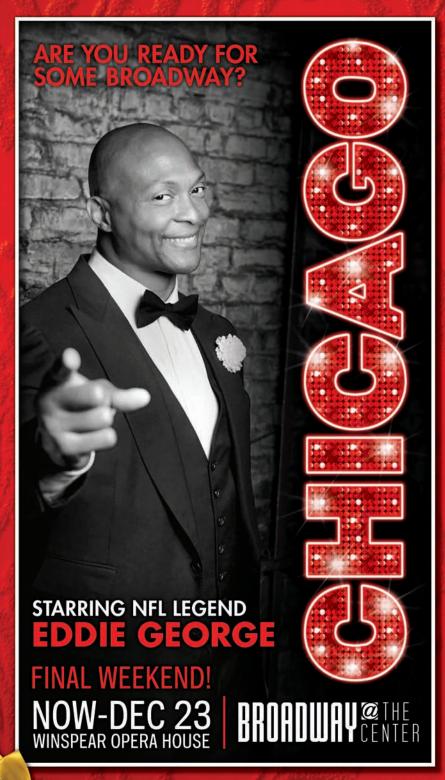
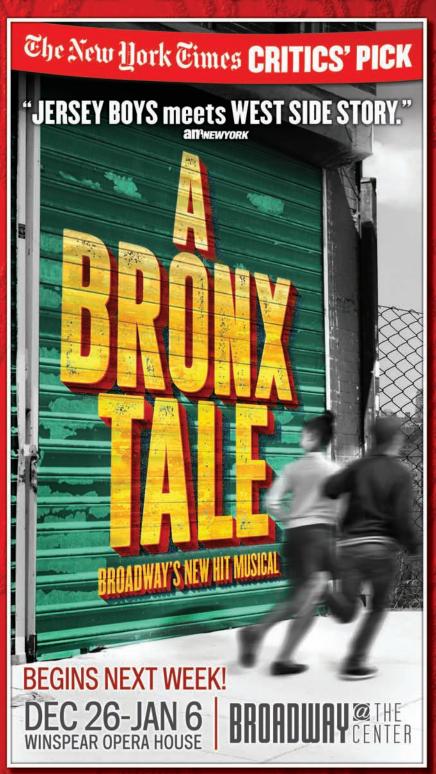


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12.21.18 | Volume 35 | Issue 33



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- Looking ahead to the council races
- Michelle Obama, Becoming
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Happy Holidays from the staff of Dallas Voice. Design by Shawn Weston





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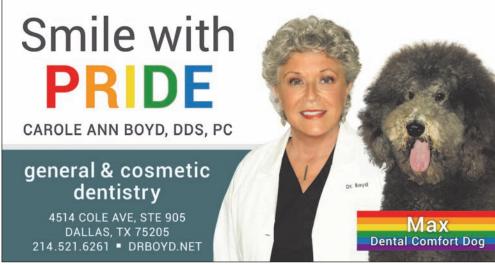
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GALA, GLBT Chamber join forces for BEN in Plano

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance (GALA) North Texas and the North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce announced Tuesday, Dec. 18, that beginning in 2019 the chamber's Business Exchange Network — BEN — program is expanding

The new Plano group — BEN-Legacy Shops - will meet on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, from January through May and from July through November, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Henry's Tavern, located in The Shops at Legacy, 5741 Legacy Drive, No.100, Plano. This is the same location where GALA holds its Third Thursday Happy Hour events.

BEN is a closed-category business referral program "designed to create professional relationships and develop presentation skills," the chamber explained. As such, only chamber members are allowed to participate. But GALA North Texas participants who aren't already chamber members can still get the benefits of BEN, since they can join the chamber at a special rate through Jan. 15.

GALA North Texas participants can join the chamber and get a 15-month membership for the price of a 12-month membership, or they can get the initial fee to join waived if they take the subscription membership option (in which the membership fee is paid monthly via a credit card).

The usual \$35 set-up fee is being waived on both annual and subscription membership options.

Those who want to get an idea what BEN is all about before they actually join can attend the BEN - Legacy Shops meeting on Jan. 10 free of

- Tammy Nash

Smith leaving Equality Texas, Smoot stepping in as interim CEO



Equality Texas, the state's largest statewide LGBT advocacy organization, this week announced the departure of longtime CEO Chuck Smith and the appointment of Samantha Smoot as interim director, effective immediately.

In a press release issued Monday, Dec. 17, Smith noted his lengthy tenure with Equality Texas and said that as the agency prepares to mark its 30th anniversary in 2019, "The board and I have decided it's time for a new generation of leadership to take us to the next step in our fight for equality in Texas. I am honored to pass the leadership

> of the organization on to Samantha Smoot, a native Texan and global leader in the fight for equality."

Elizabeth Myers, president of the Equality Texas Foundation's board, said Equality Texas is "confident that [Smoot] will continue that momentum and lead us to future victories for LGBTQ Texans."

Smoot said she is "honored to serve" as interim director of Texas' statewide LGBT lobby organization during the Texas Legislature's 2019 session, and that she looks forward "to working with the leadership team, staff, volunteers and donors

to ensure full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer Texans.

"Through political action, education and community organizing, we will continue to drive positive change and fight against systemic discrimination," Smoot said.

Smoot has 20 years of experience leading citizen advocacy campaigns with the Equality Texas organization, and she has served as political director of both the Planned Parenthood Federation for America and the Human Rights Campaign, as well as the executive director for Texas Freedom Network.

More recently, Smoot worked to support citizen groups and political leaders building more inclusive democracies through her work with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs in the Middle East and North Africa, West Africa and Furasia.

During his 15 years as CEO of Equality Texas, Smith led the growth in programs to help LGBTQ Texans, oversaw the expansion of Equality Texas staff statewide, created a business outreach program that is a model for the country, gave transgender people a visible voice, defeated the bathroom bill twice during the 2017 legislative session and passed anti-bullying legislation in 2011, Myers said.

The Equality Texas Foundation board, she added "expresses gratitude to Smith for his dedication and vital role as a pioneer for Equality Texas and welcomes Smoot's proven leadership" for the 2019 legislative session.

- Tammy Nash



David M. Lee, M.D. • Marc A. Tribble, M.D. • Donald A. Graneto, M.D. • Eric Klappholz, NP • Peter Triporo, NP Jason Vercher, PA-C · Vanessa Bludau, NP · William Hays, MD, ATC, LAT · Hollie Williams, NP

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



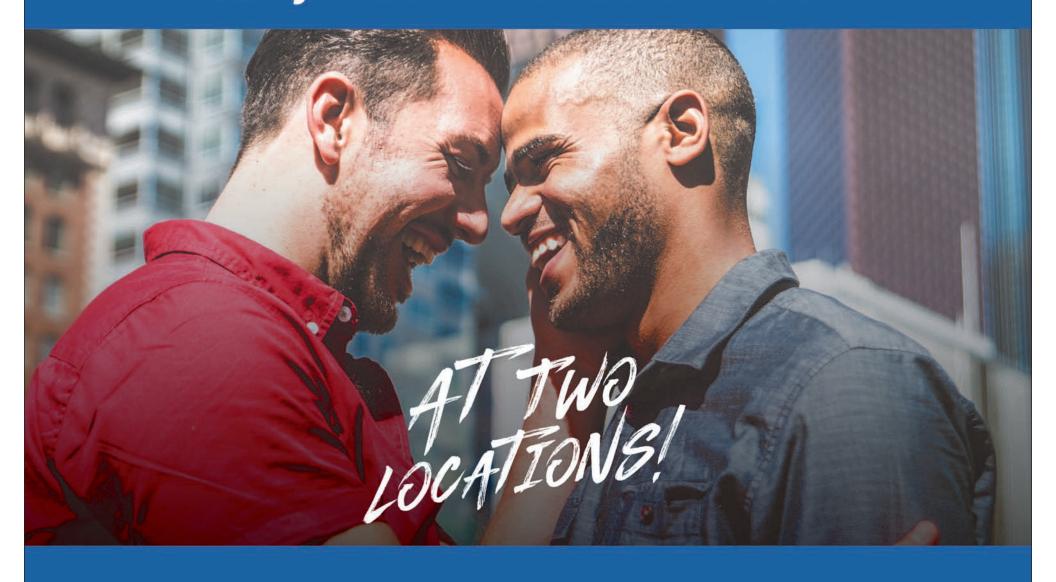
Peter Triporo, NP named Top 10 in 2018 America's Top Nurse Practitioner Awards presented by Point of Care Network.



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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.

DECEMBER

• 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.

• Dec. 25: Christmas

• Dec. 31: Celebration honors Carol and Angela

Celebration Community Church honors retiring pastor the Rev. Carol West and her wife Angela from 7 p.m.-midnight at Celebration Community Church, 908 Pennsylvania Ave., Fort Worth.

JANUARY

• Jan. 1: New Year's Day

• Jan. 8: 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.

• Jan. 12: LGBT Family **Building Conference**

Comprehensive LGBT family building conference includes two fertility physicians who are part of the LGBT community, donor egg agency, surrogacy agency, donor sperm bank, attorney specializing in surrogacy and adoption, third party reproduction psychologist, parents who have built their families through donor egg and surrogacy and adoption, as well as gestational carriers and egg donors from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at LGBT Babies, 6750 N. MacArthur Blvd., Suite 209, Irving. Register at TheDonorSolution.lpages.co.

• Jan. 19: Halftime Gaybingo

Gaybingo from 5-9 p.m. at the Rose Room, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Tickets at rcdallas.org.

• Jan. 19: Scarborough Faire auditions

Come be a part of a theater experience like no other. Auditions for volunteer lane performers (actors and musicians) for Scarborough Renaissance Festival's performing company — Scarborough Academy of Performing Arts (SAPA) will be held 9 a.m.-noon and 1:30-4:30 p.m. Auditions are by appointment at SAPA@SRFestival.com.

• Jan. 22: 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.

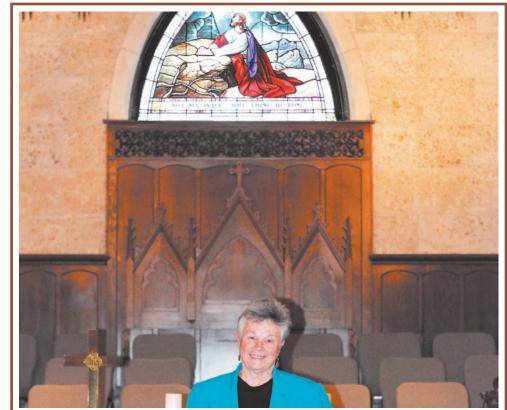
• Jan. 29: Eat for Change

Support AIDS Walk South Dallas from 5-9 p.m. at Chipotle, 4330 Lemmon Ave.

