

dallas voice

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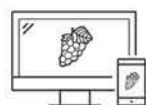
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Prism Health offering free HIV testing on National HIV Testing Day

Reducing testing doesn't mean fewer cases ... of coronavirus or HIV. While we're going through a global pandemic of COVID-19, we can't let our guard down about the epidemic of HIV in our community. The folks at Prism Health North Texas remind us that ending HIV starts with knowing your HIV risk and status.

June 27 is National HIV Testing Day. Prism Health North Texas will be providing free rapid HIV and syphilis testing at its Oak Lawn Center, 2801 Lemmon Ave, Suite 200, on Saturday, June 27, from noon–5 p.m. No appointments are necessary. They will be taking COVID-19 precautions, including providing masks and checking temperatures.

Knowing your HIV status lets you take charge of your health. You can also take charge by knowing your treatment options if you have HIV. PHNTX testing staff on-site can link you to the care you need from accessing PrEP to full-spectrum HIV primary care.

— David Taffet

Police seek suspect in theft at Cedar Springs apartment complex



Dallas police are asking for the public's help in identifying the man — seen in the photos at left — who stole a package from the package room at the Atera apartment complex at 4606 Cedar Springs Road, just north of the

Dallas North Tollway.

The suspect, a white male in his late teens to early 20s with brown hair, was caught on surveillance video as he entered the package room and took “a large package that did not belong to him,” according to police reports.

Police said it is unknown whether the suspect lives at the apartment complex.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Det. K.D. Janse at 214-671-8066.

— Tammye Nash

Lambda Legal files suit challenging Trump admin's Section 1557

Lambda Legal and Steptoe & Johnson LLP on Monday, June 22, filed a lawsuit challenging the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' recently

published health care discrimination rule that would carve out LGBTQ people and “other vulnerable populations” from the protections of Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, among other bases.

Lambda Legal promised to file suit a little more than a week ago, within hours of the Trump administration's June 12 announcement that Section 1557 had been “finalized” without protections for LGBTQ people that the Obama administration had specifically included. The Human Rights Campaign has also pledged to sue the administration over Section 1557.

Three days after the administration announced the policy change, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in three employment discrimination cases, consolidated as *Bostock v. Clayton County*, ruling that the term “sex” in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act includes sexual orientation and gender identity in prohibiting discrimination. Experts have said that while the *Bostock* ruling certainly sets precedent for determining whether anti-LGBTQ discrimination is prohibited in other federal statutes that prohibit discrimination based on sex, such an interpretation is not necessarily automatic.

The lawsuit, *Whitman-Walker Clinic v. HHS*, is filed on behalf of Whitman-Walker Health, the TransLatin@ Coalition and its members (including leaders of affiliated organizations like Arianna's Center in Florida), Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, the Los Angeles LGBT Center, GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality, AGLP: The Association of LGBTQ Psychiatrists, and four individual doctors.

— Tammye Nash

Pride at Work endorses Biden

The Pride at Work National Executive Board voted Tuesday night, June 24, to endorse Democratic candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden for president in 2020. It is the first time the organization has ever endorsed a presidential candidate.

“I am so proud to be a part of this dedicated and thoughtful team of LGBTQ labor leaders, especially as we make history by offering our first endorsement for president,” Pride at Work Co-President Shellea Allen said. “Donald Trump is an unmitigated disaster for working people, for LGBTQ people, for immigrants, for Black and Indigenous people and people of color, for women and for the world. These unprecedented times require extraordinary action, and today, we're taking ourselves off the sidelines and going all-in for Joe.”

Co-President Gabe González added, “Working people know they have a friend in Joe. And I believe the LGBTQ community does, too.”

“Donald Trump's repeated failures for working people have led to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, and it will take strong and dedicated leadership to get us back on track. Joe Biden's leadership is exactly what we need to put people back to work and get our economy moving

again,” Gonzalez said. “I know Joe Biden will be the most pro-worker and pro-LGBTQ president of my lifetime.”

Jerame Davis, Pride at Work's executive director, said, “Pride at Work took this historic step to endorse Vice President Biden because we know he's someone we can hold accountable to his promises. Joe Biden has possibly the most progressive and transformational platform for LGBTQ equality of any presidential candidate in history. His priorities are our priorities and we believe that he will fulfill his promises to lift up marginalized communities and working people.”

“And if he doesn't, we'll be there to hold him to account, just like we did when we believed President Obama wasn't living up to his word.”

— Tammye Nash

Texas A&M scientists call for bipartisan investigation into COVID-19 response failures

As the U.S. death toll surpasses 120,000 people, two Texas A&M scientists — touted as “two of the nation's most influential voices in the COVID-19 fight” — this week called for a bipartisan, objective investigation into the nation's initial outbreak response, during a discussion with John Sharp, chancellor of The Texas A&M University System as part of the 12th and final episode of the series, *COVID-19: The Texas A&M University System Responds*. Their discussion will air 7 p.m. Thursday on KAMU-TV in College Station and on other Texas public television affiliates. It also is on the university system's YouTube channel.

Dr. Gerald Parker, director of the Pandemic and Biosecurity Policy Program at Texas A&M's Bush School of Government and Public Service, warned, “We must prevent this from happening again. This is not going to be our last pandemic.”

Dr. Peter Hotez, a Hagler Institute scholar at Texas A&M and a vaccine researcher at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, agreed with the need for a bipartisan inquiry.

The two scientists said the investigation needs to take place after the immediate and ongoing crisis has waned, and it should be modeled after the 9/11 Commission following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

Hotez said he finds it “particularly concerning ... that COVID-19 transmission was allowed to go on for weeks [in the U.S.] without a major public health response, even though the world had witnessed its devastating impact in parts of Europe and China,” according to an emailed press release from Texas A&M.

“What hurt Wuhan was what hurt New York City, which is the virus transmission went on for six weeks before there was any public health intervention,” said Hotez, who is dean of Baylor's National School of Tropical Medicine.

Sharp applauded the two scientists, saying, “If the field of scientific study had rock stars, Dr. Parker and Dr. Hotez would be selling out stadiums. The nation is blessed to have their leadership in the war against COVID-19.”

— Tammye Nash

TITAS updates season with NYC Ballet performance

Last week, we reported that TITAS/Dance Unbound would open its upcoming season with a performance by MOMIX. This week, the troupe announced that due to a scheduling conflict, MOMIX would be postponed. In its place, New York City's Complexions Contemporary Ballet will open the season on Oct. 1–17.

Like all the other companies in the season, CCB is an American company with longstanding ties to TITAS.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Pet of the week • Nado



Meet **Nado**, a 3-year-old, male hound mix. He has a smooth, tan-colored coat with a hint of cream near his mouth. His big, brown eyes plead for love and are sure to steal your heart. Nado came to the SPCA of Texas as a rescue from a cruelty case, and he has overcome many of his fears resulting from his past treatment. He is sweet and timid and loves a good belly rub. He is looking for a calm, quiet environment and a fenced yard. New situations and busy places can be a little much for him, so having his own place away from others is best. Having another friendly dog in the home who can show Nado the ropes would

be great, but kids under age 12 could make him nervous. He recently completed heart worm treatment and requires exercise restriction until July 21. He will need to take it easy, and his home shouldn't have too many stairs; he probably would enjoy the couch potato life. If you're looking for a quiet gentleman to share your couch with, he's the one for you. Nado 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.

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the SPCA of Texas' shelters, clinics, mobile adoption and mobile wellness events remain closed to the public until further notice. Adoptions are 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.

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.

Celebrating Pride Online

Dallas Voice's Pride Party Online, GDMAF's Rise Together and Trinity Pride's Virtual Pride Fest keep the celebrations going amid the pandemic.

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

With Texas continuing to report record or near-record numbers of new COVID-19 cases daily, and with our attention rightfully focused on the ongoing protests calling for justice for black Americans, our traditional LGBTQ Pride Month celebrations have been muted — some delayed, some cancelled completely.

But we as an LGBTQ community are resilient. We have lived through oppression; we have lived through a plague. We know how to celebrate without losing sight of the battles that still lie ahead.

Last year, the world celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, which on June 28, 1969, birthed the modern LGBTQ civil rights movement. This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first LGBTQ Pride march. And while the Dallas Pride celebration has been rescheduled to the last weekend in July and has gone virtual, we still have plenty of virtual celebrations set for this weekend, too.

Dallas Voice's Pride Party Online

"This is a very important time for us in the LGBTQ community to stand up and make our voices heard," Dallas

Voice Advertising Director Chad Mantooth said this week, explaining why the Voice is holding the Pride Party Online on Sunday, June 28. "We saw that Pride celebrations were being cancelled across the country, and we know that people still wanted to be able to celebrate and show their pride.

"We know that it's important for us to be visible, no matter what."

Noting Mantooth's years of experience working in marketing and promotions in the radio industry, Dallas Voice publisher and owner Leo Cusimano put him in charge of creating Pride Party Online and named him executive producer of the event. Mantooth set out on his mission to bring together a diverse array of celebrities and entertainers — both local and international. And Cusimano reached out to Israel Luna, a well-known and successful North Texas filmmaker and producer for the Voice's video programming arm, DVtv, to get his help in bringing it all together in a high quality, high entertainment online event.

"This show has been a labor of love by many people in the LGBTQ community," Mantooth said. "Everyone donated their time and efforts to make it happen.

"The show will, hopefully, be inspiring and entertaining for everyone. But we also wanted this show to be fun!" he continued. "This has been a rough four months for everyone, and we wanted to put on a show that people can enjoy and that will embody the spirit of Pride in all its forms."

Dallas Voice Pride Party Online starts at 2 p.m. on Sunday, June 28, streaming on the Dallas Voice Facebook page and on DallasVoice.com. The show is presented by HELP Center for LGBT Health and Wellness, and sponsors include Toyota of Irving, Bud Light Seltzer, Goody Goody, AIDS Outreach Center and the Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund.



Local drag legend — and Dallas Voice advice columnist — Cassie Nova will host the show that will feature performances by North Dallas drag favorites and Rose Room cast members, including Jenna Skyy, Layla Larue, Krystal Summers, Kelexis Davenport, Sasha Andrews, Chanel LaMasters, Walter Lee, Kylee O'hara Fatale, Bleach, Frida Monet, Raquel Blake and Fantasha.

Dallas' own Alyssa Edwards — a *RuPaul's Drag Race* and *Drag Race All Stars* alum who starred in her own Netflix reality show, *Dancing Queen*, among other accomplishments — will also be performing. And the internationally-recognized Turtle Creek Chorale has put together a special ensemble video performance for the event.

Other celebrities include LGBTQ icon Leslie Jordan, singers Pepper Mashay and Kym Sims, Grammy-nominated stand-up comedian Lisa Lampanelli, *Queer Eye* OG and RuPaul judge Carson Kressley and some special surprise guest appearances that you don't want to miss.

Rise Together

June is always a big month for the Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund, with its largest fundraiser of the year — MetroBall — usually happening the first weekend of Pride month. This year, though, MetroBall, which would have celebrated its 25th year, also fell victim to the relentless COVID-19 pandemic and was cancelled.

But GDMAF officials were not daunted and have now joined forces with beloved Texas playwright Del Shores and the WNBA's Dallas Wings to offer the virtual Pride celebration Rise Together, streaming live at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 30 and available for everyone at gdmaf.org/RISE.

"The pandemic has hit all nonprofits hard, but the mission of GDMAF — to help those with HIV and AIDS in emergency needs — has not stopped and has



Cassie Nova, left and Ada Vox, above

become an even bigger challenge during this time," said GDMAF founder David Hearn. "There are more cases of people losing their jobs, being behind on rent or losing their housing or even struggling just getting food. The money we raise during this event, as we 'Rise Together' to help each other, will be critical.

"The other good thing," he added, "is that we will be able to reach a lot of new people from all over the U.S. and, hopefully, internationally to learn more about GDMAF and what we do."

Hearn explained that 70 percent of GDMAF's funding comes from support from the community organizations that help raise money, organizations that include Texas Bear Round-Up, Dallas Bears, United Court of the Lone Star Empire, DFW Sisters, DIFFA, the Miss Gay Texas State Pageant System and Lifewalk. But those organizations have also seen their own fundraisings events cancelled due to the pandemic, and that means GDMAF has "has taken a big hit on our funding," Hearn said.

So GDMAF and the Dallas Wings, with whom GDMAF has formed a new alliance this year, reached out to Shores, "who agreed without hesitation to help us out," Hearn said. "He has been a big HIV and AIDS activist over the years, and we are thrilled to have his support in this."

Hearn said that GDMAF's new relationship with the Dallas Wings included the WNBA team choosing GDMAF as a beneficiary for the team's June Pride game. Again because of COVID-19 which has delayed the WNBA season that should have started in May, that Pride Month game had to be reset for June 2021.

"But the Wings still wanted to help

PARTY, Next Page



GDMAF get the funding we need, so we joined together to create Rise Together,” Hearn said.

Jordan Baccus, manager of group sales for Dallas Wings, said, “Even a global pandemic during Pride month won’t stop the LGBTQ community from celebrating who they are and their allies that support them. I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to co-create this virtual Pride event with GDMAF and Pride Basics during these unprecedented times.

“The work that GDMAF does to help those living with HIV and AIDS is remarkable and that they have done this for 25 years and continue to do so during a global pandemic is even more remarkable,” Baccus added. “And working with Brian Ivanchan at Pride Basics to create a limited and one-of-a-kind Pride merchandise box has been a blast. The work that Pride Basics has done for the LGBTQ community over the years to make sure all are seen and heard is admirable.”

Baccus concluded, “Both of these organizations’ stories and missions are why I choose to continue to build meaningful relationships within the community, so that we can all help each other and ‘Rise Together.’”

Rise Together will feature some previous MetroBall performers, including Tiffany, Thea Austin, Chris Chism, Jenna Skye, Chad Michaels as Cher, Thelma Houston, One Up, David Hernandez, Ada Vox, Ray Issac and more. There will also be special guests like John Carlo from Prism Health, GDMAF volunteer Jose Avila and Dallas Wings President and CEO Greg Bibb, and a presentation on the story of Greg Dollgener and GDMAF during the broadcast.

There will be an online silent auction, live chat with Shores, contests with prizes and more. Viewers can text RISE to 44321 to make a donation any time, and donors will be recognized during the event by Shores.

