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The Premier Media Source for LGBT Texas |

Issue 7 | FREE | Friday, June 21, 2019

Out of time

FWPD officer faces months without pay after on-duty injury

by Tammye Nash, Page 8



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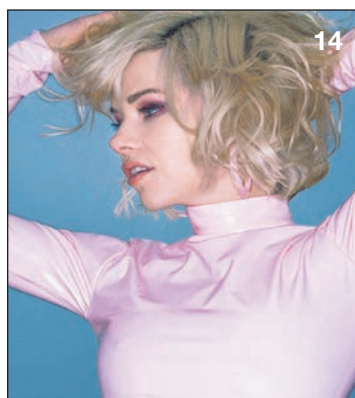
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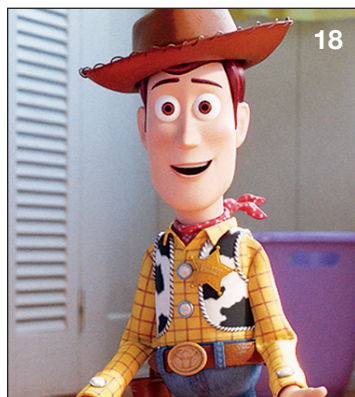
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10



14



18

headlines

■ TEXAS NEWS

- 8 Injured officer battles for treatment
- 10 Protestors target DQ Story Hour
- 10 FWPd chief hopes to allay fears

■ LIFE+STYLE

- 14 An interview with Carly Rae Jepsen
- 18 REVIEWS: 'Toy Story 4,' 'Papi Chulo'

■ ON THE COVER

Fort Worth Police Officer Kellie Whitehead. Photo by Tammye Nash. Design by Kevin Thomas.

departments

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|----|-------------|
| 6 | The Gay Agenda | 21 | Best Bets |
| 8 | News | 24 | Cassie Nova |
| 13 | Voices | 26 | Scene |
| 14 | Life+Style | 29 | MarketPlace |

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Councilman Chad West, right, and his partner Brian Bleeker. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

Dallas mayor, council sworn in; Medrano elected mayor pro tem

Eric Johnson was sworn in as Dallas' 60th mayor and members of the Dallas City Council took their oaths of office at the Winspear Opera House on Monday, June 17. The program opened with about 50 members of the Turtle Creek Chorale singing "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Former and newly-elected members of the council sat on stage together. Each was accompanied by a spouse or relative. The old rule about public displays affection by same-sex couples was off the table as both council members Omar Narvaez and Chad West entered the stage holding hands or arm-in-arm with their husbands to cheers from the crowd.

After the swearing-in ceremony, the council met for a brief session to elect leadership, during which Councilman Omar Narvaez nominated Adam Medrano as mayor pro tem. Medrano was elected unanimously. In his previous term, Medrano was deputy mayor pro tem.

Councilman Adam McGough replaces Medrano as deputy mayor pro tem.

For the first time since 2000, the council is majority minority with four black members including Johnson and five Hispanic members.

— David Taffet

Uptown Players announces 2020 season

Uptown Players just opened its latest production, *The View UpStairs*, but we already know what we can see there a year from now. The queer theater troupe just announced the line-up for its 2019-20 season, which as usual includes four mainstage productions (this time three musicals and one play), a faboo fundraiser plus a bonus show.

The season kicks off with *Nuncrackers A-Men!*, from *Nunsense* author Dan Goggin, in a cross-dressingly irreverent musical. Directed by Dennis Canright. Dec. 6–15.

The fundraising review *Broadway Our Way*, where men sing songs written for women and vice versa, returns to the Kalita in January with returning favorite performers and a preview of the 2020 shows. Directed by B.J. Cleveland and Jeremy Dumont. Jan. 16–19.

Uptown then snags the regional native

premiere of the Tony Award-winning musical *Fun Home*, about a budding lesbian who realizes her dad, who runs a funeral home, is secretly gay. Directed by Cheryl Denson. April 10–26.

For the first time since its controversial run in 1992, *Six Degrees of Separation* returns to the Kalita (this time, we assume, with the full frontal male nudity intact ... though the actor may or may not be intact; he hasn't been cast). A brilliant comedy of manners in the age of Reagan. Directed by Marianne Galloway. May 29–June 7.

Andi Allen comes back as a director for the regional premiere of the recent Broadway musical *Head Over Heels* from writer Jeff Whitty (*Avenue Q*, *Can You Ever Forgive Me?*). July 10–26.

Finally, the company closes its season with a world premiere stage show: Del Shores' theatrical adaptation of his film *A Very Sordid Wedding*. Shores himself will direct. Aug. 21–30.

Tickets available here. All performances will take place at the Kalita.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Another trans woman has been murdered

Zoe Spears has become the 10th transgender woman murdered in the United States this year.

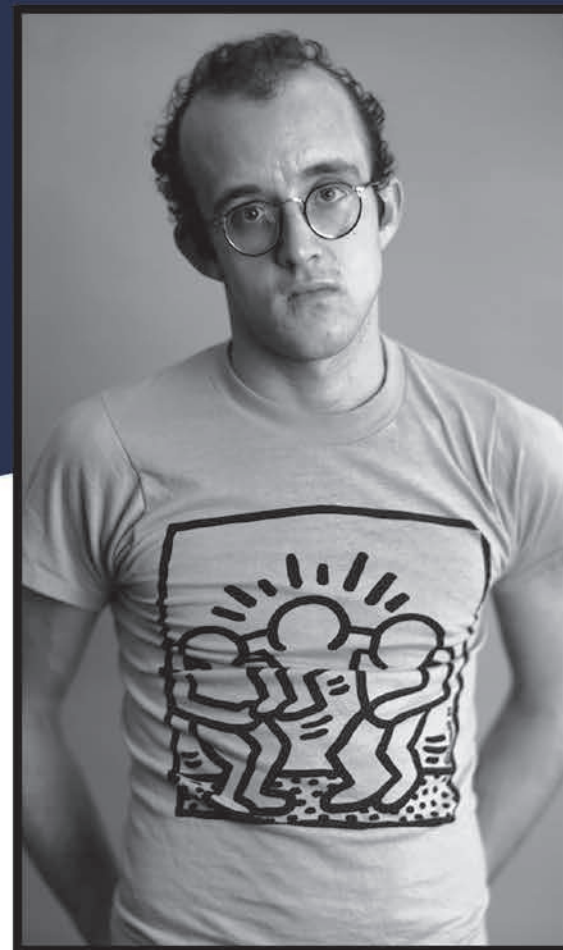
Spears, 23, who lived in Washington, D.C., was found suffering from a gunshot wound in the D.C. suburb of Fairmont Heights, Md., just before midnight on Thursday, June 13. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Spears' body was found less than half a mile away from where trans woman Ashanti Carmon, 27, was found shot to death on March 27. Police say they have no evidence directly linking the murders and have no suspects as yet in either case.

All 10 of the trans women murdered this year have been black trans women. Two of them, Muhaysia Booker and Chynal Lindsey, were murdered here in Dallas, and police believe their murders and possibly several others since 2015, are linked. Police have arrested 34-year-old Kendrell Lavar Lyles and charged him in Booker's death and in connection with two other murders, not related to the transgender community.

— Tammye Nash

Keith Haring: *AGAINST ALL ODDS*



Haring artwork © The Keith Haring Foundation

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THE GAY AGENDA



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

JUNE

• June 21: Pride Block Party Dallas 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. See box for more info. DMA.org.

• June 21: United Court

Daddy Issues benefits Safe to Be from 7-10 p.m. at Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. For more information visit DallasCourt.org

• June 22: United Court

Diva Divo benefits SSC Fund from 5-10 p.m. at Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. For more information visit DallasCourt.org

• June 22: Prime Timers

Pool party at 11 a.m. in Carrollton hosted by Brian and Mark. RSVP to 214-218-0912 for address. For more information visit PrimeTimersww.net

• June 22: Colin Allred speaks

Rep. Colin Allred speaks from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Walnut Hill Recreation Center, 10011 Midway Road.

• June 23: United Court

The Men are cooking from 2-5 p.m. at The Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser Ave. For more information visit DallasCourt.org

• June 23: United Court

Wild Wild West Show benefits Resource Center Nutrition Center from 6-10 p.m. at Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. For more information visit DallasCourt.org

• June 25: Family Night at Durkins Pizza

GALA family night's 10th year of

networking, socializing, happy hour, rock n' roll and pizza and 10 percent of proceeds benefits GALA Youth from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Durkins Pizza, 8930 State Hwy 121, McKinney. For more information visit GalaNorthTexas.org

• June 26: Rainbow Movie Night

The Silver Pride Project Presents Rainbow Movie Night. Enjoy an LGBTQ+ themed movie, snacks, conversation, and community from 5:30-7:45 p.m. at Grauwlyer Park Branch Library, 2146 Gilford St. For more information visit SilverPrideProject.com

• June 26: Prime Timers

Dinner at 7 p.m. at Tupinamba at the SW corner of Highway 75 and Walnut Hill Road. For more information visit PrimeTimersWW.net

• June 26: United Court

Club Night from 7:30-10 p.m. at The Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser Ave. For more information visit DallasCourt.org

• June 27: 90 Days

AHF and AIDS Walk South Dallas screen the film 90 Days and have a panel discussion commemorating National HIV Testing Day at 7 p.m. at Texas Theatre, 231 W. Jefferson Blvd. Free.