FEBRUARY

• Feb. 1-2 Out for Health

Out for Health is a medical conference organized by students from Texas Health Science Centers across the state to address the needs of the LGBT population. Offers continuing education credits. Students \$15, General \$50, Healthcare professionals \$120. UNT Health Science Center, Medical Education Training Building, 1000 Montgomery St., Fort Worth. Register at UNTHSC.edu/ OutForHealth.



The Rev. Carol West will preach her final sermon as pastor of Celebration Community Church Sunday morning, Dec. 30, and on Dec. 31, the congregation will hold a special New Year's Eve Party to honor Carol and her wife, Angela, as Carol begins her retirement. See listings for details.

OBITUARY



Thomas John Brown, 76, of Dallas, left this world on Dec. 13, 2018, at Parkland Memorial Hospital.

He was born Oct. 11, 1942, in Pond Creek, Okla. He grew up there and was drum major for his high school band. He spent time in Los Angeles in the 1960s, where he worked as a model and was Lana Turner's favorite waiter. He also loved to travel, and had traveled all around the world, especially to India, where he studied voga.

Tom John was cherished by his friends as a compassionate and caring man. He was loved by the gay community and by his many friends at the T. Boone Pickens YMCA in downtown Dallas, where he practiced yoga.

A celebration of his life will be held at a future date. Memorial donations can be made in his name to the T. Boone Pickens YMCA.

· Weekly: Lambda Weekly at 1 p.m. on Sunday on 89.3 KNON-FM with David Taffet, Lerone Landis and the late Patti Fink; 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.

• Feb. 9: Love Equality

The Equality Texas Dallas Steering committee presents Love Equality, a nice of dancing with drinks and light food, benefitting Equality Texas, will be held from 8-11 p.m. at 7 for Parties, 150 Turtle Creek Blvd. Ste. 107. Advance tickets are \$50 until Dec. 31, and \$75 from Jan. 1-Feb. 1, online at Secure. Every Action. com/HZCrJuU7wUaaHFlftkj1Sg2. Tickets at the door \$100.

• Feb. 12: 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.

• Feb. 26: 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.

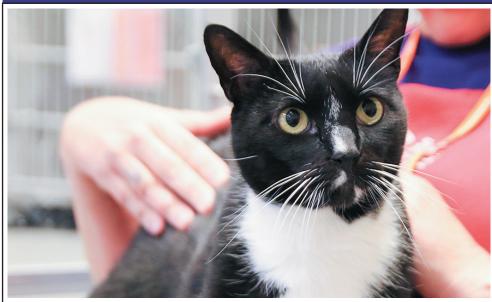
MARCH

• March 12: 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.

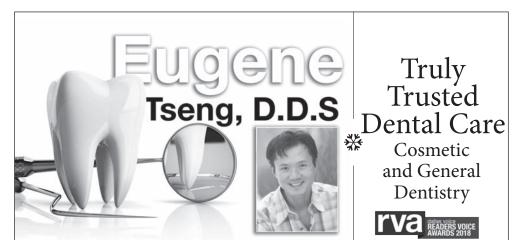
GAY AGENDA, Page 14

■pet of the week / BOOTS



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Boots is waiting for you at the SPCA of Texas' Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas, 2400 Lone Star Drive (near I-30 and Hampton Road). Hours are noon-6 p.m. Sun-Wed and noon-7 p.m. Thurs-Sat. Regular adoption fees are \$100 for puppies and kittens aged 0-6 months, \$50 for adult dogs and cats aged 6 months or older, \$25 for senior dogs or cats aged 7 years and older and \$25 for VIP dogs and cats (available for adoption for 30 days or more.) Fee includes spay/neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, a heartworm test for dogs six months and older and a FIV/FeLV test for cats 4 months and older, initial flea/tick preventative and heartworm preventative, a microchip, 30 days of PetHealth Insurance provided by PetPlan, a free 14-day wellness exam with VCA Animal Hospitals, a free year-long subscription to Activ4Pets, a rabies tag and a free leash. Call 214-742-SPCA (7722) or visit today.



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Pride festival, parade headed to Fair Park



Dallas Pride 2019

- The Miller Lite Music Festival will be held Saturday, June 1, from 11 a.m.-10 p.m. in the Centennial Building and on The Esplanade in Fair Park
- The Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade will be held Sunday, June 2, in Fair Park.

Dallas Pride organizers say watch the DallasPride.org website for more details, coming soon, including information on booths at the festival, parade entries and grand marshal nominations and voting.

Turnbow says parade location could be 'revisited' in 2020, but planned construction on Cedar Springs made 2019 relocation necessary

TAMMYE NASH I Managing Editor nash@dallasvoice.com

allas Tavern Guild Executive Director Jaron Turnbow this week confirmed that the city's annual Pride festival and parade will take place the first weekend in June at Fair Park.

Tavern Guild officials said last November that they had voted in June 2018 to move the annual Pride festival to Fair Park in June. But plans for the 2019 Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade were still up in the air at that time.

This week, Turnbow — who also leads the Dallas Pride Steering Committee and is chief organizer for Dallas' annual Pride festival and parade — said the parade will also definitely happen in June at Fair Park in 2019. But it could move back to the gayborhood in subsequent years.

"The city is planning to start construction on Cedar Springs Road [in a planned improvement project that is part of a bond program], and we simply don't know when they will be finished," Turnbow said to explain the main reason for moving the parade next year. "We asked them if they weren't finished by September, could they halt construction long enough for us to have the parade. They said, 'We don't know.' We asked if they could halt construction until after June. They said, 'No. We can't do that.'

"The original plan was for the construction to be done by September, but they can't guarantee that for us," Turnbow continued. "We don't want to plan to have a



parade on The [Cedar Springs] Strip only to realize a month before, when we don't have time to reschedule or change plans, that they won't be finished."

In addition, he said, part of the project involves tearing up and replacing sidewalks along Cedar Springs, and "even if the actual street were finished, the sidewalks might not be. We can't have 50,000 people on the street without sidewalks.

"So for 2019, at least, the parade is moving to Fair Park," he said. "Then if we need to revisit that for 2020. We will do that. To me, [having the parade at Fair Park] is not a permanent thing as of right now. For 2020, we can discuss moving it back to Cedar Springs, or maybe even moving it downtown. Some people have suggested having it in downtown, but we just can't afford to have the parade downtown in 2019, although that's not to say it won't happen in the future."

But regardless of where the parade might be held in 2020 and beyond, Turnbow said it will happen in June from now on, on the same weekend as the Music Festival.

Tavern Guild members voted last sum-

mer to move the Miller Lite Music Festival to Fair Park in June because "we knew then that there would be construction in [Reverchon Park, where the festival has been held], even though we didn't know then the timing or the extent of the construction," Turnbow said.

But imminent construction on the ballpark at Reverchon — which city officials have said would not impact the ability to hold the Pride festival or other events there — was not the only reason for moving the festival and maybe not even the main reason.

"We moved from [Oak Lawn Park, formerly Lee Park] because we had run out of room there. And we have been talking for years about not having enough room at Reverchon, either," Turnbow said. "There's so much we have to consider there — the logistics of getting everything done while still following all of the city's rules about where we can and can't put certain booths and, if it rains, where we can and can't put the stages. There are just a lot of issues that Reverchon presented."

He said that there are "no other large

parks" in the Oak Lawn area that could accommodate the festival, and while there were some that suggested moving the event to Klyde Warren Park, "that park is actually smaller than Reverchon, and our goal is to expand the festival, not shrink it."

Last September's festival drew more people than ever before, he said, and the growth is expected to continue. "We were running out of room there, and we had to do something," he said. "We don't want to wait until we are forced to move; we want to do it now, on our terms. We know what's coming [in terms of the city's regulations and requirements], and we want to circumvent all that ahead of time."

Fair Park, on the other hand, "is built to hold events like this," Turnbow continued. "There are just so many benefits to being at Fair Park in general. We will have so much more room there to grow and expand. There is plenty of parking there," including adequate handicapped parking, and DART's Green Line includes a stop just outside the Fair Park gate nearest the Centennial Building and Esplanade, where the

PARADE, Page 10

Mayor and council elections kick off in Dallas



Chad West

DAVID TAFFET I Senior Staff Writer taffet@dallasvoice.com

ttorney Chad West last week announced his candidacy for the Dallas City Council seat currently held by Scott Griggs, becoming the first new LGBT candidate to begin a campaign for the next Dallas council election.

Griggs, who is reaching the end of his fourth and — thanks to term limits — final term, has thrown his support behind West. Griggs himself is expected to run for may-

West has lived in Oak Cliff for more than a decade. He and his partner have two chil-

"I love the neighborhood," West said. "My family is here. My home is here. And my business is here."

He served on the city plan commission and is concerned about development in the area. While development can't and shouldn't be stopped, he said, it can be done in a smart and sensitive way.

West also said he's concerned with police and fire pay. "I want to bring them up to competitive levels with surrounding cities," he said.

And he is concerned with supporting education in his Oak Cliff district. "Half of the schools in our neighborhood don't have after-school programs," he said, suggesting enhancing those programs with help from area libraries and other city support ser-

Council: Adam Medrano

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano kicked off his campaign for his fourth and final term as councilman for District 2 at a fundraiser in Deep Ellum in October. He

ELECTIONS, Page 11





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The Dallas Tavern Guild presented a total of \$30,000 to its two 2018 parade beneficiary organizations at its December meeting. The donations - \$22,500 to AIDS Services of Dallas and \$7,500 to Resource Center — represent proceeds from the 2018 Miller Lite Music Festival and Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade. Organizers said this year's Pride celebration was the largest ever in Dallas.

festival will be staged in 2019.

"When it comes to the festival, our goal is to make it more inclusive and welcoming for everybody, which is something we haven't been able to do in the past. Currently, we have been pretty much catering everything to those who stay in the bar area, but there are a lot of us who aren't in the bars," he said. "We just want to incorporate more from the community. We want to expand the Family Pride Zone, have more for those in the deaf community, including ASL interpreters on all the stages.

"We just haven't done a really good job of being inclusive in the past, and I want to change that."

He also stressed that holding the parade in Fair Park will allow for a longer parade route than the one down Cedar Springs and a much larger and more efficient staging area. And, he said, holding the parade in Fair Park will give organizers control over where spectator tents can be erected along the route.

