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a divalicious journey across
small-town America

by Arnold Wayne Jones, Page 14



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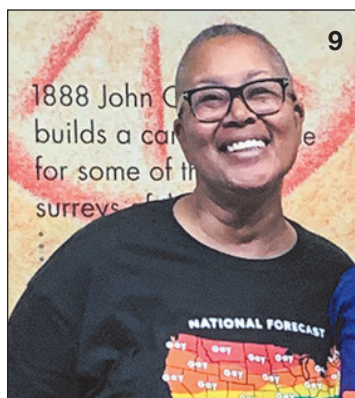
   
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Photo courtesy HBO
Cover design by Kevin Thomas

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(bik-TAR-vee)

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- ▶ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
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Johanna Metzger

Trans woman murdered in Baltimore

Johanna Metzger, a transgender woman, was murdered in Maryland on Saturday, April 11. Metzger, who is from Pennsylvania, was at a rehab center in Baltimore, according to Baltimore TV station WMAR.

According to Metzger's mother, her daughter was a college graduate who played a number of musical instruments. Metzger was stabbed to death on a Baltimore street.

In 10 years, there have been 10 murders of transgender women in Baltimore. This is the sixth murder of a transgender woman in the U.S. this year, according to TransGriot's Monica Roberts.

Baltimore Safe Haven, an LGBTQ community center, organized an online vigil on Zoom on Wednesday.

— David Taffet

Suit filed challenging Idaho's new anti-trans law

The ACLU has filed a lawsuit on behalf of four plaintiffs against the state of Idaho for enacting anti-transgender legislation earlier this month. The suit, known as *Hecox v. Little*, named for the first listed plaintiff and the governor, was filed this week in U.S. District Court for the state of Idaho.

Gov. Brad Little signed two bills into law earlier this month. One bill prohibits transgender people from changing their gender marker on an Idaho birth certificate. The other prevents transgender girls from playing on girls' and women's sports teams. Female athletic teams will "not be open to students of the male sex," the new law states. Discrimination against trans women wasn't a result of the new law, the suit argues, but the intent of the law.

Plaintiff Lindsay Hecox is a freshman at Boise State University who plans to try out for the school's cross country team. The other plaintiffs are an unnamed 17-year-old athlete and her parents. The defendants include Little, in his capacity as governor, the state's board of education, Boise State University and Marlene Tromp, the school's president.

— David Taffet

Social Security head warns against scams

Gail S. Ennis, inspector general of Social Security, is warning the public about fraudulent letters threatening suspension of Social Security benefits due to COVID-19 or coronavirus-related office closures. The Social Security Administration will not suspend or discontinue benefits because their offices are closed, Ennis stressed.

Ennis' office has received reports that Social Security beneficiaries have received letters through the U.S. mail stating their payments will be suspended or discontinued unless they call a phone number referenced in the letter. Scammers may then mislead beneficiaries into providing personal information or payment via retail gift cards, wire transfers, internet currency or by mailing cash, to maintain regular benefit payments during this period of COVID-19 office closures.

Local SSA offices are closed to the public due to COVID-19 concerns; however, Social Security employees continue to work. Social Security will not suspend or decrease Social Security benefit payments or Supplemental Security Income payments due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Any communication you receive that says SSA will do so is a scam, whether you receive it by letter, text, email or phone call.

Report Social Security scams using a dedicated online form on the Social Security Administration's website.

— Tammye Nash

Marsha Dimes raising \$ for Prism with virtual drag brunch

MyDragMerch.com is sponsoring the next Marsha and Friends Drag Brunch, At Home Edition, benefiting Prism Health North Texas, Saturday, April 18, beginning at 1 p.m.

This is a special virtual LIVE event where viewers are able to enjoy brunch in the comfort of their own homes while enjoying the show and tipping performers. Tips and donations go directly to PHNT.

Viewers can donate via Venmo @MarshaDimes.

The following Tuesday, April 21, from 7-9 p.m., Marsha Dimes and DeManda Refund are hosting a virtual talent show benefiting the Turtle Creek Chorale's TurtleCares fund, which provides financial assistance to chorus members struggling with expenses.

Both events will be livestreamed on Facebook.

— Tammye Nash

COVID-19 death rate varies around the U.S.

The death rate from COVID-19 varies around the country, and Texas is doing much better than other places in the U.S. Not only does New York have the highest number of cases — almost a third of U.S. cases have been reported in New York — but it also has the highest death rate per million population.

As of earlier this week, there were 622,923 cases around the country, with 27,539 deaths — or 83 deaths per million population.

In New York, 203,123 cases have been reported with 11,586 deaths or 591 deaths per million. In Texas, 15,492 total cases have been reported with 364 deaths or 13 deaths per million, the 13th lowest rate in the U.S. Just next door in Louisiana, 1,103 people have died at a rate of 237 people per million, the third highest rate in the country after New York and New Jersey.

Part of the difference may be in total tests administered. In total tests per million population, Texas ranks third from the bottom. Only Kansas and Virginia have a lower testing rate. Fourth worst is California. Louisiana has the highest rate of testing followed by New York.

— David Taffet

Texas unemployment numbers spiking

As of earlier this week, Texas has had 1.1 million jobless claims. In Dallas County, 70,184 have filed for unemployment. In Tarrant County, 60,655 unemployment claims have been received.

The number is highest in Houston where 127,884 claims were filed in Harris County.

— Tammye Nash

SPCA of Texas' Pet Tip of the Week: Crate training



In a continued effort to reduce the potential spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and to protect the health and well-being of the animals in our care, our dedicated staff and volunteers and our community, as well as in compliance with state and county orders, the SPCA of Texas' shelters, clinics, mobile adoptions, and mobile wellness events will remain closed to the public through at least Thursday, April 30.

In the meantime, we are offering some tips on training your pets to make you and your pets' lives happier.

Training your dog to accept and enjoy their crate is helpful in many ways, including potty training, managing destructive behavior and creating a routine for you and your dog. Dogs that have been trained to enjoy their crates perceive their crate as people perceive their bedroom. It is a safe, comfortable place to get away from the rest of the house and a place to rest.

Purchase a crate that will be large enough for the dog to stand up, turn around and lie down in comfortably. Lead your dog over to the crate and toss a few treats inside. Once they are inside, praise them and give them another treat. If they sit or lie down inside the crate, give them another treat.

If they exit the crate, don't reward them with a treat.

Repeat this a few days in a row, then add the step of closing the kennel door followed by giving them a treat.