• June 28: 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising

• June 28: Third Annual Transgender Pride

Focusing on recognizing the trans women of color who participated in the Stonewall Riots in 1969, and will include a resource fair, speakers addressing topics of interest to the local transgender family, and presenting of an award to an outstanding cisgender ally. 7 p.m. on the seventh floor of the J. Erik Johnson Public Library, 1515 Young St.

• June 28: Denton Pride Block Party

Denton Pride Foundation is holding the Denton Pride Block Party celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall

Pride Block Party Dallas Arts District

- Verdigris presents Faces of Dallas featuring the life and activism of Patti Fink at 6 p.m. in the Atrium.
- Judy Garland: The Elvis of Homosexuals with Janelle Lutz written by Robert Emery at 7 p.m. in the Horchow Auditorium.
- Drag Queen Story Time with Cassie Nova at 6:30 p.m. in the C3 Theater.
- Breaking the Binary: A Bisexual Millennial Confessional at 7 p.m. on Level 2 landing.
- Tour: Beyond Binaries at 7:30 p.m. on Level 4 in the American Galleries.
- Late Night Main Stage featuring The Rose Room Cast from 8-8:45 p.m. in the Atrium.
- Trancestor Artists: A Look at Art Beyond the Binaries at 9:30 p.m. in the Horchow Auditorium
- Screening of *Raid of the Rainbow Lounge* at 9:30 p.m. in C3 Theater.
- Kiki Ball with United Black Ellument from 10-11:30 p.m. in the Atrium.
- Charla enfocada: Artistas LGBTQ+ en la colección de arte europeo del DMA at 10:30 p.m.
- Beyond Binaries at 11:30 p.m. on Level 1 at Center for Creative Connections.
- Local artists, food trucks, movies and artisans on June 21, from 6 p.m.-midnight at the Dallas Museum of Arts and the Nasher Sculpture Center. \$10.

Riots, from 3-10 p.m. For details see the Denton Pride Block Party event page on Facebook.

• June 29: Dallas Wings Celebrity Serve

Dallas Wings celebrate Pride Month fundraiser for Coalition for Aging LGBT with drinks at 6 p.m. and dinner at 6:30 p.m. with live auction following dinner in Wings Practice Court A, College Park Center, 600 S. Center St., Arlington. \$100. Table \$800. For more information visit Wings.WNBA.com

• June 29: United Court

USO Show benefits Dallas Hope Charities from 6-10 p.m. at The Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser Ave. For more information visit DallasCourt.org

• June 30: Prime Timers

Games at 2 p.m. hosted by Rick at 3915 Mediterranean St., Rockwall. For more information visit PrimeTimersWW.net

• June 30: United Court

Drag Bag benefits GDMF and SSC Fund from 6-10 p.m. at Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. For more information visit DallasCourt.org

• June 30: NYC Pride

JULY

• July 2: Classic Chassis Car Club

LGBT car enthusiasts meet from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Ojeda's, 4617 Maple Ave. For more information visit ClassicChassis.com

• July 2: Prime Timers

Lunch at 11:30 a.m. at Golden Corral, 3312 Forest Lane. For more information visit PrimeTimersWW.net

• July 4: Independence Day

• July 8: Creating Change Host Committee Meeting

The Task Force needs volunteers to plan the January 15-19 Creating Change Conference in Dallas. Committees include fundraising, special events, hospitality, recruitment. Dinner at 7 p.m. and meeting from 7:30-9 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. For more information visit CreatingChange.org

• July 9: Prime Timers

Dinner at 7 p.m. at Empress of China, 2648 N. Beltline Road, Irving. For more information visit PrimeTimersWW.net

• July 12: Be On Stage

Black Tie Dinner and Performing Arts Fort Worth bring back the one-of-a-kind party held on stage from

6:30-8:30 p.m. at Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. \$30. BlackTie.org.

• **July 16: Stonewall Democrats of Dallas**

Largest Democratic club in Texas meets at 6:30 p.m. at Mattito's, 3102 Oak Lawn Ave. For more information visit StoneWallDemocratsofDallas.org

• **July 18: GALA Happy Hour**

Free appetizers, game tables, for GALA's third Thursday happy hour from 5-8:30 p.m. at Henry's, 5741 Legacy Drive, Suite 100, Plano. For more information visit GalaNorthTexas.org

• **July 18: TAG Youth Support Group**

Open to youth of all ages from 5-7 p.m. at Tyler Public Library Taylor Auditorium, 201 S. College Ave., Tyler. For more information visit TylerAreaGays.com

• **July 20: Three-Ring Gaybingo**

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

• **July 22: Stonewall Democrats of Rockwall**

Stonewall Democrats of Rockwall meets at 7:30 p.m. at Harry Meyers Community Center, 815 E. Washington St., Rockwall. For more information, contact Patti or Heidi at sdrockwall@att.com.

▪ pet of the week / KYRA & CHIRA



Kyra



Chira

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Out of time



FWPD Office Kellie Whitehead has finally been approved for the surgery she needs to recover from an on-duty injury. But treatment denials and delays have left her with no chance for income as she recovers

TAMMYE NASH. I. Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

I’m out of time.” Fort Worth police Officer Kellie Whitehead shrugs, then grimaces as she shifts in her seat, trying to find a position that isn’t painful. After injuring her back in a car accident while on duty in 2016, she found out less than a week ago that the back surgery that will hopefully give her back her life has finally been approved.

But she is out of time.

Whitehead has no workers’ comp leave left; that ran out while she battled it out with the company that provides the city’s workers’ comp insurance to get approval for the treatments her doctors prescribed. When the city council refused her request for an extension on that time, she had to start using her “PTO” — vacation and sick leave. Now that has run out, too.

So, Whitehead is finally getting the surgery she needs. But whatever time it takes her to recover is time that she will be off work without pay, and that means no paycheck coming in to keep the lights on, the water on, the house note paid. And recovery, Whitehead said, could take as long as six months.

“From hero to zero”

In July 2015, Whitehead — who was FWPD’s second LGBT liaison officer, from October 2010 to fall 2011 — was

on patrol on the west side of Fort Worth when she saw what she at first thought was a child floundering in the water at Lake Como. After locking her gun belt in her patrol car, Whitehead rushed to the water’s edge where she took off her shoes, bulletproof vest and uniform shirt before diving into the water in her undershirt and uniform pants.

Once she reached the person in the water, Whitehead realized that it was a young man, not a child, and it took all her strength to keep her own and the young man’s heads above water as she struggled to get them both to shore.

“It started as, ‘You’re going to be OK. ... Don’t panic. Relax. Take a deep breath.’ It got to the point ... ‘We’re going to be OK. We’re going to be fine,’” Whitehead said at the time.

“Just trying to keep both of us from panicking because it wasn’t that long that I was in the water, but it seemed like forever.”

In recounting the incident last week, she elaborated: “For a minute or two, I didn’t think we were going to make it. And then it was like something just lifted us up, kept our heads above water” until firemen arrived on the scene with equipment to pull Whitehead and the young man safely to shore.

Eight months later, on March 28, 2016, the Fort Worth Police Department gave Whitehead the Medal of Valor in recognition for her bravery. Two days later — March 30, 2016 — Whitehead was on duty in her patrol car when she was rear-ended during a rain storm. And the battle with the insurance company began.

“We joked around about how I went from ‘hero to zero,’ just like that” Whitehead said. “But it isn’t funny.”

Fighting for treatment

The accident left Whitehead with a lower back injury, and her doctor first prescribed steroid injections and physical therapy. But York Risk Services, the insurance company that handles workers’ comp claims for the city of Fort Worth, denied approval for the shots.

“I was just kind of stunned. I mean, it was steroid injections! Why would they deny steroid injections for a back injury?” Whitehead said.

So, the doctor suggested “facet injections,” a procedure in which a small amount of local anesthetic is injected into an injured spinal joint. York approved the injections, but they did nothing to relieve the pain.

York finally approved the steroid injections prescribed by Whitehead’s doctor in November 2017, about a year-and-a-half after the accident. “The steroid shots gave me about six or seven weeks of relief,” Whitehead said. “But then the pain came back, as bad as ever.”

