

dallasvoice

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Putting the youth first

Teacher Stacy Bailey turned
discrimination against her into
opportunities for LGBTQ youth

by David Taffet, Page 6

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Stacy Bailey, Julie Vazquez and Allison Johnson. Photo by David Taffet.
Design by Kevin Thomas

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Fort Worth PD dropping riot charges against protesters

Fort Worth Police Chief Ed Kraus issued a statement on Tuesday, June 9, announcing that all charges for rioting that resulted from recent protests in Fort Worth will be dropped. Individuals will be notified by letter that their charges have been dropped, he said.

Kraus noted that protesters arrested for criminal mischief, assault, vandalism, theft, etc., will not have their charges dropped as part of this action. Those are separate cases and will be, or are already being, investigated, the chief said.

Protests in Fort Worth in the wake of the killing of George Floyd have been largely peaceful.

— Tammye Nash

Rosemary Ketchum is West Virginia's 1st openly trans elected official

Rosemary Ketchum has won her bid to represent Ward 3 on the Wheeling, W. Va., City Council, making her the first openly transgender person elected to public office in that state. When she takes office on July 1, she will be one of only four openly LGBTQ officials in the state.

There are only 26 openly transgender elected officials in the country.

Ketchum, a community organizer who works for the National Alliance for Mental Illness, said she is "incredibly excited," and that while she didn't campaign on her trans identity, her victory "matters a lot."

Annie Parker, president of the LGBT Victory Fund, applauded Ketchum for having "shattered a lavender ceiling" in her state. "We know Rosemary's race will inspire other trans people from conservative states to consider a run for office in their communities — and then those candidates will inspire others as well," Parker said. "That virtuous cycle is the key to building trans acceptance and political power long-term."

— Tammye Nash

Theatre 3 brings season closer to the internet

All theater companies have had to cancel, curtail or reschedule their seasons for the past few months, including Theatre 3. But the Uptown troupe has decided to go forward with its season-ending production and make it available exclusively online.

T3 typically opens its shows on Mondays, so fittingly, this version of *The Immigrant* debuts on June 15 and will be available through June 28. Unlike many streaming theater options, however, each of the 10 "performances" will start at a traditional time (weekend and Wednesday matinees, evening curtain), and access will be limited to 200 "seats" (about the same as T3's mainstage).

There will even be talk-backs hosted after the June 15, 21 and 28 shows, via Facebook. Streaming access is \$15. You can get it at Theatre3Dallas.com.

The play, a still-timely tale of immigration set in Texas in the first half of the last century, is a four-hander, directed by T3 artistic director Jeffrey Schmidt. It will employ green-screen technology to create an intimate but socially-distanced theater experience.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

KDT brings New Works Festival online; Undermain extends 'Savage Seconds'

Despite the governor's order that public performance venues are allowed to open this week, most theater companies cannot return to live performances just yet, for reasons such as Actors Equity rules and the safety of cast, crew and patrons.

But Kitchen Dog Theater is still opening its annual New Works Festival this weekend... online and free.

Staged readings of new plays are typically far less "produced" than full-on productions, which makes the virtual readings of six plays for this year's festival a pretty good fit. The readings will take place on three weekend nights (two Fridays and a Saturday at 7 p.m.) and three consecutive Sunday matinees (2 p.m.) June 12–28.

All performances will be conducted via Zoom for free, though reservations are required. To sign up, or to learn more about the plays, visit KitchenDogTheater.org.

Meanwhile, the new filmed-theater production of Undermain's *Savage Seconds* has been extended and will be available until midnight Friday. (If you buy your tickets by Friday, you still get 48 hours to stream it.) You can purchase a ticket at Undermain.org.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

George Floyd's brother speaks to Congress

Philonise Floyd, the brother of George Floyd, who was killed by Minneapolis police officers on May 25, delivered the following testimony before the House Judiciary Committee Wednesday, June 10, during a hearing examining the crisis of racial profiling, police brutality and lost trust between police departments and the communities they serve:

"Thank you for the invitation to be here today to talk about my big brother, George. The world knows him as George, but I called him Perry. Yesterday, we laid him to rest. It was the hardest thing I've ever had to do. I'm the big brother now. So it was my job to comfort our brothers and sisters, Perry's kids and everyone who loved him. And that's a lot of people. I have to be the strong one now, because it's what George would have done.

"And me being the big brother now is why I'm here today. To do what Perry always did for us — to take care of the family and others. I couldn't take care of George the day he was killed, but maybe by speaking with you today, I can help make sure that his death isn't in vain. To make sure that he is more than an-



Philonise Floyd

other face on a t-shirt. More than another name on a list that won't stop growing.

"George always made sacrifices for his family. And he made sacrifices for complete strangers. He gave the little that he had to help others. He was our gentle giant. I was reminded of that when I watched the video of his murder. He was mild-mannered; he didn't fight back. He listened to the officers. He called them 'sir.' The men who took his life, who suffocated him for eight minutes and 46 seconds. He still called them 'sir' as he begged for his life.

"I can't tell you the kind of pain you feel when you watch something like that. When you watch your big brother, who you've looked up to your whole life, die. Die begging for your mom.

"I'm tired. I'm tired of the pain I'm feeling now, and I'm tired of the pain I feel every time another black person is killed for no reason. I'm here today to ask you to make it stop. Stop the pain. Stop us from being tired.

"George's calls for help were ignored. Please listen to the call I'm making to you now, to the calls of our family, and to the calls ringing out in the streets across the world. People of all backgrounds, genders and race have come together to demand change. Honor them, honor George, and make the necessary changes that make law enforcement the solution — and

not the problem. Hold them accountable when they do something wrong. Teach them what it means to treat people with empathy and respect. Teach them what necessary force is. Teach them that deadly force should be used rarely and only when life is at risk.

"George wasn't hurting anyone that day. He didn't deserve to die over \$20. I am asking you, is that what a black man's life is worth? Twenty dollars? This is 2020. Enough is enough. The people marching in the streets are telling you enough is enough. Be the leaders that this country, this world, needs. Do the right thing.

"The people elected you to speak for them, to make positive change. George's name means something. You have the opportunity here to make your names mean something, too.

