground, taking his truck with them when they left. West's body lay there for two days, until two dirt-bikers riding around the clay pit found him and notified authorities. Aldrich, Dunn and McMillan were arrested the next day after an informant told authorities the three were bragging about having killed someone. On Dec. 3, Dunn confessed to the crime, with investigators getting the confession on videotape.

Aldrich also confessed, apparently expecting investigators to go easy on him and his friends since all they had done was kill a faggot. In fact, Aldrich explained to officers that he hated faggots because he had been raped by a gay cousin when he was 9.

All three killers were eventually convicted. McMillan, who apparently had not taken part in the shooting, was convicted of aggravated kidnapping and aggravated robbery and sentenced to life in prison. He remains incarcerated at the Texas Department of Corrections' Terrell Unit in Rosharon, Texas.

Henry Dunn was convicted of capital murder in August 1995 and sentenced to death. The 5th Circuit of Appeals in May 1994 stayed Dunn's execution, just one day before he was to be put to death, to hear an



Diane Hardy Garcia

four boards and stabbed him twice with a pocketknife; he died several hours later. In the wake of his murder, then-Gov. Ann Richards called the Texas Legislature into a special session, and lawmakers approved a hate crimes statistics measure as an amendment to a crime bill.

But there was something different about Nicholas West's murder, Hardy-Garcia said. "There was just something about him being such a young man from a small town, relatively isolated [and closeted]. There was just something so many of us could identify with," she said. "So many of us had been there, where he was, and had migrated to the big cities — Dallas or Austin or Houston, wherever we could go to feel safer.

"But the part that was really painful was the indifference of our government to his murder," Hardy-Garcia continued. "I couldn't get one public official from [the East Texas area] to issue a statement about it. Not one. And from a public policy position, that was just appalling."

Working together, Hardy-Garcia and Beard put together a rally to both remember West and focus attention on the horror of his death and of hate crimes in general. They held the rally on Jan. 14, 1994, in Bergfield Park — the same park from which West had been kidnapped by his killers. Estimates of the crowd attending ranged from about 800 to as many as 2,000, as LGBT people and their allies from around the state converged on Tyler.

"People came from all over, they could identify with Nicholas, with the isolation of being gay and in a small town," she said. "That solidified our resolve that we had to do something about hate-related violence, not just to bring attention to it, but to address it in terms of public policy."

There were, Hardy-Garcia noted, only two state legislators who attended the rally that day, "only two that I could get to show up. And I called everyone — and I do mean everyone."

Those two were state Rep. Glen Maxey, the former LGRL executive director who had become Texas' first openly-LGBT legislator in 1991 when he was appointed to an unexpired term by Ann Richards, and Sen. Rodney Ellis of Houston. It turned

appeal based on claims that Dunn's attorney at trial was inexperienced and incompetent. After the court rejected that appeal, though, the execution was rescheduled, and Dunn was put to death via lethal injection at the Walls Unit in Huntsville on Feb. 6, 2003.

Aldrich was the first of the three to go to trial. He was also convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death. In an interview with Dallas Voice — conducted on death row at TDC's Polunsky Unit, outside Huntsville, in July 1995 — Aldrich claimed he was actually bisexual and that he sometimes had sex with his gang's victims before the others showed up to take their money and vehicles.

He was executed by lethal injection on Oct. 12, 2004, in Huntsville.

The aftermath

Hardy-Garcia remembers the days and weeks following the call from Beard asking for help as being a big wake-up call for her.

"We were just reacting at the time," she said. "There were so many things I was just so shocked about. And there were so many parts of this murder that really affected me, personally, and the community in general. This was the beginning of an awakening for many people to the real painfulness of hate crimes."

Yes, there had been high-profile hate crimes before. Just two years prior, on July 4, 1991, a 27-year-old Houston banker named Paul Broussard was leaving a bar in Houston's Montrose area when he was attacked by a group of teens from a wealthy Houston suburb that had gone to the gayborhood specifically to beat up gays. They beat Broussard with nail-studded two-by-

Safe campuses

DISD has committed to making sure each high school in the district has a GSA

DAVID TAFFET | SENIOR STAFF WRITER

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Mahoganie Gaston's job is to make sure every high school and many middle school campuses in the Dallas Independent School District have a gay-straight alliance by the end of this school year.



Mahoganie Gaston

For a number of years, LGBT students have migrated toward the few Dallas high schools that were considered safe campuses. Gaston said her goal is to make sure students know that every campus is safe for every student, including LGBT students.

She said she has a strong and reliable ally in Resource Center and its Youth First program.

Resource Center has provided training for faculty, staff — including those in psychological services, librarians, athletics — and administrators. Youth First is offering a variety of services, including counseling and programming for LGBT students.

Resource Center Communications and Advocacy Manager Rafael McDonnell said the partnership began after transgender athlete Mack Beggs of Euless won a state girls' wrestling championship earlier this year. Beggs began his transition several years ago but was forced to compete as a girl, although he would have preferred competing as a boy, because UIL rules forced him into girls' athletics.

School districts voted on a resolution relating to where and how trans athletes should participate. DISD came down on the wrong side of the issue, McDonnell said. But school Superintendent Michael Hinojosa assured him that was only because ballot wording was unclear.

Although DISD is stuck with the statewide decision forcing trans athletes to participate based on their sex assigned at birth, McDonnell and Hinojosa decided something positive should come out of the experience. "We talked about how to support LGBT students," McDonnell said.

On its website, DISD has added an LGBTQ student advocacy and youth outreach page. It says LGBT students "often experience harassment, indifference, bullying

decisions made by the state legislature, so Resource Center helped DISD secure funding from Toyota to launch the program.

Gaston said she's encountered no resistance from administrators in any of the district's high schools, and she's gotten interest from several middle schools. About 50 school personnel have gone through training, and a couple dozen have completed a train-the-trainer two-hour program put together by the GSA Network.

Some of the groups that have formed are more social, Gaston explained. Others have created projects. At Booker T. Washington High School, the GSA is going to paint a hallway. At other schools, students are dealing with members who are out at school but who, for a variety of reasons, can't come out at home.

Gaston said it is the students themselves who determine the direction each GSA will take.

DISD Director of News and Information Robyn Harris said an important part of training is providing resources. "For professional help, they can make referrals to psychologists, Resource Center, Youth First," Harris said.

While not every high school has a group up-and-running yet, GSAs are operating "in all quadrants of the district," Gaston said. "And at a recent training, middle school staff attended." Middle school staff is showing interest, she said, because mid-



and exclusion." The page is to ensure "all students have a safe school experience."

And Gaston stepped in as liaison, with the mission to open a GSA in every high school.

McDonnell said other districts — such as Los Angeles, Boston, D.C. and Chicago — have adopted a similar policy. But in those cities training was paid for by the districts. All school districts in Texas are struggling with being under-financed, thanks to poor

dle school students are coming out and showing interest.

DISD is a leader in LGBT campus safety in Texas, Gaston said, but her goal is to set an example for school districts around the country.

To help LGBT and allied students excel in safe schools, GSAs need community and company support. Gaston said anyone interested in becoming involved should contact her at MGaston@DallasISD.org.