Over time, they will associate the crate with getting a reward. You can start leaving them in the crate for intervals of time, starting with 10 minutes, and build up from there. It will take some patience on your end, but eventually your dog will learn that sitting nicely in the crate will make you happy and earn them a reward.

For more specific information on crate training, and for more pet tips, visit SPCA.org/PetTips.

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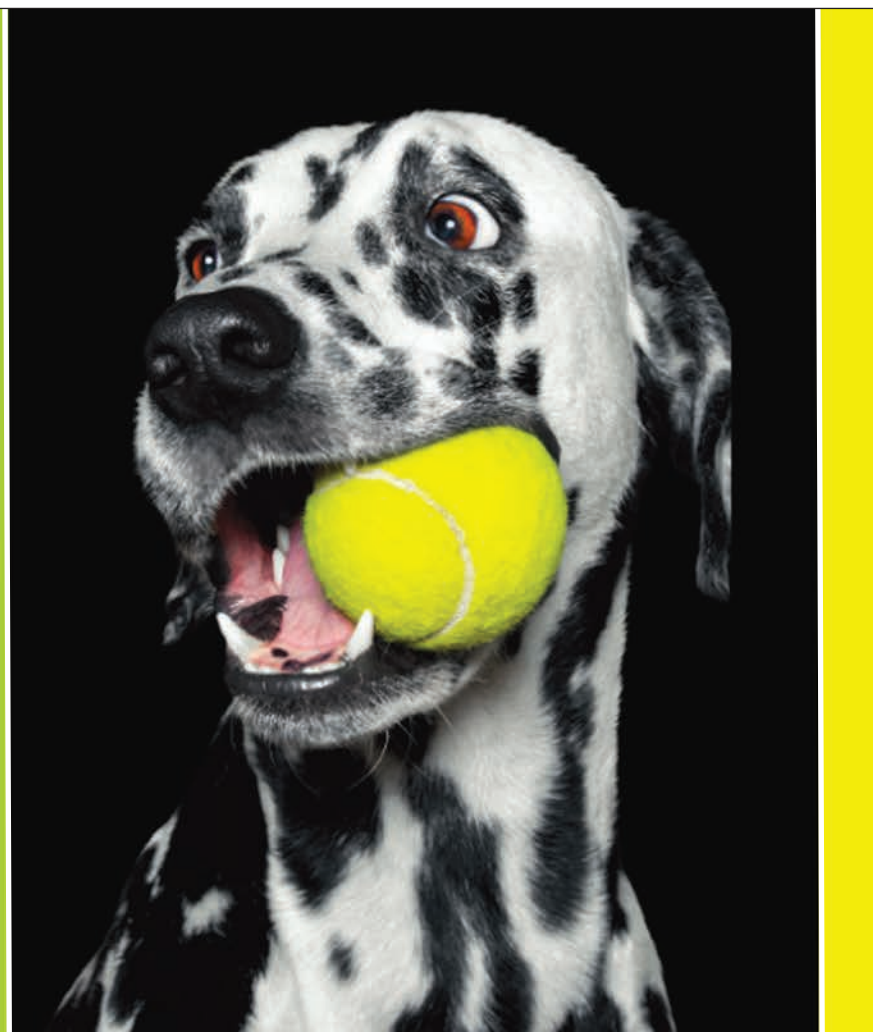
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Union Coffee brightens the day for other non-profits

Founder Mike Baughman recovers from COVID-19 while keeping his family and staff safe

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Like other coffee shop and restaurant owners, Union Coffee's Mike Baughman is figuring out how to keep his staff employed while also keeping them safe. Unlike other places, he's done this while battling the coronavirus himself.

Before anyone is scared off by the news that he has COVID-19, it's important to note that Baughman has been working from home for more than a month, and he didn't infect anyone on his staff or in his family.

His wife, Oak Lawn United Methodist Church's senior pastor, the Rev. Rachel Baughman, took care of him while sleeping in another room, he explained. And he spent some time with each of their four children while keeping a 12-foot distance from them.

"Somehow, with lots of hand washing and disinfecting," he said, no one else in his family got sick.

When stores, bars, restaurants and many other businesses closed, Baughman knew he'd have to get creative to keep everyone at Union Coffee employed. So far, all of his baristas are working a full schedule. Step one was keeping the walk-up window open.

Next he had to keep them and their customers safe. That involved creating

no-contact service. Union Coffee had plenty of gloves on hand without hoarding. Baughman said he only orders gloves a couple of times a year and last took delivery in February.

Then Baughman had to figure out how to ensure safe payments. Now, customers use the credit card pad, and the staff wipes it down after each use. And with the walk-up window, no one is entering the coffee shop, so there's plenty of room for distancing on line as well as distancing staff.

Baughman also had to figure out how to make up for some of the hit the shop was taking with no sit down service available.

The United Methodist Church launched Union Coffee as a laboratory to engage with the neighborhood and with people who have left the church and then find alternative ways to sustain good work. So Baughman came up with the idea to "Send coffee to Dallas heroes." His idea was to give people a way to say thank you to those working in non-profits with budgets stretched thin and volunteers becoming scarce.

For a discounted price, Union Coffee will deliver a gallon of coffee, tea or mat-



Safely serving at Union Coffee's walk-up window. (Photos courtesy Union Coffee)



cha to the staff at homeless shelters or at Cafe Momentum. This week they added the COVID-19 tactical team at Parkland Hospital to the list.

Baughman said he knew he would get a good response. He got the idea from something that happened several years ago: Soon after Trump came into office, he stopped immigration from a number of countries. Demonstrators supporting those coming into the country crowded DFW Airport, and Union Coffee sent gallons of their brew to attorneys who were working at the airport pro bono on the immigration cases.

At the airport, there was no shortage of volunteers, just people working long hours trying to help. But this time is different at a number of essential non-profits.

"They're working a lot harder and functioning with fewer volunteers," he said. "They're struggling with funding and feeling isolated and lonely. Any measure of thank you matters a great deal."

Union Coffee is also connecting people who are stuck at home with organizations that need volunteers. The Vogel Alcove, a non-profit daycare center that cares for children of the homeless, is short on volunteers so is asking people to engage by reading a story online, Baughman explained.

They're also short on supplies, so on Saturday, April 18, Vogel Alcove is holding a supply drive in the Union Coffee/Oak Lawn United Methodist parking lot. They need diapers, wipes, toilet paper, detergent, soap and more. Anyone who donates gets a 25 percent discount at the coffee shop.