"If his death ends up changing the world for the better — and I think it will; I think it has — then he died as he lived. It is on you to make sure his death isn't in vain.

"I didn't get the chance to say goodbye to Perry while he was here. I was robbed of that. But I know he's looking down on us now. Perry, look at what you did, big brother. You're changing the world. Thank you for everything. For taking care of us when you were on Earth, and for taking care of all of us now. I hope you found Mama and can rest in peace and power."

— Tammye Nash

Pet of the week • Joshua



The SPCA of Texas' shelters, clinics, mobile adoption and mobile wellness events remain closed to the public in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Adoptions are available by appointment only.

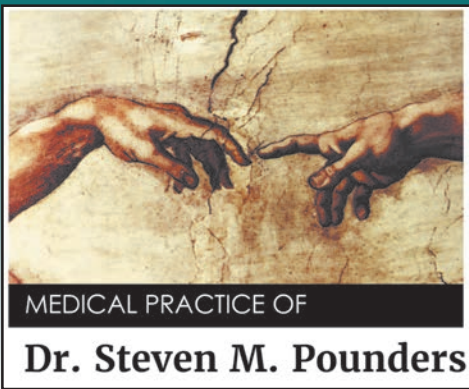
Meet **Joshua**, a 9-year-old, male Labrador mix weighing 41 pounds. He has a smooth, reddish-tan-colored coat with a hint of cream on his muzzle, large, floppy ears and big brown eyes. He's a sweet, gentle guy who can be shy around new people due to his past. He's working on gaining his confidence around strangers and is loving all of the attention he gets at the SPCA of Texas. He is looking for a patient, understanding family who will continue to let him learn the ropes of being a pet in a home. In return, he'll be sure to give you all the love you could ever need. If you're looking for a quiet gentleman to curl up and read books with, he's the one for you. Joshua 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.

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A school district's discrimination becomes a gift to Youth First

Pride parades may be canceled, but Stacy Bailey celebrates this year by donating to help young LGBTQ people and by marching for Black Lives Matter

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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After settling her discrimination lawsuit against Mansfield ISD, art teacher Stacy Bailey and her wife Julie Vazquez made a \$10,000 donation to Youth First at Resource Center this week.

"I chose Youth First because it is important to me to support a local organization that gives a safe space to our youth," Bailey said. "I experienced years of pain and self-hate." And, she added, when she was growing up, there was nothing like Youth First available to her.

"Organizations like Youth First help kids learn to love themselves," Bailey said. "That's an important resource."

She said she wished there were more organizations like it throughout the suburbs and in rural areas.

Another reason Bailey made the donation was because she wanted to make sure people understood her lawsuit against the Mansfield school district was never about the money for her or her attorney. In fact, her Fort Worth-based employment attorney, Jason Smith, made a \$10,000 donation to Human Rights Campaign from his portion of the settlement.

What their case was about, Bailey said, was discrimination.

At the start of the 2017 school year, Bailey introduced herself to her elementary school art students the same way other teachers throughout Mansfield ISD do — with pictures of her family. Among the photos was one of her with Vazquez,



From left: Julie Vazquez, Stacy Bailey, Youth First volunteer Allison Johnson, Youth First members Tave and Atticus (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

whom she called, "my future wife."

The school received a complaint from a parent. Bailey, who had recently been named Mansfield Teacher of the Year for the second time, was removed from her classroom while the district initiated an investigation. That investigation, she was told, would probably take about two days but could take up to two weeks.

Eight months later, she was still being investigated, but she had never been asked to come in and explain what happened.

Bailey spent much of her suspension volunteering at nursing facilities, playing dominoes with residents and entertaining them with bluegrass music she learned from her grandfather. But also during that period, she sent the school district an email, asking for its nondiscrimination policy to be updated to include sexual orientation and gender

identity as Dallas, Fort Worth and other districts throughout the area have done.

In May, still on the payroll but out of her classroom, Bailey received a message that she would be moved from her elementary school to a high school. That's when she hired Smith and sued MISD for unequal treatment: Had a male teacher shown a picture of his wife, he wouldn't have been placed under investigation. Assuming the male teacher had legally married, both his and Bailey's marriages would have been equal under the law, and she called for equal treatment under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Bailey went back to school in the fall of 2018 and, for the first time since she was in high school herself, found herself in a high school classroom. But as are all art teachers in Texas, she was licensed to teach K-12.

She adjusted to teaching older students. She even had a few students she had taught in elementary school in her high school class. And she became a co-sponsor of the school's gay-straight alliance. While talking to students in the GSA, Bailey asked how many had ever met an adult member of the LGBTQ community. When she learned none had, she understood how important it was for her to be a great role model for them.

In November 2019, U.S. District Judge Sam Lindsay ruled in her favor, writing in a 40-page ruling, "There is no job-related justification for placing Bailey on an eight-month administrative leave and then not allowing her to return as an elementary school teacher."

Further, he found that MISD did not show "Bailey's sexual orientation bears any rational relationship to her competency as an elementary school teacher,



or her job performance as an elementary school teacher — a position she held for more than 10 years during which time she was considered exemplary and even voted as ‘Teacher of the Year’ twice.”

Lindsay explained that the decision to place Bailey on administrative leave for eight months was entirely based on her sexual orientation and found in her favor, citing the 14th Amendment.

In February this year, Bailey and MISD

went to mediation to decide a settlement. The district agreed to remove the suspension from her record. They agreed to provide training for all counselors and administrators and open training to any interested teachers. They agreed to vote on a non-discrimination policy. And they agreed to a cash settlement.

Bailey also asked for an apology, but the district refused.

So far no training has been offered and

no vote has been taken on a nondiscrimination policy. Bailey noted the settlement only requires a vote, not a change in policy. Schools have been closed since March because of the pandemic, but the school board has been meeting. The district said they are waiting for the U.S. Supreme Court to hand down an employment nondiscrimination ruling expected this month before its vote, which may require a vote to change its policy.

Bailey explained she decided to make her donation to Youth First in June to commemorate Pride month. She noted the U.S. Supreme Court’s marriage equality ruling and other SCOTUS decisions in favor of LGBTQ rights all were announced on June 26, and the Stonewall rebellion took place on June 28.