Also available are special PRIDE products produced by GDMAF, Dallas Wings and Pride Basics, with Pride Boxes available now and during the event for donations of \$30 and \$50 that include with special Rise Together T-shirts with custom LGBTQ PRIDE Colors on the wing.

And to cap it all off, at the end of the night Dallas Pride Executive Director Jaron Turnbow will make a special announcement about Dallas Pride on July

25-26 that will include news about GDMAF.

Trinity Pride of Greater Fort Worth

Trinity Pride of Greater Fort Worth, created “with a vision of inclusivity and transparency,” held its first event — a Pride picnic — in June 2019. This year, of course, the ongoing COVID-19 crisis forced this celebration to go virtual, too. The Virtual Trinity Pride Fest will be streaming on Facebook beginning at 8 p.m. Saturday, June 27, and will feature “stunning local drag queens and special surprise guests” and with “resources on how we can support each other through COVID and how we can support our brothers and sisters of color through anti-racism efforts,” organizers said.

The focus on fighting racism was, in fact, an integral part of the original vision for Trinity Pride, “to create a movement that outlasted Pride Month in June and became a resource for the queer community.”

Trinity Pride officials said in a statement this week, “Fort Worth has struggled over the years with issues surrounding race and segregation, and the queer community hasn’t fully evaded those very same problems.

“As the Black Lives Matter movement has amassed followers, Trinity Pride felt it was our duty as activists to truly put our ethos into action. Tyler Long, president of Trinity Pride, and the organization’s board members have chosen to pivot from the celebratory nature of Pride Month to one focused on featuring Black people in our community and educating the broader public about their struggle, proving that allyship leads to a fully inclusive community.

“The board, consisting of eight queer-identifying members, has been intentionally structured to be gender- and race-diverse, giving us the ability to thoughtfully switch gears into this month of activism and action with the queer POC in the Fort Worth community.”

Trinity Pride has partnered with Community Frontline and Third Space, two major Fort Worth organizations, to help center Black and Latinx voices. Community Frontline, working with Trinity Pride, will hold its first LGBT forum in July, and Trinity Pride is supporting and highlighting Third Space’s “ICE Out of Tarrant County” campaign, pushing



Alyssa Edwards, Pepper MaShay, Del Shores and, upper right, Tiffany



Celebrate Pride with the whole world. The 24-hour live stream event will include musical performances, speeches and key messages from human rights activists.

Academy of Country Music GLAAD benefit concert

June 30 at 7 p.m.
f4la.org

Ty Herndon and his Foundation for Love and Acceptance present a concert that benefits GLAAD co-hosted by Kristen Chenoweth and Cody Alan with appearances and performances by Matt Bomer, Tanya Tucker, Rita Wilson, Lauren Alaina, Lewis Brice, Terri Clark, Billy Gilman, Dennis Quaid and Kalie Shorr.

Together We Stand

June 26 from 4-7 p.m. in Reverchon Park

The LGBTQ community supports Black Lives Matter and Trans Lives Matter. Show your support with signs at this peaceful protest.

Family Equality — Out in Texas

FamilyEquality.org/out-in-texas-marriage-equality

A six-chapter video series on marriage equality about two couples from Texas including one from Dallas. The series explores how marriage equality has changed the lives of many Texas couples and families.

Global Pride

June 27

More than 500 Prides around the world contributed more than 1,000 films for Global Pride with speeches from

Tarrant County officials to end the 287G program that allows members of the sheriff’s department to act as local ICE agents creating a pipeline from local jails and prisons to ICE facilities.

“Trinity Pride hopes this time of political movement will strengthen these partnerships beyond the span of the month and lead to a true evolution within the queer community,” Long said, “allowing each individual organization to use their unique niches in order to collaborate and lift each other higher up. Because community means we do not leave anybody out.”

For a complete listing of upcoming virtual Pride events and celebrations — including Dallas Pride set for July 25-26 — visit DallasVoice.com.

Pride Houston

PrideHouston.org
June 27: Global World Pride

world leaders, performances and shout-outs from celebrities. Look for the Global Pride channel on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok.

USA Film Festival celebrates Pride

Friday, June 26 at 7 p.m.
Angelika Film Center & Café – Dallas, 5321 Mockingbird Lane
Celebrate Gay Pride Month and join us for a program of new short films by U.S. and foreign filmmakers from the LGBTQ community. Tickets are free but you must call for reservations (no walk-ups for this event). For more info about this screening and to get instructions on how to request tickets, visit: <http://www.usafilmfestival.com/images/USAFF50.Flyer.new.pdf>

The ‘Stories of Dear Harvey’

Three free, live digital screenings on June 26, July 1 and July 12
BreakThroughWorkshop.org
The Stories of Dear Harvey is a docu-

mentary-style video that interweaves stories from the play *Dear Harvey*, with stories from the creators and the artists who have been changed through their work on the play for over a decade. Inspired by and expanding on the play’s original mission to spread Harvey Milk’s message of love and hope, this project also reflects on the legacy of Dan Kirsch, who originally commissioned and produced the play at Diversionary Theatre in 2009; and is told through the unique perspective of Breakthrough Workshop Theatre, a San Diego-based educational nonprofit which has presented an annual reading of *Dear Harvey* since BWT was founded in 2013.

Logo celebrates Pride Month

Logo will spotlight diverse entertainers, activists, creatives and change-makers in the LGBTQ community throughout the month of June, with its third installment of Logo30. The powerful series profiles everyday heroes and extraordinary people who show pride in unique and provocative ways. Among

those scheduled are Randy Rainbow, Sen. Tammy Baldwin, Bob The Drag Queen, Chasten and Pete Buttigieg, Dylan Burnside, Pennsylvania state Rep. Brian Sims, Tig Notaro and others.

Pride Radio

Virtual Friday happy hour on June 26 from 8-9 p.m. in partnership with Ready-SetPrEP hosted by Pride Radio at youtu.be/oLCe-ABOJzc.



Leslie Jordan



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Designing Pride

Freelance graphic designer Tracy Nanthavongsa designed the city of Dallas' official Pride flag

MATHEW SHAW | Contributing Writer
mathews.yb@gmail.com

Dallas' skyline just became more colorful thanks to graphic designer Tracy Nanthavongsa. Nanthavongsa is the one who designed the city's first official Pride flag, which will be flown over Dallas City Hall every June from now on.

The design — which features the seal of Dallas centered inside a white star representing Texas, all on a rainbow backdrop — is simple. But it represents a more complex larger picture, Nanthavongsa wrote in a Facebook post.

"The city of Dallas [seal] is located within our great Lone Star State," he wrote. "And outside of that state, we acknowledge the diversity of a community that unifies us all."

The city council approved his design by unanimous vote on June 17. And the next day the flag was raised at City Hall Plaza.

Nanthavongsa's experience working with Councilman Adam Bazaldua on past campaigns, as well as his tenure at the district attorney's office, made him an attractive candidate to design the flag. He said that Bazaldua approached him in May to fashion a city Pride flag.

He agreed to do it, even though he had never designed a flag before. Four days later, Nanthavongsa submitted six or seven designs.

He said the city wanted something that represented both Pride and Dallas. "The easiest and safest bet to combine the two was to use the city seal that already existed," he explained. "We can't change

the rainbow flag, and the seal they sent me versus the rainbow, the colors, was just really tacky. They didn't match. So that's why we used the lone star behind the seal.

"So it's the seal, the lone star and then the entire community of Pride."

Nanthavongsa said he did not expect the news of his flag design to blow up. But within a few hours of sharing the news on social media that the council had adopted his design, the post was

shared 400 times.

Nanthavongsa submitted the flag right at the same time the protests over the death of George Floyd, a Minneapolis black man killed by police on May 25. Nanthavongsa's office is on Main Street in Dallas, in one of the buildings damaged in the early protests. He said even though he was scared for himself and for others, he would have designed the flag with the protests in mind if they had happened earlier, choosing to offer

a "social justice" flag featuring a fist in beige and brown and the colors of the trans flag.

Still, he said, his experience designing Dallas' first official Pride flag is a major milestone in his five years as a freelance graphic designer.

"This definitely adds to my portfolio," Nanthavongsa said. "I don't think any other city is going to be like, 'Hey, Tracy, design our Pride flag,' but it does add some credibility to my name."



Tracy Nanthavongsa holds a copy of the city of Dallas' 2020 Pride Month proclamation, top, and poses with three gay Dallas City Council members, above, at the ceremony to raise the Pride Month flag he designed for the city.

The life of an activist

C.d. Kirven helped lay the foundation that today's protests are building on

Cd. Kirven has been an activist in the Black civil rights, LGBTQ equality and women's rights movements for decades. In the weeks since a now-former Minneapolis police officer named Derek Chauvin killed George Floyd, Kirven has participated in and monitored the near-daily protests taking place here in the streets of Dallas.

Kirven sat down recently for an interview with Dallas Voice to talk about her history and what she thinks of what's happening now in the streets across the country.

— Steven Monacelli

Dallas Voice: Thanks for taking the time to speak with me, C.d. I wanted to chat with you about you, your history of activism and your view on the protests, including the night of June 1 on Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge. You were there that night, correct? Cd: Yes, I was.

Ok then, let's start with how you got into activism, and then we can weave that into the protests over the past few weeks. Well, I guess my first foray into activism was probably 18 or 19 years ago. At the time, I had read in the newspaper about the food pantry program, which was about to go out of existence. It was a place where 3,000-something HIV-positive homeless people would get their only meal of the day. So I said to my girlfriend, "You know what, I'm not just going to turn the page ... I'm really sick of opening the paper and seeing this going on."

So I started a fundraising program to help save the center, and eventually, it got a big grant and was integrated into the Dallas

Resource Center. I got everyone I could, including the drag queen community, to help out.

So that was my baptism by fire, my first foray into activism. After the success of that program, the conversations I was having began to shift toward race relations in the LGBT community. So I wrote this article for the Dallas Voice, which began a contextual conversation about how segregated even the LGBT community in Dallas is. At that point, I met some local activists who got me more involved. We decided to get more aggressive regarding LGBT rights.

What did that look like? Forty-five activists were flown from across the country — black, white, lesbian, almost everybody — including myself. We were trained about Martin Luther King, about Rosa Parks — you know, that whole bus thing was all planned — and we developed ideas of what we wanted to do going forward. And then we all flew back to our home cities to try to make it happen.

Eventually, the group came to Texas, and we decided what we were going to do here. I helped get everyone behind the organization Get Equal. We started doing local and national actions, including protests at Speaker Pelosi's Office and the Republican HQ. It was an organization that kind of was a mixture of people that felt forgotten, and it also was people that wanted to take LGBTQ action into more of a civil rights fight for our era.

We kept fighting until eventually DOMA came up to the Supreme Court. We all flew up there, and I spoke in front of the Supreme Court.

And then we came back and just did more work. I had been discussing on the radio the tense race relations in the LGBTQ community in Dallas. Because you know, just as an example, we hadn't had a [black] marshal, a grand marshal, in the Dallas Pride parade for over, like, 30 years. When they eventually picked someone, it wasn't someone who had ... done the sort of work that previous grand marshals have done in the community. It felt like it was



C. d. Kirven

just an attempt to shut up the community of color in the LGBTQ community.

So you're saying it was a symbolic gesture that didn't align with the people facing the issues and doing the work to solve them? Right. It's just an acknowledgement that we have a race problem, a severe race problem, but that's about it. And when we get to the point, you know, we wouldn't even have Pride if it weren't for women of color and trans women of color. Yes, that's the reality.

And then I hear a lot of chatter on social media from white people in the LGBT community saying, "Oh my God, look at all that rioting." Well, Stonewall was a riot.

And not only that, it was a police riot. Yes! They were tired of police doing whatever they wanted. And it's the same thing

that's going on now. So yes, you know, I'm severely frustrated. But I'm also very encouraged. Because of the combining of the Black Lives Matter movement with the gay community, and the gay community saying, "We're behind you," that it's all the same fight.

Yes, I've seen that at protests myself. I also have seen the bifurcation of opinion in the LGBT community you're describing, sort of based around who has been the primary beneficiaries of these victories that have occurred over the past couple decades, like marriage equality. I've heard people express they felt like after that, much of the affluent white male gay community stepped away. Right, right. And that's been a big issue. For years in Dallas we've had

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THE LIFE, From Previous Page

a "regular" Pride parade and a Black Pride parade. That's because of segregation.

But we are seeing people trying to combine these efforts now. I'm proud of all these people who are saying enough is enough. And not all of them are Black. You were there with me on the bridge; it was primarily white people! So I have faith that we are not going to drop it.

This is a systematic problem. Racism is integrated into our culture, running through America's veins. Whether it is slavery, or how they used to drain the pools in Hollywood after Black stars swam in them, or how some politicians recently suggested maybe Black people have COVID-19 more because they're not clean, or Black people being killed by police on a daily basis.

Even while we're protesting against police brutality, Black people are facing police brutality. These things are integrated into a bigger issue which is called white supremacy. And so if we don't have these conversations, then these things continue; our children will have to face it, and our children's children will too.

Just look at reparations, which I view as an acknowledgement that we were wronged. Native Americans, Asian-Americans abused during the railroads, and other groups have received reparations. The Black community has not. Yet people still say, "Y'all want something for free."

We've never gotten anything for free. We've had to fight, which is why I have done that for the LGBT community, for racial injustice, for climate change, women's rights, DACA and workers rights. I put on the gloves and am ready to fight. And it is hurtful to me that my LGBT community doesn't reciprocate.

As you've said, the fight is intersectional. So I think it's powerful to hear someone like you speaking not just on the issues of your specific life, but making sure to emphasize the interconnection across all of these issues. The whitewashing of Martin Luther King Jr. erases his focus on class and anti-war. It seems like we're kind of living through that sort of moment again, right, where all these different people are standing up for their civil rights together. And as you mentioned, the folks that were on the bridge weren't even predominantly black, but still faced police brutality. It's almost like anyone who is standing up



C.d. Kirven speaks at a protest outside the U.S. Supreme Court during the DOMA hearing

for black lives risks being brutalized.

Exactly. We need to be looking at the police budgets, taking away what is unnecessary, and investing back into these communities, instead of using military equipment to brutalize Black communities. Even the ACLU talks about defunding the police. We have to use the words that invoke the provocative conversation. All you have to do is Google the word "defund" and understand what it means.

