

dallas voice

The Premier Media Source for LGBTQ Texas

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Making the **cut**

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a business during the new normal

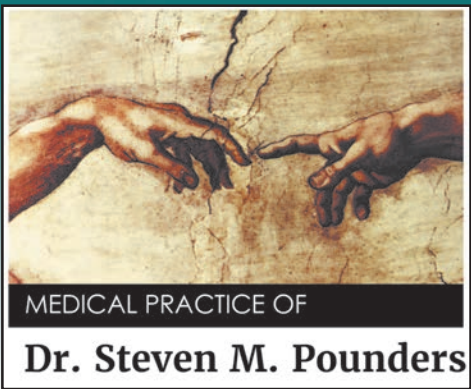
by Arnold Wayne Jones, Page 16

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Design by Tammye Nash.

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PSYCHOTHERAPIST



Who's open; who's opening; who's waiting

Although Texas Gov. Greg Abbott eased restrictions and allowed bars and nightclubs to begin re-opening last Friday, May 18, some of North Texas' LGBTQ bars chose not to reopen right away. This week, more of the bars are deciding to open.

Here is a list to check each club's website or social media page for updated information and hours of operation:

- 1851 Club: All shows listed as canceled. Website not clear if open.
- Alexandre's: Closed at least until June 1. Will decide this week whether or when to open.
- Cedar Springs Tap House: Open.
- Club Changes: Open.
- Club Reflection: Will remain closed.
- Dallas Eagle: Will re-evaluate the situation on June 1.
- Grapevine: Will remain closed for now.
- Havana: Will remain closed for now.
- Hidden Door: Remodeling. Will reopen mid-July.
- JR.'s Bar & Grill: To be announced.
- Kaliente: Open.
- Liquid Zoo: Open.
- Los Rieles: Will remain closed for now.
- Marty's Live: Open.
- Mr Misster: Open.
- Pekers: Opens June 1.
- Round-Up Saloon: Opening on June 1.
- S4: To be announced.
- Sue Ellen's: To be announced.
- The Rose Room: To be announced.
- The Tin Room: Open.
- TMC: The Mining Company: To be announced.
- Urban Cowboy: Open.
- Woody's Sports & Video Bar: Open.
- Zippers: Permanently closed.

This list will be updated as we get more information.

— David Taffet

Iconic AIDS activist, playwright Larry Kramer has died



Larry Kramer — a polarizing figure in AIDS activism — has died at age 84.

A long-time survivor of HIV, Kramer was already an Oscar-nominated screenwriter (*Women in Love*) when he co-founded the organization ACT UP in 1987 as a grassroots movement highly critical of foot-dragging by the Reagan Administration and other officials in the handling of the AIDS crisis. The group's motto,

"Silence=Death," became a rallying cry as well as a divisive political statement.

Kramer's 1984 play *The Normal Heart*, a fictionalized telling of his ouster from another group he helped create, The Gay Men's Health Crisis Center, opened Off-Broadway; it finally moved to Broadway in 2011, where it won Kramer the Tony Award for best revival of a play.

Contentious and opinionated — Kramer was highly critical of the landmark Oscar-winning film *Philadelphia* for what he considered soft-pedaling of the gay experience — he was nonetheless an agent of change and an instrumental figure in the gay rights movement; his 1978 novel *Faggots* was essential reading for a generation of men coming out.

He died due to complications from pneumonia. Kramer, who was honorary grand marshal of Dallas' Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade in 2009, is survived by his husband, architect David Webster, who was at one time owner of Dallas Eagle.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Nondiscrimination bill proposed for next legislature

Seven members of the Texas House of Representatives announced plans to sponsor a comprehensive LGBTQ nondiscrimination bill. The bill was announced in a Zoom press conference on Wednesday, May 27.

Among the sponsors are two Republicans — Rep. Sarah Davis of Houston and Rep. Todd Hunter of Corpus Christi. Davis regularly receives the highest score among Republicans from Equality Texas. She's opposed in the November election by Ann Johnson, who is lesbian. Hunter received a B-minus on the scorecard and is opposed in the upcoming election by Eric Holguin, who is gay.

State Rep. Jessica Gonzalez from Dallas, who is a co-founder of the Texas House LGBT Caucus, is the lead sponsor. Other sponsors are Rep. Rafael Anchia of Dallas and Rep. Chris Turner of Grand Prairie. They are joined by two representatives from Houston — Garnet Coleman and Senfronia Thompson, who are both longtime allies.

According to Texas economist Ray Perryman, "If we want to escalate our competitive advantage into the future, our research shows significant benefits from enactment of a comprehensive nondiscrimination law that includes all people, including LGBTQ people."

His study shows that passing a comprehensive nondiscrimination bill would result in an additional \$20 billion in gross product in the state and create 180,000 new jobs. In addition, the state would receive an additional \$2.8 billion in taxes, and local governments would benefit from \$2 billion in taxes.

Jessica Shortall, director of Texas Competes, said 70 percent of Texas, including majorities from both parties and from all major religious groups, support nondiscrimination.

The bill would cover nondiscrimination in employment, housing and accommodations. The announcement was made online in a Zoom press conference that included Gonzalez, Anchia, Shortall, Perryman and Equality Texas

OBITUARY



A memorial service to celebrate the life of **Randy Norman** will be held Friday, May 29, at 2 p.m. at Autry's Carroll-Lehr Funeral Home Chapel in Athens.

Randy Barrett Norman died May 1,

2020, in Athens, Texas. He was born in Athens to Nolan and Joanne Norman on May 10, 1967.

Randy loved his family and people in general. He was a social person who loved to bring people together. He formed a coffee club with his neighbors to keep everyone connected. Randy was always willing to help someone in need; he volunteered at the local soup kitchen, as well as the food bank. He was such a creative person, enjoying things like floral design, gardening, and decorating.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his aunt, Jean Norman. He is survived by his sisters, Donna Norman and husband Steve, and Beth Norman; his uncle, Olan Norman and wife Peggy; his nieces and nephews, Leslie Fira and husband Adam, Michael Evans and wife Katie, Nicholas Lidiak and Shelby Lidiak; his great-nieces and great-nephews, Kyler Evans and Aisen Fira; and his cousins, Lisa Hickman and Daryl Norman.

Pet of the week • Winnie



In an effort to reduce the potential for COVID-19 to spread to more people via gatherings of people and protect the health and well-being of the animals in our care, our staff and volunteers, as well as our community, the SPCA of Texas is closing our shelters, clinics, mobile adoption and mobile wellness events to the public until further notice. Adoptions are available now by

appointment only.