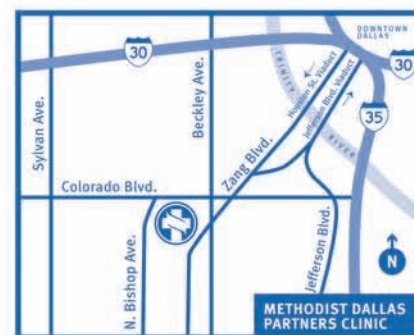
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Title IX cases on agenda for SCOTUS conference

LISA KEEN | KEEN NEWS SERVICE

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Three big LGBT cases will be part of a private discussion at the U.S. Supreme Court on Friday, Nov. 30, when the justices meet to “conference” about what appeals to hear in the coming months.

All three cases test the limits of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on “sex.” Two of the three ask whether “sex” should be read to also prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. The third asks whether it should be read to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or “transgender status.”

At least four justices must vote to accept an appeal before the court will schedule the case for argument.

The likelihood of the court taking one of these cases is fairly strong, primarily because there is a conflict among several circuit courts as to whether Title VII can be read to include sexual orientation and/or gender identity discrimination. But with the newly-constituted Supreme Court having a much more conservative slant, it is probably more likely that — if four justices want to hear an appeal — they will be seeking an opportunity to narrow the protective reach of Title VII rather than expand it to LGBT people.

In that regard, the justices are more likely to take a case brought by an employer. Those include:

- *Harris Funeral v. EEOC* (from the Sixth Circuit): This appeal comes from an employer in Michigan and asks whether “gender identity” or “transgender status” are covered under “sex” discrimination in Title VII. The employer, Harris Funeral, fired a long-time male employee after he began transitioning to female and refused to wear a man’s business suit supplied by the funeral home. The employee, Aimee

Stevens, first took her complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which ruled in her favor. The Sixth Circuit said “sex” discrimination in Title VII includes “transgender” discrimination. On appeal to the Supreme Court, the funeral home argues that its dress code applied equally to men and women, and that the courts do not have the authority to say that “sex” includes “gender identity.” The reason the word “sex” was added to Title VII, says the funeral home, was to ensure “equal opportunities for women.” This case may be the most attractive to the conservative justices because they could deny protections to transgender employees and all LGBT people by simply claiming the lower courts have no authority to expand the definition of “sex” in federal law. The Sixth Circuit includes Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio and Tennessee.

- *Altitude Express v. Zarda* (from the Second Circuit): This appeal comes from an employer in New York, challenging a Second Circuit ruling that Title VII does cover discrimination because of sexual orienta-

tion. The case involves a recreational parachuting company, Altitude Express, that fired one of its trainers, David Zarda, after learning he was gay. Zarda died before his lawsuit could be resolved, but his sister has pursued his claim. The Second Circuit covers New York, Connecticut and Vermont.

The third case before the Supreme Court conference this month is one brought by a gay employee who lost at the lower level:

- *Bostock v. Clayton County* (from the 11th circuit): This appeal comes from a gay man

Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins requires courts to read “sex” discrimination to include gender-based stereotypes. And he argues that the 1998 Supreme Court decision in *Oncale v. Sundowner* underscored that “sex” discrimination had to be read more broadly.

The 11th circuit ruled as recently as last year that Title VII does not prohibit sexual orientation discrimination. The employee in that case, *Evans v. Georgia Regional*, appealed to the Supreme Court but the court simply refused to accept the appeal for review.



in Georgia, challenging an 11th circuit decision to dismiss his Title VII lawsuit. Gerald Bostock was a child advocate employee of the Clayton County Juvenile Court System for 10 years, and all was fine. Then, in 2013, he joined the Hotlanta gay softball league and urged other players to consider volunteering for the county agency. Within six months, his office was audited, someone publicly complained about his playing in the gay softball league, and he was fired. The county said he was fired for “conduct unbecoming a county employee;” Bostock said he was fired because he is gay. Bostock filed suit, saying his firing violated Title VII. The 11th circuit (which covers Georgia, Florida, and Alabama) dismissed the lawsuit, saying it had already ruled that “sexual orientation” discrimination is not covered under Title VII. At the Supreme Court, Bostock’s attorney acknowledges that the 11th Circuit has previously ruled that “sexual orientation” cannot be read into “sex” discrimination, but he argues that other circuits have ruled it can. He also argues that the Supreme Court’s 1989 ruling in

The Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in favor of sexual orientation discrimination (*Hively v. Ivy Tech*), but the employer did not appeal to the Supreme Court. So, LGBT people in Seventh Circuit states (Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin) can press a Title VII claim, as can those in the Second Circuit and Sixth Circuit.

But LGBT people in the 11th circuit cannot.

Meanwhile, similar cases in other circuits are percolating up, putting pressure on the Supreme Court to settle the dispute nationally.

The court could announce as early as Monday, Dec. 3, whether it will — or won’t — hear any or all of the appeals. It could, and often does, re-list some cases for conference at a later date.

Two of the three cases were originally scheduled for September but were re-scheduled after the third case was given more time (until Oct. 24) to file briefs. Now, all three are on the conference list. ■

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25 YEARS LATER, From Page 8

out to be the beginning of a very important friendship between LGRL's Hardy-Garcia and Ellis.

Although West's murder was the beginning of efforts to get a comprehensive hate crimes bill passed in Texas, it turned out to be a long, long road. "You'd think," Hardy-Garcia said, "that in a 'tough on crime' state like Texas, it would be a slam dunk. But it took us 10 years. Nicholas' murder was a tipping point for us here in Texas, but nationally, the tipping point was five years later, in 1998, with the murders of James Byrd Jr. and Matthew Shephard."

Byrd was a black man dragged to death in June 1998 by a trio of white supremacist ex-cons in the Deep East Texas town of Jasper. Shephard was the gay college student kidnapped, robbed, beaten and left tied to a fence to die in Laramie, Wyo., in October 1998.

"James Byrd was definitely not the first black man to be lynched in East Texas. But with his murder, the public was really awakened to the horror of hate crimes," Hardy-Garcia said, and it was Byrd's murder that finally, in 2001 got the Texas Legislature to pass a hate crimes bill. And it was the relationship between Hardy-Garcia and Sen. Ellis, started at the rally for Nicholas West, that helped ensure LGBT people were included in that measure.

"That bond I had with Sen. Ellis and, later, [state Rep.] Senfronia Thompson, was really significant," Hardy-Garcia said. "We had built a very powerful bond through them with the African-American community [and later with the family of James Byrd]. That was essential. Without that, the hate crimes act would not have passed."

In each session of the legislature following West's murder, a hate crimes bill that included LGBT people was introduced. And each time, until 2001, it failed. Hardy-Garcia and other proponents kept fighting, but she admits now there were times she came close to quitting.

"In 1999, there was this moment, when the hate crimes bill was failing — again — and the Senate filibustered for us for eight hours in protest as the bill was going down, to try and keep it alive. I was devastated. I mean, Nicholas' murder had been a wake-up call for us, but there had been 30 murders after that. Thirty! And still we couldn't get the bill passed!

"I had worked very intensely with the Byrd family, and I was sitting with the family when the bill was voted down again that year. It was just so very painful," she said. "After the vote, I was walking down the hall, just defeated, and I saw a couple of [long-time lobbyists] walking toward

me [one of them] said to me, 'Girl, why are you hanging your head? Here you are, a brown gay woman leading this effort, and you shut down the Senate for eight hours. Do you think this would have happened 20 years ago? Be proud of what you've accomplished, and then keep fighting!'"