Yes. The word "reform" is ambiguous. It could involve giving police departments more money.

Right. Like Houston has done. ... Talk of "reform" is just propaganda telling us to quiet down about the oppression that goes on at the hands of the police. But people don't stop. So now we have the term "Karen," which means a white woman that will call the police on Black people for nothing. And when we talk about defunding the police, we're talking about taking another tool out of Karen's racial toolbox, and that's the fear that's running down people's back.

Something that I've seen in the daily protests is impatience on behalf of some folks who probably haven't been confronted with this conversation and have acted aggressively when inconvenienced for eight minutes.

I have a question for those people: Is 400 years too long? That's how long we've been waiting. We've been patient enough.

Well, I would like to be mindful of your time. Is there anything else you'd like to say before we wrap this up? I want to make sure that I say how grateful I am for this generation, because it was them out there on the bridge with me — out there using their white privilege to stand in front of people like me and continuing to fight. So I want to say thank you. And keep fighting.



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Mansfield ISD board rejects specific LGBTQ protections

The school district voted not to include gender identity and sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policies, despite SCOTUS' 'Bostock' decision

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

One week after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "sex" includes sexual orientation and gender identity protections under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Mansfield ISD's school board voted unanimously on Tuesday night, June 23, not to expand its nondiscrimination employment policy to include those two categories.

Stacy Bailey, a Mansfield ISD elementary school art teacher who had been lauded as teacher of the year, filed suit against the district in 2018 after she was removed from her classroom in late 2017 because she mentioned her fiancée — now wife — Julie Vazquez to her students. She was suspended with pay for an investigation she was told might take a couple of weeks but instead lasted a full school year.

In February this year, Bailey won her suit, and she negotiated a settlement that required, among other things, that the MISD school board vote on whether to include gender identity and sexual orientation in the district's nondiscrimination policy. Bailey said the agreement didn't actually require the school board to pass it, just to vote on it.

The board has delayed that vote since reaching the settlement in February. Board members claimed they were waiting for guidance from the U.S. Supreme Court, which was expected to issue its ruling on three employment discrimi-

nation cases that had been consolidated under *Bostock v. Clayton County*.

What was even more surprising than the board completely ignoring the *Bostock* ruling was the unanimous vote. Mansfield School Board member Randall Canedy, for example, has spoken about his gay son and the son's husband. Yet Canedy voted against LGBTQ employment protections and protection for LGBTQ students.

And board member Raul Gonzalez spoke with Resource Center's Rafael McDonnell and Leslie McMurray on at least three occasions about model policies, according to McDonnell, even telling them on one occasion, "We're going to get this done."

Not only did Gonzalez not get it done, he voted against nondiscrimination himself. "He failed," McDonnell said of Gonzalez after the vote.

The Rev. Katie Hays from Galileo Church in Kennedale had been involved in equality activism in Mansfield ISD since Bailey was first suspended from her position. Hays said the way this case was handled and the way the vote was taken was typical of how things happen in Mansfield: Everything is done behind closed doors, she said, then, without public discussion, a unanimous vote is taken. Hays said she has seen the same thing happen at just about every school board meeting for the past two-and-a-half years.

Tuesday's vote, Hays added, "sends such a sad message to the students."

Over the past few years, a variety of LGBTQ students and their parents have come before the school board to speak about Bailey's case and the district's lack of protection for LGBTQ students. Hays said she has "listened to heartache from parents and students," adding that the board should "Just enumerate the protections to these vulnerable kids."

Hays called Tuesday's vote "psychological cruelty" and said it was both sad and mean. The message sent, she said, is, "You're not protected here."

On Monday, the Texas legislative

LGBT Caucus, made up of five LGBT members of the Texas House of Representatives and more than 20 allies, sent a letter to the Texas Association of School Boards. Their request was that the organization expedite a revised discrimination, harassment and retaliation employment policy in Texas public schools as a result of last week's the *Bostock* ruling.

"Based on the ruling from the court, this revised policy should contain language that sexual orientation and gender identity are protected from discrimination in the workplace," the caucus wrote in its letter.

Caucus members reminded the association that hiring for the fall school year was about to begin, and only a handful of Texas school districts already have inclusive language in their policies. Among those that do are Dallas ISD and Fort Worth ISD.

Texas Associations of School Boards responded to the letter on Tuesday, notifying LGBT Caucus that it had already updated with its recommended changes in light of *Bostock*.

Mansfield school board members ignored that information when it took its vote that evening.

Bailey said she was disheartened by the vote: "This is an opportunity for the superintendent to speak out for equality for all. Will employees be protected and supported?"

She said what disappointed her more than anything is that the policy the school board voted against included protections for LGBTQ students and their families. She said when she was first suspended, she saw one lesbian mom in her neighborhood post online that she didn't feel comfortable enrolling her child in that Mansfield school after reading about how one of her school's teachers was being treated.

"I want parents to know their LGBTQ kids are safe," Bailey said. And she wants LGBTQ parents to know they're welcome in Mansfield schools.

"We are protected by the Supreme Court ruling," she said, but some gay teachers she works with told her the school board's vote was a "gut punch."

McDonnell, communications and advocacy manager for Resource Center, has focused a lot of his advocacy efforts on getting policies and procedures at North Texas schools updated to provide specific protections for LGBTQ students, faculty and staff. He said the Mansfield school board's vote this week was "a failure of

leadership from every member of that school board and from that superintendent. They should be ashamed of themselves."

Dallas ISD moves forward

But while he was disappointed by the vote Tuesday in Mansfield, McDonnell said there is good news coming out of the Dallas ISD. School board members there were expected to approve policy changes there to make the district's dress code "more LGBTQ inclusive" and to lift discriminatory restrictions on black students wearing natural hair styles.

The expected changes will culminate "nearly a year's worth of work" with DISD that started last year when the Austin ISD changed its dress code with LGBTQ students in mind. "As a result of that, we took a look at the DISD dress code policies, and then took that to members of Youth First for input and suggestions. We came up with two different things," McDonnell said. "One was that students will not be unfairly penalized or singled out for dress code violations for a variety of reasons," including dressing in ways that don't conform to traditional gender stereotypes.

In addition, proposed changes include language dealing with what happens if a student comes to school and is deemed to be "out of policy." The schools already have a supply of clothes to help students in those situations who cannot, for whatever reason, just go home and change into something appropriate. The new wording would make sure that students in that situation can get clothing that matches their gender identity and expression, McDonnell explained.

In addition DISD Trustee Ben Mackey is expected to offer an amendment to end discrimination against black students wearing natural hair styles. This comes as the Black Caucus in the Texas Legislature prepares to introduce a bill in the next legislative session that would ban such discrimination statewide.

McDonnell said the proposed dress code changes were part of the board's consent agenda for Thursday night's meeting and so were expected to pass without problem. "But," he added, "I wouldn't be surprised to see them pull it from the consent agenda for a separate vote, just to give board members a chance to be on the record with their vote."

Managing Editor Tammye Nash contributed to this report.



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Then. And now

51 years ago at the Stonewall Inn, LGBTQ people took to the streets to change the world. Today, we have the chance to heed the call to help change the world again

MARK SEGAL | Special Contributor

As someone who participated in the Stonewall riots back in June 1969, many people have been asking me the similarities between that event and the events, civil unrest and demonstrations that have followed the murder of George Floyd. They want to know if the two events — and the people pushing for change — share a connecting factor.

In May of 1969, when I was 18 years old, I moved to New York to escape a closeted life of

lies. I quickly realized that we, as LGBT people, were invisible in the media, in business, in entertainment and, in fact, in most areas of life. We were thought of as immoral by all religions, as illegal by the police and as mentally ill by the medical profession. And, as I noticed almost instantly, we were treated as inhuman, dominated and controlled by police.

I would find out the extent to which we were dominated very shortly.

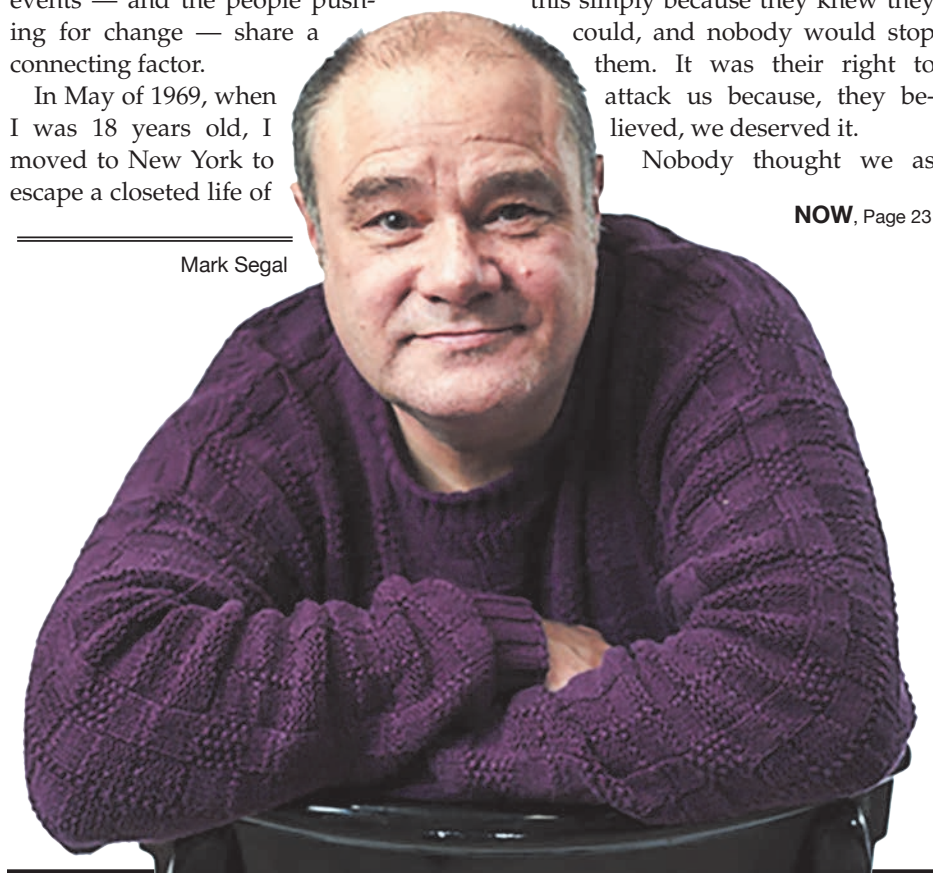
When the police burst into the Stonewall Inn that night in June, I witnessed police violence against our community for the first time — not just intimidation, not just verbal abuse, but true physical assault.

The lights blinked inside the bar, and soon after the doors burst open. Police took people, who had been peacefully enjoying their drinks, and slammed them up against the walls. They did this simply because they knew they could, and nobody would stop them. It was their right to attack us because, they believed, we deserved it.

Nobody thought we as

NOW, Page 23

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Happy Pride from the Canadian consulate in Dallas

'LGBTQ rights are human rights' is a Canadian value that its consul general brings to her post in Dallas

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

A few hours after release of the June 15 U.S. Supreme Court decision affirming non-discrimination protections in employment based on sexual orientation and gender identity, I spoke to Rachel McCormick, Consul General of Canada in Dallas, who congratulated the U.S. on the ruling. While Canada extended those rights to the LGBTQ community with an amendment to its Human Rights Act in 1996, there was no gloating over Canada's much earlier recognition of universal equality or marriage equality. McCormick only shared joy with us.

"I saw a lot of happiness for the Supreme Court decision across Canada on social media," she said.

And Randy Boissonnault, a former member of the Canadian Parliament and special advisor to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on what both he and McCormick refer to as LGBTQ2 issues, pointed out that transgender protections weren't added in Canada until 2017. And not until last year were old records expunged for convictions under the old sodomy laws.

"Canada is not without its challenges," McCormick acknowledged.

In response to the George Floyd murder, McCormick said, Canada is right now going through a conversation about being anti-racist. Boissonnault pointed out that in 2017, the Toronto Pride parade was stopped for 45 minutes by a

Black Lives Matter protest. The point of contention was that the parade being "a little too white" and forgetting about minorities within the LGBTQ community.

Boissonnault credits Trudeau with much of the progress that's been made since he came to power in 2016. Trudeau recognized he needed a minister advising him on LGBTQ issues to understand the community's needs. McCormick said the community is diverse, and issues that are being addressed include isolation of seniors and sometimes having to go back into the closet for safety to receive care, receiving proper healthcare, youth issues and coming out.

As diplomats, both McCormick and Boissonnault were as, well, diplomatic as can be. So when asked how policies are created to address needs of the LGBTQ community, McCormick said, "We're very committed to evidence-based policymaking."

That was simply a comment on how Canada's government works: Science is accepted; research is encouraged. It wasn't meant as criticism against the U.S. or any other government.

Human rights has become a very Canadian issue. "We empower missions around the world to work with local human rights organizations," Boissonnault said. And the Canadian government "puts money in the hands of consuls" to do that work.

In Ecuador, that meant helping to house 200 Venezuelan LGBTQ refugees who had fled for their lives. In Dallas, the consulate brought the executive director of Egale Canada, the country's largest LGBTQ rights organization, to a symposium at SMU earlier this year.

But one of the major functions of a consulate is to encourage trade. McCormick explained that her role is helping small and medium enterprises access international markets.

Boissonnault led a trade mission to Philadelphia to create links between the



Rachel McCormick, Consul General of Canada in Dallas.

LGBTQ chambers in the U.S. and Canada. Earlier this year, when he started a PPE company, he used suppliers he met during the trade mission.

Both agreed the U.S. is ahead of Canada on supplier diversity.

"Obama was very successful with that," Boissonnault said. "A goal of the current Canadian Minister of International Trade is not just to increase trade but diversify markets where we trade. That includes the LGBTQ business community."

McCormick welcomed contact with members of the business community who would like to expand into the Canadian market or work with Canadian suppliers to contact her office either by phone or on Facebook.

How is that working during the COVID-19 pandemic? "We have an extremely integrated supply chain," McCormick said.

She said both sides of the U.S. border worked quickly and amiably to close the border to most traffic while keeping trade and trucking going. Domestically, the Canadian government supported shelters, domestic violence groups and partnered with Egale Canada on needs of the LGBT community where they found a higher prevalence of the disease.