Meet **Winnie**, an 8-year-old, male Labrador retriever mix weighing 52 pounds. He has a short, smooth tan coat, semi-perky ears and soulful brown eyes. Little bits of white on his muzzle give away his age, but he's still one handsome fellow. He's super sweet, gentle and easygoing, and he loves attention from people, being petted and going for slow walks. He can be a little timid at time, but he warms up to new people quickly. He likes to go outside and play, but he also enjoys nap time and taking it easy. His great personality is sure to steal your heart the moment you meet him. If you're looking for a sweet senior to snuggle with, he's the one for you. Winnie is waiting to meet you at the SPCA of Texas' Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas. Please visit spca.org/dogadopt to make an appointment to meet him.

Adoptions will be available by appointment only every Thursday and Saturday. Adoption counseling will be done virtually, and curb-side pickups will be offered whenever possible, so that in-person meet and greets can be kept to a minimum. Adopters will need to submit an adoption inquiry form in order to begin the tele-adoption process and schedule an appointment to complete the adoption.

Please browse our available animals at spca.org/findapet and visit spca.org/dogadopt to inquire about a dog or spca.org/catadopt to inquire about a cat.

CEO Ricardo Martinez.

Watch for more information in the interview with Gonzalez set for the June 5 issue of Dallas Voice.

— David Taffet

Survey on LGBTQ people and COVID-19 seeks participants

Resource Center, Texas Pride Impact Funds and local researchers are spearheading recruitment efforts across North Texas for a state-wide survey recently launched by the University of Texas on the experiences of LGBTQ+ residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey will be open through June 30 online at Redcap.dellmed.utexas.edu/surveys/?s=WTHNAN93HM.

One of the first studies of its kind anywhere, this research is uncovering data from LGBTQ

residents across the state of Texas, a community already at risk that now faces unique challenges during the current health crisis and under stay-at-home orders. Researchers are also gathering non-medical information from the community, including information on food insecurity, housing, employment and domestic violence.

Another key focus of the work is to understand how LGBTQ Texans are coping, coming together and showing resilience during the pandemic.

The survey also focuses on assessing how many individuals have been tested for and diagnosed with COVID-19, and on their medical and healthcare needs. The survey will collect data on non-medical needs such as food insecurity, housing and employment needs, and experiences of violence in the home, as well.

— Tammye Nash

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Norma McCorvey's last about face

talked about intersectionality before intersectionality was even a thing.

"I feel like the issue of choice is a big political umbrella," McCorvey told Dallas Voice at the time. "It encompasses reproductive rights, African-American rights, animal rights, the environmental-

cue, telling Nightline at the time that Benham and others in that organization were "my friends They genuinely love me."

Gonzales, who was still working for A Woman's Choice, told Dallas Voice then that McCorvey's religious conversion

In a new documentary filmed in the last year of her life, the woman who was Jane Roe says that her 1995 switch to anti-abortion activist was all an act paid for by Operation Rescue

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
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It starts with a close-up shot of a woman with her vivid red hair wrapped in a peach-colored scarf, her puffy, lined face carefully made-up, interspersed with opening credits. "My fleas are waking up," she deadpans as she scratches her head and adjusts the head scarf." Underneath it all is the unnerving rasp of her labored breathing.

"Oxygen?" suggests a male voice, as someone's hand comes into the frame, holding a clear plastic cannula. She takes the tube and loops it around her face and over her ears. The credits continue, as does the rasping, with a cough added in this time. The shot returns to the woman's face as, with closed eyes, she takes several deep breaths.

She opens her eyes, looks straight into the camera and declares: "This is my deathbed confession." Then she laughs, a cross between a chuckle and a young girl's giggle.

The woman is Norma McCorvey. The documentary, now streaming on Hulu, is called *aka Jane Roe*, and it tells the story of the Dallas lesbian who served as plaintiff in *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark case that resulted in the 1972 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion in the first trimester nationwide, and who — after several years in the 1980s and early 1990s as a pro-choice advocate — in 1995 "converted" to evangelical Christianity and became an anti-abortion activist.

Her deathbed confession? The anti-abortion activism was all a sham, "all an act." She was given scripts to read,



Norma McCorvey, left, and her longtime partner, Connie Gonzalez in 1994. (Tammye Nash/Dallas Voice)

and she was paid to be a figurehead for the movement to overturn *Roe*.

McCorvey died of heart failure on Feb. 18, 2017 in a Katy, Texas, nursing home. The documentary, a Ventureland and Monomania production created in association with Vice Studios, was filmed over the last year of her life. And while it starts out with the promise of a deathbed confession, it takes awhile to get to that, focusing instead on her difficult life and the circumstances that led her to seek an abortion when, in 1969, she became pregnant for a third time.

McCorvey told the story of her life — including the fact that she had given birth to three children but never had an abortion herself — in her memoir, *I Am Roe*, published in the summer of 1994. In an interview with Dallas Voice, published July 1, 1994, McCorvey and her longtime partner Connie Gonzales talked about their lives together, the hardships they had overcome and their efforts in the pro-choice movement. They

ists and gay and lesbian rights. We're all trying to get under that umbrella and get protected.

"Choice and lesbian and gay rights are always in jeopardy, whether we have a pro-choice president or not," she continued. "Women have to be on the defensive all the time. ... If you're not out, come out if you feel comfortable with it. We need more voices out there, not necessarily all in harmony but out there and supporting our issues.

"Even if you just come out to your neighbor or to the clerk at the grocery store, that helps. Just come out to one person a day. It's an easy thing to do, and you'd be surprised how much better you feel."

Then a year later, in August 1995, McCorvey was making headlines for her conversion and her baptism at the hands of anti-choice zealot Flip Benham in the swimming pool of a Garland home. McCorvey left her job at A Woman's Choice clinic to go to work for Operation Res-

had nothing to do with the battle over abortion. "I don't know if you can really say she was 'converted.' But she was baptized. She didn't do it for Operation Rescue. She didn't do it for anybody. She did it for herself, because she felt it was something she needed in her heart.

"She didn't do it for Operation Rescue. I doubt very seriously if she'll be seen with Operation Rescue," Gonzales said.

And for a while, that was true. McCorvey went into seclusion, refusing to speak with the media or in public. But in early 1996, that, too, changed drastically, and McCorvey began taking a very public role in Operation Rescue's anti-choice efforts. And although she continued to live with Gonzalez, she stated publicly that she had ended their romantic relationship and that she was no longer a lesbian.

(McCorvey lived with Gonzalez until 2006, moving out shortly after Gonzalez had a stroke. Gonzalez died in 2015.)