“June 2020 is going to be marked by the Black Lives Matter movement bringing change for people of color,” Bailey continued. “We stand with the protesters. I think the LGBT community at large should support them.”

She also said she is proud of students from her high school and neighboring Mansfield H.S. that organized a march.

“We were all overwhelmed,” Bailey

said. “We expected 100.” Instead more than 2,000 people turned out to march in Mansfield. Among them were most of her Gay-Straight Alliance students.

“It was,” she said, “a beautiful thing to witness.”

Since schools shut down in March, Bailey has been in constant touch with her students. She’s even had contact with parents of her students, something she did regularly with her elementary school students but rarely does with her high schoolers.

The one group she hasn’t kept up with are her GSA students. Most aren’t out to their parents, and she worried about their safety as they sheltered in place. Seeing them at Mansfield’s Black Lives Matters march was gratifying, she said.

And after touring Youth First and meeting a few of the young people involved who were there to accept her donation, Bailey said she has been inspired to become active in that organization. Maybe she’ll use her skills as an art teacher to help. Maybe she will use her music.

But her first step, she said, is to just listen and see how she can help make the lives of young LGBT people better. ■

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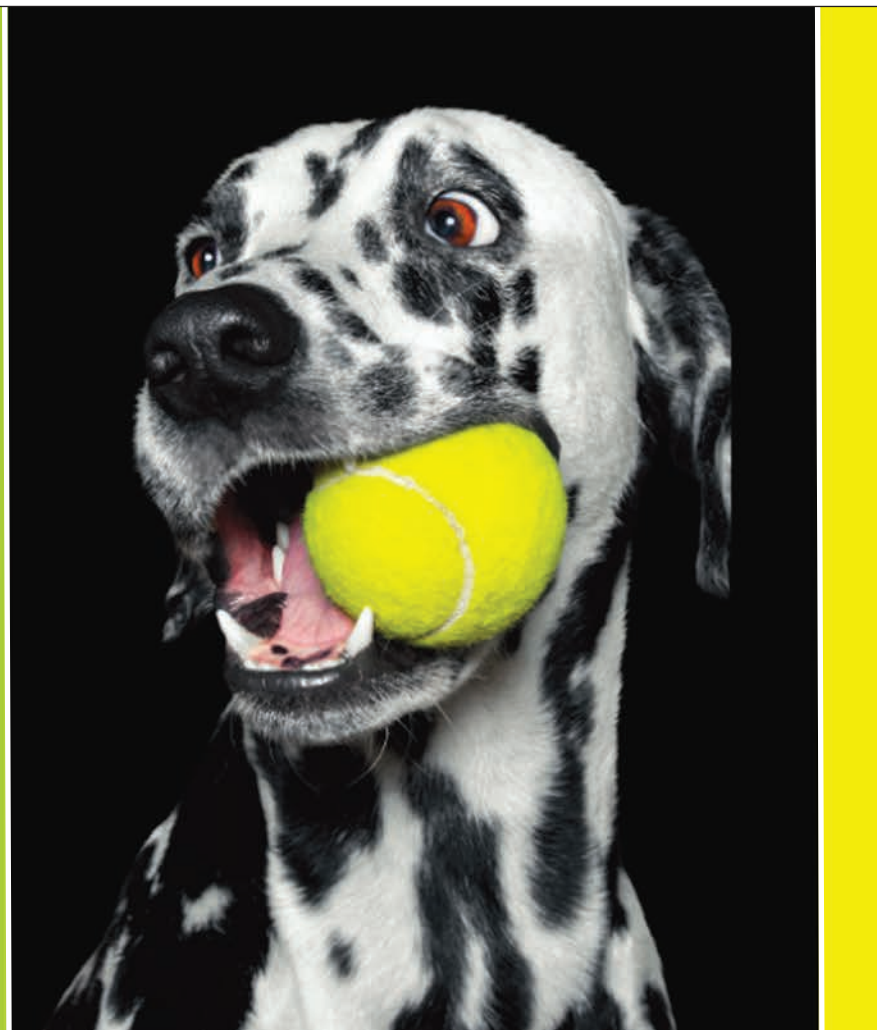
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Chamber holds diversity conference

The annual gathering will be held online this year

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

This year's Texas Diversity Equity & Inclusion Conference will be held virtually from June 16-18 and is being staged by the North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce and the three other LGBT chambers in Texas, as well as the North Texas Commission.

A wide variety of topics will be discussed over the three days of sessions by members of the LGBTQ community and allies from corporations who belong to the chamber.

Among national leaders who will speak are Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights; Alicia Green, supplier diversity manager for the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce, and Kuma Roberts, vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion for the Tulsa Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Minter will discuss how a current U.S. Supreme Court case will determine whether sex in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act protects transgender people.

Participants in Roberts' session will hear about ways to be an active ally to marginalized communities of color.

Dallas Police Department's LGBTQ liaison Amber Roman and Community Affairs Manager Joli Robinson will discuss implicit bias training at a plenary session kicking off the conference. Since becoming liaison to the LGBTQ community, Roman has participated in training sessions working with recruits on how to deal with the community. At their session, she and Robinson will discuss preconceptions people have and how to manage your biases.

Executives from Dell and Dell Technologies have testified in state legisla-



Ethan Avanzino, top, Shannon Minter, center, and Officer Amber Roman, right

tures in Texas, Oklahoma and Tennessee to help prevent passage of anti-LGBTQ laws. In the last session of the Texas Legislature, more than 20 bills died in committee with the help of Texas-based executives who testified against them.

Gary Sanchez, director of public affairs for VisitDallas, and Chris Wallace, president and CEO of the North Texas Commission, will discuss efforts to pass an LGBTQ nondiscrimination law. A bill with bipartisan support was proposed by Dallas state Rep. Jessica Gonzalez several weeks ago.