"A lot of people have been upset about the tents people have been putting up on the sidewalk on Cedar Springs for the parade. They say the tents block the sidewalks and they block the view of the parade for other people, and they are mad at us because we don't do something about it," Turnbow said. "The fact is, we don't have any control over that. It's a city sidewalk, and we can't tell people they can't put their tents there."

Some people have also complained that they won't be allowed to bring their own

coolers — in other words, they won't be able to bring their liquor — into Fair Park for the parade. Turnbow said those people need to understand that while they have been able to get away with drinking on the street on Cedar Springs, it is actually illegal, and Pride organizers have been told that the city was going to be cracking down

Turnbow said the Dallas Pride Steering Committee "is still discussing the possibility" of having some kind of event on the Cedar Springs Strip in September to keep alive that tradition, but "for right now, the idea is to keep the festival and the parade together, in the same weekend each year."

Turnbow acknowledged that moving the Pride celebration back to June and out of the gayborhood is a controversial decision, and that there are many people upset over it. But, he said, he hopes people will give organizers the chance to prove they have made the right decision.

"I know there are people in the community who think we are out to get them, that we are trying to destroy Pride. But that's not it at all," he declared. "All we are asking is that you give us a chance. A lot of us have been doing this for a very long time, and we have an amazing group in this steering committee. We are all members of the LGBT community.

"We love this city, and we love doing this event. That's why we spend countless hours working on it and so much of our own money to make it happen," he concluded. "Just give us a chance."





Adam Medrano, top, and Omar Narvaez

said he's overseen bond elections and, for his fourth term, he'd like to see some of the work actually get underway — including the project on Cedar Springs Road.

"And I want to continue my work on getting a shelter for LGBT homeless youth open," he added.

Medrano chairs the Mayor's LGBT Task Force and has guided task force-recommended-revisions to a number of ordinances through the council. Among those have been wording making it clear sexual orientation and gender identity are both covered in the city's nondiscrimination ordinances.

The city has also extended full healthcare benefits to its transgender employees at the urging of Medrano and the task force.

Council: Omar Narvaez

Omar Narvaez won his first term after an election upset, beating incumbent Monica Alonzo for her West Dallas seat. Although he hasn't made a formal announcement, he has told supporters at fundraising events that he'll be running for re-election.

"I'll make a more giant deal about it in the new year," he said.

In his first term, Narvaez successfully managed a gas explosion crisis in his district. Amazon's new distribution center and Nokia's North American headquarters will bring 2,000 new jobs to District 6.

If West is elected and Narvaez and Medrano re-elected, Dallas will have three openly-gay city council members for the first time since the 1990s.

Mayoral candidates

While city council members are elected every two years for up to four terms, the city's mayor is elected every four years and is limited to two terms. Mayor Mike Rawlings will complete his second term in June.

Among those considering a run are current council members Griggs and Jennifer Staubach Gates. Griggs is expected to announce his candidacy early in the new year.

Former councilwoman Angela Hunt, who served for eight years and is best known for her opposition to the proposed toll road through the Trinity River bottoms — a plan that's finally been abandoned. Hunt's name regularly surfaces as a probably mayoral candidate.

Working on city boards is a good introduction into city politics, and Regina Montoya, who chairs the Mayor's Task Force on Poverty and is former vice-chair of the DFW Airport Board, has announced she is running.

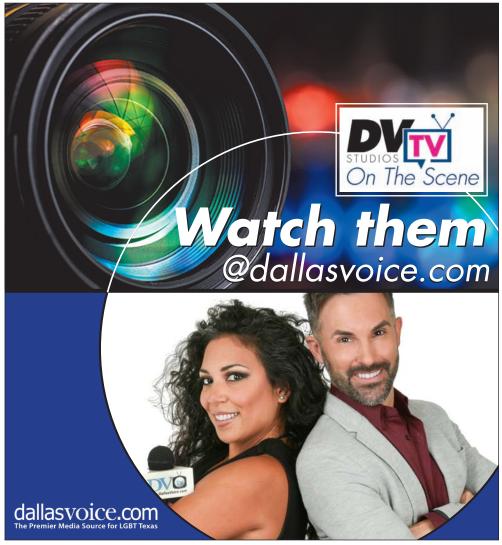
Dallas often looks outside the council to the business community for its mayors. Rawlings, for example, was CEO of Pizza Hut. So far, the only names emerging from the business community are those of Design District developer Mike Ablon, and Peter Brodsky, who is redeveloping Red Bird Mall.

Bobby Abtahi hasn't made an announcement, but his name has been suggested as a possible mayoral candidate. He ran for the council in 2013 against District 14 Councilman Philip Kingston and currenly serves as Dallas Park Board president.

All of the contenders are LGBT allies — all except one name that was suggested over the summer by D Magazine. Sen. Don Huffines, they hinted, might be interested. But after his humiliating defeat for re-election, the city probably won't have to face that little bundle of homophobia.

The one-month filing period for the May municipal elections begins on Jan. 16.





Being Michelle Obama

Former first lady sells out American Airlines Center on unprecedented rock-star book tour

DAVID TAFFET I Senior Staff Writer taffet@dallasvoice.com

ormer first lady Michelle
Obama spoke at the American Airlines Center this
week about her new book
Becoming, telling some of
the stories about how she
became who she is. But
that undersells what this
multi-million dollar evening was really like.

On Monday afternoon, the former First Lady was just being Michelle Obama, inspiring 150 teenage girls attending a leadership conference at the Winspear Opera House and leaving them with a day they'll remember the rest of their lives.

To prepare for the Young Women's Leadership Conference, the 9th-to-12th graders read *Becoming*. At an afternoon breakout session in the Winspear's Hamon Hall, Matrice Ellis-Kirk, chair of the AT&T Performing Art Center's board of directors, led 30 of the teens in a discussion of what most inspired them and what surprised them in the book.

One teen explained that because Obama always says proudly she is from Chicago's south side, she is able to claim her heritage, too. "I live in West Dallas," the teenager said. "I say it proudly now, because she says it proudly."

That's when Obama came out from behind the curtain, surprising the young women who shrieked with delight. One jumped up to hug her, and Obama made a point of hugging each and every one of the girls in the group before sitting down on a sofa next to one of them.

Obama talked to them about applying to college. She told them that when she decided she wanted to go to Princeton, a

high school counselor told her she wasn't Princeton material. But that only made her more determined to get in. She encouraged the girls to find the school that felt like the right fit for them and not let anyone tell them they couldn't achieve what they set their minds to.



Obama also talked about her friendship with former President George W. Bush and how a difference in policies or opinions doesn't have to divide people: "People can look beyond politics," she explained.

And since her conversation always remained high, she didn't mention the current White House residents.

Obama told the group to embrace who they are: "They want you to think small," she said. "They think if you win, they lose, that you're going to take their place. So you have to work hard and be prepared."

After the session, one of the girls who was sitting near the curtain said she heard heals clicking backstage, which started her thinking, "Wouldn't it be crazy if Mrs. Obama was here?"

Another said she was tingling when Obama came out from behind that curtain.

But most important was the message the former First Lady had for the girls: "She

told me to have confidence in myself," one of them said, speaking like someone who had just been hugged by a rock star but also with complete, new-found self-assurance.

After the small break out, Obama addressed the entire leadership conference, telling them, "I don't know you personally, but I know who you are. You are me."

She said she had tickets for each of them to attend her event that evening at the American Airlines Center, and she might as well have been Oprah giving each member of the studio audience a new car. That evening, she gave the group a shout-out from the stage, and the teens gave her a shout back.

While there may have been a book, this book promotion event didn't resemble any other event to promote a book. From ticket prices to screaming fans to merchandise sales, this was a rock concert without the music.

The event sold out within minutes of Live Nation putting tickets on sale. Special event DART trains ran to Victory Station — for a Mavs game? Sure. For an author? A first. Fans stood in line to take selfies with Michelle Obama cutouts positioned around the arena hallways. Kiosks featured t-shirts with slogans like "When they go low, we go high." People bought stadium nachos. And posters. And banners.

When the event began, former White House advisor Valerie Jarrett led a two-hour conversation with Obama about topics like infertility, marriage counseling, raising children and what it was like living in the White House.

On infertility, Obama said, "I know someone out there is struggling right now," and — in typical Obama style — offered comfort and understanding while providing hope through medical advances.

On marriage, she said, "No one ever tells young couples marriage is hard," adding that counseling helped her marriage.

"My husband is a bad dude," she said.
"There are times I wanted to throw him out a window."

But she said her goal was to remain married for 50 years. "If you have 10 bad years," she said, "that's pretty good."

Around the time her husband was elected to the U.S. Senate, Michelle Obama was applying for jobs in Chicago. She had an interview and nowhere to leave daughter Sasha, so she brought her along. She said she really didn't want the job, so she asked for everything — high salary, a lot of time off and more — and got the job.

Her future employer valued her, she said, because she demanded it.



Obama rounded out the evening with stories about life in the White House. One of her biggest challenges was going from being the spouse who earned the higher income to being a political wife. And she got the most criticism, mostly from women, she



said, when she spent the first few months helping her children adjust to new schools and life in the White House.

She called the day marriage equality was declared one of the happiest and saddest days she spent in the White House. Earlier that day, she and her husband attended a service for the victims of the Mother Emmanuel Church massacre in Charleston, S.C. That night, the White House was bathed in rainbow lights to celebrate the Obergefell marriage ruling.

Crowds surrounded the White House to see the lighting, but through the building's bullet-proof glass, Obama said she couldn't hear the celebration. She asked her husband to go outside with her to join the celebration, but he had briefing papers to read. So she asked Sasha, but Sasha wasn't interested. Only Melia jumped at the chance to evade Secret Service and venture outside at night, something they'd never done before.

Secret Service agents posted throughout the house were talking into their wrist radios. "Family on the move," they warned each other, she recalled, and when she and Melia got to the door to the front portico and tried to open it, they realized the door was locked. They couldn't get out that way.

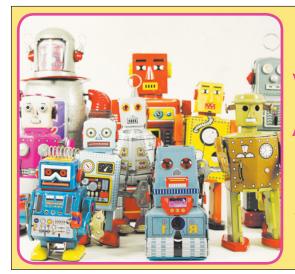
So she enlisted the aid of a Secret Service woman to sneak them out a side entrance so they could see the celebration going on around them.

Obama described the bubble the First Family lives in by explaining how traffic stops when a presidential motorcade passes — something Oak Lawn residents are familiar with anytime Air Force One lands at Love Field. And she said, "I've been to India twice, and I've never see any people

She said that level of security gave her children an odd perspective of the presidency: The Obamas had prepared their children for the inauguration and how many people would be attending. But the streets were cleared for the presidential limousine to whisk the family to the inaugural party. So when Melia saw no one around, she said, "No one's coming to your party, Dad."