News of McCorvey's conversion in August 1996 was not really all that surprising to Charlotte Taft, a Dallas activist for choice and for LGBTQ rights who founded Routh Street Women's Clinic and was a friend to McCorvey.

Taft told Dallas Voice, "I've known Norma for many years. I've known that she is a person who has a lot of need for feelings of acceptance. I am not at all surprised that [Benham's] reaching out to her is something she responded to. I don't doubt [McCorvey's] sincerity. But [Benham's] sincerity is a whole other question."

While local pro-choice leaders had "honored Norma many times" and found ways to make sure she was included in the movement, "we didn't want to exploit her," Taft said. Yet, the pro-choice movement offered only "more questions," while Benham and his followers appeared to offer answers. "With him, she'll always have the security of being told what is right and what is wrong. That kind of 'peace' and 'security' is what fundamentalism offers, and maybe that's what she needs."

To find out now that it was all a sham, Taft said this week, was a heavy blow.

In the new documentary, there is a scene where filmmakers hand Taft a lap-top and show her footage of McCorvey admitting that "it was all an act." Taft, her voice breaking, responds, "What a betrayal."

This week, Taft told Dallas Voice, "When I said betrayal, I didn't really mean betrayal of the movement. I meant betrayal of the hundreds of women who came up to her at events and thanked her and told her that she had saved their lives. I saw that over and over."

"In the film, she makes it quite clear that 'I am just looking out for Norma's salvation and Norma's butt,'" Taft added, quoting something McCorvey said in the documentary.

And still, Taft said, she believes there was more to it than money. "I still feel very strongly that she was also seeking something the pro-choice movement could not give her — *goodness*," Taft said. "We couldn't give her goodness because abortion was so vilified and stigmatized. So the adoration from

the evangelical church and later in the Catholic Church gave her the sense that she was finally on the good side.

"So in that sense, she was still sincere," Taft added. "I believe that after a while she started to see them in a different way. At one point in the film she says about them, 'They're all assholes.' I think that's true. They told her she had to stop her sexual relationship with Connie, and they had a terrible time with her cursing and drinking. I totally believe what [former Operation Rescue activist the Rev. Rob] Schenck says, that they were afraid she might go off script. But they had the paychecks. I think Norma really lived in survival all her life — even when she had money, she was always conniving for the next buck."

McCorvey was a woman damaged by the hardships of her life. She was someone always looking for affection and attention. She had always wanted a glamorous life, even telling the filmmakers that she had always wanted to live in Hollywood and be a star. Acknowledging her identity as Jane Roe gave her the chance to get that attention — first as a hero in the choice movement and later

as an anti-choice figurehead.

Taft said, "At Norma's memorial service [shown in the documentary], her daughter Melissa says that Norma was part of a documentary to show who she really is. I think Norma wanted to go out with a bang. There is a journalist named Josh Prager who is writing a book about her. He said she was able to get in the limelight, even from the grave! That's true."

And even though it may have been partly for attention, Taft said she thinks in the end, McCorvey was, at least in part, trying to undo some of the damage she might have done to the pro-choice movement with her sham conversion.

"In my opinion she wanted to leave the legacy of Jane Roe," Taft said. "Flip Benham thought he drowned Jane Roe in that Dallas swimming pool when he baptized Norma. But Norma rescued her and dried her off, and it was Jane Roe that she presented in this film, and Jane Roe who made her feel most powerful and like a leader."

For the complete interview with Charlotte Taft about aka Jane Roe, see DallasVoice.com.



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Dating during COVID-19

Therapist Amanda Stretcher suggests how to meet people during lockdown and then safely date

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Amanda Stretcher from Taylor Counseling Group in Dallas has ideas for dating while staying at home during COVID-19. She said dating apps, texting, Zoom and Facetime all enter into the mix.

And in addition to staying at home, there's safe dating. "Go on a walk," Stretcher said. "Go to a park."

She said understanding your comfort level is key. Some people aren't comfortable starting a conversation on the phone and would rather text. But however it happens, when you find someone online you might like to meet, start a conversation.

But how do you do that? Well, does something stand out on that person's profile? If so, ask a question about it. It's always easier to get a response to a question than to a comment.

"Is there a photo that drew you in?" Stretcher said. If so comment on it. What did you like about it? Is there a pet in the picture?

She had other conversation starters, too. Such as, "Tell me what you like to do?" she suggested. Or address the stay-at-home times we're living through with a question like, "What are your pre-quarantine likes and favorite things to do?"

Adapting to life under lockdown is

enough to start a conversation. As things like, "Are you still working? Working from home?" Stay positive, Stretcher said, but talk about how it's all making you feel.

"I'm enjoying doing my sessions from home," she said. "But things are heavy."

Stretcher said it's OK to acknowledge loneliness or sadness, but at the same time, acknowledge that there are things you've enjoyed about staying home. Saying you've enjoyed the break from the normal routine or getting away from the people in your office is not necessarily a bad thing.

As the conversation continues, if you'd like to meet, "take it to the level of the person most anxious," she suggested. Don't pressure a meeting, but suggest something safe.

For example, you can safely plan a picnic in an open and uncrowded park. Or suggest a tailgate date, where you meet at a drive-in, like Kellers or Sonic, then pull into adjoining stalls and order, then open the windows and chat. Or sit safely distanced on a patio together at someplace like Hunky's.

Depending on your level of comfort, once more bars reopen, meet at one and share a table. You'd be distanced from others, but not from each other.

Just be careful not to pressure the other person about meeting, no matter what their reason, Stretcher said. Reluctance to meet may have to do with having pre-existing conditions or it may come from a simple abundance of caution. It might not be a good match if you're not at ease with each other's comfort level.

Another type of date might be doing something together on the phone. Prepare a meal together and comment on what you're doing. Make the same





"Dating requires a lot of patience right now," Stretcher said. "Things will go slower, and that's OK."

Her final suggestion is to simply cultivate relationships you already have. Find out if groups you belong to are having any virtual meet-ups. Or just keep in touch with friends.

Take it slower right now. It's OK to take a break. And maybe you'll meet someone when you're really not looking.

thing, or make completely different dishes.

Go for a walk together but separately. For safety reasons or even just because of living across the DFW area from each other, each of you can go for a walk on trails or streets near where you live. This is a great time to use Facetime to show each other features of your neighborhood or local park.

The key to any of these suggestions is to talk about things that interest you.

A conversation starter for two people staying at home could be, "What are you binge watching?" Then watch a show together but apart. Comment on what you're watching while you're watching.

Talk about work. Ask, "How is working from home affecting you?" Or, "How is it going into the office with a reduced crew. If they are working in a front line position, ask them what's that been like.