John Howard from Dell Technologies will discuss how his company encourages members of its LGBTQ employee

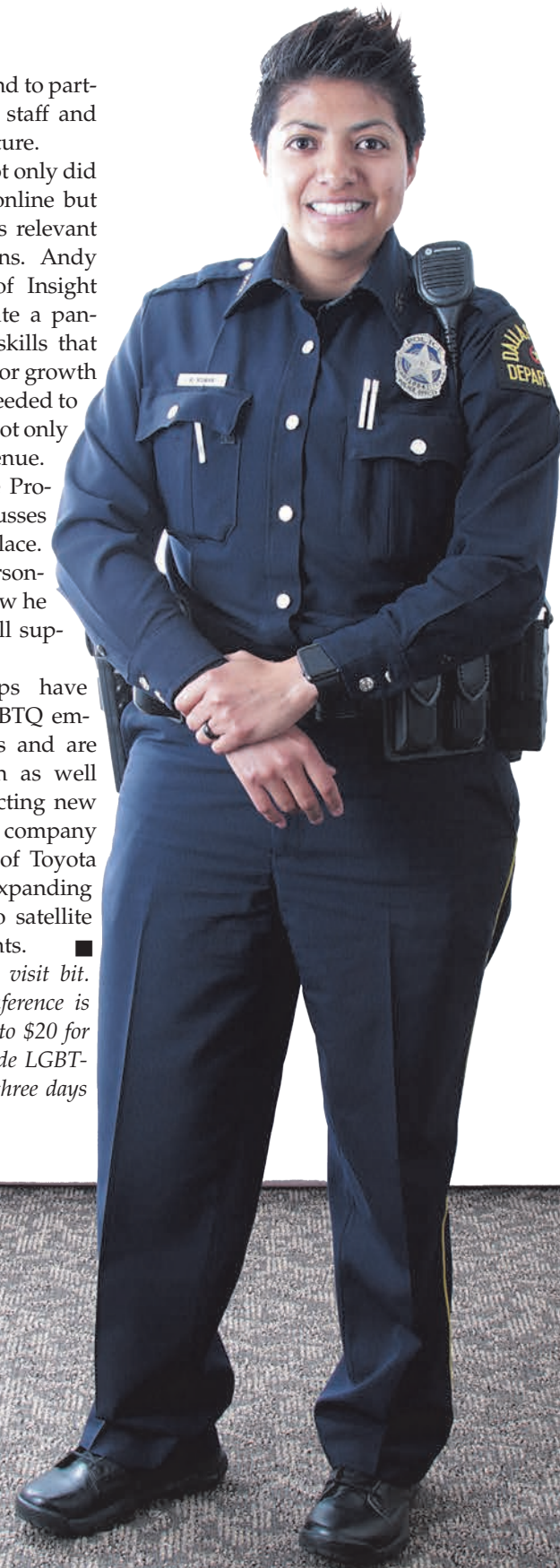
resource group to build trust and to partner with its legislative affairs staff and engage members of the legislature.

When the coronavirus hit, not only did the annual conference move online but the chamber included sessions relevant to current business conditions. Andy Church, CEO and founder of Insight Quality Services, will moderate a panel and will discuss practical skills that equipped him to create a plan for growth and gave him the insights he needed to pivot during the pandemic to not only survive but to increase his revenue.

Southwest Airlines Creative Producer Ethan Avanzino discusses transitioning in the workplace. While transitioning is very personal, Avanzino will talk about how he did it successfully with the full support on his company.

Employee Resource Groups have been effective in ensuring LGBTQ employees receive equal benefits and are protected from discrimination as well as helped companies by attracting new business. Usually ERGs start at company headquarters. Stephen Lewis of Toyota and Vijay Patel of EY discuss expanding ERGs beyond headquarters to satellite offices and manufacturing plants. ■

To register for the conference, visit bit.ly/TXDEI2020. Because the conference is online, prices have been reduced to \$20 for a single day registration with code LGBT-DEIDay20 and \$50 for the full three days with code LGBTDEI20.



When women lead

Protests in the wake of George Floyd's death continue. But with women leading the way, the violence has subsided

STEVEN MONACELLI | Contributing Writer

In the past week following the widely-reported June 1 police attack on and mass arrest of protesters on Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge — in which Dallas police used tear-inducing gas canisters, rubber bullets and pepper bullets to subdue people taking part in a protest over the death of George Floyd — every single protest event in Dallas has been peaceful. And the vast majority of them have been led by black women and other women of color.

This is a notable pattern, not just for the sake of highlighting the overwhelmingly peaceful nature of the past week of protests — even those that have explicitly sought to challenge the now-defunct Dallas curfew — but to draw a contrast to earlier events led by Dominique Alexander, head of NextGenActionNetwork, who faces allegations of domestic abuse.

My purpose here is not to investigate Alexander's personal life, which has sparked some controversy over the past year. On the contrary, I am following the advice of various organizers on the ground to follow the real story: the growing number of people participating in entirely peaceful protest actions in Dallas.

There is no lack of organizers. Furthermore, there is no need to try to tear down an organizer who is — in the eyes of movement leaders — already out of the picture. As one organizer said to me regarding Alexander, "He needs to take time to heal himself and his relationships. This is not about him."

It is, instead, about shifting the focus.



From a journalist's perspective

At Belo Park on Saturday, June 6, approximately 3,000 people gathered for an event hosted by the Dallas Alliance Against Racists & Political Repression. Just as two women of color were about to take the stage representing organizers, an older black man began yelling and arguing with some of the organizers near the sound booth. Many photo and video journalists present began to train their cameras on that drama as it unfolded. As I approached, I overheard a young organizer tell media, "This is a distraction y'all. You should be listening to them,"



indicating the women taking the stage

So I did just that. I walked away from the sideshow and instead focused my camera on the organizers, who then directly addressed Dallas Chief of Police Renee Hall, Mayor Eric Johnson and the Dallas City Council.

The female organizers spoke out against the police violence perpetrated against the protesters and directly challenged the claims made by Renee Hall.

"Chief Hall, let's talk about one of your major lies. You and the media have run with this false narrative that before last Friday you hadn't used tear gas in 30 years. That is an outright lie," one of the women

Protest photos by Jordan Smith

said. "I and others were there in 2018 when your police department shot tear gas at a group of peaceful protesters at the Botham Jean protest ... My 1-and-a-half-year-old son was tear gassed ... You are complicit and guilty of crimes against this city and those who visit it ... Resign!"

Speakers also challenged the "outside agitator" narrative pushed by Mayor Johnson, arguing that many who protest in Dallas may not live here but do work here every day. They demanded justice for all the peaceful protesters who had

LEAD, Next Page



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been subjected to police brutality in Dallas.