The biggest cheer of the evening was when Jarrett asked Obama if she was thinking of running for office. To the disappointment of the tens of thousands of fans in the arena, Obama gave an absolute no.

What she will continue to do is inspire young people. Her stop at the Winspear wasn't an isolated appearance. She's incorporated a similar surprise appearance to each stop on her rock-star book tour, a tour that's been so successful, she adding dates.



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GAY AGENDA, From Page 7

• March 15-17: Blinded: Turtles Rock Out

The Turtle Creek Chorale sings classic rock — Aerosmith, Bon Jovi, Meatloaf, Queen — on Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St.

• March 16: House of DIFFA: Futuro

A fashion experience that provides an exciting mix of philanthropy, theatrics and DIFFA's legendary runway production at 6

p.m. at the Omni Hotel Dallas, 555 S. Lamar St. Tickets at DIFFADallas.org.

- March 23: AIDS Walk South Dallas
- March 26: Grief support group

 LCPT grief support group for poor

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.

• March 30: Toast to Life: Bootlegger's Ball

Steve Kemble hosts with the Singapore Slingers and DJ Blake Ward at the Empire Room, 1225 N. Riverfront Blvd. Tickets at MyResource Center.org/ToastToLife.

• March 30: Casino Night

Tyler Area Gays presents Wild, Wild West at Holiday Inn, 5701 S. Broadway, Tyler. Need 3 people to sponsor tables at \$250 each. Contact TAG at info@TylerAreaGays.com.

APRIL

• April 9: 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.

- April 19: First Passover seder
- April 20: Beth El Binah community seder

Congregation Beth El Binah Passover seder at 6:30 p.m. at Deli News, 17062 Preston Road. \$60.

- April 21: Easter
- April 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.

MA

- May 2: 2019 Way Forward luncheon Luncheon, awards and fashion show supporting Bryan's House
- May 14: 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.
- May 28: 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,

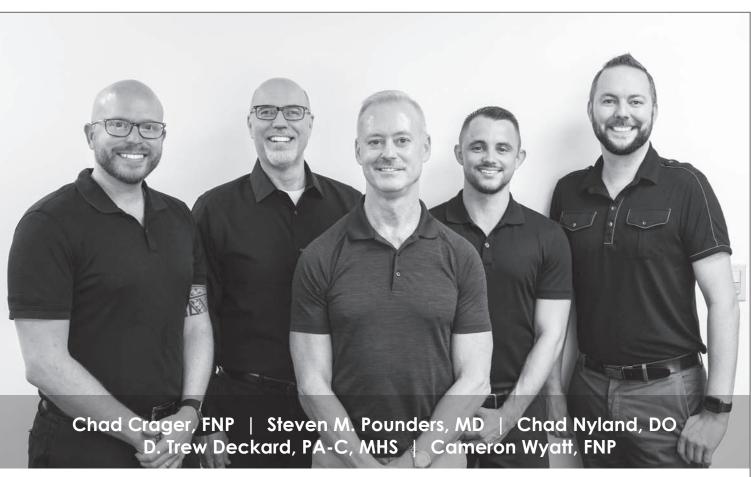
UNE

- June 1: Miller Lite Music Festival The Pride festival moves to the Esplanade in Fair Park.
- June 7-9: You Are Light

5750 Cedar Springs Road.

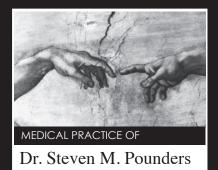
Based on the work of Brene Brown, The Turtle Creek Chorale focuses on the role of music in shaping what we think about ourselves and how we love others with personal stories of challenge and triumph on Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St.

• June 21: Pride in the Arts District Dallas Museum of Art's Late Night celebrates Pride joined this year by the Nasher Sculpture Center and Crow Museum of Asian Art with late night hours.



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■commUNITYvoices

Another made-up issue

Respectfully, if

Alexis is so pain-

fully shy or ner-

vous about being

in a public space,

I strongly suggest

accommodations

be made to per-

mit Alexis to use

near the nurse's

office, or perhaps

bathroom

the

Their 'safety' scare tactics failed, now the bigots are using 'safety' to attack trans people

'm trying to get into the holiday spirit
— really I am. We've done some shopping and put up a few decorations.
But the looming Texas legislative session is distracting, and the Trump circus just won't leave town.

I noticed an editorial recently where a former student named Alexis Lightcap is suing her school, Boyertown Area High School because they followed a reasonable policy of permitting transgender students to use the bathroom that coincides with their gender identity. This policy is in force in districts across the country with few — if any — incidents.



Leslie McMurray
Accidental Activist

she could use a faculty bathroom.

The answer isn't to punish a whole class of people who have done nothing wrong.

Taking this fight to the U.S. Supreme Court is a sledgehammer solution for a thumbtack problem. If a student desires special accommodations for privacy, such tions, and we can legally be refused care by doctors. Trump is also trying to fast-track his transgender military service ban. And under the U.S. Department of Education and Justice, they now refuse to even hear a discrimination complaint from a transgender student.

I'm sorry Alexis, but check your facts kiddo. It's not your voice that is being silenced.

Privacy is just the latest manufactured red herring bigots have come up with to attack transgender people. And you should consider it an insult to your intelligence.

Transgender kids don't pose a threat of any kind. The last thing the average transgender kid wants to do is expose that which makes them different. I mean, think about your own days in high school or middle school.

ISSUE STEISSUE STEISSUE

Let's not forget: Trans boys are BOYS; trans girls are GIRLS. The whole issue of "privacy" is a made up distraction.

Of note is the "law firm" pitching this case: The Alliance Defending Freedom is a group so extreme they have defended state-sanctioned sterilization of transgender people abroad, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which has designated the ADF a hate group.

So, yeah — consider the source.

Look, I'm all about privacy. But the fact of the matter is, extending equal rights to transgender people does not come at the expense of anyone else. Making transgender people safe does not make someone else unsafe.

Trans people are just as concerned about privacy as anyone else and just as respectful. Maybe moreso in both cases.

accommodations are simple and inexpensive.

I also feel for Alexis because she is being used as a tool by people who couldn't care less about her. Not that long ago, the ADF was attacking transgender people using bathrooms by saying it was a safety issue; they were scaremongering about "predators" — a tactic that didn't work because it was a lie. And they knew it was a lie.

Now, it's "privacy." And Alexis finds herself the unfortunate mouthpiece.

Hey, ADF: Keep throwing spaghetti; maybe something will eventually stick.

Since Trump's election, his administration has not just been attacking immigrants and insulting U.S. allies, he has been attempting to erase transgender people from existence. Presently, we have no employment protections and no housing protec-

Transgender kids aren't the problem. They are bullied, verbally harassed, physically harassed and assaulted at a much higher rate than non-transgender students.

That whole "safety" issue was baloney, and people saw through it. Now they are trying to use privacy as an excuse for discrimination. Bathrooms have stalls; nobody sees anything. It's about the best you can hope for in a public bathroom.

So what are you worried about? Someone seeing you brushing your hair? Washing your hands?

What's next? Curtains around the drinking fountain? You tried separate ones, remember? That didn't work either.

Leslie McMurray, a transgender woman, is a former radio DJ who lives and works in Dallas. Read more of her blogs at lesliemichelle44.word-press.com.



Stephan James and KiKi Layne light up the screen in 'If Beale Street Could Talk,' the new film from 'Moonlight' writer-director Barry Jenkins, based on James Baldwin's novel.

"If you wanna send a message," old-school movie mogul Samuel Goldwyn was quoted as saying, "call Western Union." But the truth is, Goldwyn as much as any of the original studio bosses was just as socially conscious as the next guy. But he conveyed his messages in a manner endemic to the stories, as in *The Best Years of Our Lives* or *Porgy and Bess*.

The starkness of that distinction — films that send messages, versus ones that embody them — is evident in four films opening on Christmas Day.

If Beale Street Could Talk

The avatar for Goldwyn's dictum is most powerfully conveyed in the best of the lot. There is a profound difference between diversity and inclusion in the arts, versus voices ... stories. That realization hit me like a locomotive as I watched *If Beale Street Could Talk*, writer-director Barry Jenkins' adaptation of James Baldwin's 1974 novel about love and justice.

Notable releases now playing

Mary Poppins Returns
Aquaman
Ben Is Back
Spider-Man:
Into the Spider-Verse
Mary Queen of Scots

Opening Dec. 25

If Beale Street Could Talk
(reviewed this week)
On the Basis of Sex
(reviewed this week)
Vice (reviewed this week)
Destroyer (reviewed this week)
Welcome to Marwen

It's the 1970s, on the cusp of the Civil Right Movement, but 19-year-old Tish (KiKi Layne) and 22-year-old Fonny (Stephan James) aren't bothered by the politics of the time — they are too busy being crazy for each other. They've been playmates almost since infancy, but their romance burgeons as each comes into their own: Fonny as a craftsman who lives to create with his hands, Tish as a maturing woman viewing the world through a newly-discovered independence. But within just a few weeks, their lives are upturned when Fonny is falsely accused of rape, and Tish finds herself pregnant. As they both navigate proving Fonny's evidence and preparing for the child to come, we experience the fabric of their lives in flashbacks, slowly illuminating the social factors that have guided their lives, perhaps without them even realizing it.

Here and in his last film, the exquisite *Moonlight*, Jenkins' mastery as the foremost chronicler of the black experience is most powerful because, as a storyteller, he's more focused on the people than the message. He turns his camera onto Fonny's

dark-skinned handsomeness, and Tish's beatific resolve not with the woozy fantasy of a dream, but the authenticity of seeing humans for who they are. There's an electricity between Layne and James — a light, an aura that exudes from them when they are onscreen together — that Jenkins captures in images. And he then lets Baldwin's words — his wit and language, braced by his abiding intellectualism — to complete the circle. Piece by piece, they assemble a jigsaw puzzle of love and justice, never hesitating to show the horrendous consequences of casual racism... and the profound generosity of the human heart when such constructs are abandoned. (Regina King, as Tish's mom, is fiercely on her way to nabbing an Oscar nomination.)

Composer Nicholas Britell, who smartly used the chopped and screwed remix technique in creating his score for *Moonlight*, does something similar here, evoking a free-wheeling jazz score but overlaying it with a more classic melody-based through-



Felicity Jones' wan performance doesn't help Notorious RBG biopic.

line that lulls and excites you simultaneously. (Jenkins has a way of making a terrible, violent act feel viscerally gratifying, and the score wisely avoids milking them.)