As Baughman is recovering from his own bout with COVID-19, he's more concerned with helping others through this difficult time. But he called his fight with the virus "a pretty nasty week and a half."

He wasn't hospitalized. But once he recognized the symptoms — feeling achy with a severe headache and having difficulty breathing — he had a doctor's appointment via Skype. His doctor sent him for a coronavirus test. By the time the result came back as positive a week later, "It was mostly over," Baughman said. But "It's not hard to see how people end up on a respirator. It was worse than the asthma I grew up with."

Fatigue, he said, is a lingering symptom.

Baughman isn't sure how he contracted the virus. Since no one in his family is positive, and no one else at Union Coffee is showing any symptoms. His only other contacts in the last month were at the supermarket.

He said his case, which didn't require hospitalization, isn't something anyone wants to endure. "It shows the importance of staying home," he said. "Had I gone in the days before showing any symptoms, I would have spread it to the whole staff. I could have done a lot of harm."

Instead, he and Union Coffee are doing a lot of good. ■

Delivering dinner — and more

Portia Cantrell is working to keep seniors together while keeping them apart

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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Portia Cantrell, who created the senior social group Silver Pride, has had to rethink how to keep her group together while at the same time keeping them safely socially distanced.

Cantrell reacted to warnings about the coronavirus earlier than most people. Her wife, T'Any Carter, is a nurse, and the couple has friends who are medical professionals in New York and Seattle. So Cantrell took those early warnings seriously and shut down Silver Pride's daily gatherings in libraries and recreation centers before the county and the city issued orders to suspend such gatherings

and close non-essential businesses.

Seniors, Cantrell understood from the beginning, would be more severely affected by the virus than the population in general.

Silver Pride was created two years ago to decrease social isolation that occurs among older people, especially among older LGBTQ community members who don't have close family. Cantrell began organizing meetups at Oak Lawn and Grauwyler libraries, bringing in speakers to discuss health issues, diet and cooking, scams targeting the elderly and more.

Reverchon Recreation Center partnered with Silver Pride to provide a place for seniors to get some exercise. Cantrell



Portia Cantrell, left

would arrange for breakfast or lunch to be served, and she created game nights and movie nights at Grauwyler after the library was closed.

Cantrell also created a prom for seniors. The last few years it's been held at the Erik Jonsson Library across from Dallas City Hall.

"That was something people looked forward to," she said. "We all like getting

dressed up and getting our hair done, but not everyone can afford more expensive events."

More than anything, Silver Pride was a place for seniors to get together and just chat.

Then came coronavirus.

"T'Any warned this is serious; this thing is spreading," Cantrell said, adding that they were looking at what was going on in other countries. And they knew, "This thing is coming here."

Cantrell said Carter told her, "You're not going to be able to live with yourself if someone you know was infected or was infecting someone else" through Silver Pride activities.

So all Silver Pride meetings were cancelled. This year's prom came off the calendar. No meet-ups.

But that left the group without social contact. Before any official stay-at-home orders came through, Cantrell knew Silver Pride members would need to stay home for several weeks. But she also knew members of her group needed food and other necessities.

So Cantrell started delivering and keeping in touch with her group by

DINNER, Page 12

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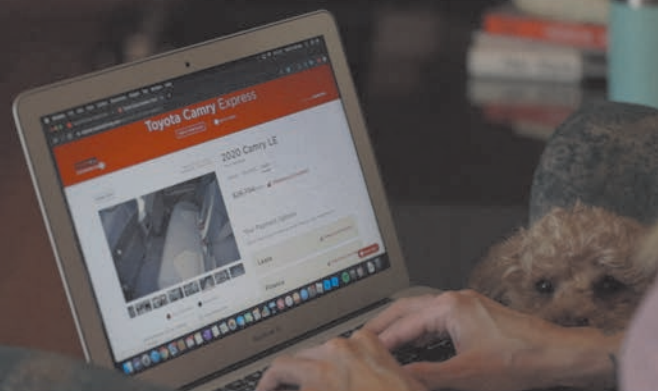
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Breaking the rules for brunch

LGBTQ community members get called out for breaking social distancing rules, and Candy Marcum offers suggestions for handling the stress of the COVID-19 epidemic

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

Everybody loves brunch. Good food with friends and family — who wouldn't love that? And Easter Sunday brunch — well, that's a tradition in the LGBTQ community almost as revered as Halloween.

Except this year. This year, that Easter brunch tradition was usurped by the COVID-19 epidemic and the stay home, stay safe orders issued by cities and counties across North Texas that the epidemic prompted.

On Easter Sundays past, houses, yards and parks were overflowing with brunchers, picnicking with pals, parading with pooches and bragging on their bonnets. This year, though, the parks were closed, and all the mimosa toasts were made via virtual gatherings. All the celebrations were safely socially distanced.

At least, that's the way it was supposed to be. There were some, though, that chose to set aside the guidelines suggested by the Centers for Disease Control and, in some cases, ordered by the local governments to stop the spread of the coronavirus. For them, connecting — in person — with their friends was more important.

It's likely, of course, that there were plenty of families and plenty of groups of friends who broke the social distancing rules over the Easter weekend. But in two such instances, those who broke quarantine made the mistake of posting photos and/or video of their brunch parties on Facebook. And the backlash was



Candy Marcum

immediate, and it was harsh.

One man who hosted an Easter brunch and bonnet party with at least nine people, when confronted on Facebook by an acquaintance who called him out for being irresponsible and setting a bad example for others in the community, deleted critical comments posted publicly, and said in a private message "people's opinions are not changed via social media posts or attempted shaming," and that he has "chosen to live my life with friends in a responsible way."

In another instance, a young man posted a video with the caption, "You can't stop the gays from brunch." His post prompted an angry response from an acquaintance: "People are seriously hurting due to no work and are dying from this shit. But you ... can't stay home like everyone else to see this shit through."

He told Dallas Voice that he was upset because, as the manager of a restaurant that has had to temporarily close and furlough its employees while the stay home/stay safe orders remain in effect, it bothered him to see people "having a party, acting like nothing's wrong" while his employees are struggling to stay afloat with no work.

The party host said he held the party because he "missed my friends," and because he suffers from depression and needed the chance for in-person interaction. "I'm not talking about sex. That's not it. I just needed to be with my friends," he said.