Do a Google search for good questions to ask — or bad ones. Stretcher suggested a get-to-know-you conversation where you both download a list of random questions and go back and forth asking from the list.

Not comfortable using a dating app? Stretcher suggested another way to meet people while staying at home is to ask friends who they know. Or join a virtual happy hour group. While a large group is talking on Zoom, send a private message to someone you are interested in and ask to chat privately later.

And if none of this appeals to you, Stretcher said, it's OK to tell yourself, "There's a lot going on right now." Put dating on hold, if that's what you prefer, and take care of yourself.

More comfortable meeting people at the bars? With current rules requiring people to only be served when seated and requiring that tables must be six feet apart, preferably separated by an empty table, meeting someone in a bar is less likely than usual.



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4th Circuit Court hears *Grimm* — again

LISA KEEN | Keen News Service
lisakeen@mac.com

One judge likened the use of separate restrooms for transgender students to separate restrooms for blacks. Another judge said Congress never contemplated “this transgender situation” when it passed a federal law barring discrimination based on sex in federally funded educational institutions.

But chances are, neither of those judges will get to weigh in on the issue.

That’s because the judges on the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals

panel, hearing arguments in *Grimm v. Gloucester* on Tuesday, May 26, fully expect the U.S. Supreme Court to rule on a totally different transgender case that will almost certainly settle the issue for everybody — whether in the schools or in the workplace.

“We’re all aware that the *Harris* decision is going to come down in a few weeks,” said Judge Henry Floyd, an Obama nominee on the Fourth Circuit panel, referring to the Supreme Court case *Harris Funeral v. EEOC*.

Floyd asked an attorney representing the Gloucester, Va., school district in the *Grimm* case, whether he agreed that, “regardless of which way it goes, the outcome of the *Harris* case with regard to Title VII, will determine the outcome as to the Title IX claim in this case?”

“I think so,” said school board attorney



Gavin Grimm

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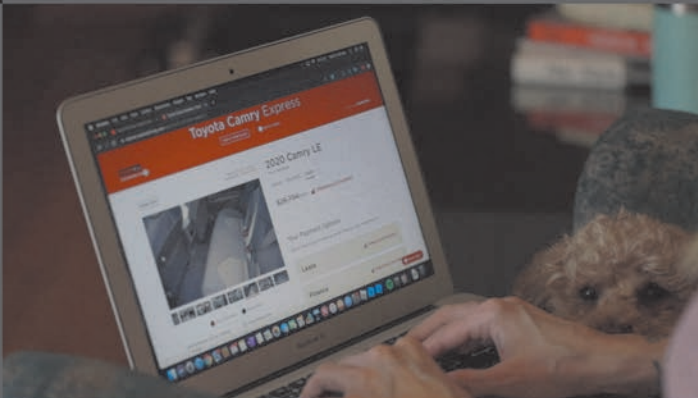
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David Corrigan. "I mean, we've tried to look at it every possible way ... and it is apparent that what they're trying to decide is 'on the basis of sex' and what's the definition of sex. And our position is it's a binary concept, that you have males and females ..."

The Supreme Court is expected to release its decision in *Harris Funeral* any day now and in doing so to declare whether Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act, prohibiting discrimination based on sex in employment, also covers gender status.

The *Grimm* case asks whether Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act, which prohibits discrimination "on the basis of sex" by federally funded educational institutions, also prohibits discrimination based on gender identity.

The ACLU, which has been representing Grimm in the litigation, says the school's refusal to let Grimm use the boys' restrooms and forcing him to use the separate unisex bathroom is "stigmatizing and humiliating" to him.

Judge James Wynn, an Obama appointee, appeared to sympathize with that view.

Wynn questioned the school's attorney about how the school would deal

with a student, like Grimm, who was in the middle of transitioning, "not fully male or fully female." Corrigan said the single-stall bathroom was the solution.

"So you've created sort of a separate but equal bathroom, right?" asked Wynn.

"Well, it's not separate but equal, because it's available to everyone," replied Corrigan.

"That's like saying a black school is open to anybody ... but you never had a white student go to one of those schools," said Wynn, who is African-American. "I actually went to one of those schools. I know what I'm talking about on that."

Judge Paul Niemeyer, an appointee of President George H.W. Bush, drilled down on what he termed the "analysis problem" posed by Supreme Court Justice John Roberts during oral argument in *Harris Funeral* last October. Niemeyer said Grimm "had physical traits as a male and identifying traits as a female and, based on that, he has made an election to be treated as a male. But that combination is different from somebody who is physically male and identifies as male."

Because Grimm had not yet fully transitioned to male, his genitalia were

female and, said Niemeyer, Title IX "authorizes discrimination between the sexes with respect to bathrooms and locker rooms, showers and residences on campus. It's pretty clear to me that the statute makes an exception for residences, bathrooms, locker rooms and showers with the idea that ... different sexes, male and female ... the institution can separate them."

"There was clearly nothing in the record to suggest that Congress, when it enacted that, was thinking of transgender persons," said Niemeyer. "Now we have this transgender situation, and I'm wondering how we conduct the analysis. It seems to me, isn't this better for Congress to handle? Because it doesn't work, as Chief Justice Roberts noted ... the criteria used in the statute don't fit these facts."

ACLU's Josh Block tried to respond by pointing out that Title IX "unambiguously prohibits discrimination" because of sex, but Niemeyer continuously interrupted him.

Eventually, Block was able to say that he believes "what the Supreme Court says in *Harris Funeral* will be very informa-

tive on whether discriminating against someone based on if they're transgender is discrimination based on sex."

"That's a good point, yes," said Niemeyer.

Gavin Grimm, who turned 21 this month, now lives in the San Francisco area of California. He graduated from Gloucester High School in 2017, but the outcome of the lawsuit is still important to him, because, even though the state of Virginia issued a birth certificate and a driver's license to him indicating his gender as male, the school still refuses to change his records — records that might be needed in college and job applications. ■