Whitehead’s doctor sent her to a surgeon, who ordered a set of MRIs. The MRIs showed herniated discs in her L4, L5 and S1 vertebrae, prompting the doctors to recommend surgery to fuse those damaged joints. York said no.

“They were saying the injury wasn’t from the accident, that it was caused by age or whatever,” Whitehead recalled. “But I had never had back problems before the accident. Just a couple of weeks before, I was helping carry an officer who had been shot, and I had no back problems.”

Doctors then suggested a discectomy, a surgical procedure to remove herniated disc material pressing on a nerve root or the spinal cord in the lumbar area of the spine. York approved the procedure, and

Whitehead got the surgery in May 2018. But again, she got no lasting relief.

After the discectomy, Whitehead continued in physical therapy, and she continued to tell her therapists and doctors that something was wrong. Not only was she not getting better, she was getting worse.

“I have spent the last six or seven months telling them that something was wrong, and they just kept telling me no, it was all in my head. I was beginning to believe them. I was beginning to think maybe I was crazy,” Whitehead said. “Then finally, about a month ago [early May], they agreed to do another MRI. And I was right.”

At that point, she said, doctors told her that fusion surgery was her only option if she ever wanted to live without constant pain, if she ever hoped to return to some semblance of the life she had before the accident.

By the time Whitehead and her wife received word that York had finally approved the fusion surgery, it had been more than a month since the MRIs had confirmed its necessity. Now the surgery has been scheduled, but Whitehead will have to go without pay.

Whitehead was initially given two years’ worth of workers’ comp leave. At the end of those two years, when she was still struggling to get treatments approved, she requested and was given a 90-day extension. At the end of those three months, still waiting for necessary treatment, Whitehead asked for another extension. This time, with a representative from York insisting that she had reached “the maximum medical improvement” that could be expected, the council denied the extension.

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Making reading FUNdamental

Protesters come from out of state to protest last year's Drag Queen Story Hour

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Eight people traveled from Alexandria, La., last weekend to protest Drag Queen Story Time in Dallas. The group stood in front of ilume on Cedar Springs Road, across the street from the Oak Lawn Branch of the Dallas Public Library Sunday afternoon, holding signs to protest the event on the anniversary of the date and at the place where the Story Hour took place last year — and about four-and-a-half miles from where Drag Queen Story Time will take place next month.

While protestors claim Drag Queen Story Hour exposes children to perverts and pedophiles, Jo Giudice, director of the Dallas Public Library, said anyone who volunteers to perform at a Dallas library first goes through a thorough background check. Then anyone who will be reading to children who isn't al-

ready an early childhood professional goes through a training class.

According to the protesters' website, "The goal [of Drag Queen Story Hour] is to provide children with queer role models and impose upon them the acceptance of sexual deviancy."

But according to Giudice, the goal of any story time program is reading literacy for children and giving parents tips on how to engage their children when reading to them.

The two drag queens who participate in the Dallas library's program are Jenna Skyy and Cassie Nova. And when the children look at them, "Children see Disney," Giudice said, "two beautiful princesses."

When she and Cassie read for Drag Queen Story Hour, Jenna said she was dressed as the Disney character Maleficent, while Cassie was dressed as a fairy princess. Both, Jenna said, had over-the-top big hair.

"It wasn't about cleavage and tight dresses," she said.

On their website, the protesters accuse the drag queens of teaching the children sexual deviancy. "This is done by bring-



Protesters on Cedar Springs Road had the wrong date and the wrong library in June 16. (Courtesy Lee Dougherty). Jenna Skyy, right.



ing in men dressed as women to read gender-bending stories to little children at public libraries," they claim.

One of the protesters called Giudice and asked if he could read a book from his church. She told him he was welcome to perform, but just as Jenna and Cassie had done, he'd have to pass a background check and go through training. Then a librarian would choose age-appropriate books that teach a general lesson, not one sent from any particular church.

Jenna said Sablack worked with her before the first event. "He read to us like we were the children," she said, adding that she learned to ask close-ended questions and keep control of story time.

Sablack taught her how to sit and how to hold the book. They discussed inflection and including the parents. And although Jenna has two degrees in education, she said Cassie was the one who was a natural at holding the children's attention.

Jenna said she loved the parents who came because they wanted their children to have fun, be who they are and be safe from bullying.

Cassie and Jenna presented a workshop on Drag Queen Story Time at the annual conference of the Texas Library Association. Theirs, Jenna said, was the most widely-attended session of the conference, and, she added, everyone was taking notes.

And Jenna said she'll continue performing as long as the library will have her. She choked up describing the parents who brought their kids to hear her read as unconditionally loving their children: "In 15 years, those kids will look at their parents and realize they're awesome," she said.

Drag Queen Story Time will be presented for adults on Friday, June 21 at the Dallas Museum of Art and for children on July 13 at 1 p.m. at Grauwyler Branch Library, 2146 Guilford St.

FYPD chief reassures LGBTQ community

A panel of LGBTQ community members met with Fort Worth Police Chief Edwin Kraus on Monday evening, June 17, for a discussion on how the Fort Worth PD can improve its relationship with transgender residents of the city, and to help allay some of the community's concerns following the recent spate of murders of black trans women in Dallas.

Chief Kraus said he had suggested the meeting because even though there had been no murders of trans women in Fort Worth, given the situation in Dallas, "I figured there were people over here [in Fort Worth] who were scared and hurting." The response, he said, showed he was right.

Finnigan Jones, executive director of Trans-Cendence, noted that his organization meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month in Fort Worth. On the Tuesday after Dallas police announced that they believed the recent murders there might be connected, Jones said, "about 60 scared people" showed up for the meeting. "We have senior trans women who are afraid to walk their dogs, who are afraid to go to the corner store for some toilet paper." Those people had questions, he continued; they wanted to know what they have to do to legally carry a gun and where they can learn self defense.

Jones said that trans people, especially transgender women, also have more universal concerns, such as if they are pulled over for a traffic violation, will they be arrested because their presentation doesn't match their ID cards.

"I tell them, the Fort Worth PD is on top of things," Jones said. "I tell them Fort Worth PD is your friend. They are not going to hassle you; they are on your side. They'll protect you."

Kraus told Jones that FYPD would gladly work with Trans-Cendence to help people find self-de-



Left to right, FYPD Chief Edwin Kraus, Finnejan Jones and Naomi Green

fense classes and classes to become licensed to carry a gun. And he stressed that his department cares about its relationship with the LGBTQ community, noting the large number of officers in the FYPD command that attended the meeting.

Naomi Green, transgender intervention specialist for Abounding Prosperity Inc., said that the transgender community wants to see "action not words" from police. Noting that discrimination often forces trans women "to turn to whatever means they have" to support themselves and their families, she encouraged Chief Kraus and his department to "shift our focus to finding ways" to end discrimination

and help transgender women find safer ways to support themselves.

Rafael McDonnell, a Fort Worth resident who works as communications and advocacy manager for Resource Center in Dallas, said that the murders in Dallas have "shown there are some gaps

in the way the Dallas Police Department does things, in the way they communicate with the community." Fort Worth, he commended, "is doing it right. Dallas needs to catch up."

Fort Worth District 9 City Councilmember Ann Zadeh also participated in the panel discussion, which was moderated by openly-gay former council member Joel Burns. Stonewall Democrats of Tarrant County President Felipe Gutierrez helped arrange the meeting, and FYPD LGBT Liaison Officer Sara Straten presented a series of "basic safety tips" individuals can use to help avoid dangerous situations.

— Tammye Nash

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At that point, the city “took back” all her PTO — the time having been expended already as she waited for treatments to be approved and a decision to be made regarding her request for an extension.

In a recent email exchange with Chris Lam, the city’s workers’ compensation manager, Cupp asked for clarification, asking specifically, “will she go unpaid between surgery date and being medi-

cally retired?”

Lam replied: “Officer Whitehead’s WC indemnity payments have ended. As pointed out, City Council denied her request for an extension of occupational leave in March of this year. All impairment income benefits have been paid by York Risk Services for her impairment rating.”

Cupp wrote in an email to Dallas Voice, “Kellie was delayed treatment due

to reasons beyond her control — doctors no longer working with the city of Fort Worth, denied treatments that were later approved on appeal, surgeon frustrated with WC and dropped her as a patient. She asked to be returned to light duty in October 2018, but the treating doctor denied it.

“She had to follow ‘the process,’ which required a psychologist review and then a ‘work hardening program.’ The city of Fort Worth did not realize the psychologist responsible for this step had retired. Kellie used her own PTO to get through

‘the process,’ waiting for the city to hire a new psychologist.”