The man in the second situation, at least at first, remained defiant, even as the backlash moved from criticism of his choice to defy social distancing rules to

personal attacks about his weight and his looks. The man who put up the original post deleted the insulting comments, telling Dallas Voice that such insults were inappropriate and detracted from the message he was trying to get across about the irresponsible decision to have a party.

One woman went so far as to send message saying, "You're a dumb ass fag... I hope you get COVID-19," prompting him to post a screen capture of her name and the message you sent with a warning that he would contact police. (He told Dallas Voice he had not done so, however.)

His defiance faded, though, when the publicity prompted his employer — a dentist who had been identified in the social media posts — to fire him.

The woman who sent the message, who had been identified in posts as an employee of Pekers Bar, also paid a price. The management at Pekers has put a statement on Facebook apologizing "to everyone regarding the nasty comment made by someone associated with the bar. This person was not employed by Pekers Bar; she was subcontracted by the bartenders to help as a barback. Due to recent events, she will no longer be helping the bartenders, and she will not be allowed back in the bar as a customer going forward."

"Please know that you can always feel welcome and safe at Pekers Bar. We do not tolerate or allow this kind of behavior from anyone, including any employee or customer. Please accept our sincere apologies."

Reached via Facebook Messenger, the woman told Dallas Voice, "I don't work for Pekers, and I wasn't making an anti-gay comment."

The impact of social distancing

There's no doubt that the social distancing guidelines set out by the CDC's and the stay home/stay safe orders issued by local governments are key in stopping the spread of the highly-contagious and potentially debilitating and even deadly novel coronavirus. And many, if not most, agree that violating those guidelines is irresponsible and

Candy Marcum, marriage and family therapist, Med, LMFT, LPC, LCDC, is offering video counseling and teletherapy services through her practice, Candy Marcum Counseling. Call her office at 214-506-2629, email her at Candy@CandyMarcum.com, or visit her website at CandyMarcum.com for more information.

could probably force the extension of those orders.

But do the men who chose to go ahead with their parties have a point, too? Humans are, after all, social animals, and many of us are feeling the stress and the anxiety of self-quarantining building as the weeks pass.

In fact, said therapist Candy Marcum, "If you're *not* feeling underlying feelings of anxiety and depression, you are not in touch with your feelings! Secondly, being in touch with how sad or scared you are is the first step in finding relief."

When faced with those "uncomfortable feelings," Marcum continued, "you want to do something to self soothe. That's a good thing. Paying attention to how we feel helps us find options to feel better." The hard part though is finding healthy ways to do that. Alcohol and online binge shopping aren't the answer, Marcum said, adding "Healthy self-soothing would be engaging in behavior that, afterward, you'll respect yourself for doing."

She suggested getting out of the house and going for a walk, paying attention to social distancing, of course, because "It's almost impossible to feel depression or anxiety while moving your body."

Contact a friend to check in, asking about how they are doing and talking to them about what you are doing to manage anxiety and stress, Marcum continued. "If you miss them, tell them so," she said.

Look online for meditations and webinars that teach self-soothing, but stay away from the news, because news can be a prime source of stress, she said, noting, "You only need to check in with the news once or twice a day."

Set up Zoom meetings with family and friends, Marcum suggested, so that you can share meals or happy hours. And of course, if you need to, contact a therapist. Many, she said, are offering video conferencing and teletherapy sessions.

"People are scared, worried, angry and sad," Marcum said. "Understandably so. Check in with your counselor for emotional support and sound advice."

Over the last few weeks, younger people have often been pointed out as the

Dallas Voice receives Facebook Journalism Project grant

Dallas Voice is among 17 newspapers in Texas — and one of only three LGBTQ newspapers we know of nationwide — to have been included in the latest round of grants handed out by the Facebook Journalism Project, the Lenfest Institute for Journalism and the Local Media Association.

Dallas Voice was among the 350 additional grant recipients announced last week.

The grants are being awarded to support COVID-19 news reporting by helping fill immediate gaps for resource-constrained local newsrooms. The Facebook Journalism Project doubled the total grant pool to \$2 million after more than

200 publishers applied in the first 48 hours after the application launched.

“The Facebook Journalism Project grant and the Local Media Association has been important for us on the frontlines, as we battle against the COVID-19 pandemic,” noted Dallas Voice Publisher Leo Cusimano. “As an essential business, it is important for us to get the vital news and updates to our community. Dallas Voice is a lifeline for the LGBT community as its premier media source, and support from this program helps in our survival.

“The importance of local journalism cannot be overstated here,” Cusimano added. “Local journalism matters.”

The grants are part of Facebook’s broader effort to provide support around COVID-19, including a separate \$1 million in grants to support fact checkers

and a recently-announced additional \$25 million in relief grants.

Applications for these grants opened on Monday, April 13.

“Access to trustworthy, accurate and local information is critical now more than ever in our state,” a spokesperson for Facebook and Local Media Association said. “These small investments can help fulfill immediate needs, such as increasing frequency of publishing, tools to work remotely, combating misinformation and serving vulnerable and at-risk groups.”

In addition to Dallas Voice, the 16 other newsrooms in Texas selected to receive almost \$85,000 in funding are Advocate Media, Austonia Inc., The Big Bend Sentinel, Copperas Cove Leader-Press, The Dallas Weekly, Houston Defender Newspaper Inc., El Paso Matters, The Kerrville



Dallas Voice Publisher Leo Cusimano

Daily Times, North Texas Public Broadcasting (KERA), Orange Newsmedia, Rivard Report, Texas Metro News, Tribune Newspapers, Victoria Advocate, Wilson County News and Wise County Messenger. Each of these recipients received \$5,000.

The other LGBTQ newspaper we know of to receive one of the grants was The Philadelphia Gay News and Between the Lines.

— Tammye Nash

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DINNER, From Page 9

phone to make sure they continued to socialize.

But Cantrell couldn't do it all herself, so she enlisted some younger volunteers who had worked with the group before. She talked about one project Silver Pride did with a couple of dozen younger helpers in which a couple who had been together for more than 40 years needed some help at home. One of the women had Alzheimers and needed hospice care. But before that could happen, the house needed some work.

So the volunteers brought in a dumpster to clean out the house, then they steamed the carpets. They painted and did other work before healthcare professionals came to assist.

Cantrell said as she was thinking about what Silver Pride members could do to help each other, and she realized: They would simply help each other.

So she found volunteers and matched each one with a senior who needs some assistance with shopping.

The woman Cantrell helps is 91, so "We're being super careful," she said.