A life changed

For Beard, the weeks, months and years after West's murder were, truly, life-changing. He went from a 21-year-old antiques dealer trying to handle the fallout from his own coming out to a nationally-recognized activist working for passage of hate crimes legislation. And the work took its toll on him.

Beard sat through every trial, listening to Aldrich and Dunn and McMillan talk about how his friend was tortured and killed. He was there outside the walls of the prison when first Dunn and then Aldrich were executed. He never forgot, and he wasn't going to let others forget either.

"When I was vocal, there was a target on me," Beard said. "I got death threats. KKK stickers were put on my business. People were going to my lake house and taking my furniture out and throwing it in the lake," he recalled. "When the police finally showed up, they just looked at me and said, 'Well, what do you expect with all the shit you've stirred up?'"

Even members of his own family reacted with anger and violence. When he announced that he would be appearing on the national *Phil Donahue Show* to talk about West's murder and his own activism, a member of his family beat him up so badly that he was bleeding from his ears, he said.

Beard put himself on the line, personally and professionally, risking his own safety and the future of his business. When the Houston chapter of PFLAG named him as the first recipient of the PFLAG Human Rights Award, presenting him with a check for \$2,500, that money was "crucial to my survival and to the survival of my business. Still, I chose not to live in the shadows. I tried to be there to give strength and support to the ones who couldn't do that."

But Beard persevered, and he succeeded. "I've been blessed," he said this week. "I've built a successful business. Recently, I was able to give the same amount that PFLAG gave me [back to the community]. I have friends and family around me. Even [the family member who beat him] has come around. We are good now."

Still, he said, as the 25th anniversary of his friend's murder approaches, he still

25 YEARS LATER, Next Page

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25 YERAS LATER From Previous Page

feels the weight of the hatred that took West's life, especially with an administration in power in Washington, D.C., that seems to use hate and bigotry as a weapon.

"The 25th anniversary of Nick's murder has rehashed it all," Beard said. "I'd like to think we are further along than we actually are. I'd like to be able to say things are great. But we just aren't there. We have a commander-in-chief, a president, who promised to include us, but then turned around

and put the target square on our backs.

"We made so much progress. We thought we were safe. But the hate was still there, it was just in the shadows. Now it's coming back out into the light again."

And yet, progress

The LGBT community is still fighting for equality and to be safe from violence and discrimination. And, Beard said, he is still

fighting, too, even though not as publicly now.

"People have asked me through the years, why don't you move some place more accepting, but this is my home. This is where I need to be," he said. "Sometimes, my phone rings at 2 or 3 in the morning, and it's some mom or dad, somebody who remembers from one of those old articles in the newspaper. They have a son or a daughter who has come out as gay, and needs



Wesley Beard

help, who's maybe suicidal or depressed. They don't feel comfortable going to their clergy for help, so they come to me.

"It happened recently, in fact, and I got up and put on my clothes and went to their house at 2 in the morning to try to help," he added. "It's so sad to think that still happens. But I am still here, too. I will still be a voice. I will still get up at 2 in the morning and get dressed and go to somebody's house if they call. I will still stand up against injustice."

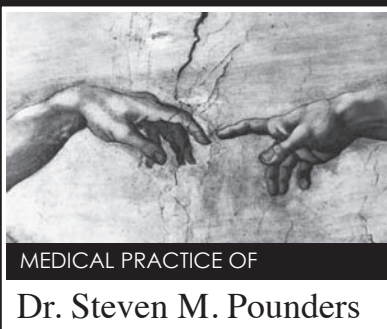
And now, Hardy-Garcia said, the community doesn't stand alone.

"The Texas hate crimes bill finally passed in 2001. The first time it was introduced, [state Rep.] Steve Wolens from Dallas introduced it and he was the only sponsor. Nobody stood with him," she recalled. "But in 2001, when Senfronia Thompson filed the hate crimes bill, it was a packed chamber. We sat and wept as we watched people filing in, one after the other, to sign on as co-sponsors. Then Rick Perry signed it — Rick Perry! That's progress. That's change, and it is irreversible. We are visible now. We are not silent any more. We have solid relationships. These kinds of murders might still happen, but there's no way we'd be standing alone like we were when Nicholas was killed. "That's the real difference between then and now. Now, we are not alone. So many of us have relationships with our parents. So many of us have children. We are out," Hardy-Garcia said. "It doesn't mean bad things aren't still happening. It doesn't mean we won't lose some battles. But we are not isolated any more. We are not alone."



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Trump: Damaging democracy, one tweet at a time

Well, we made it. We lived through the 2018 midterm election, an election that saw record turn out. And record voter suppression.

Sadly, that voter suppression lasted well beyond Election Day. In Florida, swamp creature outgoing Gov. Rick Scott was neck-and-neck with Democrat Bill Nelson for days in the race for Nelson's Senate seat until late on Sunday, Nov. 18. The governor's race there remained undecided until Sunday, as well, with all kinds of hell going on with uncounted ballots.

Thankfully, we have as our president a mature and adult human who thinks long and hard about difficult situations before he speaks. We can turn to him for wisdom and guidance at this difficult time.

As Definitely-Qualified-for-the Job-of-President Donald Trump tweeted on Nov. 12, "The Florida Election should be called in favor of Rick Scott and Ron DeSantis in that large numbers of new ballots showed up out of nowhere, and many ballots are missing or forged. An honest vote count is no longer possible — ballots massively infected. Must go with Election Night!"

Oh, and that was after he tweeted on Nov. 10, "Trying to STEAL two big elections in Florida! We are watching closely!"

A stalwart defender of Democracy, that one is.

A couple of things to note: These ballots that Trump claims "showed up out of nowhere" likely included ballots of men and women in the military who are stationed overseas. And they didn't just magically appear. They were mailed in, and under Florida law, ballots mailed in from overseas can arrive after Election Day and still be counted.

I certainly don't think Trump has any real understanding of Florida law, not to mention how the United States Postal Service works or how people outside of the U.S. manage to vote. But surely he knows someone who can whisper into his hair, "Refusing to count service members' ballots is a really bad look."

But that's what happened.

Oh, yeah, and then there's Georgia, where the governor's race between Democrat Stacey Abrams, who is a black (gasp!) wom-



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

an (gasp!), and a white man whose name I can't remember because I fell asleep looking at his face (oh yeah, Brian Kemp) was undecided until Friday, Nov. 16. That's when Abrams



announced she was ending her bid for the office, but refused to concede because, she said, Kemp stole the election.

But don't worry; Trump has an opinion about that, too: "You mean they are just now finding votes in Florida and Georgia — but the Election was on Tuesday?" he tweeted on Nov. 9. "Let's blame the Russians and demand an immediate apology from President Putin!"

Get it? LOL. Because Russia interfered with the 2016 election, and Trump was quite possibly in on it even though he calls it a hoax, and so it's so funny to joke about it when the country's faith in democracy is already shaken to its core.

Oh, and speaking of Russia, the Republicans are peeing their pants over the new Democratic majority in the U.S. House. So Trump panic-fired Attorney General Jeff Sessions and replaced him with a guy who is younger but just as racist and terrible. Only this new guy, Matthew Whitaker, wants to shut down the Russia investigation and — OH HEY WHAT'S THAT?! IT'S

A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS AND IT'S COMING RIGHT AT US!

To paraphrase a quote from *Godzilla*, "[Washington D.C. is] a smoldering memorial to the unknown, an unknown which at this very moment still prevails and could at any time lash out with its terrible destruction anywhere else in the world. There were once many people here who could've told of what they saw ... now there are only a few."