The title is a straw man: Beale Street — a famed boulevard in Memphis (peculiarly identified in the opening scroll as in New Orleans) — was a focal point of the blues, the indigenous music form of black culture that stood at the intersection of urban and rural society at the turn of the last century. Its stories would represent those of every African-American who struggled through Jim Crow and freedom rides, lynching and loving. The title, then, is specifically designed to disguise the message and put at the forefront a romance that is at once intimate and universal — there's something urgent about telling this story of these people at this time... and yet effortlessly a story for the ages.

On the Basis of Sex

That's the good news; now for the bad. Let's start with a confession: I'm a total fan-boy for Notorious RBG, aka Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, so it isn't the subject matter of *On the Basis Of Sex*, the new biopic about the early life of the birdlike liberal maven, but the pedestrian and flat telling of her life that so disappoints me.

It begins within the ivied walls of Harvard Law School in 1956. Amid a sea of blue serge floats a cerulean tweed skirt set. Ruth (Felicity Jones) is one of only nine women admitted to our most revered academy of legal training, but she's confronted at every turn by misogyny, both casual and active, from condescending classmates to prickly potential employers. She muddles along as her husband Marty

(Armie Hammer) rises in his law career while she marks time teaching. All the while, in the background, lurks an inherent understanding: For an oppressed minority to succeed, it has to be twice as good to get half the credit.

But for much of this film, that's exactly what's missing. Oh, sure, Ruth's daughter and husband drone on about how she's the always smartest person in the room, but she never proves herself to warrant that praise; she's a milquetoast lecturer at Rutgers, a voice shouting in the wilderness for equal treatment for women.... No, not shouting. Whispering. Kvetching. Shrugging.

Then, in 1970 — having never stepped foot inside a courtroom — she gets a wild hair that she might want to take on an appeal: A man named Moritz who was denied a tax benefit because of his gender. If she can convince the 10th Circuit that sex-specific laws punish men, well, it's a slippery slope to the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

On the Basis of Sex is the kind of movie, like *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, where every scene feels calculated to say, "Ya see? We told ya so" about its central thesis. It cherry-picks the most egregious injustices in Ruth's life, then has Ruth glower in silence. The only constant emotional state in every scene is a smug sense of righteous indignation. (The following is an actual line of dialogue: "This lawsuit could bring down the whole damn system of discrimination!!!!!" Ugh.)

The director, Mimi Leder, was weaned on television shows like ER, and there's a TV-ish tone that the film cannot overcome.











Christian Bale plays a genuine Dick in 'Vice,' above; opposite, Nicole Kidman in 'Destroyer.'

Visually, it lacks edge: a shot on the Capitol steps seems unnecessary and banal, and the characterization of the people, divided solely between either conspiratory villains or morally superior cynics, is sophomoric. (You can always identify the bad guy in a lazy movie: He's the notorious Hollywood liberal — in this case, Sam Waterston playing the arch conservative with no redeeming qualities.) It's the trope of the lone crusader versus everyone else; even her heroes and colleagues tell her she can't win... and they're right, until they are not and are chastened and apologetic. That might work across 44 minutes plus commercials, but it grows tiresome after two hours.

It doesn't help that Felicity Jones is about as convincingly Jewish as a BLT, and more Brookline than Brooklyn (her accent comes and goes). And while Hammer is downright dreamy, even lovable, as Marty, everyone else seems to be on autopilot. I wanted A Beautiful Mind or even Molly's Game; what we get is nowhere near as good as that, not even a warmed-over Paper Chase. I respectfully dissent.

Vice

Writer-director Adam McKay's last film, about the credit-default swap program that led to the worldwide financial crisis, was called The Big Short. His newest, a biopic of the vampiric pol Dick Cheney, could have been called The Long Con. Instead, he titled it Vice, which is almost as good. It tracks Cheney's life from youthful aimlessness (when, according to McK-

ay, he really earned the name "Dick") to self-appointed shadow president, manipulating the Constitution, constituents and colleagues in order to reshape America to his own image.

You could appreciate in a Machiavellian sense (if not agree with in practice) his single-minded resolve if you felt that Cheney was a true believer — a dyed-in-the-wool neo-con laser-focused on a New World Order. But what McKay and the film make clear is that Cheney didn't believe in anything except himself and how deftly he could wield unbridled authority. Dick Cheney was a dry-run for Donald Trump's presidency, one not guided by principles but profits... if not monetary, ego-driven.

In the hands of Christian Bale, it's a joy to watch him tick. Bale's tour-de-force performance is bracing in its verisimilitude. That voice! That snarl! That cold monotone oozing contempt for the sheeple he deigns to bless with his genius. He's uncanny and relentless, and probably the best thing about Vice.

Because the film, despite its right-sideof-history dissection of a fulcrum point of political power, is a visual and structural muddle. McKay employs so many Tarantino-esque flourishes — collages of B-roll and goofy (if withering) asides — they devolve into oppressive gimmicks. A few work: The moment 45 minutes in when a false history of Cheney's post-Reagan Era scrolls and the end credits roll, only to jolt up back to the reality of his insidiousness. Or when a conversation between Dick and his wife Lynne (Amy Adams)



— ultimately, an even more odious and conniving weasel, a doctrinaire harridan whose homophobia extended to her own daughter — turns into a Macbethian plot. But McKay rivals Seth McFarlane in his rejection of the barest hints of subtlety; the voice-over outright calls Dick a "dirt-bag," a bit of low-hanging fruit that forces the film into internet meme territory. If we want sanctimonious name-calling, we can see a Michael Moore documentary.

There's little "new" to be learned from Vice; it seems unlikely conservatives will have their minds altered or liberals will say much more than "Just as I thought!" McKay spends all of 30 seconds on Bush v. Gore, and some of the timeline and factual details seem wrong. And yet... I feel compelled to recommend it for its Orwellian accuracy. In addition to Bale and Adams, Steve Carell as Don Rumsfeld and especially Sam Rockwell as George W. Bush deliver outstanding, convincing performances. And when it comes down to it, McKay seems content in coalescing the litany of transgressions undertaken by the Cheneys, and how they and their lot poisoned the well of presidential politics for a generation or more. We need our chroniclers, our historians, our journalists to reveal the truth. But it only matters if we do something down the road to learn from their messages.

Destroyer

Funny how critics tend to use words like "brave" and "fearless" when reviewing

glamorous beauties of the silver screen who play dislikable, makeup-free anti-heroes in dramatic roles, but never use those terms to describe character actors who make their livings doing the same thing. No matter — a good performance is a good performance, and Nicole Kidman delivers one in *Destroyer*, a gritty crime thriller that seems pre-programmed to be described as a "gritty crime thriller."

Kidman plays a haggard police detective named Erin Bell. Fifteen years earlier, Bell went undercover, but the assignment went haywire, and she has wallowed in the consequences since. When she believes that Silas, the criminal who got away then, is back, she takes unorthodox steps to track him down and exact some modicum of justice and — say it with me — rehabilitate herself and atone for her misfortunes. It's a ghost story, where the ghosts are real.

The existential cop drama is nothing new... nor is the drunk cop, or the rebel cop or the troubled cop. But having that cop be a woman is a small innovation, and there's a palpable desperation in Kidman's embodiment. Brave? I dunno. But pretty damn good.

The film overall... not so much It's darkly underlit and largely predictable. Director Karyn Kusama (*Aeon Flux, Girlfight*) handles the brutality effectively, but not exceptionally: Its industrial noises, intense gazing and extended shoot-outs suggest the first season of *True Detective*, only with less style. The film's lack of uniqueness torpedoes it.





All that Chazz

Chazz Palminteri revisiting 'A Bronx Tale' in musical form? Fugedaboutit!

Chazz Palminteri dined at Campisi's in front of a poster for 'The Godfather' when in Dallas promoting 'A Bronx Tale.' (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)

> Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Dec. 26–Jan. 6. ATTPAC.org.

t's kinda hard to believe, but there was a time when nobody knew who Chazz Palminteri was. I know, seems impossible. After all, the craggy-faced, gravel-voiced Noo Yawkuh is such an avatar of

the gruff Italian kid "from the neighba'hood" that he could have existed in a scene from a Cagney film from the 1930s.

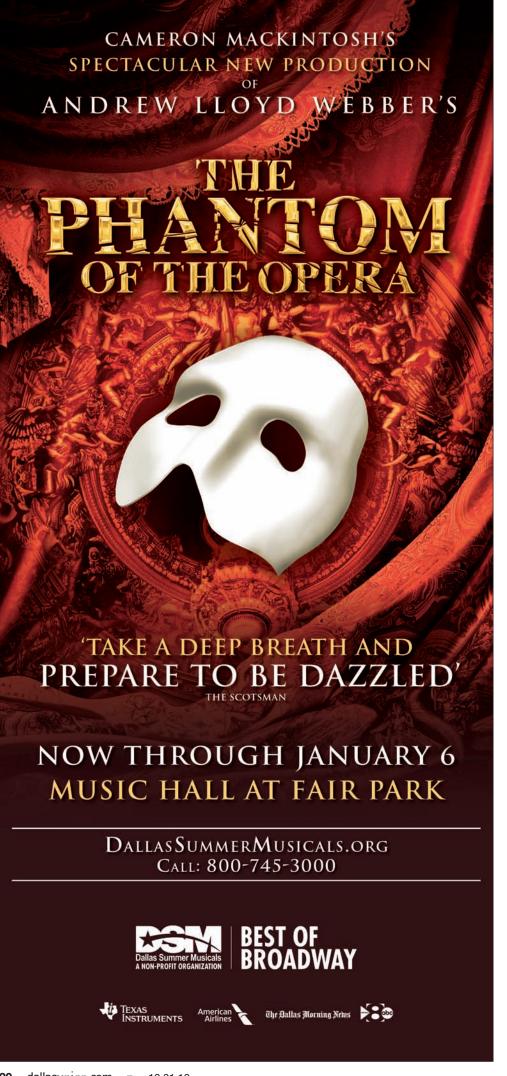
But in fact, it was less than 30 years ago that the broke boxer, singer and doorman sat down with a pen and legal pad and conjured up A Bronx Tale,

a one-man show which he also starred in Off-Broadway, then became a movie and launched his career. It was no time before Palminteri was an in-demand character actor, receiving an Oscar nomination for

Woody Allen's Bullets Over Broadway and cementing his persona in the Zeitgeist.