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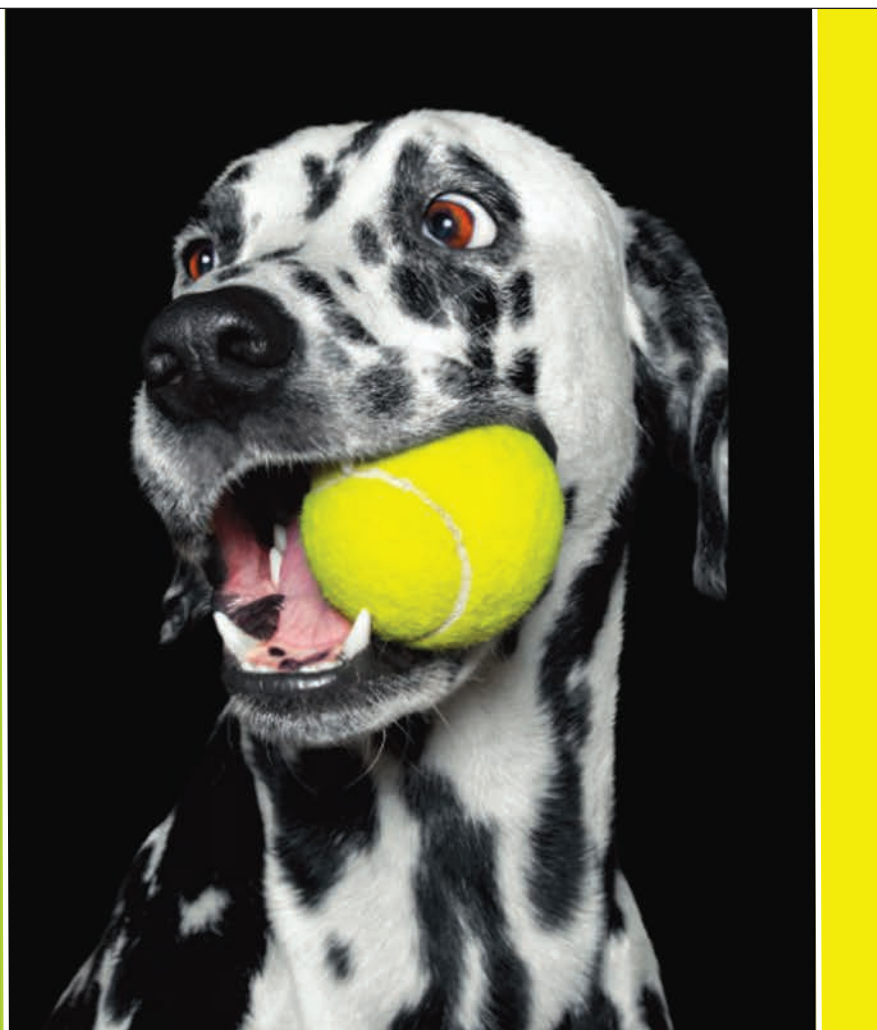
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■ commUNITYvoices

Finding the common thread

Let's not let COVID-19 steal our humanity

Many years ago, I was living in the mountains of Northern California when we had a big winter storm. The snow was measured in feet, and our power was out. PG&E said it might take as long as a week before it would be restored.

The main road was plowed, but not the private road we lived on. It wasn't far to the main road, but it was too far for us to shovel our way out.

I learned then that your world closes in very fast when you are homebound. Wars, legislative decisions and other concerns became abstract background noise. And after a heavy snow like that, it gets very quiet — no TV, no radios, no wi-fi and no refrigerators. Just the far off sound of generators.

A few of our neighbors had generators. Some were kind enough to store food for us so it didn't spoil, and we ate what could be cooked on a grill or camp stove.

Our world had closed in.

This pandemic reminds me a little of that experience, but it's also very different. Then, we could all gather in front of a fire together and talk, like humans do. The only masks around were ski masks.

These days, I haven't worn shoes in over a week, and my morning commute is about 30 feet. Those are the immediate benefits of working from home.

This virus we are facing, known in formal circles as SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it causes, known by its more familiar name of COVID-19, is not the flu. Not by a long shot. This one packs a punch. It's killed more than 100,000 Americans, including more than 1,500 Texans, and it's not done yet.

(I'm not going to get into how it's been handled; there is plenty to read on that subject.)

I'll admit, I'm scared. I'm in a high risk group, and I don't want to die yet. And I certainly do not want to die on a ventilator alone, with no opportunity to say



Leslie McMurray
Accidental Activist

ry distress, fever, chills and cough. But there is also the situation where your blood oxygen level drops dangerously low, but you don't realize it. There are patients that feel fine one minute, then crash and die shortly after. There's purple toe, kidney damage, unexplained heart attacks, strokes, blood clots, lung damage, pneumonia, central nervous system damage with loss of smell and taste and ...

It seems as if they are finding more every day.

This thing is different. It's scary. Treatments are sketchy and experimental. There is no cure and, so far, no vaccine.

So, excuse me if I give you stink-eye for not wearing a mask in the grocery store.

I was asked recently if I had noticed more acts of compassion during this global crisis. It broke my heart to say, "I don't know." It's been spotty. Sure, healthcare workers and first responders are doing their jobs heroically. But outside of TV, I haven't come into contact with them — yet. There have been food drives and fundraisers, and I'm proud of the work nonprofits are doing.

But we need more than delivering Happy Meals to people who are fighting for our (and their) lives!

Mostly, what I'm seeing are either people in an almost trancelike state, or those who are acting selfishly. At least now, I'm finally seeing paper products back in stores from the great toilet paper rush of 2020. But it would be nice to

"good-bye" to those I love most.

Have you seen some of the symptoms that keep popping up? Sure, there is the common respiratory

see people wearing a mask when they aren't forced to. I'm worried that the latest symptom of the pandemic is a loss of our humanity.

Back in January, our country was divided; today, it still is. I'm not seeing ANY of the unification like what happened after 9/11. The venom on social media either praises Trump or vilifies him.

I think he's OK with it either way as long as his name is in there somewhere. But for the rest of us, we don't know who is behind those masks. Hero or villain? Friend or foe?

The pandemic has also divided us into frightened high risk groups vs. protest groups jammed together calling it all a hoax.

The worst part for me is I don't know of a solution. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said recently that Dallas County (nor any other county) can't compel people to wear masks or limit church attendance. Well guess what: Some of us don't want to die for your freedom to not wear a mask!

The internet has brought such a variety of entertainment to us, but before COVID-19, there were very few shared experiences like there were when I was little. Back then, *everyone* watched the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Now, it's hard to find that common thread. I mean, I love the show *Killing Eve* but have to sift through friends to find one who has seen it or is at a different binge stage than I am.

We finally have an experience in common with all of mankind: COVID-19 and the pandemic. This thing doesn't give a *% who you are. None of us are immune. So let's band together; we have a common enemy we should all agree on. Let's help each other now, even if we can't get within six feet of one another. Please, if ever there were a time, this is it. Let's not let SARS-CoV-2 steal our humanity, our kindness, our empathy. ■

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

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Viral theater



Danielle Georgiou took inspiration from the coronavirus for a world premiere experimental theaterwork

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
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It's a dire time for the lively arts. Concerts are *not* coming to a bandshell near you this summer. Broadway will be dark at least through Labor Day. Forget about a dance recital.