Lam also told Cupp and Whitehead that Whitehead had “reached maximum medical improvement on March 31, 2017, with a 5 percent impairment rating. The rating was assigned by the state-appointed designated doctor Patrick Downey. The administrative law judge’s decision was not appealed, so the decision is now final. The time to appeal has run out.”

Cupp said she and Whitehead have “never been in a situation like this,” and that they “don’t really understand how she can reach her ‘maximum medical improvement’ when she is still being treated with hopes to continue improvement.”

Cupp noted that in March 2017, Whitehead’s doctor told her and a case manager that “Kellie would only get worse,” and that the case manager told her and Whitehead that “she was at a loss, that she had never worked a case where treatment was continuously denied.”

(Dallas Voice requested comments, by email, from Chris Lam and from the office of Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price. As of deadline on Thursday, June 20, we have received no response.)

The only other option

During a recent interview with Dallas Voice, Whitehead said that she intended to go through with the fusion surgery even if York refused to cover the procedure. “It’s my only chance to get better, to have a normal life,” she said. “I’ll find a way to pay for it.”

Now, with the surgery approved, that worry is lifted. But Whitehead still faces the possibility of months without pay until she would be able to go back to work or until she could be approved for medical retirement, and the prospect is daunting.

“I’ve worked for the Fort Worth Police Department for more than 20 years. I had never once been injured until this happened,” Whitehead said. “There’s been nobody we could talk to, no one who would help us figure this all out. It feels like they’re working against you instead of trying to help. There’s been nobody on our side this whole time.

“I feel like they want me to resign and just be out of their hair, so they don’t have to deal with it anymore,” she added. “But if I do that, that’s 20 years down the drain. I just want to get better. I want to be able to work again. I want to have my life back.”



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administration

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editorial

Tammye Nash Managing Editor ■ 113

Arnold Wayne Jones Executive Editor Life+Style ■ 129

David Taffet Senior Staff Writer ■ 125

Philip Burton Proofreader

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J. Denton Bricker, Alicia Chang, Lawrence Ferber,

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Brandi Amara Skyy DVtv Host

circulation

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■ commUNITYvoices

Doctors aren't offering young people PrEP. That has to change

As a young person who identifies as nonbinary — meaning I do not identify within the gender binary — accessing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was a challenging quest. PrEP is a once-daily pill regimen that supports people in remaining HIV-negative. Although I have been an organizer and advocate in support of LGBTQ youth for more than five years in Philadelphia, I have only been aware of PrEP for about two years.

PrEP is extremely effective at preventing HIV transmission. So why is no one talking about it to young people?

In 2016, 21 percent of people newly diagnosed with HIV were age 24 or younger (about 40 percent of HIV diagnoses are in people under 30), and yet people under 25 were only 15 percent of all people on PrEP. There have only been approximately 27,000 prescriptions issued to this group since 2012.

A recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on how PrEP is prescribed found that black and Hispanic/Latinx people are most likely to benefit from PrEP, but least likely to be prescribed it.

Truvada (FTC/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) for PrEP was first approved as an HIV prevention method in 2012, but only for individuals age 18 and older. In 2018, the Food and Drug Administration expanded the approval of PrEP to include adolescents. But there are still too many logistical, economic and cultural barriers to young people receiving this vital medication.

One key barrier and area of missed opportunity is the doctor's office. Unfortunately, like many LGBTQ people, until recently I never felt like my doctor's office was a safe place to openly talk about my sexual health and experiences. I often felt like I was being slut-shamed or othered for my identity and the partners I had.



Tyunique Nelson
Contributing Columnist

about PrEP. No one offered it to me, and I wasn't sure if it was my job to ask for it. I'd go to my appointments and end up leaving without a PrEP prescription because I was afraid to ask my doctor about it.

Then there's the price tag. Without insurance, PrEP can cost up to \$2,000 per month. A young person on their parents' insurance pays far less but faces the risk of their parents finding out they're on PrEP if their explanation of benefits goes to their parents. Title X clinics, like Planned Parenthood, provide cost-effective and confidential options, but the Trump administration is intent on shutting them down, without regard for the vital services they provide young people.

There's also a huge gap in comprehensive sex education. Today, fewer than half of all states mandate medically-accurate sex and HIV education. In Pennsylvania, schools are required only to provide education on HIV and AIDS, with a focus on abstinence. The Philadelphia School District (where I live) provides teachers with additional information on contraception and dating violence but fails to require any specific curriculum.

Unfortunately, what students learn can vary greatly, depending on the teacher. It's unforgivable that most stu-

I answered the standard questions about sexual behavior, but these didn't create an opportunity

to ask

dents get through school without learning that there is a medication that can help them remain HIV-negative.

I'm asking everyone to take the steps they can to ensure young people have access to PrEP. In hospital and clinic settings, sexually-transmitted infection screenings have to go beyond the standard of offering condoms, lubrication and dental dams after a person is tested. Information about PrEP and post-exposure prophylaxis should be publicly promoted in health care environments and spaces that LGBTQ youth, people that identify as nonbinary, and black cis and transgender women occupy.

Sex education needs to be honest and comprehensive, and it needs to address real solutions and skills. And young people ourselves need to take the initiative and ask our health care providers about PrEP.

It was only after I met an affirming nurse at Planned Parenthood, who happened to be queer, that I became comfortable discussing my sexual health and HIV prevention needs, including PrEP. When young people are educated about PrEP, when staff and physicians are knowledgeable about LGBTQ-competent services and provide equitable and affordable care, we are empowered to take our sexual health into our own hands.

Help us protect our futures and lay the groundwork for a lifetime of sexual health. ■

Tyunique Nelson is a contributing writer for TheBody, a member of Advocates for Youth's YouthResource Leadership Program and a program associate at the Mazzoni Center in Philadelphia. This column is a project of Plus, Positively Aware, POZ, TheBody and Q Syndicate, the LGBT wire service. Visit their websites —HIVPlusMag.com, PositivelyAware.com, Poz.com and TheBody.com — for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.

monster giggle



LIFE+STYLE

profile

Carly Rae Jepsen bops to her own beat

It's certainly not Carly Rae Jepsen's fault that the English language is, at least when she needs it most, a total let-down. It offers her scant synonyms for describing what, exactly, she's checking off on her color-coded poster boards when making an album: "I'm always embarrassed to say, but emotions."

She giggles, the winsome sound of the greatest pop song not yet written. To hear her floaty laugh is to experience a little miracle, a bit of magic in a time when the world's lost some of its own — in other words, hearing Carly Rae Jepsen giggle, or say anything, quite honestly, is a lot like hearing her 2015 glitterstorm of pop greatness, *E•MO•TION*: sweet, bubbly, infectious. A daydream.

Content occupying her own queer wonderland (shh, she's *still* our best kept secret), Jepsen's post-"Call Me Maybe" trajectory into gay darlinghood is a strange, beautiful thing considering how truly delicious her escapist bops are: framed around prismatic beats that lean into the retro pop sounds of the '80s and '90s, her lyrics speaking to the human condition, the fickleness of love her trademark. Broadening her e•mo•tion board (sex!), *Dedicated*, Jepsen's fourth, more-exposed album, is an exciting next step in the 33-year-old industry outsider's free-spirited career. Recently, Jepsen kept it real while talking about how the LGBTQ community's wholehearted embrace of her is "a beautiful gift in my life," being more open to showing the public who she is, and almost getting eaten alive by gays (because of course!) during a recent shopping trip. ■

— Chris Azzopardi

Dallas Voice: I saw you play with The Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 2017 and that was gay heaven. So many gays. I kept thinking, with you around, who needs Grindr? Go to a Carly show, find your husband. Or your husband for a night. Carly Rae Jepsen: [Giggles] I mean, that's all I'm trying to do, man, is set up new love lives.

Are you feeling that gay love when you're on stage no matter where you are? I would say one of the gifts of this whole experience, from *E•MO•TION* on, has been a swell of being accepted and embraced by a community that I have loved since I began, basically. And I don't think I've ever had more fun than when I play a Pride festival; there's nothing more joyful, and the rooms and the fields are so full of an energy that you don't get anywhere else, and what a cool thing to be involved in.

Does the queer fandom for you on social media translate to everyday life? Like, are LGBTQ fans openly expressing their enthusiastic love for you on your way to Starbucks or at brunch? All of my fans and my gay fans, too, are the coolest, most realest people I've ever met, so it's never been the type of fandom where you feel like you have to run away; it's more like you're meeting new friends everywhere you go and I love that about it.