Oh man, that sounds dire, doesn't it? I don't mean to be a bummer, but, well, shit's dire. For real.

Make no mistake, a lot of good came out of the midterm election.

Michigan elected Dana Nessel as the state's next attorney general, replacing Bill Schuette, the man who fought up to the Supreme Court to keep same-sex couples from being legally recognized as married. Oh, and the lawyer who fought against Schuette and won? Dana Nessel, who is also openly lesbian.

In another karmic outcome, Minnesota Democrat and lesbian Angie Craig beat the anti-LGBTQ Rep. Jason Lewis. Massachusetts voters rejected a measure that would have taken legal protections away from transgender people. Jared Polis became the first gay man elected governor of Colorado. In fact, he is the first openly gay man elected governor of *any* U.S. state.

There's more: Kansas sent Sharice Davids, who is both Native American and a lesbian, to Congress. Zach Wahls, at just 27 years old, is now an Iowa state senator. Wahls, you'll remember, spoke in support of his lesbian moms in front of the Iowa House of Representatives and the video went viral.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. So there is much to celebrate.

But Democracy is still in a fragile state. If we thought Trump's behavior when he had a Republican majority was bad, we ain't seen nothing yet.

(Editor's Note: This doesn't even include Trump's ridiculous comments about how Finland prevents forest fires by raking the forest.)

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.

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The new breed

Looking to support the sounds of our community? To start, add these LGBTQ acts to your gaylist



Dallas Voice has always prided itself on bringing to light stories and people who resonate with the gay community... and often, who are queer themselves (though it's not a requirement! Ask Kathy Griffin, Cher, Nick Jonas....) Music has always been a place where sexual orientation can hide behind pronouns (*oohh, oohh baby, you know I love you — we fit so good*), personas (Ziggy Stardust, anyone? ... or Chris Gaines?) and even ambiguous music videos.

Well, this week we wanted to highlight the LGBTQ artists we love... and who you should be following, if you aren't already.

MNEK, pictured. You've heard English singer, songwriter and producer MNEK behind the scenes, writing for artists like Madonna and Beyoncé (yes, he co-wrote a *Lemonade* jam, Bey's "Hold Up"). But with his Capital Records debut, the 23-year-old U.K. rapper-singer steps into the spotlight, seeing his own artistic vision through with a 16-track album meant to be heard as a full album, a defiant move in a singles-driven music industry. Black and gay, MNEK knows the struggle to thrive in a majority-rules world, which he writes about on the album's standout, "Correct," a call-to-arms for queer people, served through the musical guise of a big party bop. Words to live by: *Yaaas bitch, stay fabulous, honey.*

Donna Missal. As is the case for many aspiring musicians who climb YouTube's ladder, New Jersey's Donna Missal stormed the internet first, racking up 11 million combined streams. The demand opened the doors to her first album, the soulful *This Time*, released in September on Harvest Records. Produced by Tim

Anderson, known for helming projects by Solange and Halsey, the sexually fluid LA-based singer-songwriter's rock-meets-soul sound is as intoxicating as her lyrical content, which she says reflects "taking chances for yourself, figuring out who you are and really standing behind that."

John Duff, pictured. Sassy, frequently shirtless IG sensation John Duff took his social clout to the next level with the release of his song "Girly," a frothy pop romp celebrating femme power (*let's get girly, flip our hair, we don't care*). Its accompanying video is a tribute to a pantheon of gay icons. In the clip, he delightfully mirrors the precious mannerisms of Mariah in her 1999 "Heartbreaker" video along with her signature look — a midriff halter top, cut-off jeans — while also recreating other iconic music-video scenes from Madonna, Britney, Beyoncé and Christina Aguilera.

Michael Blume. An alumnus of Yale University whose future was once academia-bound, Blume almost didn't pursue music as a career. But after joining an on-campus a capella group that toured the world, performing in 35 countries, the New Jersey-bred, NYC-based singer has forged a flourishing musical career for himself. Queer and other human rights issues still rest heavy on his mind, as illustrated by his latest release. A follow-up to his 2016 debut *When I Get It Right* called *Cynicism & Sincerity*, the six-song EP's musically diverse palette — from trap hip-hop to gospel and electronica — is the conduit for his pointed and passionate activist convictions.

Faultlines. Folk-pop trio Faultlines pulled no punches with their Trump-targeted words on "Rain," released early this



year. The fired-up anthem is in the stomping soul style of 1960s protest songs and blends the earthy voices of band members Todd McCool, Ashley Morgan and John Flanagan, who draw upon urban pop and roots country for the gritty call-to-action. Their lyrics rouse: *There's a man in a big white house trying to take your voice away, they sing. Do nothing and stay silent if you think that it's OK.*

Shea Diamond. Activism is art in Shea Diamond's case (we interviewed her earlier this year). Performing songs to fellow prisoners while serving time in various Michigan prisons, the trans singer-songwriter and her inspiring narrative soon fell into the nurturing hands of star gay producer Justin Tranter, who Diamond has called her "fairy godmother." Tranter produced songs from Diamond's first EP, released this year. For the album, the artist channels her personal struggles as a trans woman of color living in a time when the trans community is under attack. Now, particularly, her soulful croon is a voice that needs — and demands — to be heard.

Chris/Christine and the Queens.

Pansexual French pop singer, songwriter, producer and choreographer Héroïse Letissier yearned to break down gender constructs, so she fashioned an androgynous look, started going by "Chris," and used her new persona (previously, her professional alias was Christine and the Queens) as the title of her sophomore album (which we reviewed earlier this month). One of the most exciting pop albums of the year, *Chris* holds a mirror to the artist's personal journey, boldly framing her newfound identity in assertive retro beats that throb and empower. ■

— Chris Azzopardi



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The answer is *yes*



Singer Philip Chaffin reimagines songs from a queer perspective



Will He Like Me? (PS Classics), the new album by gay singer Philip Chaffin, asks a musical question to which the answer is a resounding yes. The song cycle, comprised of a series of songs usually sung by women to men, takes on a profound meaning when sung by a man without changing the pronouns. After hearing Chaffin sing songs such as "Lovely, Lonely Man" (from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*), "Tom" (from *Hello Again*), "Happiness Is A Thing Called Joe" (from *Cabin In the Sky*), and the title tune from *She Loves Me*, you will probably never listen to them in quite the same way again.

— Gregg Shapiro

Dallas Voice: The album is subtitled "a love story." How much of it is a reflection of your own love story with your husband Tommy Krasker? Philip Chaffin: Tommy and I had our first date in 1993, and we've

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been together ever since. We definitely poured 25 years of our shared lives into this album. As we developed the album, we knew we wanted it to be more than just a collection of songs. We wanted it to be a journey — a gay man's journey. We knew we wanted to start with a first date and a first relationship and a first break-up, and then move through new experiences and new relationships. We wanted to hit some key moments that Tommy and I both related to, that we hoped others might, too. The time in your life when you think, "I'm never going to find the right guy. I'm just going to have fun."