Then again, artists have always thrived during dire times. They somehow find a way.

The latest content creators to find that way is the venerable Undermain Theatre, which has specialized in experimental stagecraft across five decades (a planned play festival this summer had to be scotched). It will take more than a pandemic to stop them. In fact, it took a pandemic to *inspire* them.

"The relevance to our 2020 lockdown was a deciding factor in how to proceed with our production," says Danielle Georgiou, associate artistic director at Undermain, founder of the Danielle Georgiou Dance Group and, with partner Justin Locklear, creator of their newest work, *The Savage Seconds*. "Having slowly developed this story for about five years, we were excited that it would finally be on stage at Undermain, but as the pandemic hit, we realized that drama must sometimes evolve [to] parallel real life."

Although an in-person production — which was already scheduled to be a special offering this summer — was not possible, Undermain has decided to launch the world premiere as a streamable performance... a decision made all the more possible once they figured out a new take on the piece. At first, they weren't certain how to proceed, but after more research and discussion they landed on a core concept to get them through: honesty.

"We decided to center the narrative on a pandemic, both as an undeniable reaction to today and as a nod to our research of Oedipus Rex, which featured its own epidemic event: the plague of Thebes. It felt correct and compelling, and it really launched a momentum in the narrative that pushed the characters closer together in a way which we were feeling in our lives," Georgiou says.

The plot involves a family living a public life surrounded by turmoil. Baby, now 14, has spent half her life in boarding schools but returns home during a pandemic where she becomes a pawn of her grasping father, malicious siblings and viral fame. Meanwhile, she's still a teenager coping with celebrity during times of crisis and her own sexual awakening. Like much of Georgiou's work, it's not easy to categorize: an opera, a dance, an experimental think-piece. There's even a puzzle-box of a website (thesavageseconds.com) to accompany the production — a digital program, yes, but also an exploratory adventure into the plot, characters, themes and creators. It takes the theatrical experience down an online rabbit hole designed to engage the audience.

The title *The Savage Seconds*, Georgiou explains, refers to

Colby Calhoun, Monet Lerner and Nick Leos will perform in a new sexually exploratory theater piece designed for a post-COVID world. (Photo courtesy Justin Locklear)

“the brief moment between innocence and experience, when a character experiences a revelation, and their life is forever changed. We see many stories like this called ‘coming of age,’ which are told from the perspective of experience and maturity so that the trauma of growing up is pictured as charming and quaint. We know that our protagonist, the youngest daughter of a powerful political family, is experiencing a life-changing discovery, and we wanted to frame it really as something more sinister.”

Just how to rehearse, block, choreograph, record and perform a piece with social-distancing protocols with a cast of 11 is such a challenge that even the creators don’t know how it will come out. But that’s part of the artistic process.

Undermain/DGDG are “essentially creating a narrative art-film, infusing our dance-theater multi-disciplinary perspective,” Georgiou says. It will not be on a single stage but rather “in spaces that we can more easily control in terms of safety and sanitation. We are not certain what it will look like, in

regards to theatricality, but we want to tell this story at this time, and making a movie seems to be the best practice. It will be an exercise in creativity, making sure that we are masked, distanced and rehearsed in private.” The company has held Zoom rehearsals and production meetings, and when it comes time to shoot, “it will be strictly scheduled to eliminate shared space.”

The final product will be available June 4–10; once you purchase your ticket, the viewer will be permitted unlimited access for the entire window — yet another innovation in this brave new world.

“We aren’t sure of the future of how we will create our shows, but for now, keeping connected with our audience through our site, videos and social media will be our priority,” Georgiou says. Live theater will survive, with the same creative momentum, “but in a different form.”

It has to. That’s what artists do. ■

Available online June 4–10. Visit TheSavageSeconds.com for the interactive experience and it or Undermain.com for information about streaming.



Theater for a new world

As theaters worldwide grapple with the evolving mandates of the pandemic, several North Texas companies have announced plans headed forward.

Stage West is postponing its show *Between Riverside and Crazy*, originally set to open in late August, to a subsequent season. Its next upcoming show, *Into the Breeches!*, will not open in July as planned but will open instead at an outdoor venue in September (dates TBD). In the event such a venue cannot be obtained or social restrictions prevent it, the production will be postponed to a later season.

The Dallas Opera will broadcast on WRR, Dallas’ classical radio station 101.1 FM, two recordings of operas they have previously performed. On June 6 will be Gounod’s *Faust*, performed in 1998 and conducted by now-music director Emmanuel Villaume in his TDO debut. On July 11, Verdi’s *La traviata*, conducted in 2004 by former music director Graeme Jenkins, will play. Both start at 7 p.m.

Performing Arts Fort Worth has rescheduled *Jesus Christ Superstar* to July 27–Aug. 1, 2021.

Circle Theatre has canceled its next two productions, *The Last Wide Open* and *Fences*, for the entirety of the season but hope to reschedule them for a future season.

TITAS will announce its full season of all U.S.-based companies on June 8. Read the lineup, and plans for how it will be presented, at DallasVoice.com.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

NOTICE OF DART PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing on D2 Subway Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in cooperation with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), has completed the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the D2 Subway Project, a proposed second light rail transit (LRT) line through downtown Dallas that would extend 2.4 miles from Victory Station to the Green Line along Good Latimer Expressway.

The SDEIS is available for review at DART.org/D2. The 45-day public comment period for the SDEIS is May 15 - June 29, 2020. Copies of the SDEIS are also available for public viewing at the Dallas Public Library, 1515 Young St. (Library hours may be affected by COVID-19 restrictions, so please contact DART Community Engagement, 214-749-2543, to make arrangements for viewing hard copy.)

Two alternatives—a Build and a No-Build—are being considered in the SDEIS, with the potential impacts and mitigation identified in a broad range of environmental categories. Potential impacts of the Build Alternative involve: the Magnolia Gasoline Station, 902 Ross Avenue; the St. James A.M.E. Temple, 624 North Good Latimer Expressway; Pegasus Plaza, 1500 Main Street; and Belo Garden, 1014 Main Street.

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of our customers and employees, DART will conduct virtual Public Hearings to receive comments on D2 Subway Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Public Hearings: Thursday, June 11, 2020 – 12:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Virtual hearing information will be available at DART.org/D2 or contact DART Community Engagement at 214-749-2543

Written comments can be provided via email to D2@DART.org or in writing to: Ernie Martinez, DART Capital Planning, PO Box 660163, Dallas, TX 75266-7213.