Too many journalists and media organizations fall into the trap of covering the drama. But most protests I cover are long, hot walks through the summer streets of Dallas. There is, without a doubt, energy, emotion and anger. But most of that, particularly the speeches of organizers themselves, rarely makes the nine o'clock news.



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And that is why my crew is focusing completely on the peaceful events and why I am working to draw a parallel between the local female leadership of the Dallas protests and the broader, national and international trends that indicate women sharing power is essential to longstanding peace and prosperity.

The future is female

Research by Harvard Business School and Columbia Business School suggests that women are better at leading diverse countries. They tend to focus more on "inclusive" and "tolerant" governments, and their economies tend to grow faster.

From what we've seen on the ground in Dallas, women-led organizations have held uniformly peaceful events and have seen their event turnout grow the fastest.

A number of other research findings buttress the idea that women-led organizations are essential to the success of the anti-racist movement — research most recently addressing how female-led countries have better handled the COVID-19 epidemic, and more generally, a broad range of studies suggesting that female empowerment is central to all other forms of social and economic development.

But let's remember that it has only been two weeks since George Floyd died at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer and protests erupted around the country and even the world.

This iteration of the anti-racism movement is still in its early days — remember, the Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted a little over a year — and despite the increasing triple digit temperatures and notably decreasing police presence, protesters show no sign of letting up. The women leading this growing movement in Dallas have a long road ahead of them, and they know it. As they have said, "This is a marathon, not a sprint!"

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a call to come together

For the past few weeks our nation has grappled with major problems focused on our differences — from the differences in how black and brown people are systemically treated in this country, to the differences in how COVID-19 has disproportionately affected people of color. COVID-19 is still ravaging our seniors and residents of nursing homes across the nation. We are still battling a vicious virus that does not discriminate between communities — gay or straight.

Today, however, as we celebrate Pride in the Dallas area, I would like to talk about our commonalities. I would like to acknowledge our similarities and what brings us all together — how we all want the best for our children, how we all want to love freely, how we all want to live our truths, and how we all want to be accepted in our diverse communities and places where we live.

This month we celebrate the pride of the LGBTQ community. We salute their courage to stand together against adversity and their choice to be proud in their convictions on who and how they love. The LGBTQ community teaches us to look beyond differences and celebrate



U.S. Rep. E.B. Johnson
Guest Columnist

America is changing and progress is being made, slowly.

the diversity that includes each of us.

In my lifetime, our LGBTQ communities have indeed come a long way. The culture of

We must continue to push and continue to insist and continue to demand justice and civil rights for all. THIS IS OUR TIME!

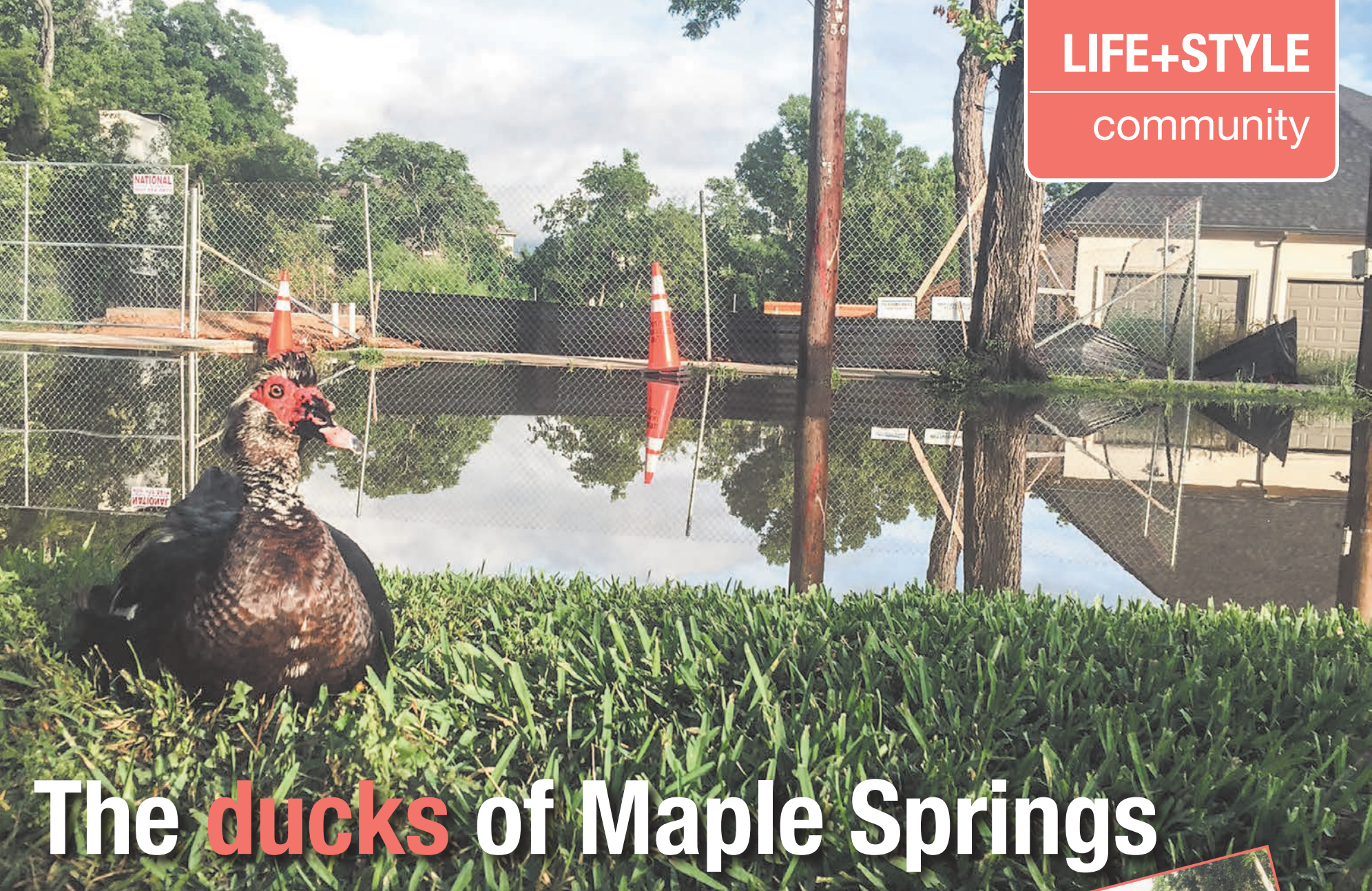
Whether we stand up to be heard or kneel down to be recognized, progress will not come without friction. When you press against the rock of injustice, there will always be friction. When you press against the rock of intolerance, there will always be sparks. And when you press against the rock of bigotry, there will always be fire.