Boissonnault said OutRight Action International, which addresses human rights violations and abuses against LGBTQ people around the world, found authoritarian governments are using the pandemic as a screen to marginalize.

During a crisis such as this, "you become a target," he said. Transgender men and women can't get their hormones, and people living with HIV can't get anti-retrovirals.

When the world is concentrating on something else, authoritarians consolidate their power, Boissonnault said. On

the opposite end, he cited the current Prime Minister's father, former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who made the decision in 1967 to introduce legislation to legalize homosexuality.

"Governments really do matter," he said.

And without comment on how the U.S. is doing during the lockdown, Boissonnault said in Canada, people are pulling together. "There's overwhelming cooperation with lock-downs," he said.

McCormick added, "In hotspots, decisive action is taken. Especially in remote communities in the far north, people took action to protect their communities."

Despite the pandemic, the Canadian consulate remains hard at work promoting trade, but also promoting its human rights agenda.

McCormick listed ways the consulate is working to become better allies with the transgender community. "We're transitioning bathrooms to be gender neutral," she said, adding that the staff includes pronouns where appropriate. And staff has training on advancing ally-ship.

While Canada has less than one-half of 1 percent of the world's population and only about 15 large cities, the country was home to 125 Pride celebrations in 2018 — or about 10 percent of the total Prides held around the world.

And how sincere is the country's Prime Minister to his commitment to LGBTQ rights? Boissonnault said he has attended a meeting with Trudeau every Wednesday, 26 weeks a year for his four years in office.

"There's no difference between what he shares in private caucus and what he says publicly," Boissonnault said of the Canadian prime minister. "The message is consistent. LGBTQ2 rights are human rights."



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Big Ol' Baptist, Big Ol' Gay

Tim Seelig tells his 'Tale of Two Tims' in a new memoir out this week

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

People who attended Turtle Creek Chorale concerts during the 20 years Tim Seelig was at the helm likely know snippets of his life. For instance, they might know he was fired from the Baptist church he worked at in Houston. And they might know he was married to a woman and had two children.

They might know "the Cliff Notes version" of his life, Seelig said. But, he added, the reaction he's gotten from those who were familiar with the personal tidbits he throws out to the audience from the stage and who have now read his new memoir, *A Tale of Two Tims: Big Ol' Baptist, Big Ol' Gay*, has been, "Oh my gosh. I had no idea."

Seelig's memoir describes some horrible experiences. But no matter how bad they were, he still describes hysterically. A good example of how he describes his life through the lens of his own sense of humor is his retelling of his experiences with three Christian counselors as he struggled with his sexual orientation.

After being molested while a student at Hardin Simmons College in Abilene, Seelig visited Christian counselor No. 1. At the age of 19, he was convinced that everything would be alright if he fled to Oklahoma — where there were no gays — from that massively evil gay presence in Abilene.

Counselor No. 2 presented him with what he calls the Sears Catalog of lady pickin' — if he just got married, of course, he'd be cured of his homosexual tendencies. That counselor helped Seelig narrow the field to two finalists, and then he married the winner.

And the advice was precious: Go ahead and scratch that itch when needed.

Christian counselor No. 3 is the one who outed him to his wife, his children and his church in Houston. "He blackmailed me into telling my wife what I've been struggling with," Seelig said.

Recounting the story within a week of the *Bostock* decision that declared sexual orientation and gender identity covered under sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Seelig said he believes the church had the right to fire him. What they didn't have the right to do was spend money on attorneys to hound him for the next year.

Not only did the counselor reveal Seelig's sexual orientation to his wife, he disclosed a long list of details that Seelig revealed during what should have been confidential counseling sessions. So what should have been a private separation and divorce assisted by the counselor was, instead, weeks of fighting and retribution that dragged out into a year of misery.

Seelig laughs now about one fight with his soon-to-be-ex-wife, who asked him, "How many men have you had sex with." "I can't even count them," he told her, even though — at the time, at least — that wasn't true.

Seelig also recounts in the book his relationship with his two children. His daughter Corianna, to whom he dedicates the book — who was raised by her guncles (gay uncles) in the Turtle Creek Chorale — died suddenly in 2018. It was Corianna that outed him as HIV-positive when she announced she was going to ride in the California AIDS Ride — in honor of her dad. Of course, his name was included in all of her fundraising material.

Seelig said that while his outing as gay was done with complete malice, his outing as HIV-positive was done totally out of love.

Seelig was estranged from his son, Judson, for about seven years, beginning when Judson left for college at age 18. After receiving his degree, Judson moved to Dallas but changed his name so no one would ask

questions about whether he and the infamous director of the Turtle Creek Chorale were related.

But then Judson got engaged, and his fiancée let him know she wasn't going to marry someone without meeting his father — especially when his father lived in the same city. So he arranged a meeting with Seelig and his partner. They had so much fun that the evening ended with Seelig's future daughter-in-law asking when they could see each other again.

Seelig and his partner planned the young couple's wedding reception, and "It was the gayest wedding Dallas ever saw," he said proudly.

The wedding took place at the Sammons Center for the Arts on Harry Hines Boulevard. Seelig rejoiced at how many Baptist relatives he packed into the hall where the Turtle Creek Chorale and The Women's Chorus of Dallas each hold weekly rehearsals.

And while Dallasites who were once his audience when he directed TCC will enjoy filling in the blanks between the small bits they already knew as they read his memoir, they'll also enjoy stories about his last 10 years serving as artistic director of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. Seelig began his 10th year with SFGMC in January, and, he said, he is sad that he isn't directing the chorus this year. They're tentatively scheduled to return to the stage in January 2021.

To no one's surprise, Seelig is doing everything big in San Francisco.

Part of the memoir involves *Gay Chorus Deep South*, a documentary released late last year that will eventually be aired on MTV. The film tells the story of the San Francisco chorus taking a one-week tour of the Deep South, visiting the home towns and churches of several chorus members.

Seelig said before leaving on tour, many members thought they would be teaching a thing or two to people in red states with the weakest pro-

tections for the LGBTQ community. Instead members of the chorus learned lessons about love and family from those they visited.

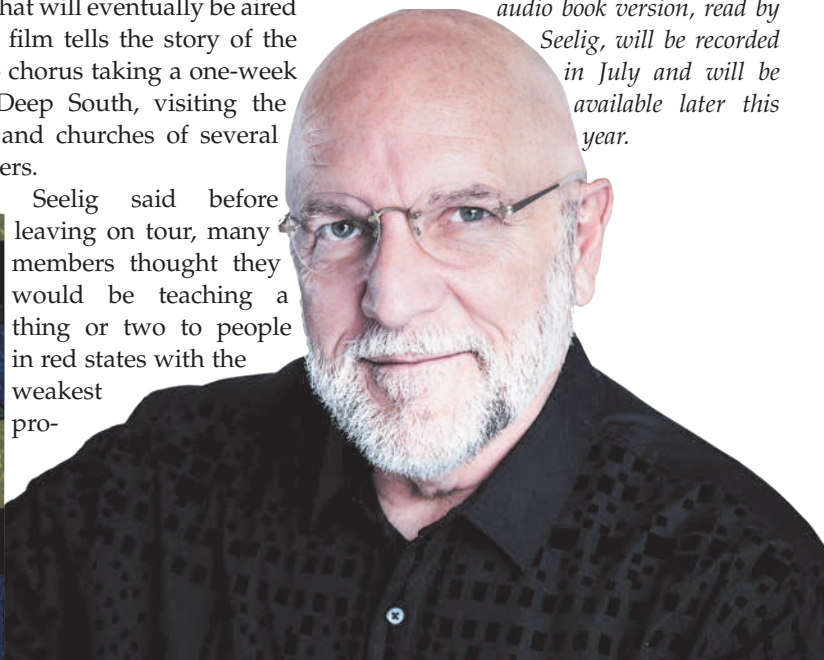
Also last year, the chorus purchased a four-story building in San Francisco that's not only the new home for the chorus, but — again, this should come as no surprise to anyone who knows Seelig — the newly-launched National LGBTQ Arts Center.

Just months before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the chorus took on a major expense — buying real estate in one of the most expensive cities in the U.S. — while losing the major source of their funding for a year — their concerts. But, Seelig said with certainty, "We're going to make it."

They've turned part of the building into the SFGMC TV broadcast center. So far, they've produced a number of episodes of an interview show featuring guests such as Kristin Chenoweth, composer Andrew Lipa, Cheyenne Jackson, chorus concerts and pandemic videos produced by compiling chorus members singing individually from home and wov-

en together. Seelig said one of the lessons he's learned during the pandemic is aerosolization that means choruses like his and the chorale will be the last arts organizations to return to the stage, because of how singing projects droplets. "It's something I should have known," he acknowledged. "I've watched my mama use enough Aquanet through the years."

A Tale of Two Tims: Big Ol' Baptist, Big Ol' Gay is available through Amazon. The audio book version, read by Seelig, will be recorded in July and will be available later this year.





LGBT people had any worth in society. No authority would be on our side.

We were let out of the bar one by one. But rather than run home, many of us chose to stay. I stood across the street from the bar. Eventually, there were more of us outside the bar than there were police officers, and the police were trapped inside.

Almost spontaneously we began to throw anything we had at the doors. The police had lost control because we refused to allow them to attack us any more.

Like the black community, we witnessed the hate and the disregard, and we experienced a police force attempting to dominate and control us. As with the protests today, the protesters at the Stonewall Riots were young people my age, street kids, trans people, people of color and women. Society and even parts of our own community had already abandoned us. We didn't have good jobs that we were afraid of losing. We had only our lives and our dignity to protect.

We were the ones that had nothing to lose.

Sometime in the middle of all the ruckus, I stood there and thought: This is 1969. Black people were fighting for their rights; so was the Latino community and the women's community. What about us?

In the middle of that revelation, a man named Marty Robinson handed a piece of chalk and told to write on the walls and streets: "Tomorrow night Stonewall."

And we did meet that second night and then a third. And from the ashes of Stonewall, the Gay Liberation Front was created.

From our anger we founded a group that made sure nobody would forget what happened at Stonewall and that nobody would forget how we'd been treated by the police. A movement was created, the first LGBT movement that was willing to fight back and not just plead for our rights.

We were out; we were loud; we were in your face.

Over those following nights in 1969, we were the ones who dominated the streets. We were the ones who defied

the police to stop us. We had found in ourselves real radical organization, self-identity and community.

Part of our movement was to work with others seeking social justice, so we marched with women, Latinos and African-Americans. We worked with the Young Lords and the Black Panthers. The women of GLF were part of the women's movement, and many were leaders there.

Although we were people who were literally illegal in New York at that time, we took back our streets. We advertised our meetings and dared the police to break them up. For the first time, a drag queen could walk down Christopher Street and not be arrested. And they were welcomed as part of this new movement of inclusion and diversity, where in the past our own community had shunned them.

We protested and created incidents. Some of us were beaten; others were arrested. But we never gave up. When anyone got arrested, we demonstrated the next day outside the police station.

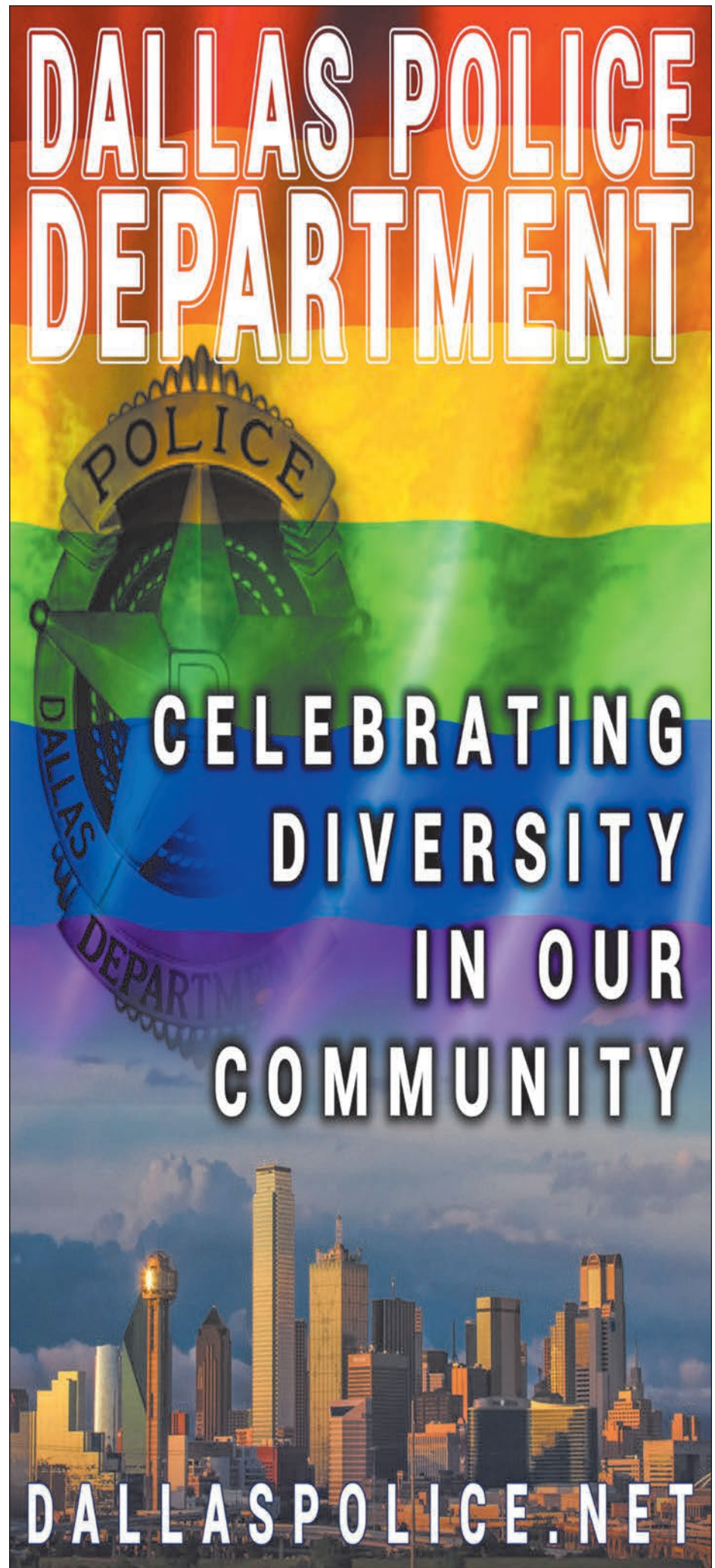
The similarities between Stonewall and the protests today are obvious. Violence once seen as normal in all its ugliness became unacceptable. A dominating police force would no longer be tolerated. The idea that "This cannot keep happening" led to civil unrest and created a movement for change.