The time when you try to settle down and your libido trips you up, and you mess it all up. And although the album wasn't really autobiographical, we definitely knew that near the end, the singer was going to find true love when he least expected it, and that was definitely true for the two of us. That part -- finding true love after a whole lot of trying — is absolutely about us!



planning this album in 2013. At that time, marriage equality was still two years away. But New York State, where we lived, was allowing same-sex marriage, and Tommy and I had gotten married in 2012. The whole idea of the album was a celebration of equality, and marriage equality in particular. It's always been a convention that when you sing the Great American Songbook, women sing about men, and men sing about women, and you adjust the pronouns accordingly. But the impulse for this album was: what

if we took these songs designed for women, and *didn't* change the pronouns? What if we simply sang them from a gay man's point of view — from *our* point of view? It was very exciting to imagine singing songs in a way that I honestly wouldn't have imagined singing them just a decade ago — and in fact, because so many of the songs we chose mention "my husband," it's some-

thing I *couldn't* have done a decade ago. It felt incredibly liberating.

With so much music to choose from, what can you say about the song selection process? I always gravitate towards the really obscure, and Tommy has to remind me that familiar is good, too [laughs]! But here, I think I was more willing to include familiar

material because I knew I wasn't presenting it in a familiar way, or a familiar setting. Even the familiar songs felt so fresh to me. I think the moment we first thought of — and sang through — "Mister Snow" was one of my favorite moments in this whole five-year journey. We always knew the first song on the album, the first date, was going to be "Will He Like Me?" But then we wanted a song where the singer reflected on that date, and imagined a shared future. A moment where he really jumped in with his heart. And of course, it had to be a moment — as with all the songs on the album — that was designed for a woman to sing, so it was a tall order. But then Tommy came up with the idea of "Mister Snow." He ran to our music library and pulled out his piano-vocal score of *Carousel*, and we sat at the piano, and he played and I sang. And it was so exhilarating to sing: one of those sweeping long-lined ballads I love so much. Again, it was everything we wanted to do with this album. Before marriage equality, no guy was singing "when I marry Mister Snow." Honestly, the first time I sang those lines, I burst into tears. It was incredibly moving to me.

A majority of the songs on the album are from the 1960s. What do you think that says about the love songs written during that period? You know, I had never noticed that! But Tommy and I both grew up in the '60s — I can't imagine that didn't influence our song choices. You bring yourself to every album you do. If you don't, what's the point? I confess, in the five years between our get-

ting the idea for the album and our actually releasing it, there were a lot of times that we thought, "Aww, shoot, someone is going to beat us to it." Because it seemed like such a timely — and sort of inevitable — idea. But the truth is, if some other singer had made this album, he wouldn't have made *this* album. This album is about me and Tommy, and our likes and dislikes, and our sensibilities, and no one else was going to make this album. And I suspect we gravitated towards a lot of songs from the '60s because that's when we developed a love for American popular song and Broadway. That's when that music became a part of our lives. And let's face it, there were so many amazing writers at that time — I guess I include more mainstream ones like Bock & Harnick, and Cy Coleman and the Sherman Brothers on the album, plus lesser-known ones like Erwin Drake and John Clifton. It was a pretty heady time for love songs!

Food comes into play on "Cooking Breakfast for the One I Love" and "But I Could Cook." Is the quickest way to a man's heart through his stomach? It has been for me! There is indeed an awful lot about cooking on the album — that's one of my passions. My love of cooking actually goes back to my early days dating. When I was in college, there was a guy named Jesse, whom everyone wanted to go out with. Of course they did: he was handsome, smart, funny and talented. He was also always hungry. I figured that if I wanted to date him,

■ CHAFFIN Page 20

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Reviews of the latest albums by Babs, Bocelli, Robyn and more



ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

Barbra Streisand, *Walls*

Barbra Streisand's reputation as a "Hollywood liberal" has often been in contrast to her music. Her films get political, her speeches, her concert banter, but the album? Well, she's best known for Broadway showtunes, American standards and her flirtation with disco. But for *Walls*, La Streisand, at age 76, has finally allowed her art and activism to intersect.

The style will be familiar to her fans: That honeyed contralto, soothing yet somehow defiant. The content, though, is something new. She goes for the throat... albeit in that adult contemporary way. She begins by keying us in to her point of view with "What's On My Mind," a proper lead-off to the album on which Babs is in fine voice, but it only takes until the second song, boldly titled "Don't Lie to Me," for her to come out swinging directly against the current president. *Everyone answers to someone* she refrains, but her message is less of rage than a plea for

humanity. The title track is a sombre and not-too-subtle reference to the "build the wall" movement, and feels a little preachy, as does the saccharine arrangement of "Imagine/What a Wonderful World," but Streisand is in fine voice throughout. And having her put her anger where her mouth is really works for me right now. **Three stars.**

Andrea Bocelli, *Si*

Ever since he burst onto the musical scene in the 1990s, Andrea Bocelli has practically been a genre unto himself. Italian, and skilled at opera, his voice has also been well-suited to pop songs and standards, something more classical grand tenors like Pavarotti and Domingo struggle with. (The style is sometimes derisively referred to as "popera" by less commercially viable artists.) But Bocelli need not concern himself with the hater, as long as he has such a voice.

That voice! Always as rich as brandy-wine, elegant yet tremulous, ethereal yet humane.

But vocal cords are not fine wines; they

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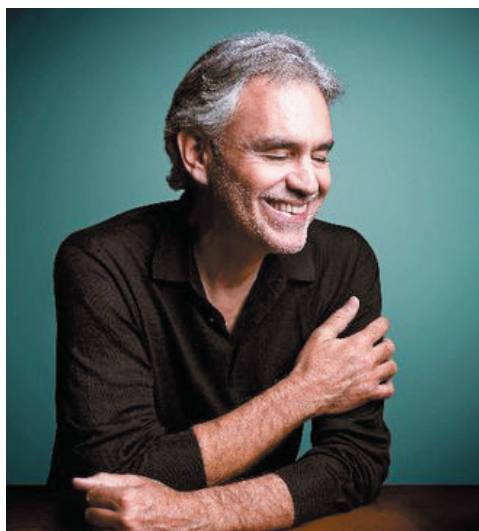
age, and while they can become mellower at times, they can also lose their force, their control.

Now 60, Bocelli is not exactly past his prime, but on *Si*, his 16th studio album — and first of original material since 2004 — you can detect cracks in the facade ... minor ones, but cracks nonetheless.

Its most apparent on the third track, “Un’anima,” in which he strains to stay in his range; while he hits the notes, his voice becomes more reedy and weak. But ironically, that softness serves him well on several other tracks, especially the duets. “If Only” with Dua Lipa brings out the best in both their instruments; he pairs with his son Matteo on “Fall On Me,” and the pop sensibility makes Bocelli sound as if he would be at home on a country music radio station. The teaming with Josh Groban, the *other* popera megastar, is an eargasm for both their fans. **Three-and-a-half stars.**