The difference is that there are those who actively work to pour gas on those flames, and there are those who aggressively work to distinguish them, forever.

To our communities of faith, let us continue to pursue love; to our law enforcement community, let us continue to protect the constitutional rights of all of our people, and to our community leaders, let us lead by example. While we examine what has divided us and joyously celebrate what brings us together, let us all remember that, in the United States of America — we all fly the same flag!

U.S. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson represents Texas' 30th Congressional District, and was first elected to Congress in 1992. She was first elected to the Texas House of Representatives, winning her seat in a landslide to become the first black woman to win electoral office from Dallas. She also served three terms in the Texas Senate before being elected to Congress. Congresswoman Johnson is a longtime ally of the LGBTQ community.





The ducks of Maple Springs

Despite 'looking like the Sith,' a community of waterfowl gives character to an Oak Lawn gayborhood

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

One of the consequences of less outdoor human activity on the planet — in addition to cleaner air and a reduced carbon footprint — has been the reemergence of wildlife into urban areas. Many of us have seen pictures of monkeys on the streets of Delhi, dolphins in the canals of Venice, sheep roaming town centers in Wales.

But while cities have always sustained wildlife — from rats in sewers to pigeons on statuary and housepets on leashes — none of this unexpected influx of fauna comes as a surprise to the

residents of the Maple Springs neighborhood. Starting barely a block off Maple Avenue — a stone's throw from Parkland Hospital, around the corner from the Tin Room — this residential community with a high gay concentration of homeowners has long dealt with the omnipresence of huge gatherings of ducks.

While beauty is in the eye of the beholder, these are not usually small, colorful mallards or snowy, flamboyant crested; in appearance, they seem likely to be muscovy ducks: large (almost goose-like), with a warty comb.

"They look like the Sith," jokes Robert Cortez, who has lived here since 2015.

Cortez and his partner Gary Sanchez are some of the residents who have, if a bit begrudgingly, embraced the presence of these fowl interlopers; they've even raised some who were abandoned.

"It was February and they were soaking wet and the mother had already taken off," Cortez says. "You see these

pitiful little creatures — what are you gonna do?"

There were three hatchlings; two couldn't even stand up. So the couple put them in a shoebox, got a light bulb to keep them warm and started researching how to feed ducklings. (Answer: Mealworms; when older, they've also fed them frozen corn and cat food.)

"Two of them lived to adulthood," Sanchez notes, "and one of those became the neighborhood floozie."

That's pretty believable — there are lots of ducks. They tend to travel in clusters. And they aren't shy.

"They aren't afraid of anyone!" jokes Larry Lane, a longtime resident. Lane remembers when, attracted by a nearby spring (hence the neighborhood's moniker), ducks first started to congregate. After a house abutting the springs



burned down, the brace of ducks ventured into yards, eventually walking down the streets and sidewalks like they owned the place.

At first, Lane concedes, they were charming — a defining element to the community. In part, that's because the local raccoons would eat eggs and control the duck population. But a blight killed off many of the raccoons, leaving the ducks without natural predators. In the last few years, they have become more bold... and, Lane admits, more annoying.



"They have torn up my grass," he sighs. "There is some duck drama — it is a polarizing issue in the neighborhood," admits Sanchez.

Many residents tolerate them... and more. Gary Riggs, another homeowner, has a backyard swimming pool in which he will often have to chase away some of the paddling visitors. But recently, he has noticed small nests popping up on his property filled with duck eggs, which eventually become hatchlings. You can still find the babies quacking through the streets, though, the mama leading her offspring down the road.

Still, even many of those who find them troublesome wish no ill will on the birds and acknowledge that their presence makes for a distinctive feature in the community. One neighbor has even painted her front door with pictures of the ducks, incorporating actual feathers into the design — a fitting acknowledgment that the ducks of Maple Springs are residents like anyone else. ■

Additional photography by Wes Smoot and Gary Riggs.



ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

For more photos and videos, visit DallasVoice.com.



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Dallas Pride will not be gathering at Fair Park this year, but is pleased to announce The Pride of Texas, a virtual celebration of a very real mission.



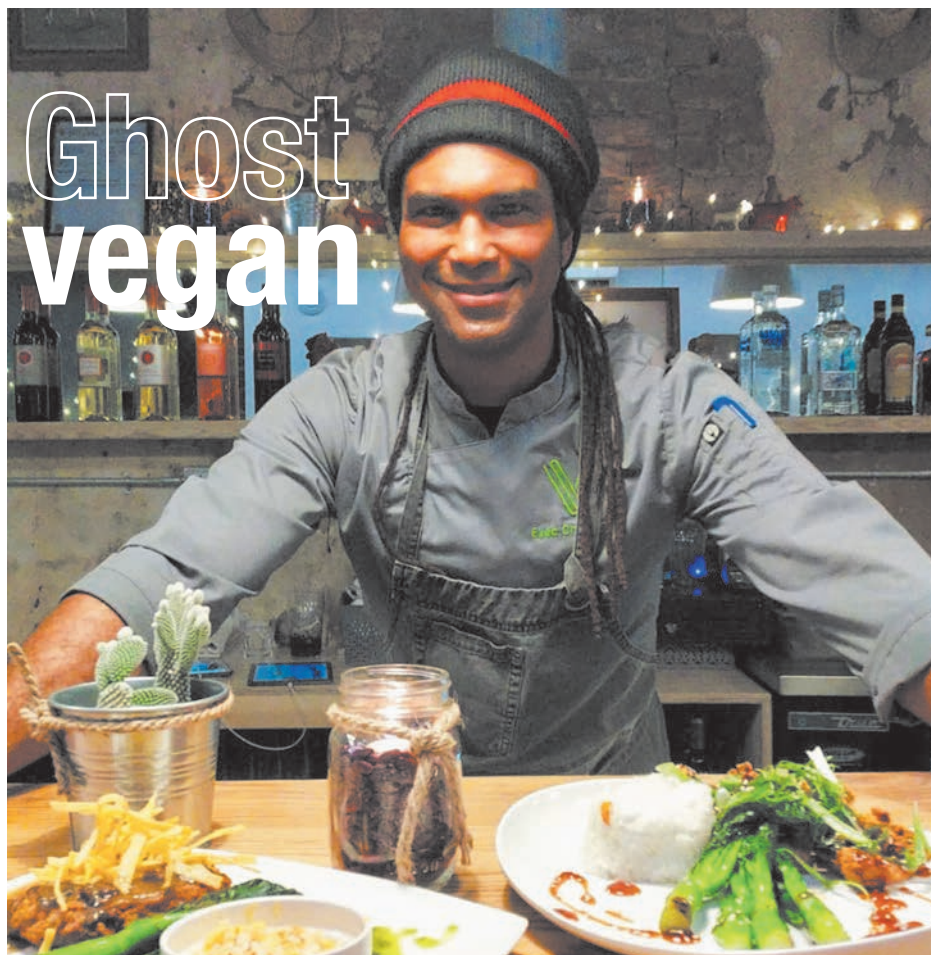
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Ghost vegan