We are at a pivotal time in history, a time of powerful change. We need to embrace the moment and help it spread. We need to be proudly on the front lines.

We can't be afraid of being arrested. Many of us in 1969 wore our arrests as a badge of honor. After all, our country was born from a revolution.

Those who fought to create this country in 1776 are known as patriots. And the people fighting for change today, the people taking to the streets and demanding that these injustices happen no more, they are patriots, too. ■

Mark Segal has been an LGBTQ activist since participating in the Stonewall Riots in June 1969. He is one of the original founders of the Gay Liberation Front and created its Gay Youth program. He is also the founder and former president of the National Gay Newspaper Guild and the founder and publisher of Philadelphia Gay News.



Good music, good bourbon, good times

'Bourbon Cowgirl' Scooter Pearce won't let anything, including homophobes, stand in her way

Being closeted was never really an option for Scooter Pearce; even when she was a little kid, when someone asked her name, she'd tell them, "Johnny Cash." Still, being openly lesbian in the 1990s meant that the music business wasn't welcoming her with open arms; even in the Outlaw music scene here in Texas, Pearce had a hard row to hoe. But she kept going, even when all the odds were stacked against her.

Pearce started out in the music business in 1991, playing country, southern rock and blues. By 1996, she was playing her own original music in her gigs, and by 2002, she was touring the state with her own band, The Gypsy Cowgirls. The band broke up in 2008, Pearce went back to working solo, and she was starting to build a name for herself; in fact, in 2010, Gabino Iglesias with The Austin Post dubbed her "the Voice of Authenticity."

But it was that same year that she hit on a streak of bad luck that nearly ended not just her career, but her life. In 2010, Pearce broke up with her partner (the impetus for the song "Ring Don't Fit My Finger"), and on Thanksgiving Day, the studio where she had been working and living crashed, and she lost all the recordings she had been working on. By March 2011, the studio was back up and running. But a near-fatal car wreck on Father's Day that year could have ended her career, if not for her friends. She told Austin Culture Map in 2012, "I wasn't supposed to ride in a car for three months. I played my first show on July 9,



and only missed one show due to being in the hospital."

Still, her injuries severely impacted her ability to keep up with the hectic schedule she was used to, Dan Garrison with Garrison Brothers' Distillery — where Pearce had often played gigs — set up a trust in her name and auctioned off bottles of the distillery's best reserve whiskey to help fund it. Becker Vineyards held an auction, as did Alamo Springs Cafe. By the next summer — in fact, one year to the day after her accident — Pearce was back in the studio to begin recording her album, *Authentic*.

These days, Pearce's touring and gig schedule is pretty much at a standstill, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. But Pearce had already changed things up, taking a job in 2018 as the hospitality tour supervisor at Garrison Brothers Distillery, where she gets to put both her musical talents and her love for great bourbon to good use. And that slower schedule gave Pearce the time this week to answer a few questions for *Dallas Voice*.

— Tammye Nash

Dallas Voice: I have seen several interviews about how a break-up inspired you to write "Ring Don't Fit My Finger" and about how you fought back after the automobile accident in 2011. What kept you going through that breakup and your studio crashing and then the wreck? Scooter Pearce: A lot of heart and the love of the song. I knew that all I need-

Half the time, even today, I get called "sir."

It's been harder for me to get into some venues, and some I've had to go in through the back door! But once the music started, folks started seeing me as a human being, not just a lesbian. And when the night ended, I was usually invited back for more shows. All it took was my music.

Now, there have been those other places, the ones that had figured it out from the start and won't hire me due to my lifestyle. But the Kerrville Folk Festival opened many doors for me in different directions and opened many hearts and ears of all races, sexes and creeds.

You are part of the "Outlaw Country" music scene, which has always been very different from the "traditional Nashville scene." Is the Outlaw Country world more accepting of LGBTQ artists? Or are you seen as a rebel even among the rebels? At first it was hard to break into the scene. But I had a couple musician buddies call in sick to their gigs and send me in their place. Luckily, they let me play, and all was good. But, once Marge [Muel-ler] insisted I play Luckenbach Dance Hall for a friend's memorial, I became less of a rebel.

Even though they didn't want my band to take the stage, we packed the dance floor with our first song, and we kept the crowd. We got invited back several times, and my first band, The Gypsy Cowgirls, had made their mark in the Outlaw Country Scene.

After [Gypsy Cowgirls] broke up, I remained true to the music. I had a master music producer, Rene Lawrence (a.k.a. "Mo T. Rucker") who taught me to stand alone, and I have been blessed with great musicians to teach me other tricks of the trade.

What would you say that being openly lesbian means in terms of your songwriting? Does it bring a different level, a different flavor to your work? I really don't think it affects my writing much. All my music comes from the heart. But I have been told that I should flip my pronouns, so people wouldn't know that I'm gay. But, I responded, "John Prine ain't an old woman, but 'Angel from Montgomery' was a hit, damn it! I will write my songs as I see fit."

Switching gears now, tell me about working with Garrison Brothers Distillery. How — and when — did you get started with them? What do you do at the distillery? Tell me about the tours

ed to do was keep going. As long as I had my guitar and my music, I knew I was ok. It's just not in me to quit.

How did all that affect your songwriting?

It was definitely a growing period, but it never really changed the way I wrote music or my types of songs either, just gave me more stories to tell! Every song is a story, whether it be mine or my favorite barfly's. Some are funny; others rip your heart out. Each song is a gift from the Muse.

Talk a bit about being an out lesbian in the world of country music. Were you just always out? If you came out at some point, how did it affect your career?

Did it affect your songwriting at all? I've been out since I was 14 years old. I never let my sexual preference stand in the way of anything, especially my career. I never pretended to be anything I'm not. I stayed true to myself, because music made me connect with people I wouldn't normally connect with on a day-to-day basis. But, in doing that, I faced struggles in the business that a straight woman wouldn't.



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GOOD TIMES

, From Page 24

you lead. Well, it's kind of a long story. I met Dan Garrison one night while playing music at an outdoor venue in Fredericksburg. He liked my style and booked me on the spot to play for the very first Bourbon Camp, which was for the very first group of investors for Garrison Brothers Distillery, back when the whole operation was in one building and before the bourbon was even ready. But that white dog sure tasted good!

Ever since that night, I have always been treated like family. Like, when I had my wreck in 2011, Dan called me while I was in the hospital and said, "Scooter, I know you're uninsured and need help, but knowing you, you're not going to ask for it. But I'm gonna do what I can to help you." A couple months later, Dan shows up at a benefit for me at Becker Vineyards and hands me a check. He had raffled off some bourbon in my name, with the campaign name of "Bourbon Drinkers for our Favorite Gypsy Cowgirl."

Over the years, I have played all types of events for Garrison Brothers — public events to private dinners and, of course, Bourbon Camp every year, LOL. But in 2018, I put on a different hat and got myself employed at Garrison Brothers. Each show had become worrisome, because more people in these areas were becoming more open with their hate. As long as they thought I was a man, everything was ok. But as soon as they realized I wasn't a cowboy on stage, their looks could kill, and their words were harsh. Now, don't get me wrong; it wasn't everyone or everywhere, and it wasn't the ones that hired me. Just always seemed to be that one group that made everyone with me watch their backs.

So I figured it was time to slow down and only play for the venues that respected me and my safety. So now, I work in Hospitality as the tour supervisor. I get to give tours (public and private) of the first Texas distillery with my sixth-generation Texan flare, share my stories of the ranch and enjoy damn good bourbon!

When I'm not doing tours, I am working with my hands — building things and repairing the broken stuff that keeps hospitality shining. But I also get to spread joy with my southern charm and charisma, LOL. Even though they still call me "sir" ...

Can you give us a quick lesson on how to judge a bourbon? So, pour some bourbon in a glass. First observe the color, then you swirl it in the glass. Quality bourbon will have what is called "legs," similar to wine. Now you do what we call "nosing": that's where you hold the

glass under your nose and inhale deeply through your mouth. With good bourbon, you can taste it with inhaling, not sniffing, and without the burn. Bad bourbon burns all the way around.

A great bourbon to me is Garrison Brothers. What sets it apart from the rest is that we use No. #1 food grade ingredients — God-given Texas rain water, and we use smaller barrels so that the liquid gold has more contact with surface of the wood, giving it maximum flavor. And also because Texas doesn't have traditional seasons, we have "hot," "hotter" and "hotter than Hades," LOL. But it works for us, because the bourbon ages quicker in our heat, so you get quality product in half the time.

When it comes to first tastes, you can never go wrong with our small batch 2020, but if you're lucky enough to find Balmorra, you found yourself bourbon candy in a glass! It is double-oaked, meaning it ages in two different barrels. The other bourbon I would suggest is Cowboy — unfiltered, uncut, but hard to find. It sells out almost immediately at it releases on the ranch. Last year we sold 500 bottles in 58 minutes. Also, you can never go wrong with one of our single barrels — one barrel that yields about 100 bottles, and each barrel is different than the last, meaning each single barrel has its own flavor profile.

Don't let the price tag scare ya about our bourbon, because it's worth every drop.

They tell me you are called The Bourbon Cowgirl. How did you earn that nickname?

Because I'm a real cowgirl! LOL! No, really it's because when Dan met me, I was a foreman for a 1,000-acre cattle ranch in Johnson City, Texas. I also wear pearl snaps, Wranglers, boots and a cowboy hat daily, ever since I was a kid. So, I guess I dress the part, too. But I don't just look the part, I live the part. And I drank a lot of bourbon to get this smooth, baritone voice, LOL!

I understand y'all just recently raised about \$300,000 in about three weeks for COVID-19 relief. How did y'all raise the money, and where is it going? We started a campaign at the distillery called "Operation Crush COVID-19." We raised the



money by auctioning off a new release of bourbon, "Laguna Madre." The money goes to Team Rubicon, a group of vets that help out in natural disasters, like hurricanes and COVID support. It also goes to help out the service industry workers that lost their jobs due to the epidemic.

Tell me what's next on your agenda? I assume that the epidemic has put a lot of stuff on hold, but if someone wanted to catch a performance, where should they go? Well, pretty much everything is on hold. Most of the venues I play nowadays are house concerts, wineries and corporate events. Most have been canceled due to COVID, but I'm looking for more open venues for both the rest of the year and next year. I do, however, post music videos on my social media pages, and all my music is on major streaming platforms. But with the down time, it's good for writing and studio time. And for tours, we're hoping to kick 'em back up in the fall, but everything is still up in the air.

Last, but not least, what do you want to talk about that I haven't asked about? It may have taken me longer to get to where I am today because I'm gay, but I wouldn't change anything. All my struggles and hardships have been lessons, blessings of lifelong friendships and roads not for the weary to travel. Take those away, and I

Garrison Brothers: Texas' first legally distilled bourbon whiskey

ready-made bottles. The distillery, located on a small farm and ranch in the Texas Hill Country, was founded in 2006 and in 2010 produced the first bourbon whiskey legally made in Texas. The extreme Texas heat originally caused Dan Garrison's casks to crack, leak and even break altogether, wasting hundreds of gallons of the "white dog" distillate. But that same heat turned out to be Garrison Brothers' secret weapon.

The Texas heat creates multiple aging seasons in a year, resulting in a darker, richer, fuller, bolder — and multiple award-winning — bourbon. The Garrison Brothers team was awarded a gold medal for its Single Barrel Bourbon, a silver medal for its 2016 Small Batch Bourbon, and another silver for its Balmorhea Double Barrel Bourbon at the American Craft Spirit Awards in 2018. In 2014 and 2017, Jim Murray's Whiskey Bible named Garrison Brothers Cowboy Bourbon "American Micro Whiskey of the Year." Whiskey Bible recently awarded the same distinction to Balmorhea Double Barrel Bourbon for 2019 and again in 2020. Garrison Brothers was voted Best Craft Whiskey Distillery in America by readers of USA Today in 2017.

Garrison Brothers' bourbons include

- Garrison Brothers Small Batch Bourbon (47% alc/vol, 94 proof, 750ml), Just 48,000 bottles.

- Garrison Brothers Single Barrel Bourbon. Visitors can buy a bottle of the Single Barrel that they bottle themselves at the distillery. Bottles include custom labels with details about the barrel and whom it was selected for.

- Garrison Brothers Balmorhea Twice Barreled Bourbon (57.5% alc/vol, 115 proof, 375ml), aged three years in new white American oak barrels made from



wood grown in the Ozarks, and transferred to a second new white American oak barrel made from wood grown in Minnesota, and aged another two years.

- Garrison Brothers Estacado (53.5% alc/vol, 107 proof, 375ml), aged three years in a new white American oak barrel and finished for six months in eight heritage Llano Estacado Winery port wine casks. Just 4,710 bottles.

- Garrison Brothers Boot Flask Bourbon (47% alc/vol, 94 proof, 375ml), 2018 small batch bourbon sold in a 375 ml bottle ergonomically designed to fit snugly around your calf in your most comfortable pair of boots.

- Garrison Brothers Cowboy Bourbon (68.65% alc/vol, 137.3 proof, 750ml), aged five years in new, charred white American oak barrels. Uncut, unfiltered and bottled at cask strength. Just 4,725 bottles.

For more information about Garrison Brothers Bourbon or to arrange a tour of the distillery, visit garrisonbros.com or follow @garrisonbros on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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"People are more able to hate us when they are unaware that we are members of their communities."

— From "Pride is a Protest!"
by Jayla Wilkerson

Since 2016, politically-active LGBTQ people have had to protest gay Republicans. We've had to volunteer for candidates who support us, up and down the ballot, in every election to try and balance the hatred, homophobia and bigotry coming out of the halls of government. We have had to spread information that promotes our fight for equality and helps keep us safe.