The woman sends Cantrell a list of what she needs. Cantrell shops for and delivers the items. At first Cantrell would take the groceries into the house. But now, to protect herself and the woman, there's no in-person contact; Cantrell hangs the grocery bags on her door before calling the woman to let her know her groceries are there.



BREAKING, From Page 10

ones being the most cavalier about social distancing guidelines. That's not surprising, Marcum said, because, "It is difficult for people under 40 to believe they are not immortal. Therefore, it is difficult for these folks to believe that they will become infected with the coronavirus. This is the time for maturity to kick in."

She continued, "If you feel invincible, I know you believe that people who are older and not in the greatest of health are vulnerable to COVID-19. Think about them. I know you do not want to infect somebody else — especially the vulnerable." Marcum added, "Use self-care and other care to respect social distancing. Be other centered. We are all depending on one another to follow established guidelines

Other volunteers are also careful. Rather than exchange cash, they leave the receipt in the grocery bag, and the person they shop for repays them using Venmo or Cash App. Cantrell said she is glad one of the classes Silver Pride held earlier was on using phone apps.

Cantrell acknowledges the technology can be challenging for seniors, so rather than hold Zoom meetings, they're meeting by phone. "It means so much to know people around you care," she said. "Knowing everyone cares makes you healthier."

Cantrell looks forward to people being able to meet again, although she's not sure exactly what that will look like, since seniors will still be more vulnerable to infection than the population in general.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, several librarians from around the city were in touch with Cantrell telling her they regularly get older LGBT people coming into their libraries to check out books. They were interested in starting groups around the city where older LGBT could engage. Maybe after the current crisis is over, Cantrell said, smaller groups will gather in more places around the city.

But while those plans are on hold, along with any sort of meetup, Cantrell said, caring for each other continues through the pandemic. ■



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■ commUNITYvoices

The gays strike again

Marriage equality, pro-choice laws made God send the coronavirus, preacher says

Well, it was only a matter of time before it was revealed that LGBTQ people are responsible for the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak. It turns out that God is mad about gay marriage.

So, file COVID-19 under “Things LGBTQ People Have the Power to Unleash,” right alongside hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, recessions, climate change, terrorist attacks, divorce, autism, dementia and naming your pronouns.

And it goes without saying that the anti-gay right is most upset about that last one.

According to Perry Stone, a Tennessee pastor, he heard from God himself that “this is a moment of reckoning.”

“I know what I heard, I did not make that up,” he told his congregation. “I audibly heard the phrase, a male voice speaking, and I believe it was the Holy Spirit.”

Oh, a male voice, huh? That’s sexist.

Then again, men are more prone to violence, so I guess it makes sense that he would imagine a male Holy Spirit striking down everyone in your local nursing home and making all of the toilet paper and hand sanitizer disappear just to punish you for being LGBTQ.

“Why is there a reckoning?” Stone asked. “Because we have by law forced God out of our country and basically told him, ‘In public places, you’re not welcome.’ You’re not welcomed in our schools, so our schools are now shut down. No prayer in public school, no Bible reading in public school. Now, are you with me? They’re telling kids to stay home for who knows how long, so our schools are shut down.”

So, God is mad about separation between church and state. Got it.

But is Stone saying that the reason schools have been shut down is part of a plot to make sure people don’t start



D'Anne Witkowski

Creep of the Week

Has God never heard of Christian schools? Because those are a thing. You

praying in them again? Or he saying that God blew coronavirus in all of our faces because he’s mad about the lack of school prayer?

choice, the majority of them have a spirit about them where there is no love,” he said and then launched into an obnoxious imitation of what he imagines a feminist sounds like: “‘It’s our body. We will do what we wanna do. You’re not gonna tell us what to do with our body.’ I got news for you ladies: It ain’t your body; there’s another body living inside your body.”

So, women who support abortion rights are loveless shrews who anger God because they don’t want to be human incubators? Got it.

“The Bible talks about going after ‘strange flesh,’” Stone says and then launches into the tale of Sodom and Gomorrah. You know, the one where Lot invites a couple of angels into his house, and then his neighbors are like, “Give us those angels to rape!” And Lot is like, “No. Take my virgin daughters instead,” and then he tries to run away with his wife, but she turns back to scope the destruction and gets turned into a pillar of salt. And that’s why processed food has mad amounts of sodium.

“So why is there a reckoning?” Stone continued. “There is a reckoning because the courts of the land passed a law to take an infant’s life, that it was OK, and for marriage as we have known it to be changed into something we have never known. Both of their laws, biblically in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, are what God calls an abomination. And the Bible teaches us that God is long-suffering; he is not willing that any perish; he wants everyone to come to repentance. But there will be a time when the Lord says, ‘Enough is enough.’”

And when the Lord is at his wits end, he kills a bunch of people at random and hopes that people will figure out what it is he really wants.

That must be where Donald Trump learned it from.

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



can send your kid to a school where they have to pray.

But it isn’t gays alone that have brought on a worldwide epidemic. It was the power of gays and women who have abortions combined.

“We have said to God, ‘The infants that you put in our wombs, we don’t respect them; we don’t want them; we will get them out of our bellies through abortion,’” Stone continued.

(Who is going to tell him that the only way a baby ends up in your belly is if you eat it?)

“If you watch the women who are pro-



Shangela, flanked by Bob the Drag Queen left, and Eureka O'Hara, stars in a new HBO series.

Shangela is here

The Texas drag goddess has 2 new shows and a positive spirit to get us through the pandemic

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

Drag queens have always been as famous for their shadiness as for their illusions — *RuPaul's Drag Race* even includes the regular feature “The Library Is Open” — but if the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we're all in this together. And that message is foremost at the heart of the new HBO reality series *We're Here*, in which three divas traverse the U.S. bringing communities together

through the magic of drag.

And perhaps coincidentally, it also embodies the attitude of one of the hosts: Shangela LaQuifa Wadley.

Although she never *officially* took the title “America's next drag superstar,” glam goddess Shangela has ended up being perhaps the ideal ambassador for unity in a time of social isolation.

“We are living in the times of Miss Rona, but we are making it work! Hallelu!” she exclaims with her signature enthusiasm (and catchphrase).