Robyn, *Honey*

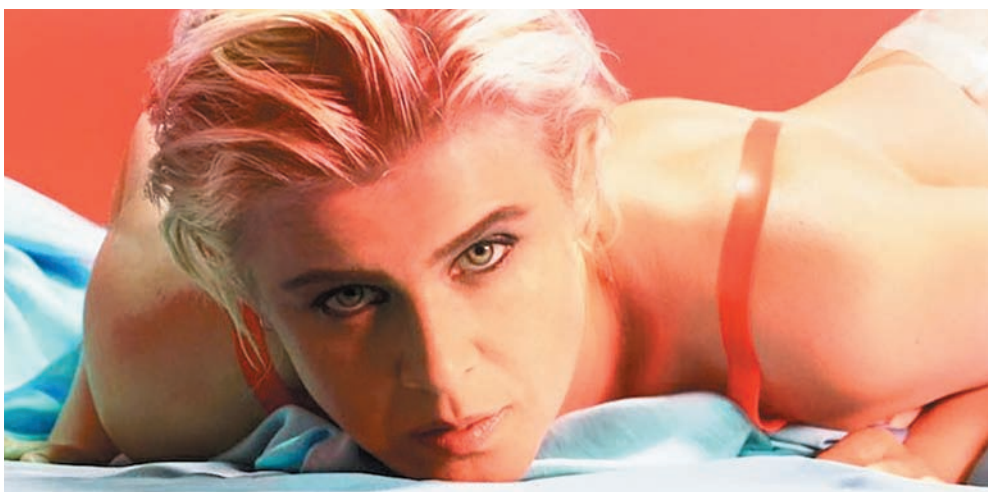
Robyn exists, alongside Kylie Minogue, as a special tier of gay diva: a foreigner (she’s Swedish; Minogue is Australian), tremendously successful overseas, who occasionally blesses the States with one of her infectious dance hits. And the first track off of *Honey* — her first full length album in more than a decade — proves the rule: “Missing U” has all the catchy beats that her fans have come to appreciate from her, and one long overdue. As the album progresses though, it becomes increasingly less dance-pop and more introspective electro-synth, as if she was throwing us a bone before asking us to come on her new journey, starting with the third track, “Because It’s in the Music,” goes full-on dreamwave by the fourth, “Baby Forgive Me.” That song elides seamless on the next cut, “Send to Robyn Immediately,” which feels more like a self-contained remix before transitioning into an R&B-infused riff, which harkens to Robyn’s soulful roots. **Two-and-a-half stars**



Various artists, *The Greatest Showman Reimagined*

Last year’s surprise Christmastime box office hit, *The Greatest Showman*, owed its success in large part to Pasek-and-Paul’s amazing song score, which was filled with great tunes... none better than the anthem for gay inclusiveness “This Is Me.” That song, searingly delivered by Keala Settle, gets covered on the new *Reimagined* album by Settle, plus Kesha and Missy Elliott.... then 14 more pop stars (among them North Texans Kelly Clarkson and Pentatonix, as well as queer icons Panic! At the Disco, Pink and Sara Bareilles) contribute their talents to interpreting the songs.

You might wonder, as I initially did: Why produce a dozen covers of an album that was already pretty terrific as it was? Because lightning can strike twice. With such an amazing score, why not spread the gospel further? Missy Elliott’s rap on “This Is Me,” for instance, does not so much transform as augment a great song. And from Brendon Urie’s gladiator-rock opening on “The Greatest Show” to Pink’s soaring vocals on “A Million Dreams,” to the hip-hop takes from Years & Years/Jess Glynne and Max/Ty Dolla \$ign all the way until the three bonus tracks that button this album, it’s a joyous reminder of a feel-good movie. **Four stars.** ■



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B.J. Cleveland**

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my best shot was to cook for him. Except all I knew how to cook at that time was steak and potatoes — and cinnamon rolls. But I taught myself to cook, and grew to really love it. And thus, all the cooking songs and references on the album; that's who I am. Those are the songs I related to, that I could infuse with my own spirit. And with "Cooking Breakfast," which is an old Fanny Brice song, that's exactly the kind of thing never designed for a man to sing. And with "But I Could Cook," which talks about acquiring husbands for the money they'll leave you, that's the kind of song a man never *could* sing, until very recently.

Who is a better cook: you or Tommy? Tom-

my can't even boil water. There are lots of things he's way better at than — many, many things — but when it comes to cooking, that's my domain! And I love it. Nothing makes me happier than cooking something new for Tommy, and having no idea how it came out, and hearing him say — as he often does — "that's the best thing you've ever made."

You made a point of including "forgotten gems" such as "Who Gave You Permission," from *Queen of the Stardust Ballroom* and the title tune from the 1966 Off-Broadway musical *Man With a Load of Mischief*. As someone who comes from the cabaret world, can you please say

something about that genre's tradition of educating your audience? I wish I could take credit for those two numbers, but those two were Tommy's suggestions. Tommy has this amazing memory for show tunes. I swear, he remembers every show tune he's ever heard in the course of his life: on cast albums, in revues, from playing auditions early in his career. A lot of the song suggestions, especially the obscure ones, came from him. In terms of "Who Gave You Permission," we knew that we didn't want to end the album with a traditional happy ending. This album was about celebrating equality. It was about using songs that had always been used to explore straight relationships to explore a gay

one. And I think in any life, there's a certain amount of heartbreak. Tommy and I are in our 50s now — we have gay friends who've passed away, leaving spouses behind. It's awful, and heartbreaking, and it's part of our collective story. We can get married now, and that's amazing. That also means that at some point, one spouse is left alone. Tommy and I wanted to reflect that, and we struggled for a while to find the right song. Then he remembered seeing on TV, maybe 40 years earlier, Maureen Stapleton singing about her husband who'd just died, in *Queen of the Stardust Ballroom*. I don't know how Tommy remembers this stuff. He didn't remember a lot of the details, but he just remembered the mood of the song, and a few phrases, and Maureen Stapleton wandering through her empty house. But he managed to track the song down, and it was perfect. Honestly, I don't think we ever think about educating the audience; we just don't really make a distinction between known and unknown songs — we just try to do what feels right, for each particular moment on the album. I think, for us, that's always been a big part of our mission statement at [our record label] PS Classics — that's there's no distinction between known and unknown music, just as there's no distinction between "old" and "new" music. It's part of one long, beautiful tapestry.

I'm glad you mentioned PS Classics, a record label, the one you co-founded and run by you and Tommy. Please say a few words about being a record label mogul. Jessica Molasky, one of the first artists we recorded, always used to call us "the reluctant moguls," because Tommy and I were the furthest things from businessmen. We didn't start the label to make money — and thank god, because we didn't make a penny for years — but simply because Tommy had been freelance record producing for a decade, and all the big labels were downsizing their music theater divisions. He knew if he wanted to continue making the kind of music he cared about, the music of Broadway and the Great American Songbook, he'd have to start his own label. And we knew he couldn't do it alone, so I came aboard as his partner. Right from the start, though, I said, "Let's only work with nice people." We'd both been in the business for a collective 25 years at that point, and we'd both worked with a lot of jerks. We thought, if we're going to start our own label, we only want to work with nice people. People who are warm and generous and kind. And we've stuck to that, and that's what's made running this record label a wonderful experience for 18 years now.

Are there plans for you to perform concerts in support of *Will He Like Me*? Absolutely. It was always designed that it would function not only as an album, but as a one-man show. Even as we were choosing and refining songs, we knew what the staging was, and imagined things I would do onstage to complement the material. I'm very much hoping to starting touring with *Will He Like Me*? in the spring.

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**Tuesday 11.27 —
Sunday 12.02**

'Elf The Musical' is lovely and sweet

A human, raised at the North Pole, discovers that he is not, in fact, a magical elf but a naïve American goofball. He ends up in New York City, trying to spread Christmas cheer. The musical adaptation of the hit Will Ferrell movie *Elf* is a winsome, lovely show and the perfect way to set the tone for the holidays!

DEETS: Music Hall at Fair Park, 909 First Ave.
DallasSummerMusicals.org.