I just wonder if, at this point in your career, you can go into a gay bar as yourself and not be gay-mobbed. I mean, I was in New York recently with my boyfriend and we were shopping and we found what was gonna be a store for everything glitter, based on, like, drag, and I was like, "I better go and see if I can find some sparkly gloves for the Cyndi Lauper event." [on April 29, Jepsen performed alongside Lauper at Carnegie Hall for the New York Pops' 36th Birthday Gala, Hall Full of Stars: The Songs of Cyndi Lauper concert.] I walked in and he just grabbed my hand and slowly walked me out, and he was like, "I love you, love, but you're gonna get eaten in there," because we got noticed by, like, six different people on the way in. I was like, "But I want the gloves!" So yeah, sometimes it's a little bit more crazy.

And did you get the gloves? I got gloves elsewhere; I was really bummed about it!

I'm sorry that the gays got in your way. No, no! Normally it's something I love, but there's sometimes when, yeah, it's gonna be a bigger deal.

Why do you think gay audiences have embraced you as much as they have? I have been asked that question a couple of times and both times I was perplexed because I don't know that I have the exact, proper answer. It's a beautiful gift in my life. I think that, maybe, when I'm writing I'm thinking about not being shy of what I'm actually feeling and really getting to the heart of all of the insecurities and concerns and wishes and desires I have, all combined at once. I think maybe authenticity and that realness is something that connects. I'm hoping that's the reason, but I wouldn't know for sure.

Perhaps, more so than in straight adult culture, there's a willingness to indulge and unabashedly celebrate extraness

and even kitschiness. Perhaps! I definitely have not been shy about the playfulness and the joy that I find in writing music. If that connects, then I feel wonderful. I think that's the whole purpose for why I write: to connect to like-minded people.

We also love someone who's an underdog, and someone who we can claim as our own. I wonder if you think your outsidership in the pop world has been part of your queer appeal, because I think it has been. There's a part of me that thinks that I sort of exist on an island, but it's how I like it. [Giggles] I don't think I totally belong in the L.A. world of pop music, but it's been a really big learning curve for me that's wonderful and I get to celebrate the world that we've created in some way. And it's a much more comfortable one for me than one — I don't know, you feel like you lose your identity in the other one, I think. In this one, I feel like identities get to be celebrated for how weird and wacky they become.

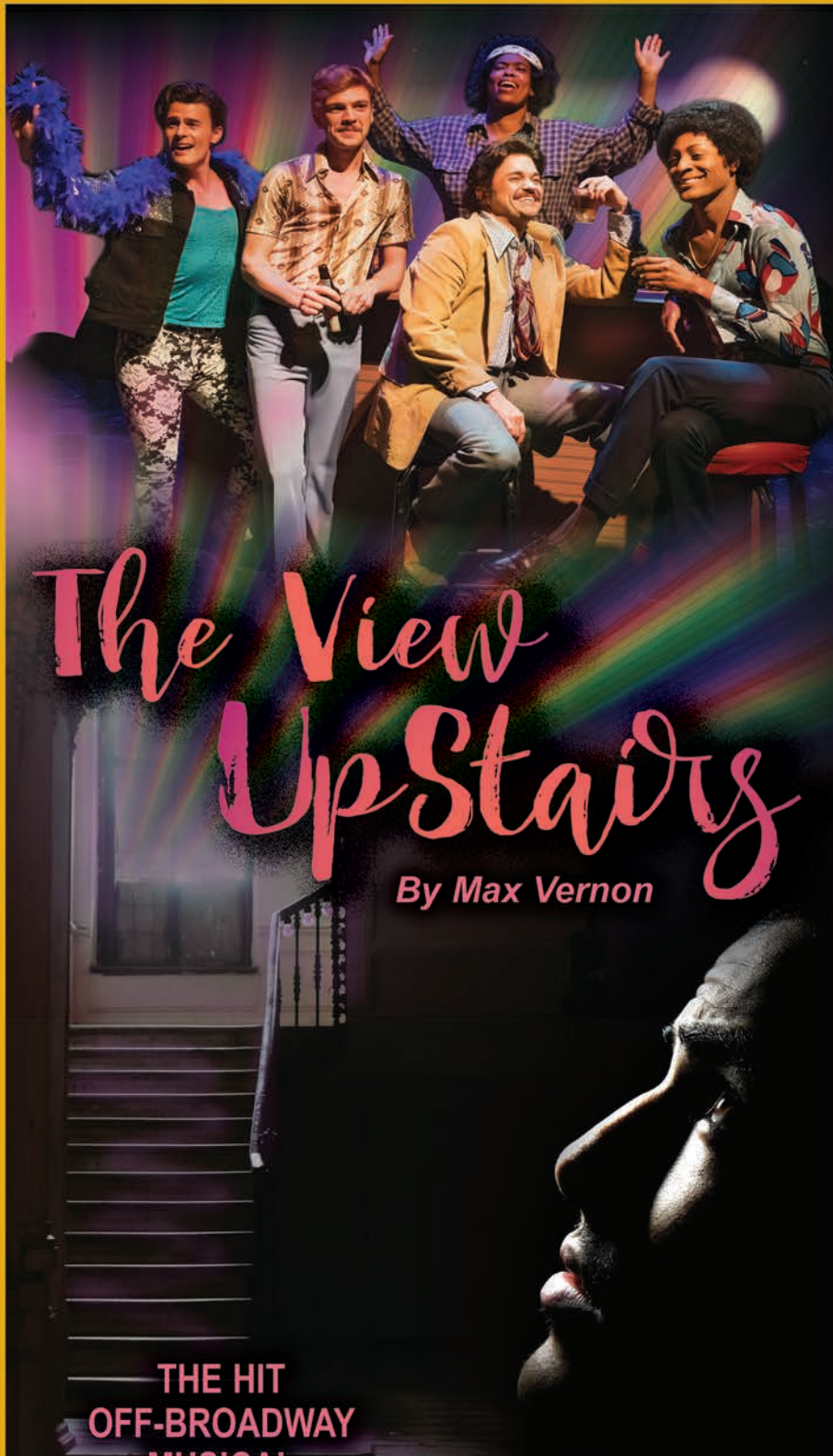
You recently told The Guardian you're "more confident in your weirdness," and I think that's something a lot of queer people feel or hope to feel. It's funny reading articles back about things that you've said, and sometimes in the past I've shied away from ever reading anything that someone has printed about me because it's always felt so false. Lately, with this round, I read things back — and there are mistakes here and there — but, in general, I'm terrified by how real and exposing it all is. It's like, "Yeah, OK! I made a decision to be really honest and this is how it unfolds."

Because you're being more yourself at this point in your career? I don't think I could do this anymore if I wasn't allowing myself to be real. And it wasn't that I was fake before; I just was scared of showing all of me. I think even with this album there was a real decision to go to the places, even the melancholy ones, because those are feelings that I experienced too, that I needed to explore, and I'm hoping that it's the right move. It's a scary thing, always, to expose yourself, but I think even if it's embraced or not embraced it's still gonna feel better than playing the safe game.

Who are your gay heroes? My friend Brandon Hamilton. He was the first man in my life who really taught me about the challenges he was overcoming, and he's been such a beautiful support in my life and such an inspiration. He would be my number one.

I love that you chose a friend. How about musician-wise? I'm a huge Cyndi Lauper fan. I was really gifted, because two days ago I got to talk to her on the phone for an hour while she interviewed me [for Interview magazine], which I'm still coming to terms with. I was freaking out.

■ GIGGLE Next Page



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By Max Vernon

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■ **GIGGLE** From Previous Page

My cheeks were hurting from grinning the whole time. To me, her whole career and the way she embraces the community, and also is just comfortably, at this point in her life, killing it and looking for ways to give back and doing gracious things like getting on the phone with me, that's like, if I could be anything when I get older, I would love to be someone who follows that footpath.

Oh, I already see it. Aww, thank you. I hope so! And I hope I still have as much fun with my hair! It's purple right now!

What was your first reaction when you saw Mark Kanemura snatching his wigs to your song "Cut to the Feeling" in his viral video? [Giggles] Honestly? I was like, we should've just had this guy do the video. It's a thousand times better than anything we could've made, oh my god. And then the second thought was, how do I meet him? So it was wonderful: We reached out and just invited him to a festival show and said, "We'd love to invite you [onstage] for 'Cut to the Feeling'; you can do whatever you want to do; the stage is yours," and when we arrived that day he was super chill and super calm and acted, in the best way, too cool for school. I was like, "You don't even know, but this is amazing," and I was like, "I don't need to know what you're gonna do but come on out and do whatever you want." He blew my mind away, because he came out, and you thought the Instagram video was amazing, the live show was, like, even 10 times better. I had a hard time continuing to sing because I just wanted to laugh out loud and party with him!

Did you figure out where those wigs he tossed went when he threw them up and they disappeared? I asked him about it!

Ha! No, seriously! That was, like, the first question I asked him: Who helped with the wigs? Was there someone catching

them? Was it CGI? I have so many questions! And he's like, "No, it's just the way the camera happens, that when I threw them, they kind of disappeared." I mean, what can I say, it was a little bit of gay magic right there.