Chef Troy Gardner's new delivery-only TLC Vegan Kitchen brings zingy plant-based cuisine to the people

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

When Troy Gardner was opening V-Eats Modern Vegan, his Trinity Groves vegan restaurant, a few years ago, he was pretty sure he knew what to expect. "Downtown, localized, vegan? I figured lots of young hipsters," he recalls. But he was totally wrong.

"From the day we opened there were people in their 50s, 40s, 30s, from all income levels [and walks of life]. I realized then there was no 'definitive vegan,'" he says.

That kinda includes Gardner himself. He began cooking in the third grade, starting with mac and cheese and inventive ramen dishes; by the sixth grade, he had mastered quiche, a vegan version of which he still puts on the menu every so often. Gardner — who launched a catering company in 1996, and ran the meat-friendly Oak Lawn eatery Samson's Gourmet Hot Dogs

from 2013 to 2016 — still eats non-vegan food regularly. Which is how he thinks it should be.

"I didn't want to alter my palate [by giving up animal-based ingredients] but rather create vegan dishes that tasted like they were non-vegan," he says. (He still wears his vegan-friendly cowboy boots every day, though.) He's a devoted Texan and passionate about Texas cuisine; taking those flavors and making vegan versions of them fuels his culinary sensibilities.

Gardner brings that goal home — literally — with his newest venture, TLC Vegan Kitchen.

The idea behind a curbside/delivery-based "restaurant" without an in-person dining option originated with Gardner about two years ago; he had even considered converting V-Eats to a market/delivery concept late last year. He just couldn't find the time to get it off the ground. That changed with the onslaught of coronavirus. "COVID let me out of some of my other obligations, so I was able to finally do what I have been wanting to do," Gardner says.

TLC is only the latest in a growing concept: The ghost kitchen. It allows chefs to spend rent (often in cheaper

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QUARANTINE CUISINE: Chef Troy Gardner masters textures on dishes like vegan chicken-fried steak and sausage pizzas.

warehouse spaces) on larger kitchens with lower overhead, and bring their cuisine to the masses.

The name TLC is a clever pun, not only because he puts “tender loving care” into each recipe, but because his signature dish, made from oyster mushrooms, “tastes like chicken.” He doesn’t fuss, though, with too-clever-by-half spellings, like chik’n or cheez; he just makes things that taste exactly (and I mean exactly) like their meat-based counterparts.

Take the chicken-fried steak — a thick, breaded medallion that looks like a compact version of the soul-food classic. It’s crunchy and juicy (especially if

you add gravy) and made out of soy protein. (It’s the Impossible Burger “meat,” and he admits it improves upon his seitan version.)

Using Impossible protein is one of his few nods to incorporating the innovation of other vegan chefs in his recipes. The trick (if you want to call it that) to his mastery has always been finding creative non-animal proteins.

“When I started, it wasn’t like you could go to the store and get 15 different meat substitutes,” he says. So he experimented. And soon, he discovered a fresh approach to coming up with vegan dishes.

“I start with textures, because anyone can do flavor,” he says. “When you nail the texture, you nail the dish.” For some recipes, he uses a “magic algae,” and he has used dried flower petals as substitutes. And the texture idea works, certainly with the chicken-fried steak and also the sausage on his pizzas. Other inherently vegetarian dishes, like his crispy Brussels sprouts, are topped with a cilantro-lime crema, hibiscus and basil oil to give them zing.

Indeed, Gardner is no ascetic when it comes to flavor — he celebrates sweetness and richness on the tongue. But he is especially proud of his gluten-free lava cake, his house-made agua frescas (which he concedes can be improved at home with the addition of a little booze) ... all while lowering his carbon footprint: “I believe in improving the planet one dish at a time.”

TLCVeganKitchen.com.

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Coronavirus can stall our celebrations, but not stifle them. From live local dance to Pride at the fair to a concert in New York City, you can get your fill of gay fun.