Shangela — who out of drag is just Paris, Texas, native DJ Pierce — has had one of the more public career trajectories in drag: She appeared on the second season *Drag Race* only months after her first time in drag and was the first one

booted; she returned for Season 3 (doing better) and became a frontrunner on the third installment of *All Stars*; she also co-starred alongside Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga in *A Star Is Born*... which is kind of a win in itself. Over that decade, we have seen her evolve from inexperienced newbie to the reincarnation of Diana Ross, always with a can-do spirit and openness of heart that has made her a perpetual fan favorite.

“We're all part of the same family,” she says of her drag sisters. “[Trixie Mattel, who defeated her on *All Stars*] has always been a supportive friend of mine. We are all hard-working divas.” And that extends to her new co-stars. For *We're Here*, Shangela joins Bob the Drag Queen and Eureka O'Hara in the makeover show that's part *Queer Eye*, part *America's Next Top Model* and part *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*.

“I have worked with Bob and Eureka [in shows] all around the globe, but Eureka used to live in Tennessee and

Bob lives in New York, and I live in L.A. But until we got the invitation to be a part of this show [we had never spent so much quality time together]. We learned so much more about each other through this process of filming.”

And, in turn, they learned a ton about America.

Each episode sees Shangela, Bob and Eureka traveling to “small towns in America who have these queer or queer-adjacent folks, and taking them on [as drag daughters] for their first time in drag in this show. We have to go out to the community and see if we can get people to come out. We go through a lot with [them] to produce a drag show where they haven't been before ... in just a week! Honey, grab the Kleenex and the popcorn — it's very emotional.”

But more than just mawkishness, the queens insisted on being true to their craft.

“When we signed on, we were vocal about being part of a project that looks

and sounds and *is* authentic to the drag world. [The series creators] were very open to that idea..." so open, in fact, that the queens all signed on as co-producers.

The potentially stifling burden of small-town life is something Shangela knows first-hand.

"The minute I turned 18, I was like, 'See y'all later — I'm goin' to Dallas!'" she laughs. "When you're from a small town, you don't necessarily see people who are like you [even on TV]. The first time I went to Dallas and saw two men holding hands on Oak Lawn I was like, 'Oh my!' But [the message of the show is,] there may be a community that will stand beside you. A makeover show? If it's making over anything, it's an outlook. We partner with some very interesting stories, but they aren't unique. Wherever we are, we experience some of the same challenges — including being weighed down by the looks and stares and back-hand comments, the solitude and the desire to be better than we are." (Lately, solitude *especially*.)

Promotion for the series was curtailed due to the pandemic; the girls were scheduled to attend SXSW and had multiple red-carpet events sidetracked. Still, Shangela hopes the series will come back next year, because there's still much more they can accomplish.

"We only went to six cities — many of which none of us had ever been to," Shangela says. "And there are so many small towns across America. It isn't all rainbow flags and Pride parades — we are still living in Trump America where

[some] people are emboldened to say negative things to people from different communities." (Did the threat of ignorance and hatred lead them to take extra precautions about security? I ask. "Honey, I was with Bob and Eureka — that was all the security I needed!")

Shangela remains an energetic cheerleader for the drag world ... and the gay community as a whole.

"My heart goes out to my community — the drag queens, the go-go dancers, bartenders, promoters. Their lives have been halted! We are going to have to find out ways to support them."

She recently re-released on YouTube a video of her first one-hour standup cabaret, recorded in New York in 2012, *LaQuifa is Halleloosing It!* "We understand the seriousness [of the lockdowns], but you get bored! I wanted to release this for free on YouTube. I had people who [wanted me to monetize it], but I said no we are going through this as the world together." And coming in May to a streaming service (she can't say which yet) is *Shangela's Shook* — an episode-by-episode guide of what you didn't see on *All Stars 3*.

Until then, Shangela is stickin' around Texas to be close to family and "doing my best to flatten this curve. I know we will get through this and adapt."

Halleloo!

We're Here *debuts on HBO on April 23.*

LaQuifa is Halleloosing It is currently available on YouTube (you can find it on the Shangela L. Wadley page).

Shangela's Shook will become available for streaming mid-May.



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How music saved trans pop singer Jakk Fynn

JOHN CARDER MCCLANAHAN |

Contributing Writer

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About 15 months ago, L.A.-based pop singer Jakk Fynn sat up in a hospital bed feeling like a load had been lifted off him. Fynn had just undergone so-called “top surgery,” a step to complete his upper body transformation to fit the male mold. But for Fynn, who identifies as transmasculine Latinx, the surgery created a chance to live and express himself as the person he is.

Earlier this year, Fynn dropped his first EP, prophetically titled *Cancelled*, which included a music video for his up-tempo dance single “Fire.” In the video, a diverse group of young men and women dressed in white jumpsuits line up within an ambiguous setting. As they move through the line, a mysterious figure brushes paint strokes on each one’s backside, marking either triangle or circle symbols that are somewhat

evocative of gender labeling. Shots of Fynn singing flash throughout the video. But toward the end, the group of individuals strip off their jumpsuits and dance in celebration, shedding the unchosen symbols added to them.

Like those depictions, Fynn learned to shed repressive shells which hid his true self. He did so multiple times in his life and sometimes without the benefit of doing so on his own terms.

From an early age, Fynn used music as refuge when he faced social adversity. Creative expression became the biggest constant in his life. But as Fynn grew to understand the intersectionality of his passion for music, sexuality and gender identity, he struggled to garner acceptance from those closest to him.

Childhood in Los Angeles wasn’t easy for him. His mother and father split, leaving him to his Mexican grandparents to raise. Growing up in a conservative and religious Latin culture, self-expression became restricted, and his family expected Fynn to live by the female label given to him at birth. (Years before he adapted the Jakk Fynn moniker, his family called him something else, a name he does not use now.)

“My grandparents were old school, tra-

ditional, with all this kind of more masculine machismo undertones that impacted my ability to express myself,” Fynn says. “My grandmother pushed me to present a certain way — dye my hair and wear makeup and get rid of my arm hair so I could attract a good male partner.”

In junior high, Fynn found solace in music. A close aunt exposed him to ‘90s pop; he began rocking out to Nirvana and Pearl Jam, while expressing a more feminine vibe when he jammed to Britney Spears and The Backstreet Boys. During his tween years, he picked up an electric guitar and began strumming and singing “pretty terribly, but I felt at that point things began to pivot.”

Music soon became passion, which opened a realm to which Fynn could escape. By the time he enrolled in high school, Fynn aspired to earn a degree from Boston’s Berklee College of Music. But his grandparents rejected the idea.