**Saturday 12.01
Sunday 12.16**

'A Very Judy Christmas' premieres at Uptown

Janelle Lutz received widespread kudos for her performances as both Judy Garland and her daughter Liza Minnelli, and so B.J. Cleveland — who himself has a history playing drag versions of those women — wrote and directed a world premiere holiday show built around Lutz. *A Very Judy Christmas* kicks off Uptown Players' 2018-19 season with guests stars, music, humor and, we're assuming, some booze. It is Judy, after all.

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



**Friday 11.23
—
Wednesday 12.26**

Strippers take on ballet in 'Bur-Less-Q Nutcracker'

You can see a traditional *Nutcracker* if that's your thing, or you can laugh your Capestios off in *The Beulaville Baptist Book Club Presents A Bur-Less-Q Nutcracker*, Mark-Brian Sonna's Texas-twanged send-up where a small-town church accidentally hires a busload of strippers to perform Tchaikovsky's ballet, which returns yet again with loads of laughter.

DEETS: Studio Theatre, 15650 Addison Road.
BurlesqueNutcracker.com.

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ARTSWEEK
THEATER

A Christmas Carol. Dallas Theater Center's annual holiday tradition, this year with Alex Organ as Scrooge. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Dec. 30. DallasTheaterCenter.org

The Beulaville Baptist Book Club Presents: A Bur-Less-Q Nutcracker. MBS Productions returns with its campy, sexy comedy about strippers doing Tchaikovsky. Stone Cottage Theatre at Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Nov. 23–Dec. 26. BurlesqueNutcracker.com.

A Doll's House, Part 2. WaterTower recently closed an adaptation of Ibsen Doll's House; but this new play by Lucas Hnath forms an imagined sequel to Nora and her fate. *Final weekend.* Stage West, 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. StageWest.org.

The Lady from the Sea. Undermain presents this version of the play by Ibsen. Undermain Theatre, 3200 Main St. Through Dec. 2. Undermain.org.

BALLET

The Nutcracker. Tchaikovsky's timeless classic of Yuletide, presented by Texas Ballet Theater in Dallas and Fort Worth. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Through Dec. 2. Bass Performance Hall, 535 Commerce St., Fort Worth. Dec. 7–24. TexasBalletTheater.org.

FINE ART

An Enduring Legacy: The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Collection of Impressionist and Modern Art. The recent death of Dallas arts

patron Margaret McDermott, at age 106, led to a bequest of 32 works from her private collection, housed in her own home until recently, and now on display with three previously-donated works to the DMA. Dallas Museum of Art 1717 Harwood St. Through Feb. 17, 2019. DMA.org.

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

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

EXHIBITIONS

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

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

FRIDAY 11.23 —
BLACK FRIDAY
COMMUNITY

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

SATURDAY 11.24
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.

MONDAY 11.26
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 11.27
FILM

The Sound of Music. The hills are still alive in this smash hit musical, winner of the best picture Oscar and a favorite for more than 50 years. Screens as part of the Tuesday Big Movie New Classic Series, which now includes a matinee. Landmark's Magnolia Theatre in the West Village, 3699 McKinney Ave. Screens at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

THEATER

Elf. A charming adaptation of the modern Christmas fantasy about a human who works in Santa's workshop but eventually returns home to the U.S. Music Hall at Fair Park, 909 First Ave. Nov. 27–Dec. 2. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

THURSDAY 11.29
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.

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Cassie Nova

Hello, all. If you are reading this, I guess you survived another Thanksgiving and finally woke from your food coma. I freakin' love Thanksgiving. It's like a free day to eat whatever you want to with no guilt and the calories don't count on that one day. It's like magic.

I come from a family of really great cooks and I am one of them. Not to toot my own horn (toot toot), but Thanksgiving at my house is great. And after cocktails and the tryptophan kick in, you know you are gonna get some good sleep, too. I never feel so rested as I do after I wake up from my first nap on Thanksgiving Day... I wake up and eat summore.

Most years, it's not a tradition or anything like that but maybe it should be: We go around the table and say what we are thankful for. In the moment I always say the basics: I'm thankful for my friends, my animals, my health, blah blah blah. So I want to take this opportunity to say some of the overlooked things I am always thankful for but rarely acknowledge.

1. My husband and feeling loved, of course.
2. Sleeping the whole night through without having to get up to pee.
3. The wobbly and weak legs you get after great sex.
4. When the cable, internet and DVR are all working correctly.
5. Electric blankets when it is cold.
6. A pair of drag tights you can wear for weeks without getting a run in them.
7. Lipstick that doesn't stain. I can't tell you how many times I have left the club looking like I just drank a gallon of Kool-Aid.
8. Hot pickles! For some it's chocolate; I likes me some hot pickles!
9. A freshly styled wig that all you have to do is put it on. Like a hat but fishier.
10. A clean toilet seat. No drops of anything.
11. Tito's! Sometimes Vanilla Crown Royal and Coke Zero.
12. Solid pup poops when doing poop patrol in the backyard.
13. Healthy and happy animals.
14. Ellen DeGeneres comedy album *Taste This*. Actually, just Ellen in general.
15. Kelly Clarkson... she knows why.
16. Having a variety in my celebrity spank bank, from Henry Cavill, Jai Courtney and Jason Momoa to randos like Paul Adelstein, Tyler Labine and the "That Didn't Suck" guy from the Carvana commercial.

17. Not being stuck in traffic. If I can get to work without constantly hitting my breaks, I almost cry.

18. A drama free weekend. I work in gay bars so those are rare.

19. A reliable vehicle. I know so many without one and I do not want their struggle. Bless 'em.

20. A great book!

I know a lot of these things are stupid to some of you but to me they can turn a bad day into a reason to continue living. You already knew I was dramatic. Still thankful, though.

Now let's show that I'm thankful to have a job by doing it ... Let's help some folks!

Hello Cassie, I am writing you because lately I feel like I am doing my best to save a marriage that I held at a higher caliber than my spouse. We have had an extreme series of



ups-and-downs with faults that can be equally shared in our past, but it seems like the circle is everlasting and there is no seeming way to compromise unless I tuck tail and accept all the blame.

I tend to find myself lately believing I am the one to blame because I have tolerated so much. I guess my question to you is where do I go from here? I love my spouse so much it hurts but I feel nothing but cold rigid distance, and it's messing with me mentally to the point I am taking prescribed anti-depressants and anti-anxiety meds daily. I am literally at a loss and I am doing my best to understand where he is coming from but when I do get a chance to express myself my ideals are constantly challenged and I feel I am not being heard.

Cassie, I am running on fumes physically and mentally trying to save something that I feel I am the only one fighting for. Any helpful tips you may have to get him to come around

would be beneficial! Thank you, Signed Stressed Out in South Dallas.

Dear SOSD, First off, I wanna say this sounds like a shitty situation. It seems like you are doing all of the work and you just want him to do his part to make the relationship work. A health relationship should be 50/50. Anything less that and things quickly become strained.

That being said, there are two sides to every story. If he wrote in to me to ask advice, what would his letter say? Are you tuned into him enough that you would know this or can you only see as far as your anxiety lets you? I assume he knows you are on antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication. Is he the only reason you take them or does he just exacerbate your situation.