Then last year, Palminteri revisited his play and movie,

writing the script for a musical (with a score by eight-time Oscar-winning composer Alan Menken and lyricist Glenn Slat-



er) based on *A Bronx Tale*, which ended up being a surprise hit. Like *Jersey Boys* before it, it humanizes the goombah culture in an allegory — based on Palminteri's own childhood — about youth and redemption.

A Bronx Tale, the Musical opens at the Winspear the day after Christmas, but Palminteri came to Dallas ahead of time to talk about his life, the show and the handshake deal that made him a star.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Dallas Voice: What was it like changing your life story into all these different art forms? Chazz Palminteri: It was a one-man show first, then it was a feature film, and now it's a Broadway musical, and each one is very different. I mean, you just can't [take the] movie and add songs to it, or have a one-man show and add music. That's what makes it unique.

You had never written a play before — what gave you the thought you could do it? I was a great storyteller — I used to tell stories on the corner. I had the soul of an artist. I was very good in English [class] though I wasn't a good student even when I went to college. I dunno. But it worked out OK.

How did you get the idea to write the play? I ran out of money and was desperate. I used to box and worked as a doorman at a nightclub. This one guy tried to get in and I wouldn't let him in. Turns out he was Swifty Lazar, the biggest agent in the world [at that time]. He said, "You'll be fired in 15 minutes." I was like yeah, yeah... My boss come out, said hi Swifty ... and I was fired in 15 minutes. He was nasty to me.

I went home and sat on the edge of my bed.

Looked at the card on the refrigerator [where I had written what my father said about wasted talent] and thought, well, if they wont give me a part I'll write it myself. So I went to Thrifty Drug Store, bought five tablets of paper and said, What will I write about? I decided to write about the killing that I saw when I was a kid and my relationship with the wise guys and my father. I started to write, and in 10 months I had a 90-minute, one-man show.

It was your first big hit — how did you get people to support it with you as a writer and star? So I borrowed money from a friend — a legitimate friend, may I say — and I put it up and BAM! My life exploded. I won all these awards, and all of a sudden I got offered \$250,000 [by a film producer] the week after it opened; I had \$200 in the bank. I said, "Great, but I want to play Sonny and I want to write the screenplay." He said, "No you can't — we want to get a star and want someone else to write it" and I said [well, let's just say "fugedaboutit].

So they waited two weeks to freeze me out and offered me \$500,000 .. again I said, "I play

Sonny and write the screenplay," and again they said it's not gonna happen. Everyone said I was crazy — the last time this had happened was Sylvester Stallone. But I kept doing the show, and the lines got longer everyone was coming to see it. Nicholson, Pacino ... they all wanted to play Sonny. Every director wanted to direct it, and every studio wanted to make it, and it became insane. So they came in one more time and offered me \$1 million. They slid a piece of paper over and said, "Sign that check and you'll get \$1 million tomorrow." I said "OK... but I get to play Sonny, and I get to write the screenplay." And he said, "Chazz, we need a star in the part." I said, "But this will make me a star." And he said they can't do, it so I said [neither can I]. I stood up to leave, and he said — I still remember his words — "You know this movie will never get made." And I said, "You're right... with you." He said, "How can you be so sure?" And I said, "Because it's too damn good. Somebody will believe in me sooner or later."

Crowds kept getting bigger. One day I did the show, and when I got off stage the stage manager said, "Robert De Niro wants to meet you — he's in your dressing room." [De Niro] said, "That's the greatest one-man show I ever saw! This would make a great movie." I said, "I know, but no one wants me to be in it — they want to put a star in it." He said, "Well, you should play Sonny, you'd be great, and you should write it because it's your life,

and I'll play the father and direct it. And if you shake my hand, we'll go partners."I shook his hand, and rest is history.

How did you go about adapting it from then to now? I was a lyricist [when I was younger], and I used to sing, but in a musical, the meat of the [action had to be] done in the song — the dialogue is just to set up the song. You can't have the scene and then say the same thing in the song. It's a whole different art form.

How has your understanding of the material developed over every incarnation? When I was 9 years old, I saw this guy kill a man right in front of me. The cops came, and I was sitting right there, and they asked me who did it, and I said I didn't know. I just refused to rat. At 9 I was smart enough to know that. When I first wrote it 30 years ago, I really related as the young boy to the father, because my father was a bus driver who told me, "The saddest thing was wasted talent." But when I had a son, and he got older, I started relating as the father to the boy.

You wrote the musical, but what is your role with the current tour? My role is what I'm doing right now! I am one of the producers and wrote it, so I am there [in many of the cities where it opens], but because it's my life story, I can sell it better than anybody. It's a story I'm very proud of.

■ CHAZZ Page 24



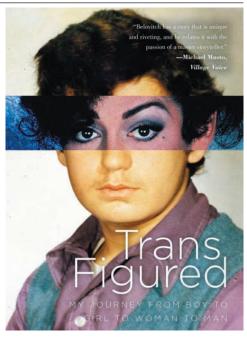


Trans a legacy of change

New books explain long history in the understanding of gender identity

Trans Figured: My Journey From Boy to Girl to Woman to Man by Brian Belovitch (Skyhorse 2018) \$24.99; 232

In his family of almost all boys, Brian Belovitch stood out because he lacked something his brothers had in abundance: hypermasculinity. Belovitch was soft and chubby, with curls and long eyelashes and was often mistaken for a little girl as a preschooler, which was just fine with him. He enjoyed his femininity, even though he knew that it would get him a beating — if



not from his brothers, then from his father.

Even as a young child, Belovitch says, he was overly-curious about sex, and especially about the male body. Girls held no interest but boys were another matter. He was in fourth grade when he had his first sexual encounter, with a slightly older male classmate.

By his early teens, Belovitch had discovered alcohol and shoplifting. He'd run away a few times, and visiting gay clubs near his Rhode Island home was, for him, a natural next step. After a traumatic coming-out to his family, he moved in with a man he considered his first real friend; it was through Paulie that Belovitch met a community of trans women.

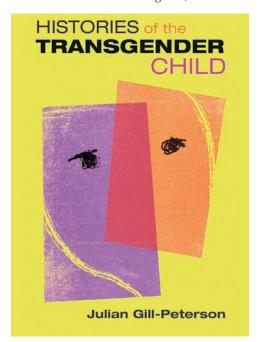
That was when Natalia was born. She was beautiful, sexy, "my own special creation," says Belovitch of himself as a trans woman. Natalia was the toast of New York, a model and actress thanks to hormones. silicones, pilfered clothing and a desperate need for love. Belovitch got married as Natalia, and divorced; she led him to prostitution, heroin, cocaine, alcohol, HIV and an attempted suicide. He was Natalia when he reached out to friends and sought therapy. As Natalia, he took a"look at the direction in which my life was heading." Belovitch was Natalia when he realized that he was "feminine-inclined," but Natalia had to go.

Toward the end of this totally frank memoir, Belovitch says that if it wasn't for the AIDS epidemic, his story would be "as common as salt." Readers may find that arguable, since Trans Figured goes well beyond unique. Beware, though, that it's going to put you through the wringer.

Belovitch is completely open about the abuse he experienced, and his recounting can be graphic (it contains nudity inside).

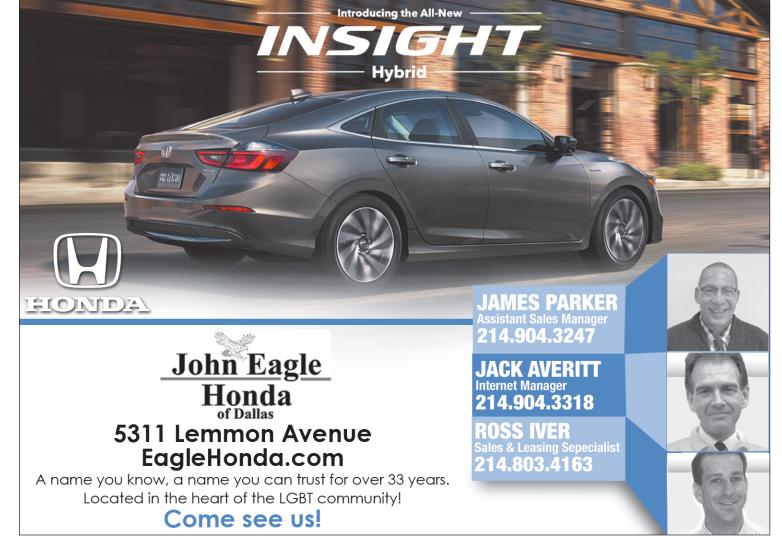
Also know that nostalgia for the 1970s may hit you, but that's going to include a breathlessly steep plunge into memories of cocaine, promiscuity and epidemic.

Still, and without giving too much away, there's a happy ending to this memoir, one that manages to educate readers as it oddly entertains them with stories of times past. It's a happy ending well-deserved and well-told and, considering the overall uncommonness of Trans Figured, it fits.









Histories of the Transgender Child by Julian Gill-Peterson (University of Minnesota Press 2018) \$24.95; 288 pp.

The study of endocrinology had a fowl beginning. In the 18th century, scientists — determined to learn more about what made male and female sexes — removed the testes from birds, observed a certain amount of feminization, and then transplanted the gonads back into the birds. Alas, because they put the organs in the birds' stomachs, little was learned; even so, it led them to think about kids and the male-female characteristics children possessed. They began to believe that gender identification was pliable, and that children didn't fully become either until they reached a certain age.

By the 20th century, better understandings of human anatomy, psychology and hormones led to new ideas that spurred doctors to take bold steps to help children with genitalia that didn't fit the norm at birth and didn't match their sexual identity later. Those kids underwent treatment that seems invasive, almost horrifying, but that gave at least some relief from the feeling of being bodily trapped.

These operations were supposed to have been kept quiet, but that was impossible. This, says Julian Gill-Peterson in this book, led to an influx of *adults* who sought Amer-

ican doctors for "sex change" operations. In the years surrounding World War I, those who were successful in their search told tales of themselves as children, making do with the resources they had, being isolated, yet sometimes enjoying a surprising amount of support from family who let them choose the gender in which they felt comfortable.

In the introduction, Gill-Peterson indicates that the current narrative paints to-day's trans children somewhat as pioneers. Nothing can be further from the truth, as you'll see here, eventually. Maybe.

Maybe, because *Histories of the Transgender Child* is written very much for scholars in concept, medical jargon and words that will send the most casual reader dictionary-bound. Doctors should grasp this book easily; non-medical professionals may be tempted to put it aside.