"Now That I Found You" was used in the season three trailer for *Queer Eye*.

Was that a big deal for you? Yes! I love that show! And I love those men! And I love the whole concept of just what the show is doing. I think right now it's such a wonderful time for people to be making creative projects that are uplifting and inspirational and make you feel good at the end of your day, and whenever I watched it I always felt like [she affects a fairy-like accent; it's magical], maybe the world is a wonderful place! And being a part of that in any way, I was so thrilled.

You've been giving us gay content since the gay twist at the end of the "Call Me Maybe" video, with "Boy Problems" and "Party of One" being very LGBTQ-inclusive. Not to mention, your lesbian aesthetic in the former. That mullet! You're not queer, so where does your queer sensibility come from?

Basically, how are these videos so gay? That's an amazing question. I grew up in Canada, and this is gonna sound maybe strange, but the idea of the struggles and the confusion — and even different, fucked-up opinions — didn't really come into my consciousness until later, when I kind of got to see the world. And I was outraged. And it blew my mind, because it just seemed so normalized to me to not be thinking about any person who loved whoever they loved as anything other than normal. So I think part of that is a bit of the reason why I fight the good fight: to try to make people see it the way I've been seeing it my whole life.

That is definitely conveyed in these videos. Are you consciously saying, "We should get a trans woman for this video," or "I'm gonna rock a mullet for

this video,” or “I’m gonna cast a real gay person like Mark to be in the ‘Party of One’ video”? Inclusiveness is always something that just comes naturally to me, but also, the mullet, I just had broken up with my boyfriend and felt empowered to rock whatever fucking hairstyle I wanted and I felt powerful when I had it, so that was not a decision to look any certain way but just to look myself.

After *E-MO-TION*, an album that’s essentially become a gay classic, what kind of pressure was on you when recording *Dedicated* as its follow up? I wasn’t intending for myself to feel pressure, but I feel like there’s always pressure when you love what you do and you want it to connect. I think it’s mostly pressure I put on myself versus feeling pressure from the outside world. I wanted to make something very different, I wanted to honor the fact that I was going through a breakup, and some melancholy.

There was some expectation of me to always maybe write the feel-good songs — and I felt good — but I also wanted to indulge the feeling of sad too, which is probably more on the second half of the album. I think I went there. But I feel like honesty is always the best move; being authentic, you can never really go wrong. I’m hoping that by at least being real that will connect on some level to the people who need it.

What was the vibe when you wrote and recorded what I’m already calling the Song of the Summer, “Want You in My Room,” with Jack Antonoff? The beginning lyric of that song, the lighthouse line about how the idea that when somebody you’re obsessed with, it’s like that light beam comes back to your mind every couple of seconds and they go away and they come right back again — it’s obsessive. And Jack is always so playful and fun to write with. He was shouting, “I want you in my room!” We were both dancing and I was just shouting, “On the bed! On the floor!” And we were laughing and it was like, “Let’s just go there.”

And when I write songs, I always put a word theme afterwards about, “What is this about?” so that the album is made up of lots of different — I’m always embarrassed to say, but emotions. And when I put that song on the billboard of my little list of stuff I was like, “SEX.” “This. Song. Is. About. Sex.” And it was really fun because I haven’t had something as simple as that.

Sonically, it’s a real throwback to the ’80s. Artist-wise, did you have anyone in mind when recording it? I think at that moment in time probably embracing a little bit of Squeeze, a little bit of Cyndi, and

a little bit of getting to shout-sing in a way, because it isn’t coy. There’s a big part of my personality that’s shy, but there’s also a real part of me that goes to that place when I’m private, so it was really fun to be, unabashedly, “Let’s just go there.”

You’ve said you find inspiration from your friends and their love lives, as well as your own. What kind of conversations had you been having with your LGBTQ friends about love and sex that might’ve found their way into some of these songs? You know, my friend Brandon and his boyfriend came down to stay with me and listen to some of the first songs as I was working on selecting them, and they were mostly supportive. [Giggles] They were like, “I like this one!” “I don’t like this one!” That kind of stuff. I was like, “Cool cool cool.”

We gay men are good at having opinions. Which is why I love any friend who’s not afraid to tell me, like, “Please don’t leave the house in that.” Or, “I’m really not a big fan of this.” At the same time, when they say something complimentary, it means 10 times more. But I think in the writing of this album, because it took me so long and there were some experiments along the way, there was a real feeling that it was like little snapshots of my life, sort of processing my life as it was happening, so it was very personal. It’s probably my most personal album in a lot of ways. But, at the same time, with everything that I ever write I’m always looking to connect on a bigger level with people who are hopefully feeling similar things, and for that, I think I strive to feel less lonely in it.

That feeling of “you are not alone” is something I felt at your show in Toronto. I can remember the first show that I did in New York at Irving Plaza, or maybe it was the second show. It was a big deal, this night to me, because I was blown away by the size of it — and that they were there for us, and we were headlining. I know I had played stadium shows before, but this one felt way more important in all the good ways, and I remember walking out on the stage beforehand, 30 seconds beforehand, and thinking, “I’m terrified. What if I blow it?” And then hearing the crowd and going out there and feeling like, wait, this is the safest place. This room is so full of love. I felt like I could fall flat on my face and everyone would cheer and be like, “Stand back up again!” And I felt so grateful in that moment, that somehow in this world the reality that we had created together was one of love and safety and acceptance. I still, to this day, don’t know how that happened. It’s the luckiest gift of my life. I’ve never really been nervous in the same way since. I’ve just felt really accepted.

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Being human

2 very different films show tone-deafness in the face of personal agency

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

The revolution in CGI animated features draws a direct link to 1995's *Toy Story*. It wasn't just the technology but the cheekiness that appealed to both kids and adults that has become synonymous with Pixar. It was followed four years later by an equally-entertaining sequel, and a decade after that by one of Pixar's first two outright misfires, *Toy Story 3* (the other was *Cars*). The studio is best when



Matt Bomer makes a pet out of a laborer in 'Papi Chulo,' above; opposite, Woody 3presumes to teach Forky how to be a toy in 'Toy Story 4.'

it's innovating, not just scientifically but narratively, and returning the same characters over 24 years isn't exactly in the realm of cutting edge.

And in another way, the age of woke-ness has forced many of us to reevaluate our relationship to cultural touchstones. Was *Toy Story* always as uncomfortably stuffed with questions of agency, self-determination, slavery and exploitation as it seems today? After *Get Out*, can we think of Woody and friends and not see sentient creatures brainwashed into lives of abject servitude?

I'm not sure those issues were at the forefront of the makers of *Toy Story 4*, but they do pop up a few times. The interloper this time out — the way Buzz Lightyear stirred the pot in the original — is a homemade spork craft project dubbed Forky who, Pinocchioesque, becomes self-aware not as the obvious scraps of debris he is but as a toy. Woody (Tom Hanks) tries to indoctrinate him into the society of subservient playthings, but Forky (Tony Hale) just wants to jump into a trashcan whence he came. He's a Frankentoy, an abom-

ination of nature. But Woody won't let Forky be what he's meant to be — he's tired of feeling like a has-been and takes on Forky as a kind of project, something to give him purpose. But for much of the time, he feels more like Samuel L. Jackson's character in *Django Unchained* — the sell-out who benefits from the status quo.

The tone takes a strange turn when Woody meets a defective talking doll in an antique store who herself projects an evil doctor vibe that borders on *Human Centipede* territory. Is this a comedy or a

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horror story? A little of both, I suppose. And while not all the pieces in this jigsaw puzzle fit, there are some charming moments, a few funny lines and a sentimental snuffle or two packed inside some damned impressive animation. It's nice to see the tech has improved, even if the storytelling hasn't.

The shoulders along the road of mediocrity are littered with romantic comedies. The bad rap is often deserved. Even rom-coms that I have enjoyed in the moment fade to a vague recollection of serviceable distraction mere weeks later. (Films that defy the conventions in any meaningful way — say, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *When Harry Met Sally* or even *Groundhog Day* — seemingly get reclassified as something other than *merely* rom-coms.) We all know the tropes: the meet-cute, the misunderstanding, the reconciliation. But there's an entire subgenre of meltdown movies, which always begin when the hapless protagonist gets dumped, has some kind of public shame and decides to start over by engaging in some new journey: *Eat Pray Love*, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, *Legally Blonde*. Add to that *Papi Chulo*, which

apparently hopes the quirk that sets itself apart is that it's a *gay* rom-com. Meh.

Matt Bomer plays Sean, a weatherman from Southern California who has an on-air breakdown thinking about how his boyfriend Carlos just left him. His bosses put him on leave, and he begins a minor home-improvement project that escalates into a bigger job. He hires a middle-aged Mexican day laborer, Ernesto (Alejandro Patino) to help him. Their unlikely friendship, which isn't sexual, is the shaky hook upon which

the plot hangs.