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Making the cut

Krystal Summers returns as a (barber) pole worker with a new salon... and a lot of trepidation. (Photography by Arnold Wayne Jones)

Stylist and performer Krystal Summers turns the lockdown into an opportunity to pursue her dream of starting her own salon

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

On a rainy Tuesday morning a few weeks ago, deep in a warren of office suites in a Lakewood strip mall, Krystal Summers did something that just two months ago seemed almost impossible. And it terrified her... in several ways.

First was the trepidation that comes with becoming a small-business owner. And then there was the prospect of doing so in the midst of a pandemic.

As Summers hung out her shingle for her new salon, Krystal Paints Dallas — a huge step she had long dreamed of — she was simultaneously gripped by the concerns that come with intimate contact with clients during the season of corona.

Summers had been a vocal critic on her social media of Shelley Luther, the smugly brazen scofflaw who defiantly opened her salon in contravention of a statewide shutdown, was then punished and subsequently became a hero of the far right, ultimately having her jail sentence overturned by gubernatorial fiat. She felt Luther — and subsequently state leaders — were behaving rashly, opening up salons sooner than was safe. And she still feels that way.

"I think it's too soon," Summers declares, fully masked within her studio at Village Salons on Gaston Avenue. "But I felt forced to come back to work because I couldn't afford to lose clients — the biggest part of the job is developing and holding on to a client base."

That's what she's spent the last seven years doing, until recently at Vertigo 12, the downtown salon owned by her friend and (former) employer Nolan Matthew. But her goal has always been to be her own boss.

"It was always my intention to go out on my own," Summers says. "I've thought about it for years. I had actually visited [the Village Salons space] a while back. But my loyalty to Vertigo... it was hard to let go."

COVID-19 did a lot of the decision-making for her, as it turned out. State and local governments closed barbershops and the like in March. And while she had clients who begged her to come to their homes and cut their hair during the interim, she steadfastly refused.

"I told them I'm not doing that," she says, noting that she has taken the self-isolation protocols extremely seriously, having virtually no contact with anyone other than her live-in boyfriend and the occasional cashier for months. And if she had her way, she'd still be practicing shelter-in-place. But once Matthew announced that Vertigo would not be reopening, it lit a fire under Summers to forge her own path — a forced entrepreneurship that she sees, in the final analysis, as a unique opportunity. She's contacted about three-fourths of her existing clients, and virtually all have said they will follow her.

The return to business-and-new-normal has its own risks, which do concern her. "We have to touch people," she notes; when cutting her first customer's hair, just moments before we meet, she realized that her clients will always have to remove their masks even briefly for her to do her job properly.

"I'm very excited about the new venture," she says, though it did end up happening too fast. Gov. Abbott had initially indicated salons could reopen on May 18; he suddenly caved to pressure from Luther and her ilk, and allowed them back on May 8, forcing Summers to ramp up her model by more than a week. And it all manifested itself with the realization that the boss is responsible for everything — supplies, rent, customer retention, scheduling and every other detail. And considering her secondary job as a drag queen on The Strip is also indefinitely on hold, she is glad to have an income again. Still, she found the imposed moratorium a blessing in disguise.

"I've honestly enjoyed the break," she says. "I'm a workaholic — I sometimes work 16 hour days on weekends [between styling and performing]."

Only now, when she works, it's all for herself — a bright light amidst the gloomy shadow of this corona. ■

Pride Month begins this week — coronavirus notwithstanding — and while parades and parties may have gone virtual,

there's still tons of online content to make you proud to be a gaymerican. Here are some programs to stream during June.



I Am Divine. After 20 years as a cult icon in outrageous drag roles in the films of John Waters, Glenn Milstead, aka zaftig camp queen Divine, finally hit the mainstream with the hit film *Hairspray*; 10 days later, his success would be cut short when he died of a heart attack in bed. This documentary of the groundbreaking disco singer, actor and filth-monger pays fitting tribute to Divine's influence and life. Available on Netflix.



Out. Pixar has its first gay leading character, at least the first openly gay lead — even if it is in a nine-minute short released directly on Disney+. In *Out*, a closeted gay man struggles to tell his busybody parents that he has a boyfriend, so a little rainbow magic makes his dog help him through it. I dare you not to cry in the closing moments. Available on Disney+.



Hannah Gadsby: Douglas. The queermedian — whose 2018 standup special *Nanette* was an evolution in damage-comedy, part jokes, part TEDTalk — delves into new territory with more humor but her same feminist mindset for this new special, which premiered earlier this week. It's funny and political and very humanistic — a perfect kick-off to Pride. Available on Netflix.

Ask Howard

How to do the wrong thing right

Having devoted my last couple of columns entirely to Miss Rona, I began noticing a few days ago that a subtle corner has somehow been turned as of late, a shift in perception one might say. A total sea change, actually, as if the general public were finally shrugging in unison to our infectiously life-altering voodoo spectral, "F/U already, girl, dayum!" Here in Gayville, the flag-waving new 'tude out on the streets all but radiates, "Miz Thang, I'm tired. I plumb had it. You ain't pimpin' out this here queer, no mo'. Nuh-uh. I'm through with your zombified, global-wide pandemic slave-minion shit: Rona, you and me, ho'? We done, bitch!"

Clearly, this is not just a "minority protest stance" anymore, either. A casual stroll through literally any given, oh, Tom Thumb or Walgreen's showcases the spectacularly sudden indifference. Sure, lip-service is still being paid to facemasks worn in public ... but just barely, and certainly not "protectively." A swagging full regalia of Wild West bandit drag's triangular face handkerchiefs stagger down aisles blindly through fogged-over eyeglasses, or the occasional welder-esque contraptions efforted by the more "sensitive skin" crowd's raids of hospital supply stores' overstock sales. Shout-out to shrewdly scored new Lucite face shields, bulwarks of such protectors from Category 5 sandstorms!

Recently, believe it or not, I've found myself sofa-binging on a veritable slew of big, tentpole disaster/end-of-the-world movies — always requisitely and appropriately uniformed, of course: Five-day-old sweats with mismatched socks, mangy mullet 'do, a backwards baseball cap, two lap cats secretly filching licks at my blanketed, biohazard-green tub of Mint Chocolate Chip Baskin-Robbins. (Correction: Roo, making no slithery secrets about his petty thievery at all, and stone-deaf, 107-year-old Boo, per usual, just whining his shrill, Father-Time/alpha seniority screechiest about how he'd instead much prefer plain old real vanilla, the way ice cream's naturally *supposed* to be — you know, just another same old — same old regularly given Tuesday morning here in isolation paradise. Bang-bang, Corona, shebang-bang.)