But don't. Yes, it's a challenge to read, but it does get easier as actual personal anecdotes become more plentiful. These tales also serve to show how society, shame and social mores affected children and former kids who had few places to turn; it also shows how understanding of trans individuals grew while attitudes at large worsened. Here is the peek that most casual readers want from this book, one that's more relatable and more social-his-

tory-based; these same angles also bring unsettlement as readers see racism creep into this overall tale, and Gill-Peterson explains how doctors often saw patients as mere experimental vessels.

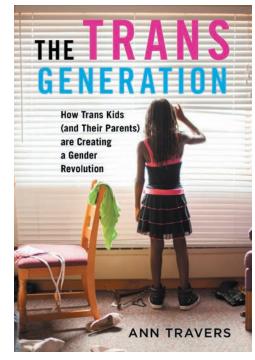
So don't ignore this book. Just be aware that it's scholarly, so it needs more time to develop appreciation. Give yourself that, and *Histories of the Transgender Child* could be a book to start.

The Trans Generation: How Trans Kids (and Their Parents) are Creating a Gender Revolution by Ann Travers (New York University Press 2018) \$25; 261 pp.

It is a boy or a girl?

That's a common enough question, if you're an expectant parent. You might've even wondered it yourself: Will you need pink things or blue, and what name will you choose? For generations, it's been an exciting decision for prospective parents, but Ann Travers asks in *The Trans Generation* if it's a prudent one. Maybe letting the child decide would be a better choice.

Fifty-six years ago, when Travers was born, the maternity doctor unwittingly caused a lifetime of hurt: "It's a girl," he said... and Travers spent years trying to untangle what it meant. That is part of what drives this book. The other part is the



desire to improve the lives of trans kids through understanding.

Getting to that point is harrowing: Ninety-five percent of transgender kids in one study felt unsafe in their schools. Many report that physicians misunderstand kids who are gender-nonconforming. Trans kids attempt suicide and/or self-harm at very high rates and, says Travers, "many grow up hating their bodies" Most employ several kinds of coping mechanisms to live

■ TRANS Next Page





What do you see as the message? A Bronx Tale is a cautionary tale about not wasting your talent. Sonny [the gangster/mentor in the show] didn't want me to be a gangster, he wanted me to go to college, but my father said just because who Sonny is, he will influence who you are just [by] being around someone like that. I was, like "Dad, he's a great guy," and I would sneak out and hang out with him. And I was in danger a few times. My father was right.

How has it resonated with audiences outside the Tri-State area? It is a huge hit in

Japan — you say, "What? How could that be?" But the characters are like archetypes — symbols as opposed to characters. Everyone can relate to that. It's about "Is it better to be loved or feared?" The choices you make will shape your life forever. It's about Machiavelli. Sonny the wise guy used to read Machiavelli. Who ever heard of that? I asked Sonny, "When did you read Machiavelli? You didn't go to college?" And he said, "Well they sent me away to college a few times," and I knew what he meant when he said that.

■ TRANS From Previous Page

their lives.

In writing this book, Travers — who uses the pronoun *they* — interviewed a wide variety of trans kids from the U.S. and Canada (19 in all, ages 4 to 20, plus 23 parents). The children mostly came from middle-class families, which allowed them privileges such as better access to medical care and chances to change schools if they needed to do so. Other children Travers interviewed lived in poverty, their stories illustrating how being a trans kid can be socially and medically isolating, and how



'The Trans Generation' author Ann Travers

lack of access to needed resources can affect their well-being.

Parents, of course, can affect that well-being, too, but it takes a "phenomenal amount of care, advocacy and activism... to push back against cisgendered environments," schools, sports, binary-only bathrooms, social activities, medical facilities and politics. It takes a willingness to learn, listen and lean in.

Not just for parents, but for teachers, advocates and loved ones, The Trans Generation is one heavy-duty book. Writing with a bit of a scholar's voice and occasional, relatively advanced, science and law studies, Travers also offers plenty of eye-opening chats with trans kids, which turn out to be the most helpful, useful and even entertaining parts of this book. From the mouths of babes, as they say, those interviews give insights that adults will find to be wise and thoughtful, even monumental. They're also heartbreaking, but considering the kids readers are introduced to, and the singular interview with a 16-year-old who made her own hormone treatments in her high school's laboratory, they're a good indication of hope for the future.

While you could be forgiven for skipping to those case studies, you'd be missing out. The thicker parts of *The Trans Generation* are worth reading and reflection and are deeply instructive on pronouns, on gender fluidity and on being trans in a cisgender-based society. They are also serious and weighty, but that kind of rock-solid information could make this book the right choice.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer



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DeGolyer House celebrates the beauty of the nativity scene

Nativity scenes can be realistic or abstract, made of crystal or resin, in miniature or life-sized. You get to experience all of those variations until the end of the year at the DeGolyer House inside the Dallas Arboretum. More than 500 creche scenes have been set out to wow you with their beauty and diversity.

DEETS: Dallas Arboretum, 8525 Garland Road. Daily 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Through Dec. 31. Dallas Arboretum.org.



calendar highlights

ARTSWEEK

THEATER

The Beulaville Baptist Book Club Presents: A Bur-Less-Q Nutcracker. Strippers get unwittingly enlisted to perform to Tchaikovsky. Studio Theatre at Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through Dec. 30. BurlesqueNutcracker.com.

Chicago. Give 'em the ol' razzle dazzle in this hit musical about the power of celebrity. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Through Saturday. ATTPAC.org.

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.

Fetch Clay, Make Man. A world premiere play by Dallas Theater Center playwright-in-residence Will Power about the intersection of the lives of Mohammad Ali and Stepin Fetchit. Studio Theatre of the Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Jan. 13. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol. A retelling of Dickens' story from the perspective of Scrooge's business partner. Emily Scott Banks stars. Final weekend. Stage West, 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. StageWest.org.

The Phantom of the Opera. The mega hit musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Music Hall at Fair Park, 909 First Ave. Through Jan. 6. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

The Santaland Diaries. David Sedaris' essays on working at Macy's form the basis of this one-man comedy. Casa Manana, 3101 W. Lancaster Ave., Fort Worth. Through Dec. Saturday. CasaManana. org.

Note: During holidays, some scheduled events may not take place or hours may change. Check with the websites of the particular event.

Solstice: A New Holiday Adventure. Characters from last year's holiday hit return for a new play from Jonathan Norton about the magic of winter. Theatre 3, 2900 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through Dec. 30. Theatre3Dallas.com.

BALLET

The Nutcracker. Tchaikovsky's timeless classic of Yuletide, presented by Texas Ballet Theater. Bass Performance Hall, 535 Commerce St., Fort Worth. Through Dec. 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 at 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

The Artistry of the Nativity. Hundreds of creche displays, exhibited for the holidays. The DeGolyer House inside the Dallas Arboretum, 8525 Garland Road. Daily 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Through Dec. 31. DallasArboretum.org.

The 12 Days of Christmas. Outdoor nighttime light show for the holidays. Dallas Arboretum, 8525 Garland Road. Daily 6–9 p.m. Through Dec. 31. DallasArboretum.org.

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 Jan. 21 (extended).

FRIDAY 12.21

COMMUNITY

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

BROADCAST

RuPaul's Drag Race: All Stars. The fourth installment of returning queens competing for the crown. VH1 at 7 p.m.

MONDAY 12.24 — CHRISTMAS EVE

TUESDAY 12.25 — CHRISTMAS DAY

Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Dec. 26-Jan. 6. ATTPAC.org.

this week's solution

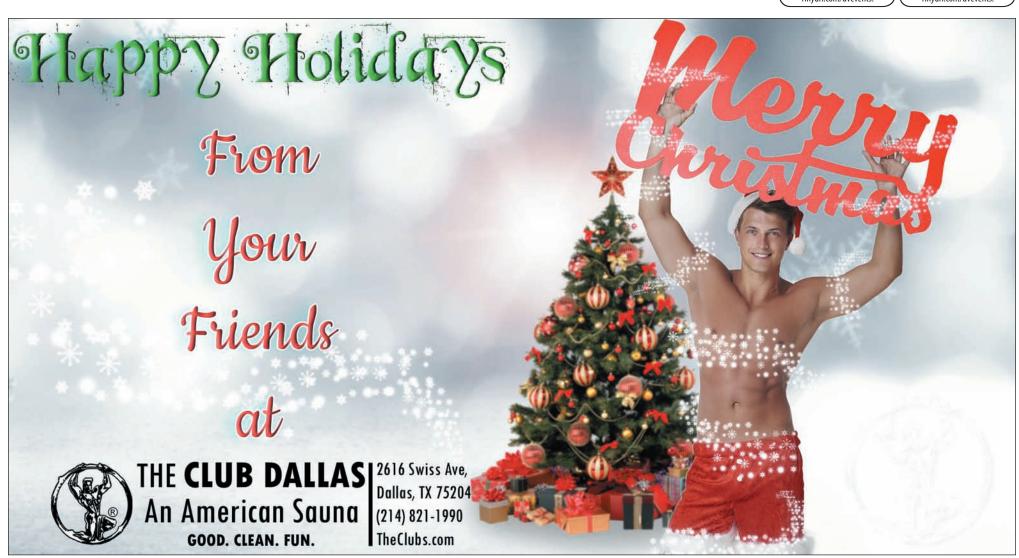


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Cassie Nova

Hecklers and ho-ho-hos

Hello all. With Christmas coming up and lots of holiday parties to go to, I thought I would give y'all a few pointers on how to attend one of your fabulous events without bloodshed or casualties.

The reason I feel this is an important topic right now is because of something that happened at my Freakshow last week at JR.'s. I started the show as I normally do — I just walk onstage and start talking. There was a large group around the stage, so I thought it was going to be a great night. I had barely gotten out the words. "Welcome, everyone!" when a member of this group shouted, "Thank you, next!" I know that is an Arianna Grande song, but I knew what this little bitch was saying. I ignored it and went on to talk about Arianna's break up with poor, big-dicked Pete Davidson. That idiot has been through some shit.

I continued doing my job and engaging people in the audience. I found out that this large group of non-regulars had just left their company's Christmas party and were not ready for that party to stop, so they came to JR.'s... awesome. Most of the group were having fun, going with the flow and just enjoying themselves. But there was one guy, much older than everyone else and wearing a very festive Christmas suit, who stood directly in front of the stage and engaged in a very loud conversation with a drag queen about how horrible he thought I was.

I stopped talking so we could all hear his convo: "I hate her, she's horrible, her hair looks like a rat's nest, she's ugly." I just stood there and let him rant on. The queen he was talking to looked mortified but not sure about what to do about it. The people who work with the Christmas-suit-guy tried to get him to stop talking and realized that the entire room was listening to him as he very loudly professed his hate for me. But Papa Noel loudmouth was not having it — he wasn't finished.