Bruce Wood Dance: 10 Years, Distance Unites. Bruce Wood Dance would normally be staging its summer showcase around now, but coronavirus derailed live performances of its 10th anniversary season. But you can still enjoy the beautiful work of this group online — and for free. Friday–Sunday, BWD will feature recordings of

live performances of works by Kimi Nikaidoh, Katarzyna Skarpetowska, Bryan Arias and the late founder, including the company's 2018 appearance at Jacob's Pillow. *Schedule and links at BruceWoodDance.org.*



Out at the Fair Livestream. Out at the Fair, a series of family-friendly Pride celebrations of the state and county fair industry, has been affected by COVID-19, with most of the fairs postponed until 2021... including what was to be the 10th anniversary event in San Diego. (Still no word on whether the Texas State Fair will be back in the fall.) The group livestreamed a Pride event last weekend with performances by Ben De La Creme, Debbie Gibson, David Hernandez (pictured) and more, and you can replay the showcase online and bring a little fair, gay fun to your home for free. *Available at OutAtTheFair.com/live.*

Ben Platt: Live From Radio City Music Hall. As anyone who has seen the Tony Award-winning star of Broadway's *Dear Evan Hansen* and the Netflix series *The Politician* (which will soon be back for season 2; more on that next week) can attest, Ben Platt is a gifted singer of amazing passion. How amazing? Check out his concert video, recorded pre-pandemic at Radio City Music Hall, and prepare to be wowed. *Available on Netflix.*



Girl on girls

Jenny Block explores the power of ritual during a pandemic

The human experience is consists of rituals, and when those rituals are compromised we are often left feeling adrift. Graduations, Pride parades, birthdays, weddings — all have been canceled or altered because of this pandemic. How readily we can adapt and accept change that must occur is a testament to the human spirit. Though we fear change, though it may take disaster to force us to reassess, when that disaster does indeed rear its ugly head — be it fire or flood or famine or disease — we see through the flames and the rushing waters and the starvation and the death to discover not only who we are, but what we truly love.

I recently wrote about the truly ingenious wedding of two young lesbians, Lindsey Leaverton and Bri Houk, for *The New York Times*. The pair got married at a drive-in theater, complete with popcorn and tailgates and animated concessions dancing across the giant screens against the backdrop of a vast Texas sky.

The drive-in movie theater is an interesting phenomenon. It was designed to allow people to be apart together. It allows us to have an experience that is at once private and public. We are aware there are others around us, and yet we can be immersed in a film without intrusion.

So how apropos that this couple would choose to have their wedding at a drive-in — how perfectly emblematic of this strange time in which we're living, in which we are all having our very own private and individual experiences quarantined from the outside world and yet all going through the same catastrophic event. We are alone together.

How very much like marriage that is: Two people join together to take on the world, which is exactly like — and completely different from — everyone else's trip around the sun.

This is not the first time the universe cocked its head to the side and laughed at Lindsey Leaverton's plans. She had a promising career as a Christian music singer, with a strong following and a church that was like a home to her. But when she came out, the true colors of those institutions emerged. Her label dropped her. Her church dropped her. Friends and family dropped her as well.

It was one of those moments where you have to decide what you are made of. Will you allow others' expectations of you to destroy you because they don't align with your own truth? And then, years later, will you allow a pandemic to come along and steal a wedding day months in the making?

Planning a wedding during a lockdown is much like deciding what to save from your home when it catches on fire. What can be



easily left behind? What things cannot be replaced? You can buy new clothes and bedding and furniture. But what about the things you can't buy? Your papa's dog tags from the war; your grandmother's wedding band; the photo of your great aunt who was the first woman to graduate from her law school.

That's the thing about weddings. There's a whole lot of lovely window dressing that can be added. But at its core is a simple ritual binding together two loves and two lives

to face an ever and rapidly changing world over which we have virtually no control.

The flowers from the bouquet will die. The dress will be wrapped in a sea of tissue, not daring to dream that it will get to dance around the ballroom floor once again. The menu will be long forgotten, the cuisine a distant memory. And the matchbooks will be tossed into junk drawers across the country if they even make it all the way home with guests.

But that toast your best friend made. The

way your father surprised you with his new Fred Astaire skills as he twirled and dipped you across the floor. The sound of all of the people you love clicking glasses and wishing you well. Those things you will never forget. Those are the things that set the course for a marriage. Those are the things that make a wedding not just a party, but the first of many rituals that will leave an indelible mark on your life experience and remind us that, come what may, we were here, and we will continue to be here.

Each day I wonder when the pandemic will subside; when black lives will finally matter as much as white lives to everyone; when we will once again have a true and sane and just and kind leader in the Oval Office; when *all* police will remember their place and their oath to protect and serve; when the economy will flourish.

In the meantime, I marvel at how we are surviving; how we are protecting the rituals we love and need; how we are standing up for one another; how we are finally holding people accountable for the behaviors we have too long ignored. This is Pride month, and despite it all, I feel incredibly proud to be a lesbian — to be an ally, to use my privilege for the only thing it should be used for: raising up those without a voice.

I'm grateful for the drive-in weddings and the drive-up graduations and the drive-by birthdays. I am grateful for the virtual cocktail parties and Zoom chats. I am grateful to have those rituals to cling to amidst everything going on right now. And I am grateful to know that we can and will overcome — because we must. Every time hate comes calling, we'll flush it out with light, and we'll hold tight to those things that truly make us who we are. It's the only way. So, this Pride season, in all this darkness, I commit to protecting our rituals and to using my visibility to be part of the light.

To make a comment or ask a question, email GirlOnGirls@gmail.com.

this week's solution

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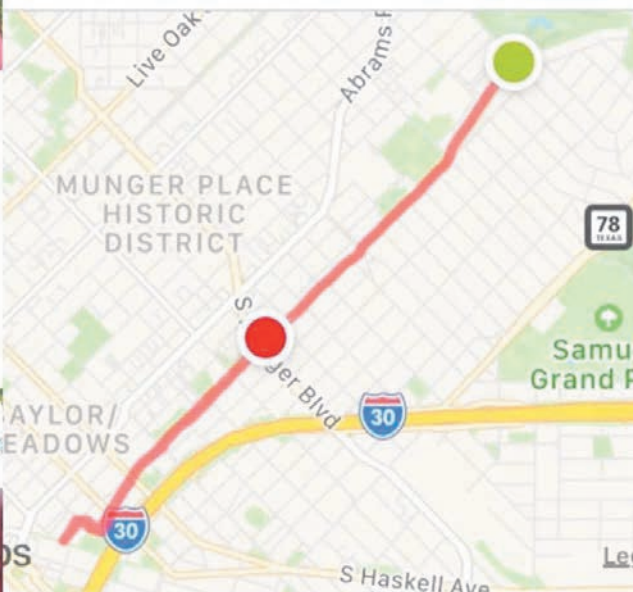


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Activity: Road Cycling

SUMMARY

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Photo by Roger Huffman



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WNBA tickets
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- Land of Sinead
O'Connor
19 Itty-bitty, to Baudelaire
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Wedding Wars
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flick of 2009
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