Writer-director John Butler has churned out the most serviceable of movies. There's virtually no subtext at work here; Sean is profoundly clueless, but the audience can see every misstep from a mile off. (His boyfriend is named Carlos; he courts a connection with an immigrant. This isn't Agatha Christie.) The romantic comedy wasn't designed for those craving unique situations, but even by its compromised standards, *Papi Chulo* creaks. There's the unreturned phone calls to the ex, the awk-

ward, inappropriate familiarity with his employe (fueled by liberal guilt), the painful language-barrier interactions. (There's something roughly condescending, even racist, about the porcelain-skinned Bomer deigning to "better" the life of a Mexican; last year's *Beatrix at Dinner* spoofed and skewered that set-up to the point this one feels tone-deaf.) This is the cinema of humiliation — pioneered by the Farrelly Brothers, refined for a female demographic by Melissa McCarthy and more or less squandered here.



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Friday 06.21

The Arts District Pride Block Party returns in force

Late Nights at the Dallas Museum of Art are a long-standing tradition, but last year's Pride-themed summer blockbuster was such a success, it's grown by leaps. The DMA, the Nasher Sculpture Center and the Arts District have joined forces to host the second annual Pride Block Party, featuring live music, drag queen storytime, film screenings, arts tours, food trucks and more. Don't miss this new but exciting tradition.

DEETS: The Arts District at Harwood and Flora streets. 6 p.m.-midnight. Free.



'Les Miz' returns to North Texas

It was a dark, massive 19th century novel about a doomed uprising in Paris. Who would think it would make for a good musical? Well, Boublil and Schoenberg did. The composing teams created *Les Misérables*, the enduring theatrical epic about justice, love, idealism and sacrifice. It's been around for more than 30 years but continues to

be revived on Broadway, including this national tour. It settles in for a week at Bass Performance Hall.

DEETS: Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. BassHall.com.

Tuesday 06.25 — Sunday 06.30



Thursday 06.27

Queer fashion takes to the skies at Altitude

Dallas' W Hotel has been commemorating Pride all month long, and it culminates with a blowout show on Thursday. EpiScene is a queer fashion and style showcase that celebrates the avant garde, with designers (among them Amy Marshall of Frizz and Frocks, Molly Syndor of Molly Margaret, Julie McCullough and Octavia Chavez of Ain't No Lady) showing off unisex. There will be music from DJ Jeremy Word, all overlooking Dallas from the impressive Altitude on the 33rd Floor of the W.

DEETS: W Dallas — Victory Hotel, 2440 Victory Lane. 7-11 p.m. Tickets at bit.ly/episcenedallas

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calendar highlights

ARTSWEEK

THEATER

Aladdin. Tour of the stage musical (currently also in theaters) of the animated Disney film set in the mythical Middle East. *Final weekend.* Fair Park Music Hall, 909 First Ave. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

The Armor Plays: Cinched and Strapped.

Two feminist, empowered-woman plays by Selina Fillinger. Theatre 3, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through June 30. Theatre3Dallas.com.

The Ballad of Little Jo. Musical (based on the film) about one woman's dream in the Old West. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through June 30. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical. Jukebox musical about the pop song genius responsible for hits like "Natural Woman" and "I Feel the Earth Move." *Reviewed this week.* Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Through Sunday. ATPAC.org.

Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?/Here We Go.

Two one act plays by Caryl Churchill. Presented by Second Thought Theatre. Bryant Hall on the Kalita Humphreys campus, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through June 29. SecondThoughtTheatre.com.

Penny Candy. A world premiere commission from Dallas playwright Jonathan Norton, about life in Pleasant Grove. Produced by Dallas Theater Center. Wylly Theatre Studio, 2400 Flora St. Through July 14. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

Reykjavik. Steve Yockey's rolling world premiere play opens Kitchen Dog Theater's New Works Festival, a collision of sex and danger. Trinity River Arts Center, 2600 N. Stemmons Freeway, ste. 180. Through June 30. KitchenDogTheater.org.

Unveiled: A One Woman Play. Five Muslim women (all played by the same actress, playwright Rohina Malik) sip tea and talk about their stories of faith, culture and prejudice. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through June 30. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

The View UpStairs. Regional premiere of a musical about an arson in New Orleans that killed dozens of gay people. Kalita Humphrey Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. June 21–July 7. UptownPlayers.org.

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. Sondheim's masterpiece. Directed by Joel Ferrell. Circle Theatre, 230 W. 4th St., Fort Worth. Through July 13. CircleTheatre.com.

FINE ART

Dior: From Paris to the World. Retrospective of 70 years of the famed French design house. Dallas Museum of Art 1717 Harwood St. Free. Through Sept. 1. DMA.org.

Jonas Wood. Mid-career exhibition of the modern American painter. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Free. Through July 14. DMA.org.

FRIDAY 06.21

PRIDE

Pride Block Party. The Dallas Arts District, the DMA and the Nasher team for this summer Pride party and arts event. Intersection of Harwood and Flora streets. 6 p.m.–midnight. Free.

TUESDAY 06.25

FILM

The Ruling Class. Peter O'Toole received one of his eight Oscar nominations for best actor for this dark comedy about a delusional aristocrat. 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

Les Miserables. The titanic musical drama based on Victor Hugo's sprawling novel returns to North Texas. Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. June 25–30. BassHall.com.

THURSDAY 06.27

PRIDE

EpiScene: Queer Designer and Style Showcase. A fashion show and party with live performances, a DJ set by Jeremy Word, and a fashion show with avant garde designs and models. Altitude on the 33rd Floor, W Dallas — Victory Hotel, 2440 Victory Park Lane. 7–11 p.m. Tickets at bit.ly/episcenedallas.

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, my peoples. With the 4th of July coming up, as I have started to make plans for how to celebrate our country's independence, I realized something: I never get to see fireworks shows ... anywhere. As a working drag queen, I am lucky enough to be booked always on holidays. You know, the clubs gotta make thez money, so you know I will be there to help you all celebrate the 4th, Christmas, NYE... hell, more birthdays and bachelorette parties than anyone ever wanted to be invited to.

So this year, I decided to take the 4th off and have a few friends over. When it gets dark, our little town of Midlothian is going to have a cute little fireworks show. I was so excited until I found out that this year they are doing the freakin' fireworks show on the July 3rd! I work on the 3rd! (The Rose Room will be open on July 3 for a fabulous pre-4th performance; hope to see you there.) No big deal — sometimes I get to see random fireworks going off as I drive down I-67 and I-35. So thanks to the folks shooting off illegal fireworks. I hope you don't blow off a finger or start a fire.

Last year, even though I didn't get to see any fireworks, I did have a cute pool party, and I rented a bouncy house with a water slide. It was awesome. When the party rental guys showed up, they said that the kids were going to love it. I thought to myself, "Yes... yes they will — these adult children will love the bouncy house" ... and they did. I have never laughed so hard as I did seeing Fantasha, the fishiest drag queen in the world, fall down the water slide. She was as graceful as a water buffalo.

Nothing proves how out of shape you are as trying to walk in a wet bouncy house and climb a rope ladder to get to the top of the slide. Then, exhaustedly, you basically just fall over the edge, down the slide and into the too-small pool. I was so worried that all of our fat asses abusing the rented equipment would ruin it somehow, so I got the extra insurance just in case. Luckily they make those things strong, and even after all of our adult asses using it all day, it held up great. Why should children have all of the fun? They didn't have that kind of shit when I was growing up, so I made sure my friends and I don't miss out.

We played like kids for sure, but bitch, I hurt like an old lady the next day. I remember being a kid and hearing my grandma moan and groan every time she got up from the couch. I get it now, Grandma.

Duh! Now that I think about it, I did get to see fireworks a few years ago at my friend Sweet Mark's lake house. Between my husband and our huge



group of friends, we probably had a few thousand dollars' worth of fireworks purchased from one of those stands in Quinlan, Texas. The ones we shot off went on so long that I stopped jumping every time one exploded, proving you can get used to anything.

I remember one 4th of July when I was probably about 9 or 10. My mom took me and some cousins to the Cotton Bowl at Fair Park. We had popcorn and sodas. I think they shot the fireworks from center field all while playing the music of Journey. The smell of pot was everywhere. I'm not sure if my memory is correct on that, but what I do remember is ashes falling from the sky in my popcorn and coke and grossing me out. Then, while looking up, I got ash in my freakin' eye. It ruined the whole experience for me. Damn, I guess I was a pissy little bitch even as a child. Oh, well. As Lisa Lisa says, K-Sara K-Sara.