In the apocalyptic thriller, *28 Days Later* — its opening amnesiac scene a gold-standard of cinematic anxiety — a sveltely naked (and full frontal!) young twotter, surgical tubes snaking out his every orifice, haplessly discovers himself locked inside a hastily-abandoned hospital's impenetrably sealed hazmat chamber, whereupon it gradually dawns on poor naked Jim that in the span of less than a month (from when a bus first hit him until edgily awakening now from a medically-induced stasis) all civilized trappings on Earth have vanished. Not the least of these is its human population, replaced now by



an obligatory staple of every disaster/horror movie ever made: The camera rotates full circle around our twotter hero. His expression goes blank, eyes glittering that glazed, mystified opacity of someone just woken who realizes he's not even on the same planet he went to bed in. My manager's office wall is opaque now, graffitied over completely, its latest sensory-overload in obviousness being a new daily color chart announcing "Today's COVID-19 RISK LEVEL" ... which, apparently for the benefit of only zombies amongst us, employs a sliding arrow clarifying each day's current advisory precaution hue: Red: Stay Home/ Stay Safe; Orange: Extreme Caution; Yellow: Proceed Carefully; Green: New Normal Until Vaccine. The chart's arrow, to the numbness of nothing remotely new, has yet to spasm even once beyond the furthest extreme edges of Code Red.

More dialogue: Jim (twotter Cillian Murphy): "What about the government? What are they doing?" Selena: (Naomie Harris): "There is no government." Jim: "There's always a government! They're in a ... a bunker, or a plane?"

a duplicitously vile underworld of scuttling, drooling, shambling shadow lurking dopelgangers: A destiny so contemplatively horrific that the only note left Jim following his parents' double suicide was, "Please, don't wake up!"

(Eh, but, what's ... a "twotter," you ask? Oh, that's just some word I invented here at civilization's epilogue ... I've had a bit of spare time around the house lately. A twotter is the hybridization of a man-boy twinkie with an otter. You've seen twotters. We all have. They're everywhere: Tall-ish, lanky-ish, awkward-ish, neither clean-cut nor quite at street punk, shimmery but not shiny, simultaneously innocently doe-eyed and dystopian. Think Leonardo DiCaprio in *Titanic*. He's the archetypical twotter. Opaquely oscillatory.)

Prescient dialogue from 28 Days Later: Researcher: "The chimps ... have been infected." Activist: "Infected with ... what?" Researcher: "Rage!"

In my building's lobby, our manager's office front wall (which used to be a transparent sheet of glass) is now straight out of *28 Days Later*. You know the scene,

"People always expect us here in the great state Alabama to be more like New York and California — why, bless their precious little hearts. But we good Alabamians just ain't nothin' like them folks way out west in Hollywoodland, or up north in Red Delicious New York City."

And, how correct you are, Kay! For in per capita population density, Alabama's COVID numbers exactly match those Californica-tin' inner-peace seeking, dippy hippies and them Big City, classless Yankees way up north. Meanwhile, all dingbat-petty pissing contests aside, the CDC implores us be prepared, by the end of May, for nothing less than 200,000 new cases, per day, metastasizing into one million being newly infected every five days, translating into 3,000 new COVID-19 deaths *every day*. In truth, just 3,000 daily deaths may very well be a low-end leaning number, indeed, considering only 1 in 10 of our global citizenry, suspecting that they may have contracted COVID-19, even so much as bother getting tested for its antibodies.

Final dialogue: Jim: "How did you know? I mean, how did you know he was infected?" Selena: "Look, I didn't know he was infected, OK? He knew. I could see it in his face."

So, Howard's advice this column? Be good, and run out and get tested, kids. Trust me, it's easy nowadays. No longer must one endure that tremors inducing nostril cornucopia being shoved so far up into your head that you swear you heard your hippocampus actually pop. That kind of torture's sooo last week. No, all you gotta do here lately is drizzle a long wad of spittle into a tapered cup. You know how to spit, don't you boiz? You just pucker your lips together, salivate up ... and blow.

Catch y'all again here my next issue, in about, well, oh, just 28 days! Later, boiz!
— Howard Lewis Russell
Send your comments, questions of suggestions to AskHoward@dallasvoice.com.

this week's solution

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Solution on Page 18

Across

- 1 Mark Bingham of 9/11
 5 "I ___ Kick Out of You"
 9 Desperate cry
 13 Bird, to Brutus
 14 Come together
 16 Estimating words
 17 Kerry, who plays Mia on 48-/64-Across
 19 Animal that's no breeder
 20 Martin of *Grace and Frankie* et al.
 21 Without pausing
 23 Where to look, in "Misty"
 25 Women on top, at times
 26 Intelligence agent
 29 Reese who plays Elena on 48-/64-Across
 34 Word before kwon do
 35 Guy into bottoms?
 36 *Così fan ___*
 37 Series ender
 39 Anne of *Girls in Prison*
 42 The L.A. Sparks strip them
 43 Cruising, maybe
 45 Georgetown athlete
 47 Eligible for soc. sec.
 48 With 64-Across, Hulu series directed by Lynn Shelton (1965-2020)
 51 Tax-collecting agcy.
 52 Bear market order

- 53 Boats like Noah's
 55 Ax wielder
 59 Trojan War hero killed by Achilles
 63 "And another thing..."
 64 See 48-Across
 66 Taylor of *Six Feet Under*
 67 "Air Music" composer Ned
 68 Ethnic acronym
 69 Tie it to become wife and wife
 70 Straddled a stallion
 71 Israeli author Oz

Down

- 1 Hesitating sounds
 2 Porter's "Well, Did You ___"
 3 Get out of bed
 4 Actor Milo of Oz
 5 Professional who helps you shoot off
 6 W. H. Auden's tongue
 7 Jermaine and Michael's brother
 8 When sex addicts need it
 9 Like Gomer's humor
 10 Plenty, informally
 11 Lounge about
 12 Chicken, to a chickenhawk
 15 Penetrate
 18 Bisected
 22 Ellen, for one
 24 Ending for Jean
 26 Get to second base, perhaps
 27 *Evita* portrayer on stage
 28 It helps a baker get it up
 30 Part of Saigon's current name
 31 Cheri of *Scary Movie*
 32 Skinny bear
 33 Egg holders
 38 Cole Porter song from *Paris*
 40 Time for Frida
 41 "Bear" and "rear," e.g.
 44 Britten's beers
 46 Cockeyed
 49 Recipient of Bugs' kisses
 50 Fruit, to Froot Loops
 54 E with a queer orientation
 55 Result of four balls
 56 *Brothers & Sisters* producer Ken
 57 Northern metropolis
 58 Burning software
 60 The Seattle Storm, for one
 61 Roughly
 62 Muscle Mary stat
 65 Carpet color at the Oscars

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