Just because you have tolerated things in the past does not mean you have to keep tolerating them, especially if they are hurtful to you. Have you thought of taking a break? Like

maybe go visit family for a few days to see if he misses you. Do you two ever actually talk about anything real? Does he know how you are feeling or are you keeping all this bottled up inside just expecting him to notice you are upset? If that is the case, I have news for you: men are stupid and if you are waiting for or expecting him to notice something, you will be an old homo before that happens.

Fault and blame are a never ending game that will always ruin a relationship. Try to start a dialogue to help you both get out how you are feeling. Settle for nothing less than you both putting in 100 percent into your relationship. If he can't do this or is unwilling to try, it might be time to walk away. It will hurt but so will staying in a relationship that is slowly breaking your spirit. Good luck!

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



JR.'s: Where the boys are

- Making the **SCENE** the week of **Nov. 23–29**:
- **1851 Club**: **Kiana Lee** hosts her show at 10:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.
 - **Alexandre's**: **K-Marie** on Friday. **Vero Voz y Compania** on Saturday. **Wayne Smith** on Sunday. **K-Marie** Sings Broadway on Tuesday. **Vero Voz** on Wednesday. **Chris Chism** on Thursday.
 - **Cedar Springs Tap House**: **Poker Night** at 7 p.m. on Friday.
 - **Club Changes**: **Divine Miss Divas All Stars Reunion** at 10 p.m. on Friday.
 - **Club Reflection**: **Death Drop Fridays** hosted by **Beyondshade Starr** from 11 p.m.-2 a.m. on Friday. **Toys 4 Tots 6th Annual Toy Drive** and Show at 6 p.m. on Sunday.
 - **Dallas Eagle**: **United Court** presents Go Elf Yourself at 7 p.m. on Friday. **Line Dance With Yoshi** from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday.
 - **Henry's Tavern**: **Celebrate Pride in Plano** on Wednesday evening
 - **JR.'s Bar & Grill**: **Krystal Summers** hosts the Girls Like Us Show at 11 p.m. on Tuesday.
 - **Marty's Live**: **Sexcapade Fridays** hosted by **Rudeboy Dallas** and **Nicole O'hara Munro**.
 - **Round-Up Saloon**: **The Showdown**, a 12-week contest, hosted by **Daphne Rio** and judged by **Domita Sanchez**, with \$2,000 in cash prizes, on Tuesday.
 - **Sue Ellen's**: **Vivienne Vermuth** performs Thanksgiving Day. **The Southpaw Preachers** and **Eddison** on Sunday.
 - **The Rose Room**: **Taryn Taylor** on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
 - **Urban Cowboy**: **Fauxbia and Porter Bella** host Drag Brunch from noon-3 p.m. on Sunday. Collecting items for domestic abuse shelter Safehaven.
 - **Woody's Sports & Video Bar**: **I Love the 90s** at 9 p.m. on Monday. **Showtunes** at 9 p.m. on Tuesday. **Karaoke** at 10 p.m. on Wednesday. **Jada Pinkett Fox** at 11 p.m. on Thursday.

Scene Photographer: **Kay Haygood** and **Chad Mantooth**



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Lighting up Sue Ellen's with a smile



Cooking up something delicious at Panda's



Vidal at JR.'s



Keeping an eye out for customer's at Sue's



The friendly staff at Woody's



Justin at Woody's



Ready for fun at Sue Ellen's



A swingin' good time on The Strip



Undercover panda on The Strip

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Many Happy (Election) Returns

Solution on Page 22

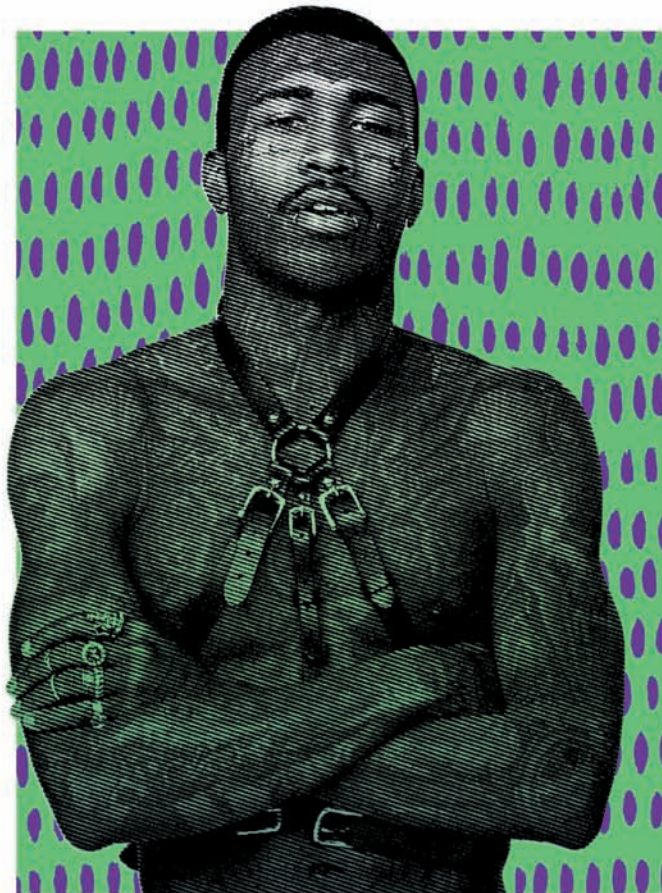
Across

- They get checked at bathhouses
- Abbreviated Broadway musical?
- First out governor Kate, who was reelected
- Prefix with classical
- Antigay prejudice, e.g.
- Mineo, who played Plato
- All's Well That ___ Well*
- Emma Stone plays a beard in this movie
- Rights law upheld by Massachusetts voters
- Whoopi, et al., at the Oscars
- Underdog victories
- Fruit cover
- "___ Ordinary Man" (*My Fair Lady*)
- Squealer
- Lay in the hammock or LuPone
- Sharice Davids, first LGBTQ ___ elected to congress
- Hollywood Squares choice
- Church sections
- Saint, in Rio
- Daly of *Judging Amy*
- Home of the Bruins
- Claire of the Moon*
- actor Todd
- Greet with loud laughter
- Kim Davis, who lost the race for this office
- Blue bottoms
- "Houston, we have a problem"
- Reagan's Star Wars letters
- Like an eagle in flight
- Pride of lions?
- Half a score
- First gay man elected governor Jared
- Title for Uncle Remus' bear
- AARP members

Down

- It's found under the tongue
- Diary entry start by Anais Nin?
- Comfort in sorrow
- Hardly like a muscle Mary
- Even bigger than a bed for a queen
- Fill with freight
- The A in GLARP (abbr.)
- Censor's sound
- Tails of the city, when cruising?
- Place for future Lts.
- Porter's "___ Shouldn't I?"

- PBS helper
- South Pacific* heroine
- Plague for payment
- Mabius of *Ugly Betty*
- "Toodles"
- Gay-dog owner on TV
- Former labor leader George
- Darrin Stevens, for one
- St. crosser
- Preposition that goes either way
- Type of aids
- First of the Democratic ass drawers
- Tutti-frutti ingredient
- Star Trek* counselor Deanna
- Who should be against homophobia
- T, to a "Homer-phile"
- Wave tops
- "Harder days, empty ___ days" (*Oliver!*)
- Big name in dieting
- Field of Ursula Le Guin
- Ellen DeGeneres and others
- Earth tone
- Ready to get drilled by the dentist
- Direction for seamen
- Race unit in *The Front Runner*
- "Xanadu" band, for short
- Tennessee foot player



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