Most recently, we have had to choose between sheltering in place to protect ourselves and each other from a pandemic that has been allowed to rage through our country or joining our black brothers and sisters facing tear gas and rubber bullets and more to make sure people know and acknowledge that Black Lives Matter.

We have even changed "Gay Pride Month" to "Gay Wrath Month." That, of course, isn't an official name change. But we, as an LGBTQ community, need to be fed up with the white supremacy plaguing the black community which aligns so clearly with the homophobia and transphobia plaguing us — all of which have clearly infested our current political climate. It is necessary not just for the well being of our own communities, but because — when considered as a corollary to Jayla's point — because we are less able to effectively stand up to racists when we are unaware they are members of our community.

And so, we must protest.

Hearing recently about Log Cabin Republicans Dallas having these big, successful meetings has been hilariously confounding for me — watching and wondering how many of them are just itching for the day their conversion therapy will be successful and they can join their GOP colleagues completely in their bigotry.

It takes me back to my high school days when I knew that at any minute, that annoying bully was going to show up and start calling me "fag." Their homophobia, like the high-school bully's taunts,



Joey Casiano
Contributing Columnist

to our LGBTQ youth, who are still facing their own high school bullies.

Since the 2016 election, I have been subjected to more than a few anti-gay attacks myself. I'd like to say I kept my composure every time, but truth is I have yelled back; I have caused a few scenes. But I have no more patience with these people who don't want to let me be myself. And yet I know that, as a cisgender, gay, light-skinned Mexican guy, what I have been through is insignificant compared to the hatred and discrimination my black LGBTQ family endures.

And honestly, going out recently to celebrate Juneteenth, seeing the strength and motivation of the protesters in the streets — motivation to make a difference, motivation to be happy — comforts me. It reminds me of being at the Dallas Women's march, of how wonderful it felt as we made our way to City Hall, yelling out our chants at the counter-protesters gathered against us. And it felt good to see these activists out on the streets, prepared for what they were doing and what they needed to do. It was different from the sense of imminent disaster I used to feel, disaster that I felt and saw in 2016 when I watched about a third of voters just simply not bother to vote.

There are, I know, a number of reasons those people didn't vote: They don't care about helping others. They don't think their vote counts. They have not yet settled on their political ideology. They were born on third base.

Whatever their reasons, it doesn't matter, really, because what lies at the core of all the reasons is either an unwillingness to participate or an oppressed psyche.

have no real effect on me anymore. But I can't help but wonder what damage these homophobic gays of Log Cabin Republicans might be doing

Those of us who care to engage must do so as much as we possibly can. And we probably will for a very long time — even if this next election goes our way. And that includes registering people to vote, and then get them out to vote.

Let me be very clear, voter registration is not just about registering people. It's about informing voters. When voters are informed, they find it easier to vote, and when it is easier to vote, turnout goes up.

How do we do that? We have to plaster our candidates and voting dates across our whole community, on all platforms, especially while we live in the clutches of COVID. And we do have some outstanding candidates this cycle.

Ann Richards was elected governor in 1990 by a slim 2 percent margin. She lost to George W. Bush in 1994, and ever since then, Texas has been red. In 2018, Ted Cruz won re-election by effectively the same percentage as Ann Richard's victory. While this is not enough to predict the next election's outcome, there does seem to be a favorable trend there. And when it comes to our elected officials, in the words of Holland Taylor as Ann Richards, "You have the power to call them out and call them down. You hire them. You can fire them."

I think perhaps that Pride Month 2020 will probably be known as "Gay Wrath Month" for quite some time, and I cannot think of a more fitting title for my birth month.

The wrath the nation is facing is for Marsha P. Johnson, for Breonna Taylor, for George Floyd and so many others. We need that wrath, just like the Civil Rights Movement needed protests, The Black Panthers and others to be successful.

But we also need the vote. We need people going out on their days off to register and inform voters. Otherwise, hell, we'll be out here protesting the rest of our lives, and so will our children.

It is not our time to rest. It is our time to speak out and stand up for our rights, because even if you think you have no stake in the game, your dignity does. ■

Joey Casiano is a local artist/author working on his first novel. He serves on the Stone-wall Democrats of Dallas executive board and is a political activist.

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Where does the good go? Jason Mraz knows

The musician opens up about coming out as bisexual and talks Pride, protesting and our current uprising

The coronavirus pandemic has forced Pride events around the world to go virtual this year. For Jason Mraz, that means he can, for the first time, take part in the annual summer festivities. After all, thanks to the virus, the “I’m Yours” singer-songwriter can’t tour in support of his latest album *Look for the Good*, which dropped last week. Usually, he says, he’s on the road during Pride season.

“I’ve got friends and neighbors who invite me every year, but my schedule never allowed it,” Mraz says during our recent Zoom call (that predated the Supreme Court’s recent landmark gay and trans rights decision). This summer, he says, he’s “probably gonna hole up with my friends and neighbors and do the virtual Pride event and go hard.”

From his home studio in San Diego, Mraz, 43, discussed his side hustle — food agriculture — as a metaphor for the fight for racial and LGBTQ justice, how Mister Rogers inspired his latest album, why he’s thanking his childhood bullies who used to call him a “fag,” and his journey to being openly bisexual.

— Chris Azzopardi

Dallas Voice: How are you and your family doing? And the avocado farm? Jason Mraz: I’m fine. I’m a bit of an empath, so yeah ... feeling pretty terrible about what’s going on. I’ve tried to use my superpowers for good. I’ve tried to sing songs of hope and positivity and peace and joy. So, you know, thinking about how I’m going to keep singing and breathing life into a better future. We have a little apricot tree, which for the first time is producing fruits. It really is a pleasure and a privilege to work in food production and to work with the Earth and to have that level of peace, and that interaction with nature.

I once read that one of the best things to do is to go outside and just lay on the ground. Just feel the Earth underneath you. So nice. I think one of the best things to do is just lay down *in general*, which I always forget. I’m always on my feet. I’m always going, going, going. A cool thing I like to do when I lay down on the Earth, especially at night, is remember that we’re not necessarily sitting on top of the globe; we’re kind of stuck to perhaps the side of it, or depending on how it’s photographed, maybe we’re on the bottom of it. Who’s to say the poles are really on top and bottom? We’re floating in a vacuum of space. There’s really no up or down. So when I’m lying on the side of



Photos courtesy Jen Rosenstein

the Earth, I like to imagine I'm on the side of it, just dangling. And if you put your feet up, you're really dangling out into the universe, which is this big, vast ball of confusion. It's a good thing.

I know right now is not really the time to lay down and be quiet and look at the stars, but let's talk about food for just one second. You can't grow food overnight. It takes time, and it takes rest, it takes daylight, and it takes darkness; it takes the earth to regenerate and renew itself. That said, everyone who's out there fighting for justice right now, also remember to stay hydrated and get good sleep and stay rested so that a season of this can continue and real transformation and regeneration can occur.

They say that if you're not taking care of yourself, you can't take care of other people. That's right. The flight attendants tried to teach us well. Secure your oxygen mask first before securing others. But nowadays, careful how you even say that, because there's been plenty of people who never even had an oxygen mask to begin with. So here we are in a whole new educational America.

There really couldn't be a better time for this album. You couldn't have predicted that this is where we would be, and yet it feels like this album could have come out of this very moment. Can you talk about your headspace when you decided to write this music and how relevant it is to what we're going through right now? In 2016, after the election that year, my heart exploded, and I started writing different kinds of songs. I knew that 2020 was going to be another engaged election year, so last year I just started putting all this together. I teamed up with Michael Goldwasser of [reggae collective] All-Stars — he's a phenomenal reggae producer — and we put a phenomenal band together. We thought, "The sound of reggae and all the different genres inside of it are so danceable and also beloved around the world; let's make a full album of reggae tracks, and, at the same time, let's try to breathe life into some issues we care about through these songs and lyrics and offer it to the world in 2020. Because we know it's gonna be heated; we know there's gonna be debates; we know there needs to be radical change and recognition for many." We, of course, didn't predict this level of radical change. But I'm glad to see an uprising. I really am.

I'm not an anarchist, but I am glad to see America getting its education and an invitation for new ways to mobilize, strategize, react, use our resources, use our powers. So *Look for the Good* was intended to be that. It was intended to be this little album of songs that are easy to dance or march to, to remember to stay positive while you're out there using your

voice or your time for the greater good.

With everything feeling so heavy right now, where do you find the good? Well, if I'm not on the internet, I'm at my piano, usually. And it's kind of a new instrument for me. It has a different voice; it has a different weight. So that's been my peace. That's been my little church.

And then on the internet, I go for peace. I follow [civil rights activist] Shaun King and the NAACP, and I just want to educate myself more on how I can better use my internet resources. I feel like the battlefield for a more equal and just America is not [only] on the streets, it's also on the internet. Because we've clearly seen propaganda come our way to heighten our president and those initiatives, but we also need the propaganda or the internet content and bravery and songs and sharing to heighten the injustices and to advance equality.

Here's something interesting: About 10 years ago, I took a trip to Ghana, and I got to visit "the door of no return," which is what they would call the door that slaves were passed through; if they went through that door they were going to be boarded onto a slave ship and exported out of Africa to either London or the United States. It was an intense place. But the thing that helped abolish slavery was the printing press. This blew my mind — a printing press. Because suddenly now we've got newspapers, and we can make more people aware of what a slave ship looked like, what humans look like stacked in a boat, and how harsh the conditions are. And it started to touch people's hearts. And eventually people said, "Enough is enough. Why are we doing this to other human beings?"

So we are experiencing the same thing right now with the level of communication that we have, the many cameras and eyeballs and engaged people we have. We have all these microprinting presses all over the planet exposing the harsh realities and brutalities that people of color and [the] LGBT community as well have experienced. This type of hatred and bigotry. So I feel like this is a huge awakening. There's a huge new printing press. Sorry. Your original question: What am I doing to look for the good...

Yeah, you said you're at the piano, making some music and writing some songs. That's really where my best spirit is enjoyed, at the piano because I can transmute my fear and my pain into something more pleasant. Our life experience is going to be the result of our thoughts and our speech, our beliefs and our actions and our attitudes. I feel that music — and art in general — is such a

■ JASON MRAZ Page 44

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Do-over



Jon Stewart's political comedy 'Irresistible' fails to coalesce

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

I still haven't fully forgiven Jon Stewart for abandoning America.

That's harsh. But in 2015, when he stepped away from hosting *The Daily Show* — the comedic moral center of our political discussion — he left a vacuum where outrage mixed with gravitas and accessibility. He used to mock how many people got their "news" from his satire show, but the truth is *they did*. Part of me still wonders if, had he hung around long enough to skewer the Nazi Cheeto every night at 10, we might be in a different world today.

And so the fact that *Irresistible*, his new politically-charged feature film (as writer/director, not actor) begins on Election Day 2016, suggests maybe even Stewart is looking for a do-over. If only it had quite the impact as he was once able to muster.

In the film, as in life, Trump has been elected, to the surprise of most political

pundits, including Democratic strategist Gary Zimmer (Steve Carell), who goes into a state of denial and self-recrimination. Looking for a way out — a worthwhile political horse to back — Gary settles on Jack Hastings (Chris Cooper), a retired Marine who becomes a minor YouTube sensation after an impassioned speech at a city council meeting in a rural, eco-depressed Wisconsin town. Gary recruits the taciturn country rube into mounting a campaign against the incumbent mayor, with the promise of respecting his authenticity and values.

Yeah, we all know where this is headed.

The trope of the cynical, sophisticated campaign operative rediscovering his passion for civic involvement (while stressing his fish-out-of-water outsiderdom from Middle America) isn't a new one; it was basically every sixth or so episode of *The West Wing*. That makes *Irresistible* disappointingly familiar. But what it lacks in original insight is offset — at least for a while — with its hopeful, even romantic sense of fantasy. Unfortunately, such rom-com-

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The purge



'Welcome to Chechnya' uncompromisingly profiles the widespread persecution of Russian gays

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

David France spent the first 30 years of his life as a print journalist, especially covering AIDS in the 1980s, when mainstream media were largely arm's-length about gay issues in general. In 2012, he turned all that collective memory and connections into his first movie, the Oscar-nominated *How to Survive a Plague*, which used fascinating, rare video footage of meetings and protests, plus current-day interviews, to tell with gravitas and astonishing intimacy the inside story of a campaign many of us probably assumed we already knew. (If you've seen it, you'll probably never forget — as I haven't — the late, surprising reveal that feels as powerful as the satisfying solution to a locked-room mystery.)

Now France has turned his investigative and storytelling skills on an even less-well-known story of gay rights, at least in the West: the brutal, widespread, violent purge of gays in the Chechen Republic of the Russia Federation. *Welcome to Chechnya* might not have quite the impact that *How to Survive a Plague* did, but it has something else in even greater abundance: The immediacy of atrocities going on right now.

The crackdown on homosexuality exploded in 2017, around the same time the American president was cozying up to soulless dictators like Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un. Chechen's strongman, a weasley, bloated bumpkin named Ramzan Kadyrov, shares a particularly loathsome quality with Trump: The ability to lie while simultaneously admitting that what he's doing is justified. "We don't have homosexuals" in Chechnya, he proclaims to a journalist, so how could he torture them? Then he suggests any be sent to Canada to purify the blood of the Chechen people.

Horried by the persecution, a network of gays began a kind of post-So-

■ THE PURGE Page 47



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A family affair



California dreaming in the sexy, fine-weather Genesis G80; but the sporty G70 sets a new bar

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
autocasey@aol.com

Since driving the original Hyundai Genesis sedan a decade ago, I could tell the Korean automaker's upscale brand had serious potential. I've met many Genesis owners who love their cars. Now a stand-alone brand, Genesis is becoming a serious competitor to the world's luxury automakers. If you think I'm nuts, you haven't driven some of their latest: the Genesis G70 — a car that puts several rivals back on their trailers; or the hefty big boy G80.

First, let's dig into the G80. Up front, you need to know some-

thing: I despise winter — the icy roads, the chilly mornings and especially the long dark nights. It all just leaves me California dreaming of cranking the Beach Boys and watching the sun set over the Pacific from a surfboard. When my niece announced she was getting married near San Diego — during December — I was revving my jets to go. Making it even better was the sexy, slinky Genesis G80 5.0 waiting for my family at the airport.