For the record, my feelings were never hurt. I have a thick skin, and seriously, I looked damn good that night. My hair was fresh and fabulous. My corset was cinched just right so my thickness looked amazing. My dress was new and looked luxe. Bitch, even my makeup was on point. I looked like a big, badass supermodel with a touch of Pennywise. And though my ego ain't always my amigo, we was friends that night. My self-confidence was not going to be diminished by some boob talking shit about me.

I finally thought to defuse the whole situation and try to get him on my side — you know, "enemies closer" kind of stuff. I asked if I could buy him a shot and we could put this whole ugliness behind us, because I was not completely innocent in this situation. I made a few awful, petty jokes at him, so I figured, let's do a shot together and get past this and move on with the show.

He basically said sure, buy me a shot, rolling his eyes and being dismissive. Before I could say anything else, one of his friends, who turned out to be the general manager of the restaurant they all worked at, said in a slur, "You gotta buy me a shot, too!" I said, no I don't, and that her friend was still being a dick, so I wasn't buying a shot for anyone. She said,

"I thought that was what your kind liked: Dick!" I am paraphrasing — what she actually said was worse.

At that point, I was done with the whole situation. I was ready to just move on with the show and not feed into their energy. Now I was pissed off. No jokes, no niceties, just moving on. That's when Christmas suit jumped onstage and demanded the shot I said I was gonna buy him. Within seconds, security had him outside and made him leave, along with his general manager. The next 10 minutes consisted of Christmas-suit-guy's co-workers apologizing and offering to buy me shots. A few minutes and a few shots later, we were all having fun again.

So that brings me to Christmas party etiquette. Do not drink so much at your work event that things are going to be awkward next time you go in for your shift. No one wants to be out of a job right before Christmas because you got drunk and offered to blow your co-workers.

If you are going to a white elephant party - where everyone brings a gift and y'all take turns stealing the good gifts from others - make sure you put a little thought and heart into the gift so the game will be fun. I went to one where some asshole basically wrapped a half used roll of toilet paper as his gift. Somebody ended up with that gift, and I guarantee you that unless he had to shit right at that moment, he'd be pissed he picked your gift. It's more fun when people are fighting over the gift you bring. (I am going to a white elephant party this Thursday. I am bringing a beautifully-wrapped 12-inch dildo, complete with a suction cup on the end. If I know my friends, there will be a lot of stealing that night. But know your audience. my friends won't be offended or embarrassed by that gift; they are all freaks.) Let's say your friends are uptight; bring a nice purple, stuffed sloth from Five Below or a gift card to Which Wich. You can't go wrong with a cute stuffed animal or a sammie. Or candles — we could all use just one more fucking candle.

Another great gift idea is to take an awful pic of yourself, maybe making a funny face or just a pic of your toes and put it in a beautiful frame. Then whoever ends up with your gift has the

option of hanging your pic and shaming you forever or replacing your pic with one they actually like — after all, it is a beautiful frame.

Always take the host of the party a gift like a bottle of wine. I love when months after we've had a party I realize we have a great bottle of wine to drink on some random Tuesday. Or a candle, another fucking candle.

Use good judgment at all of your parties... or don't. Some of the best parties are when

you use horrible judgment and end up having a blast. Just don't be a dick. If you can't party without being a jerk, people will stop inviting you altogether. And nobody wants that.

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

You can contact Cassie at AskCassieNova@gmail.com.



LIFE+STYLE





Making the **SCENE** the week of **Dec. 21–27**:

- 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 for charities from 9 p.m.-midnight on Saturday.
- Alexandre's: Filter Kings on Friday. Anton Shaw Band on Saturday. Wayne Smith on Sunday. Vero Voz on Wednesday. Chris Chism on Thursday.
- Cedar Springs Tap House: Geeks Who Drink Trivia Night at 7 p.m. on Tuesday. Steak Night at 11 a.m. on Wednesday.
- Club Changes: Wall of Food Meeting at 8 p.m. on Wednesday.
- Dallas Eagle: Line Dance Lessons with Yoshi from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday.
- Henry's Tavern: Celebrate Pride in Plano on Wednesday evening
- JR.'s Bar & Grill: Dreamgirls at 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- Kaliente: Winter White Party with DJ Puma on Friday. Free before 11 p.m.
- Liquid Zoo: Karaoke with Wayne Smith on Saturday.
- Round-Up Saloon: Bear Happy Hour on Friday. Boys! Boots! Boxer Briefs! at 10 p.m. on Monday. The Showdown at 11 p.m. on Tuesday
- Sue Ellen's: Mojo Dolls on Saturday. The Southpaw Preachers at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday followed by the Anton Shaw Band.
- The Rose Room: Janet Andrews on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- TMC: The Mining Company: Fuego hosted by Sasha Andrews with Latin Dance Contest at 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday.
- Woody's Sports & Video Bar: Tampa Bay at Dallas from noon-3 p.m. on Sunday. Ho Ho Ho 90s from 9 p.m.-close on Monday. Showtunes Christmas at 9 p.m. on Tuesday.

Scene Photographers: Kat Haygood and Chad Mantooth

Teddy Bear Party, Part Two

Photos Courtesy of The Mug Spot













Celebrating 39 years at The Hidden Door









Dallas Pride Steering Committee's holiday party



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Bleach and friends on The Strip



Looking cute at The Round-Up Saloon





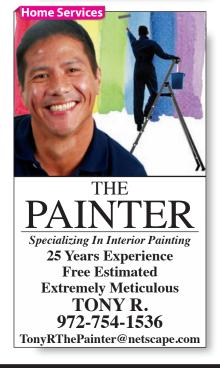
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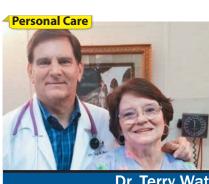
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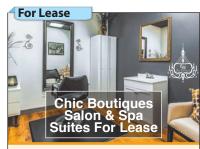


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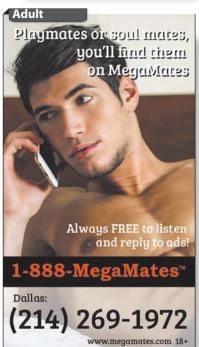
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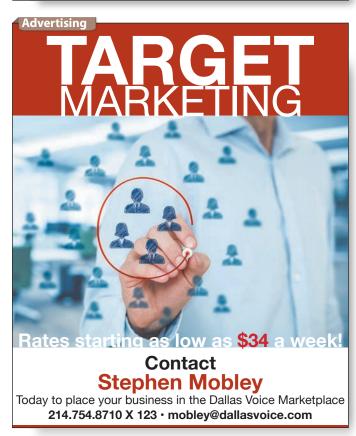
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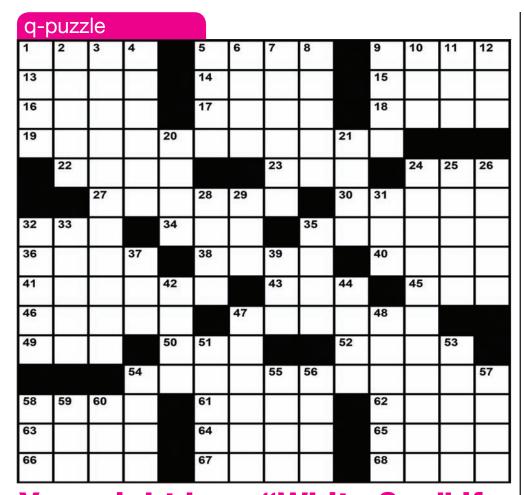












You might be a "White Gay" if...

Solution on Page 26

Across

- 1 Queen of heaven, to Socrates
- 5 Partners of bottoms
- 9 Fashion designer Jacobs
- 13 Lesbian character in No Exit
- 14 Pull down
- 15 John Goodman's
- Normal.
- 16 Affluent, to Frida
- 17 Part of San Francisco's **BART**
- 18 Title for Chablis
- 19 ...you have ever been to a 61 Noncommittal words concert of _
- 22 Reproduced nonheterosexually?
- 23 "I Could Have Danced
- __Night" 24 "Lazy River" start
- 27 Drag queen's hose
- problem 30 Doubleday of baseball
- fame 32 Gore Vidal, ___ Edgar Box
- 34 Type of sucker
- 35 ... your favorite diva is Britney ___
- 36 "Fancy" singer McEntire
- 38 ...you own every vinyl album of ___ (with 41-Across)

- 40 Bullets and cannonballs
- 41 See 38-Across
- 43 Type of job
- 45 Keep out
- 46 Tatum of *The Bad News* Bears
- 47 It's hung in a deli
- 49 Hi-___ graphics
- 50 He comes between Larry and Curly
- 52 Gay-friendly student org.
- 54 ...you voted for ___
- 58 Mommie Dearest star Dunaway
- 62 In order (to)
- 63 Poet Gidlow
- 64 Yarborough of NASCAR
- 65 Survivor homes
- 66 Lesbian couples may do this
- 67 Mireille of World War Z
- 68 Words before were

Down

- 1 He got a blow job...with a trumpet
- 2 Seminal computer
- 3 Some cans and bottles
- 4 Gaily colored flower
- 5 It rusts the Tin Woodsman
- 6 Trireme propellers
- 7 Like the beginning of

- **GWTW**
- 8 Slow kind of mail
 - 9 Drop down like an eagle
 - 10 "Now I get it!"
 - 11 Disencumber
 - 12 Queerly shy
 - 20 Stats on a stallion
 - 21 Labium
 - 24 Not like the gay couple of SNL
 - 25 Frost starter
 - 26 Flaming queen's crime?
 - 28 Tim of Private Practice
 - 29 Clean-air org.
 - 31 Golden Girl Arthur
 - 32 Hot blood
 - 33 Carolyn who wrote about a Nancy
 - 35 One sheet to the wind?
 - 37 Constellation over Rio
 - 39 US gun lobby
 - 42 Sailor's patron
 - 44 Pole of your first mate?
 - 47 Billy Budd, for one
 - 48 Mason of Hollywood
 - 51 Not straight up
 - 53 Treasured violin
 - 54 Six feet under
 - 55 Composer Edouard
 - 56 Vat colors
 - 57 Oral attention getter
 - 58 Butch's gal
 - 59 Porter, but not Cole
 - 60 Big initials in fashion

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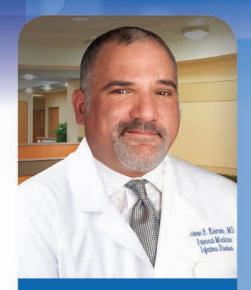
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