“They refused to pretty much accept or support me in the music realm as well,” Fynn says. “That was a big point of contention between them and myself, because they wanted me to go to a four-year [university] and didn’t want me to waste my time on music.”

Fynn’s high school years were tumult-

uous as he constantly tried hiding his sexuality, while his family embraced sterner religious beliefs, attending evangelical sermons almost every Sunday. Yearning to live as himself, Fynn became more rebellious, which led his grandparents to give him an ultimatum — abide by traditional practices or move out.

“I said, ‘Forget your ultimatum,’ and I got kicked out, and they were really confused as to why I was so angsty,” he says. “My aunt and her husband actually went to one of my close friends at the time and interrogated him at his house, and he ended up outing me, saying that I had a girlfriend. I didn’t get to come out myself.”

After that, he continued to openly date women but still felt restricted from living completely free. Not long after, he found someone. But while in the middle of that relationship, he developed stronger feelings for a close friend who he became emotionally dependent on. Despite his partner’s more restrictive ideas about masculinity, Fynn came out as trans.

“When I eventually confronted them about my feelings, they ended up cutting

■ JAKK Page 18

It's at least as hard coming up with interesting cocktail recipes as it is dinner recipes (vodka-and-soda being the chicken casserole of alcoholic beverages). So we enlisted the help of some mixologists — all brand

ambassadors for various liquors — to come up with easy at-home blends to make your Zoom happy hour pop with bright springtime flavors. And all are made with pretty simple ingredients you should have nearby already!



Cucumber Lemonade

Ingredients: 2 parts Hendrick's Gin; 1 part lemon juice; 1 part sugar syrup; 2 parts soda water; 3 thinly sliced rounds of cucumber.

Glass: Highball.

Method: Combine all ingredients in a highball filled with cubed ice. Lightly stir and serve. Garnish with 3 thinly sliced rounds of cucumber & 1 slice of lemon.

— Mattias Horseman

The Freshest Margarita

Ingredients: 2 parts Milagro Silver Tequila; ¾ part agave nectar; 1 part fresh lime juice; lime slices.

Glass: Rocks.

Method: Pour all ingredients into a Boston shaker, shake and strain over ice in a rocks glass. Garnish with a lime wheel.

— Jaime Salas



Backyard Tea

Ingredients: 2 parts Sailor Jerry Spiced Rum; 1 part iced tea; 2 parts lemonade; sliced lemon.

Glass: Tall boy.

Method: Combine in a pitcher; serve on the rocks, garnished with a lemon.

— Ashley Thomas



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me off, and that really, really hurt me,” Fynn says. “It came to a point where I decided to take a year off, because I had never just been single and alone as trans, and I wanted to learn how to just be alone with myself and be acquainted with myself. [*Cancelled*] is maybe not directly about that in terms of the content of the songs. But the time period is deeply reflective of that.”

Over time, Fynn’s relationships with his ex-partner and the close friend he

lost became amicable as his feelings for them dissolved. But his fear of abandonment and need for acceptance permeated his life, stemming from the trauma left from his earlier homelife. Now on his own, he needed to convey his newly established self to the ones who knew him longest... on his own terms. Christmastime in 2018, less than a month before his top surgery, he came out as trans to his family.

“That was kind of my compelling rea-

son to make the final step to come out to my grandparents,” Fynn says. “I was about to have surgery, and it’s not like I had a large chest, so I don’t know if they would have necessarily noticed, but I did have anxiety about them maybe noticing, but I was tired of living in fear.”

At first, Fynn’s family did not fully accept him as trans and refused to acknowledge his preferred pronouns, though they still loved to have him around. When he and family went out



to eat, using public restrooms triggered his anxiety. But Fynn learned to cope with the nervousness and everyday fears after coming out as trans. And although some friction remains between him and his family, Fynn’s grandparents encouraged him to do what he needed to live a happier life despite their beliefs.

“That was a good thing to hear,” he says with a choke in his voice.

Now as a transmasculine artist treading new avenues in creative culture, Fynn hopes his venture into mainstream music can inspire others to embrace revised notions of masculinity. But more importantly, he wants listeners to live as their true selves.

“Music saved my life,” he says. “Not only from a creative side, where I can express myself and cope through different situations, but it can also be empowering and healing for the listeners as well if it resonates. I’d probably be dead if it wasn’t for music.” ■



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and Dr. David Lee,
BEST General Practitioner

this week's solution

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Girl on girls

How saving a teeny life saved
Jenny Block

Whenever I watch an apocalypse-themed movie, I always wonder, "What character would I be?" Would I be the one who almost immediately jumps in the river and ends it



OK, OK. It's not the *apocalypse* exactly. But life as we once knew it has definitely come to a halt for the time being. And I learned I'm not any of those things. As it turns out, I'm the one who adopts a puppy.

Yup. It's true. I adopted a chiweenie from the SPCA of Polk County. She was one of three in a litter that was living under a house after their mother had been shot by God-knows-who. I had read about shelters being overcrowded and looking for people to foster or adopt, so I went online to check out our local shelter. And there she was.

My wife said no at first. "Not what we need right now," she said. Besides, she wanted a bigger dog — a doodle to be exact. But my tear-filled eyes changed her mind. That's the thing about my wife: She knows the difference between when I just think I want something and when I *need* something. Turns out I needed this puppy, and, despite her grim start in life, I may have



all? Would I be the one to organize the community against the zombies/the aliens/the government? Would I be the one to hide all of the children from danger in a cave while secretly teaching them the combat moves no one knew I had? Would I be the one sobbing uncontrollably, unable to save myself let alone anyone else?

I had hoped I would never find out. But I have.

needed her even more than she needed me.

Two weeks into quarantine, I was feeling lost. I do volunteer work, traveling all over the U.S. picking up and delivering bone marrow for Be The Match. But my wife feels too nervous about my traveling now, so I'm grounded for the time being. And I was spiraling. I was taking walks. I was doing Facebook Live and IGTV videos to help oth-

ers get through this. I was doing my best to do the things I know how to do to cope. But nothing was working, and I was sinking.

One thing I know about myself is that I spend a lot of time in my head. That's a really good thing when it comes to writing. Often, I think about a piece of writing so much that, by the time I get to writing, the words all but fall onto the page. But when it comes to life, being someone who is in her head a lot can mean being outside of the moment a lot, too.

I work hard to be present, to stay in my body, in the moment, in the world as it is at any given second. And with my daughter sheltering at her dad's four hours from me, and our supposed leader flailing and failing more than ever, and with the death toll rising, my head began to spin in a way I had never before experienced. In a way, I was so out of control that I feared I might never return to center.