Mission One was using it to make 58 miles disappear between San Diego and Wedding Central in San Clemente, right on the Pacific Ocean. My husband set the NAV while I clicked onto Interstate 5, where the 420 horsepower 5.0-liter V8 engine got busy moving its distance evaporation mojo to the rear wheels through an eight-speed automatic transmission. All-wheel-drive is available, but ours thrust from just the rear haunches. Go

G80 '19
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The only thing slowing our progress was a stop at an In-N-Out drive-through to quell munchies after our cross-continent flights. Like, yum!

Whether slinging chrome northward to meet relatives, or carting them to and from wedding venues for several days,

the G80 made a convincing mini-limo with its wide swaths of matte wood on the dash/doors, aluminum detailing, heated/ventilated Nappa leather front seats, heated rear seats and heated steering wheel. Given weather that was irrepressibly "seventy and sunny," we left the dual-pane sunroof open. The Lexicon audio system sounded crisp

and was enabled by wireless phone charging, Apple CarPlay/Android Auto compatibility.

There was plenty of tech to tempt this driver. The heads-up display worked with the navigation system to keep us mostly on-course while multi-zone automatic climate control suited all. My daughter couldn't keep her hands off of the power rear sunshade as she played celebrity. Safety was enhanced by forward collision mitigation with pedestrian detection, lane keep assist, blind zone alert and rear cross path detection systems. The around-view camera helped ease us in and out of our hotel's skintight parking garage.

G70 '20
Genesis. 3.3-liter TTV6. 17/25 mpg city/hwy. Base/as-tested price: \$35,450/\$53,245.

Adding props, the G80 fit in like sun to sea while cruising San Clemente, slinking through traffic alongside herds of Audis, Benzes and Teslas. A large silvery grille flanked by LED headlamps gives the car street cred, as do neatly creased bodysides, long hood, fastback roofline and multi-element taillamp blades. Day or night, it looks expensive. Ours was further set off by smoked

alloy 19-in. wheels and dark Adriatic Blue paint.

The luxury-oriented G80 seemed a little over-dressed for my surf lesson, me in my board shorts and rash guard, but I certainly arrived in style. It registered no complaint when I slapped a towel on the driver's seat, powered open the trunk, threw in my gear and headed west until I found waves.

After nearly a week of living with the G80, I only had two real complaints. The navigation system nonchalantly turned itself off when bored, and at

one point, instructed us to turn left down a steep flight of stairs leading to the beach. I'm pretty chill, but spewed a stream of expletives that wilted my daughter's ears. And, since designers chose to put "set it and forget it" climate controls above the radio, I repeatedly turned the volume to hot.

Beyond that, the G80 was subline whether slamming I-5, twisting two-lanes, or playing taxi to the in-laws. I've always liked how driving a Genesis

■FAMILY AFFAIR Next Page



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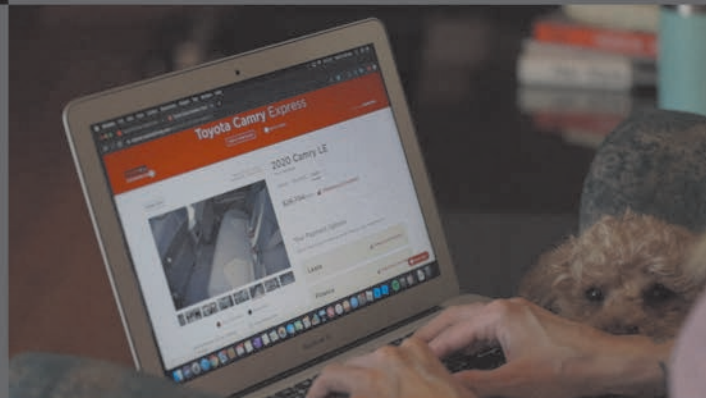
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combines a sense of precision like a Jaguar with the easy effort of a Lexus. This one did not disappoint.

It's also a pretty good value. A base G80 with the V6 starts at \$42,725, but came to \$57,995 with the V8 and a full board of luxury and safety gear. All-wheel-drive adds a little more, but I'll fly home with the delusion it won't be 20 degrees with a chance of snow tomorrow. Competitors include the Lexus GS, Mercedes E-Class, BMW 5-Series, Infiniti Q70 and Cadillac CT5.

For a different but equally laudable experience, the G80's little sister made its own waves.

There's some Alfa Romeo and Jaguar in the styling, but designers really focused on the details, like black chrome and copper bezels for the LED headlamps. From the front, it looks a bit British with its large grille, the rear muscular with fat fenders and the side profile neatly tailored over 19-in./wheels fronting red brake calipers. From every angle, it's a handsome little devil.

Inside, drivers face a perfectly-sized

leather-wrapped steering wheel, analog gauges and head-up display — all perfect for getting your business done. Seats and door panels are accented with red diamond stitching while aluminum trim and suede headliner lend a modern flair. Heated and ventilated front seats, extendable lower driver's seat cushion and heated steering wheel add comfort, as do a wide sunroof, power steering column and Lexicon 15-speaker audio system that one can almost believe is shared with Rolls-Royce. Rear seats are a little tight, even for my 6-year-old, but you're not going to be back there, anyway.

Genesis went for an intuitive touchscreen for navigation and audio, skipping the joywheel nonsense with which some rivals seem enamored. Wireless device charging, Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and Bluetooth make connections easy. I'm also a fan of proper volume and tuning knobs for clipping through channels while creeping through traffic. Climate controls are arranged simply with large knobs for adjusting temperature and fan speed,

with defrosters one level below. Everything is exactly where you'd want it.

Genesis stepped up with a full array of crash avoidance systems. Adaptive cruise, forward collision warning with pedestrian detection and blind spot alert are on the menu, as are rear cross path detection and lane keep assist. The surround view monitor makes getting in and out of tight parking spaces a snap.

As much as I liked the larger G80 it's the G70 that truly heralds Genesis' arrival as a machete-wielding beast on the world stage. I've read several reviews that panned the 4-cylinder G70 as noisy and harsh, but that was not my experience with the turbocharged V6 version.

Underfoot, the 3.3-liter twin-turbo V6 delivers a stout 365 horsepower and 376 lb.-ft. of torque — all routed to the all-wheel-drive system through an 8-speed automatic transmission. Shift it with paddles if you choose. The Drive Mode Select system lets drivers configure the powertrain and electronic suspension from efficient/comfortable to aggressive/firm. Select the former over the latter to see 17/25-MPG city/highway.

On a perfectly smooth racetrack, driving enthusiasts might prefer the G70's German or Italian rivals, but most of us do not travel on tracks. In the real world, we're confronted with potholes and brutal bridge seams, which the adjustable suspension soaks up with nary a shudder. At almost any speed, the smooth turbocharged engine plants power while the AWD system reassures drivers with absolute composure. Whether slugging through city traffic or stretching out on the highway, the car is a delight to drive.

Genesis understands true enthusiasts prefer an engaging driving experience over video arcades. While the G80 and G90 are impressive, the G70 is a shock — a sport sedan that takes it full-on to global competitors' and a delight to drive every day. A base price of \$35,450 rises to \$53,245 loaded with all the gadgets and potent engine. Competitors include the Alfa Romeo Giulia, Jaguar XE, BMW 3-Series, Audi A4, Cadillac CT4 and Mercedes-Benz A-Class.

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■ JASON MRAZ From Page 33

great way to access and get all five under control: your thoughts, your speech, beliefs, your actions, your attitude. Then your life experience gets completely transformed and gets basically connected to that big planet that we're dangling on, and that universe that we're praying to and wondering, "What the *eff* is this all about?" Beliefs that we can truly live in a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, peaceful world. All of that can come together through music.

I think music has the power to get through to people when other means of communication cannot. Do you recognize that as a musician? It's not as easy to memorize a quote, but what is it about a melody that allows it to sink and stay with us? I don't know the science behind it, but I've been experimenting with it since I was a little kid and it's a magical phenomenon that we as humans get to experience. It's a language that transcends the words even. And it's a human phenomenon. And I'm so thankful that it exists. Imagine if we only had to deal with speeches. That would be a miserable existence.

What does the rainbow on the cover of *Look for the Good* represent? I got this idea from a Mister Rogers album cover. He has an album that says, "Mister Rogers knows you're special," and it has a little mirror on the cover and also a little rainbow around it. I was really touched by that, and I was really touched by his work. And even the song "Look for the Good" is a bit of a reference to an interview I saw with him. I guess it was his mother who told him, when watching the news, if something bad is on the news, look for

the heroes. Look for what's good on the news. And that inspired the songs. That inspired the album cover. Really it inspired who I am as an entertainer. So the album cover was really meant to be a reflection back on the viewer to see the good in themselves.

We've had some phone interviews in the past, and I've sort of seen you come fully into yourself. Getting there.

The journey of you being an out public figure took some time. I was looking back at some of our conversations and you dropped a couple of hints. In 2010, you told me you didn't like feeling another man's facial hair on your skin. And then in 2012, you said you'd been asked to join in on a threesome with a couple, but it wasn't a reality at that point. And then, in 2018, we got the news that you were bisexual [via a Pride Month poem Mraz wrote for *Billboard*]. Why, at that moment, did it seem like the right time to come out as bisexual? I wanted to be careful [because of] my family, which is probably a struggle a lot of people have. And when I say this, it's not because they wouldn't love me for who I am. I was afraid to say who I was when I was younger. I was afraid to explore it, because I thought exploring it was the wrong thing to do because of things I heard when I was growing up and because of how I saw society react to the LGBT community. So I thought if I go down this lane, I was taught that it was not a good path. And so for me to come out and say I was taught that that's not a good path is potentially causing harm to my mother, who raised me well, so I never wanted to put her in a position that made

her feel or look like a bad parent. Same to my stepfather or my stepmother or my father. I had four parents. They're not all to blame. I'm not going to throw any of them under the bus.

So it was just growing up in a kind of community where I didn't feel safe to go down that path and explore some intuitions that I had. So I closeted it. I suppressed it. I put it aside. And as I go through life, and as I started having experiences, it's in my programming, it's the systemic issues of going through life and thinking, "This is not healthy." But the more I went through life and the more I became supported and supportive of the LGBT [community], I realized I was safe, I was home, and enough is enough.

Silence doesn't do anybody any good. And it wasn't doing *me* any good. It wasn't giving me the opportunity to have more of the experiences I wanted to have in my life. And as I was getting older, I thought, "Jesus, am I gonna waste my whole life on fear? Or can I step into this and be proud of who I am and see where this takes me, see where this journey takes me, see what kind of new friendships I form, see the level of love that I'm capable of that I've not given myself permission for?" That was my journey.

Honestly, I thought, "I'm gonna have to wait until my parents leave the planet before I get to be who I am." I didn't want that. I wanted them to see who I am while they're still alive, and I want to be who I am while I'm still alive. It gave me even more empathy and more compassion for those who are taking that journey every day, and for the out community who just lives bravely in this world every day. So it was time for me to come out. If I was really going to use my superpower for good, it was time for me to start addressing who I am, because authenticity is the new reality.

That takes me to the last song on the album, "Gratitude." I don't think I've ever thought to give gratitude to the bullies



who called me a faggot when I was a kid, which you do on the song. Can you talk about how that song came about and how you were able to get to a place where you could show gratitude to the people who ridiculed and put you down as a kid? I can't fight violence with violence, and I can't just call names back to the people who've called me names. So rather than name-calling, I tried to look for the good in the situations that I experienced in high school.

I didn't want to go back and attack that person. I just wanted to demonstrate that I was better than that person and that all that energy they put into tearing me down was a waste of their energy, because all I've done is build myself up to be a bigger, better, stronger, more active person. I've known that for a long time I did want to put that in song, so I started this song back in 2010. I played it live a few times, but it never really found its home on an album.

So finally on this album, working with this phenomenal reggae band and having 10 years to really build the song, [and] I listened to a lot of gospel music, especially on Sundays, I was able to weave some of my gospel influences into this song "Gratitude" and do my best to try to look for the good.

That's what this album project was. How can I look for the good in this? How can I look for the good in 2020? How can I look for the good in my past? And I knew I needed to figure out: How can I look for the good in the trauma of my high school bullies? And if I can, it's that drive; they gave me that drive. And I hope that they're embarrassed or sorry or feel like total failures, because their bullying did nothing but help me change the world.

What message do you want to send out to the LGBTQ community? Because Pride is different this year. We've gone virtual. A lot has changed. Just because it's going virtual does not mean that Pride is still not a protest. And the battlefield is not just on the streets, it's on the internet; it's amplified when our voices come together. So my message to people this year is to keep going and go harder than ever. I honestly feel like what's going on in the world is getting closer to the Equal Rights Amendment, and that's been a long time coming. The last time the Constitution was amended and ratified was in the '90s, and it had to do with Congress' salaries. Who gives a fuck about that? So I think what's really heating up is going to get us closer to the Equal Rights Amendment. So my message to Pride is, even though we may not be in the streets, go harder than ever. And who knows? This thing might spill over into the streets anyway, because the internet can't hold us. It can't.

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Drink your Pride

Color-coding Roy G's Pridetastic shot list

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
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A friend who had his gay card punched years ago admitted sheepishly that it was just last week he figured out why Roy G's, the newest bar and restaurant on The Strip, was called Roy G's. If you're similarly puzzled, it stands for ROY G BIV, the mnemonic for remembering the color spectrum (red-orange-yellow-green-blue-indigo-violet... though in the Pride flag those last two are melded into just purple).



So it's totally in keeping with its namesake that the menu includes a shot list of seven concoctions (they do the entire rainbow, not just the Pride flag), each named for a color, but inspired by a traditional full-sized cocktail. Bar manager Cody Riggs devised the recipes for the half-dozen-plus drinks, highlighting one of the five major liquors (vodka, gin, whiskey, rum and tequila) throughout the rainbow. "We wanted to keep

the dive-bar [theme], but also provide something classic" and enjoyable, solo or with a group, Riggs says. (All the syrups and juices are made in-house, he stresses.)

In honor of Pride Month, here is our rundown of the rainbow.

R(ed). Essentially a Daisy cocktail, this twisty sour drink is a refreshing but lively summer shot. *Watermelon vodka, aloe liqueur, simple syrup, grenadine, lime*

juice.