Dear Cassie, I recently had a conversation with my best friend who suffers from depression. He thinks the world is getting worse, especially for the LGBTQ+ community. Every time he points out something horrible in the world, I try to point out something positive, but I am starting to find less good in this world as well. Do you have any advice for us? Thanks, Whitney.

My dear Whitney, You don't have to suffer from depression to feel the way you and your friend feel. I think we all suffer from it to some degree, but it must be so much harder to stay positive when you have any form of depression. I hope your friend is getting help.

I blame social media. Sure, it is great to get your news so fast, but at what cost? I'm not sure if the world is getting worse, or if we are just hearing about it more. We hear about bad news so quickly now that, before you can even take it all in, there is a new round of bad news. Your brain is bombarded with a constant flow of negativity, and regardless of all the cute puppy and kitty videos you watch, it takes a toll.

Sadly, since the Trumpster took office, people who hid their hate behind their keyboard now feel they can come out and show their bigoted selves. Trump's America is a scary place, especially for people of color and our LGBTQ+ sisters and brothers.

I say, turn that sadness into anger and let that fuel the change you want to see in this world. Volunteer — become an activist for something that is important to you. Get out and put yourself around people that think like you. Try to stay positive, but ask for help if you need it. You, your friend ... none of us are alone in this. Stay strong!

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

Reach Cassie at AskCassieNova@gmail.com.

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- **515 Bar:** Karaoke at 9 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **Alexandre's:** Anton Shaw Band on Saturday. Wayne Smith on Sunday. K-Marie on Tuesday. Vero Voz on Wednesday. Chris Chism on Thursday.
- **Cedar Springs Tap House:** Fish & Chips Fridays starts at 11 a.m. Hangover Brunch on Saturday and Sunday at 10 a.m.
- **Club Reflection:** Trinity River Bears Cookout from 4–7 p.m. on Sunday. TGRA Cowtown Contest at 6 p.m. on Sunday. Twisted Tuesday Talent Show at 11 p.m. on Tuesday.
- **Dallas Eagle:** United Court Presents Daddy Issues from 7–10 p.m. on Friday and Diva/Devo from 5–10 p.m. on Saturday. Dallas Diablos Cookout from 5–9 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Havana:** Showtime at 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Hidden Door:** United Court Club Night from 7–11 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill:** Double Trouble with Bleach and Raquel Blake at 11 p.m. on Tuesday.
- **Pekers:** Karaoke with cash prizes at 10:30 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Round-Up Saloon:** Miss Firecracker Pageant hosted by TGRA from 6–9 p.m. on Sunday. The Round-Up Hoe Down Dance Competition at 9 p.m. on Tuesday.
- **Sue Ellen's:** Empire Cats and Southpaw Preachers on Sunday.
- **The Rose Room:** Jasmine Masters on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Gloria Devine's Trivia Challenge benefits GDMAF's Team Metro LifeWalk from 6–9 p.m. on Sunday.
- **TMC: The Mining Company:** Latin Dance Contest with \$100 cash prize at 11:30 p.m. on Wednesday.
- **Urban Cowboy:** ESAB Show at 7 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Woody's Sports & Video Bar:** Jada Pinkett Fox at 11 p.m. on Thursday.

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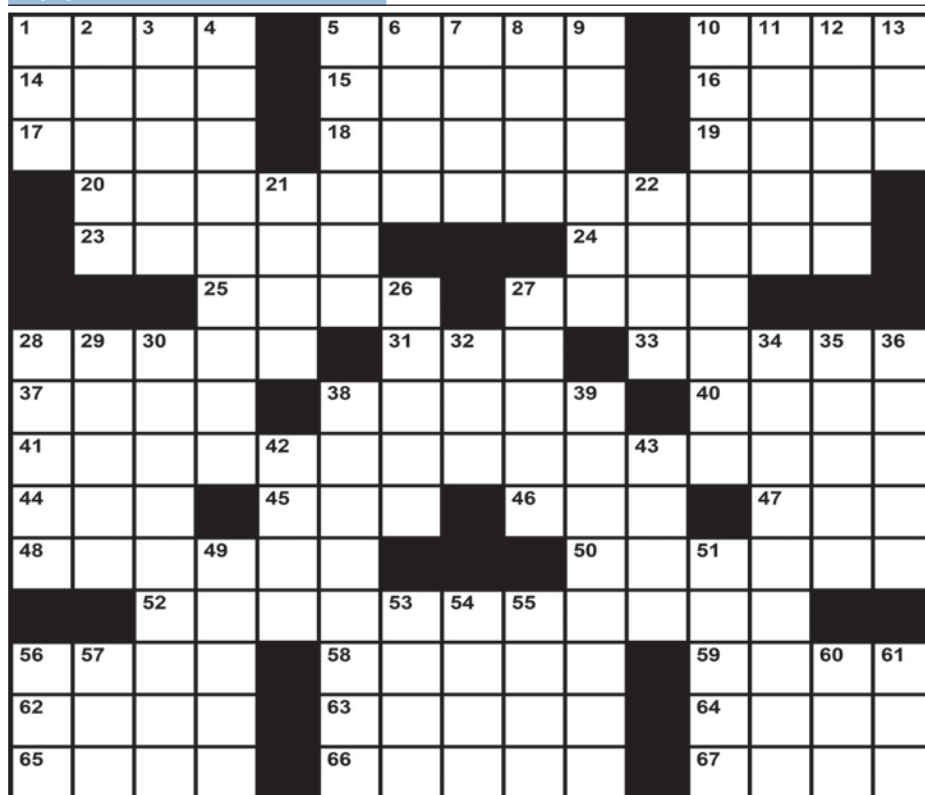
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Not Quite Homo

Solution on Page 22

Across

- 1 I ____ Andy Warhol
- 5 Prod
- 10 Where Galileo dropped his balls
- 14 Two of a kind
- 15 Desmond of *Sunset Boulevard*
- 16 Soon, to Shakespeare
- 17 Manicurist's tool
- 18 Having sex, with "it"
- 19 Lucci in *All My Children*
- 20 Start of a quip
- 23 Intense devotion
- 24 Recesses for Rev. Perry
- 25 Thank a lover without words
- 27 Leave in the text
- 28 Old Hollywood film *Quo ____?*
- 31 More of the quip
- 33 Number of bulbs
- 37 Clay Aiken, almost
- 38 Shirt spoiler
- 40 Broadway light
- 41 More of the quip
- 44 Come out on the beach
- 45 Log Cabin member, for short
- 46 Refrain syllable
- 47 Keanu in *The Matrix*
- 48 Puts into place
- 50 Most faithful
- 52 End of the quip
- 56 *Brothers & Sisters* producer Ken
- 58 Consumer advocate Ralph
- 59 Poet Kitty
- 62 Petty of *Orange Is the New Black*
- 63 *The L Word* creator Chaiken
- 64 Janet or niece Hunter
- 65 Business VIP
- 66 Opera guy
- 67 Really long time span

Down

- 1 Lotion letters at South Beach
- 2 Israeli seaport
- 3 Lube user?
- 4 YMCA device for runners
- 5 *Bewitched* mother
- 6 Pull a boner
- 7 Forbidding
- 8 Prefix with science
- 9 Pestors, as Albert to Armand
- 10 Rights activist Malala, for one
- 11 Nuts
- 12 Rufus Wainwright output
- 13 Request for Vanna
- 21 Aussie bounders
- 22 Decide not to swallow
- 26 Still in bed
- 27 Time on the job
- 28 Homosexuality and lesbianism, to Franklin Graham
- 29 Reader computer program
- 30 Euphegenia's last name, in a movie
- 32 Egypt and Syr., once
- 34 Dramatist Williams
- 35 Drags
- 36 Some stick it where it doesn't belong
- 38 "Move your ass!"
- 39 One who offers a breast, e.g.
- 42 Beat the skins
- 43 Gilbert of *The Talk*
- 49 Male counterpart to a Seattle Storm player
- 51 Part of UHF
- 53 Barneys event
- 54 Forbidden fruit site
- 55 Kind of phobia
- 56 Grand ____ Opry
- 57 It goes on top of a bagel
- 60 One, to Frida
- 61 Saturn model

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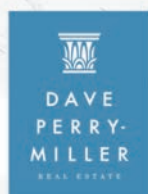
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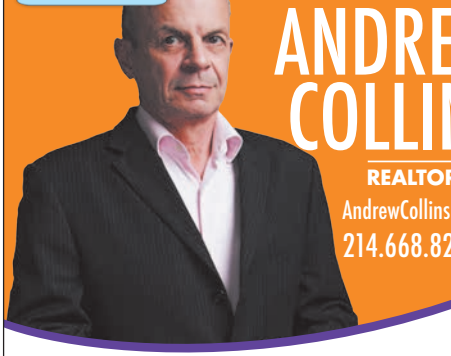


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