I had to do something, and the universe nudged me and pointed to a teeny puppy. And, as usual, the universe was right.

There is nothing like a puppy to keep you in the moment every moment.

The puppies were dumped at the SPCA on Thursday, March 26. I made an appointment that day to go to meet them the very next morning at 9. On the way, I received an email saying the puppies were too sick to be adopted and to hold off coming. But for some reason, I kept driving. I called

when I arrived, and they let me in. The three puppies were dehydrated and lethargic and skinny as could be. I had put down a deposit on one of them the night before, the one they called Libby. As she looked up at me, I swear her eyes pleaded with me to save her.

They allowed me to take Libby (soon renamed Aurora) straight to the vet, who basically told me that she would either be fine, or she wouldn't. Only time would tell. Suddenly it wasn't about the next day or the next week or the next month. It was about the next minute. I cried all the way home and into the night as I fell asleep, wondering if she would even be alive in the morning.

And she was. She ate and drank and snuggled in my arms, and I took care of her every minute, which turned into another minute, which turned into another day. And just like that, I was living again. I was cooking again and smiling again, and the spinning stopped, and the being in the moment began again. And we went back to the vet two weeks after I adopted her, and her weight had doubled and her eyes were bright and the vet looked up at me and said, "Good job, Mommy."

My eyes filled with tears again. This time it wasn't because I was afraid she wasn't going to survive, but instead because I knew I would.

— Jenny Block

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Sheltering in place



Dr. Mark LeDoux and Rosie



Lost Souls Rugby Football held its final practice. The team was registered to compete for the Bingham Cup in August. The tournament has been cancelled. Team captain Bruises McGee said, "Our players have been working hard, but we will be there in 2022."



Layla LaRue



Jeff is all dressed up with no place to mow.



Checking out the Tiger King mural in the Design District.

Dernaissance

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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48					49	50				51	52			
			53				54	55	56					
57	58				59						60			
61					62						63			
64					65						66			

Solution on Page 18

Across

- 1 Irene of Fame
- 5 Sound of three men in a tub
- 10 Bit of salt, for Stephen Pyles
- 14 Way to come
- 15 Stars that shoot off
- 16 Emerald Isle
- 17 To ___ Foo Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar
- 18 "I knew ___ along!"
- 19 What fruits do in orchards
- 20 Laura Dern series set in Monterey, California
- 23 There's a single runner
- 24 Treat to eat while dropping trou?
- 27 Jan. 1 until now
- 28 Unlikely to bite
- 32 Intense desires
- 33 Infuses with bubbles
- 36 Ginsberg's "In Back of the ___"
- 37 Laura Dern series about a corporate executive who has a nervous breakdown
- 39 ___ Fein
- 41 Accounts of Anaos Nin and such
- 42 Really get into somebody
- 44 Costner character
- 45 Binges, briefly
- 48 Statistic in David

Kopay's sport

- 51 ___ Eclipse
- 53 Laura Dern movie about a coast-to-coast divorce
- 57 Prison sticker
- 59 Like a happy face that you put on
- 60 Inventor Elias
- 61 Himalayan legend
- 62 Dinah of a golf classic
- 63 Ivy League team
- 64 Calendar boxes
- 65 Many go down on them
- 66 Money from Lucy to Ethel

Down

- 1 Gay rodeo guy
- 2 Rub some oil on
- 3 Like a tree's section
- 4 West Side Story Jet, e.g.
- 5 Prissy temper tantrum
- 6 Trent of Mississippi
- 7 Shaped like the office of the top homophobe
- 8 Witchcraft trials city
- 9 Greeting for Dolly
- 10 De Rossi's wife
- 11 Earhart's velocity
- 12 B'way hit sign
- 13 Cut
- 21 Chip company
- 22 It's attractive and a bit of a shock
- 25 Lupino of Women's Prison
- 26 Immigrant's subj.
- 29 Dry as a bone
- 30 Threesome that visited Mary
- 31 Green with a mostly unfabulous social life
- 33 She played the housekeeper on The Brady Bunch
- 34 Raison d'___
- 35 Frida's half-dozen
- 37 Frequent online exaggeration
- 38 Chicken hawk pads
- 39 Undercover agent
- 40 "I Got Rhythm" writer Gershwin
- 43 Organ pleased by Britten
- 45 Peter who played Lawrence
- 46 No pal of creationists
- 47 Hardest to catch
- 49 Whitman's leaves
- 50 Eminem's ___ Mile
- 52 Questionnaire choice
- 54 It's for skin care
- 55 Hiker's snack
- 56 Some of Mary's lambs
- 57 Pink Floyd guitarist Barrett
- 58 "Isn't ___ bit like you and me?" ("Nowhere Man")



Matt and his babies take a walk.



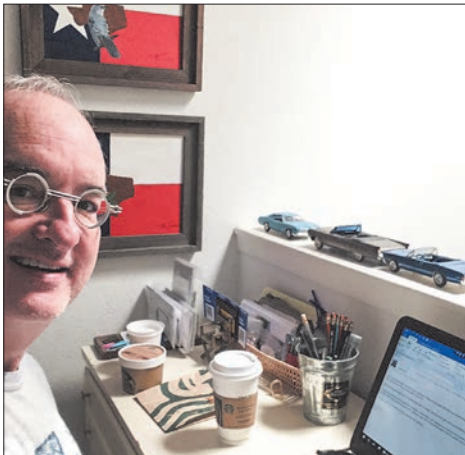
Michael Riley is ready to go shopping.



Monica Greene offers curbside service.



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Paul J. Williams



Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence get cooking.



T.J. Griffin celebrates his 37th birthday with partner Reed Robertson.



Wayne Smith in Quarantine.

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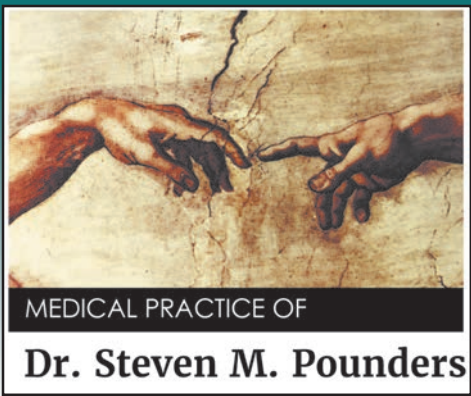
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