O(range). Riggs' personal liquor of choice is bourbon, so he's especially fond of this variation on the modern Gold Rush cocktail. Like a good whiskey, this shot is eminently sippable, though smooth enough to pound down. *Bourbon, honey, orange and lime juice.*

Y(ellow). Imagine a Lemon Drop, turned into a sweet Southern shot with the one-two of soft peach and tangy ginger battling it out on your tastebuds. *Vodka, peach liqueur, ginger-honey, lemon juice.*

G(reen). The presence of cucumber and mint keys you into recognizing this is a take on the Eastside cocktail. It's the perfect shot for people who don't think they like gin, Riggs says. It will fool you into loving it. *Gin, simple syrup, mint, cucumber, lime juice.*

B(lue). One of two recipes that are more club drinks than traditional cocktails, the presence of coconut rum tells you what to expect from this sweet sorority-girl staple. *Coconut rum, blue curacao, pineapple juice.*

■DRINK Next Page

Happy Pride!





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ish hokum isn't Stewart's wheelhouse. The film begins with Gary and his Republican counterpart (Rose Byrne) in a post-debate spin room, saying aloud what they *really* do, instead of what they are pretending to do. It's witty and withering... but only rears up again at peculiar intervals for the rest of the film. *Irresistible* isn't an outright comedy, nor satire, nor bit of celebrated Americana... though it's all of those in unsatisfying bites. By the end, it has even become as cynical as the attitude it (initially)

purports to indict. There are some great bits, from the skewering of liberal political correctness (led by Debra Messing in a cameo) to Carell's convincing performance to the *Newhart*-esque portrayal of small-town denizens. But despite Stewart's clear plea for sanity in politics, the message is a muddle of false-flag indicating. Maybe he should have consulted an image consultant who could have kept the film on-message. ■
Now available for streaming.



■THE PURGE From Page 37

viet Underground Railroad, quietly spiriting gay men, lesbians and trans folks, as well as their families, out of the federation to safety in the West, housing them in anonymous shelters, counseling them how to lie at checkpoints, creating false identities... all at great personal risk. If this weren't a documentary, it would be a nearly unbelievable Hollywood thriller — *Argo*, where the stakes are tied to your very identity. (It can be tough to watch; at one point France captures, in real time, a sincere suicide attempt by one refugee; another video shows the sodomization of a victim by his torturers.) Ultimately, this is a compelling tale about real heroes, who mostly work in secret and whose anonymity is essential to the safety of themselves and others, but whose stories need to be heard and this fulcrum of human rights. France presents a sobering capstone to Pride Month, a reminder (as if we needed one) that Stonewall began as a riot, and the battle is still being fought all around the globe. ■
Debuts Tuesday on HBO.

■DRINK From Previous Page

I(indigo). The second club drink is a version of the Purple Gekko. It's basically a "reverse" tequila shot: Do the sugared lemon wedge first, then take the shot; trust us. *Tequila, blue curacao, grenadine, lemon wedge.*
V(violet). A purple gin drink suggests an Aviation, but this twist gets a fruity kick from blueberry syrup. *Gin, pomegranate liqueur, blueberry-lavender syrup, lemon juice.* ■
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Thank you to the Dallas Voice readers
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best place to adopt a pet.

For our final official installment of Pride TV: Best Bets Edition (don't worry, there is plenty more streamable content we'll be covering in the future), we celebrate an actual Pride party

here at Dallas Voice, embrace sexual freedom and sing along with Sondheim.



Dallas Pride Party Online. Dallas Pride has undergone so many changes in recent years, from moving away from September, away from the gayborhood, away from June and eventually away from an in-person celebration. But while Dallas Pride will still be holding a virtual event in July, Dallas Voice is producing its own internet-based party on Sunday, with performances and appearances by Lisa Lampanelli, Shangela, Pepper Mashay, The Kinsey Sicks and Leslie Jordan, pictured. Don't miss out! Available at DallasVoice.com on June 28 at 2 p.m.



Take Me to the World: A Sondheim 90th Birthday Celebration. Although it debuted more than two months ago, this tribute to the greatest musical theater composer of all time is still streaming for free online, and it's an ideal way to cap off your Pride Month viewing. A social-distanced concert of tons of Stephen Sondheim showtunes from Broadway and not-quite-B'way singers (including a sassy Randy Rainbow, pictured, who has been doing this shit at home for years), it's a joyous tour of musical theater in the 20th century by people who live it in honor of the man who created it. Available on YouTube.



Submission Possible. This docuseries about the world of kink was set to be six episodes long ... which it still will be, although the pandemic has delayed completion of all but the first episode until 2021. But in that one episode, we follow "Queen of Kink" Madison Young, who interviews folks about such taboo topics as sex magic, spectrophilia, masturbation rituals and more. Available on Revry.

Ask Howard

How to do the wrong thing right

One recent Saturday morning, in the flashy pink neon glow of the fabulously retro Lucky's Café, I posed this following impromptu question to total strangers: "Aside from basic species-survival needs — food, shelter and ejaculating into a fertile vagina — what are five things that you just can't live without?" Stunningly, the same five answers popped up over and over, with near assembly-line regularity: 1. Porn; 2. The gym; 3. My phone; 4. My dog; 5. Music.

Now, this wouldn't necessarily come as surprising, considering the area of town in which my very scientific survey was conducted. But, fellas, I mean... *really*? Nobody's can't-live-without list includes family? A husband, or boyfriend even? Last night's Grindr trick? Did every gay person simply have to raise himself?

Naturally, Howard's immediate follow-up question was a no-brainer: "So, what kind of porn category do you enjoy viewing most — Bareback? Daddy/son? Extreme BDSM triple-fisting taboo torture bondage? All the above ... combined?" Who would have dreamed the answer — "pre-condom era" gay porn DVDs would ignite a veritable vinyl-records'-worthy comeback, or that we would have a virus — venal bitch, Rona, of all creatures! — to thank for their phoenix ascension out of yesteryear's technological tarps? More baffling, as porn DVDs go, it's the vintage classics (roughly, the 15 years between 1969 and 1984) that have been reborn from long-extinct production houses with names like Nova, Magnum Griffin, Catalina, Vivid Man and Hot Desert Knights — lint in all the film frames and all. They have it all! And such gleaming, shiny-buffed models, too — not a single one of them narcotized, dead-behind-the-eyes methheads. What a refreshment from nowadays' pierced, pasty and polluted zombies who can't even hitch their own Doc Martens into the dungeon sling's straps without having to be carried to it foamily gurgling in tongues.

Anyhow, enough of vintage gay porn DVD's mirthful comeback, it's time to get serious again. Everybody, together now — slowly, slowly, just take a deep breath and let's get right to it.

By now, you've all received your form letter, printed on mock White House stationery, gushing, "My Fellow American: Your Economic Impact Payment Has Arrived," accompanied by your now long-gone \$1,200 grant to survive on for, well ... infinity? "We hope this payment provides meaningful support to you during this period. Every citizen should take tremendous pride in the selflessness, courage and compassion of our people." (Wait, time out: Correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't this same buttery comfort doled out, using these exact same milque-toast adjectives, to Tony Soprano's psycho sister, Janis, by her useless shrink in the

scene just before Janis murders her goon boyfriend on the stairs, and then phones Tony to please come clean up her mess?) "America's drive, determination, innovation and sheer willpower have conquered every previous challenge — and they will conquer this one, too. Just as we have before, America will triumph yet again — and rise to new heights of greatness. We will do it together, as one nation, stronger than ever before." Signed, in the autopen forgery that looks like a pervert's brain scan, President Donald J. Trump.

And what inspirational comfort, too, L'Orange's "eConOMIC relief" indeed offers to the American people! Meanwhile, the arrow on our daily COVID-19 risk level meter here in Texas still remains firmly entrenched at the furthest extreme edge of Code Red's STAY HOME/STAY SAFE; yet, possibly, it's meant to be held up to a mirror and deciphered in reverse? Across the country every day, about 20,000 new COVID cases are identified, and more than 1,000 people die. Each day! According to the New York Times, even though 20 to 50 percent of those infected may never show outward signs of illness, their antibodies "only last two to three months — especially in people who never showed symptoms while they were infected — offering a very strong note of caution against the idea of 'immunity certificates' for those people who have recovered from the illness."

Statewide, Texas — national leader of the reopening movement (and swaggeringly proud of it back on April 30) — has to date surpassed 100,00 infections and more than 3,000 deaths! So the real question becomes, are the long-term benefits worth closing down any state's behemoth economy to save 3,000 lives? Or, say, 30,000 lives? 3 million lives? Even just one life matters, after all. The restaurants of swanky Uptown Dallas are now packed, and hospitalizations have, since Memorial Day, begun upticking ever higher especially amongst our one community taking Rona's lopsided punches hardest. I can't breathe!

Yes, it's nifty Phase 3 of the restart. What a pretty pass, too, we all now find ourselves bulldozing away at: Retailers are allowed to operate at 50 percent capacity; bars, too (as long as patrons are seated). Restaurants were allowed to plow ahead to 75 percent capacity expansion, and outdoor Fourth of July celebrations will be at the discretion of "local officials." Amusement parks are also permitted to "gradually expand capacity." Amusement parks? Are you kidding me?

Clearly, with no vaccine in sight, the new street 'tude is to fiddle and watch Rome burn. COVID is, plainly, just going to have to burn its way through the population. It's too entrenched now to hope we could still contain the spread. National unemployment filings have rocketed up for the 14th straight

week. Steady, reliable paychecks and basic food (label-less tins from a charity pantry, be damned!) have suddenly stolen center stage over any formerly quaint fears of catchin' piddling coronavirus.

Any you boiz ever courageously viewed the continuously updated "Gay Porn Stars in Memoriam" vid on YouTube? For those who have, you know swollen eyes start flowing at about minute eight: Sober, smiling images (of the deceased at their radiant best) scroll past in two-second intervals, announcing the years of each individual's life span and what they died of: The ever-wrenching usual suspects in predictably conga line order of complications from AIDS just ahead of suicide, "accidental" overdoses (sometimes labeled "heart failure") and, finally, vehicular accidents pulling up the rear (more often than not involving a motorcycle) ... with only but the rarest death from anything, say, "unexpected:" a freak electrical accident, drowning, murder or meningitis.

I'd like you all to read this letter/poem from one of those circling centenarians. Put yourself in his shoes. Stamp down those sociopathic tendencies. Show some empathy. See through another's eyes! Especially here in Dallas, where each day of our "recovery transition" only witnesses a higher increase in COVID-19 cases than the preceding day, having knocked at its 300th local door. Still, waayyy back on June 12, all restaurants and clubs sure well entered Phase 3 (in bars, one is provided lip-service to "Please, stay seated," and in restaurants the 75 percent must be some kind of operational hologram, 'cause it sure looks like capacity to the sighted). Because none of us want to acknowledge the extremely elderly among us, they have taken it upon themselves to reassure us instead. Please do enjoy the following, courtesy of a third-generation, pedigreed Dallasite.

"Dear Neighbor, I am 91 years old, holed up in my apartment thanks to my daughter, who is protecting herself carefully. I am a happy man, and wish to share my solutions with others who may not find their isolation satisfying. I sleep 10 to 12 hours each night. Sometimes, when my left brain insists, I get up at night to write what the left brain is considering. My interests are quite diverse. I read every day: fiction, history, archaeology, anthropology, art, folk art, and fun like *Calvin & Hobbes*; watch courses on DVD; and add something different almost every day. I am never bored. I watch little TV, finding it too depressing. Occasionally I watch a film I choose to record. I write observations on our world, including a couple of dozen essays beginning with one on human diversity. I write about my life as an architect, photographer and observer of life, such as how almost all of us talk ourselves

out of making-and-doing as children when we begin learning about letters and numbers. I walk laps in the corridor outside my apartment door for exercise, where I see no one. I phone and email people. I respond to communications from others. I contribute money to help others. I occasionally send gifts. I am alone, but not isolated. My challenge to others who do their part by isolating themselves: Do your thing. You are unique. No one else has your diversity of experience. Use that diversity. Enjoy it. Communicate and encourage others. Be happy. Stay safe. With congratulations and best wishes to each person in retreat. — Leonard Volk"

So, retreat back a little from Rona with that, bois! You'll feel better, less constantly ... queasy. Or at least not always like Kim Novak's oxymoronic turn in *Vertigo*. Yes, progress for civilization's forward march requires a vaccine, *now*! Until then, I'll just be shivering here alone, 'neath the covers — me and my pre-condom vintage gay porn DVDs — waiting for my immunity certificate to arrive on mock White House stationery, courtesy of our mock leader. My own personal interests are, like Mr. Volk's, actually quite diverse: I, too, am an observer of life.

Oh, and the five things that dear Howard here can't live without? 1. My long-term husband (who still always insists on remaining 100 percent anonymous in my columns); 2. My little brother (the only immediate blood family I have left); 3. My two grizzled orange cats, octogenarian Roo and centenarian Boo (who is pushing 110 years old!); 4. Memories of my parents, at their gleaming finest; and 5. Same as everybody else: Extreme triple-fisting taboo/torture gay BDSM gimp porn, in DVD format, of course. Everything old is new again!

As Mr. Volk calmly advises, kidz, "Be happy. Stay safe."

— Howard Lewis Russell

Have a comment or question for Howard? Send it to AskHoward@dallasvoice.com.



this week's solution

M	U	L	A	N		G	A	R	P		C	E	D	E
O	C	O	M	E		O	B	O	E		O	X	E	N
A	L	L	O	W		L	I	S	T		R	I	N	D
T	A	L	E	S	O	F	T	H	E	C	I	T	Y	
						B	I	D	S		R	I	N	
L	E	G	A	T	O		J	A	P	A	N	E	S	E
A	B	A	S	E		L	I	M	A		E	L	A	L
U	S	S		M	A	Y	H	O	N	G		I	L	L
R	E	P	S		I	R	A	S		H	E	A	V	E
A	N	S	W	E	R	E	D		L	E	S	S	O	N
						A	L	S		A	A	R	P	
	O	L	Y	M	P	I	A	D	U	K	A	K	I	S
B	N	A	I		E	A	S	E		I	N	A	N	E
R	E	I	N		E	M	I	L		N	O	T	R	E
R	A	N	G		D	A	T	E		S	L	E	E	P

🔍 browse

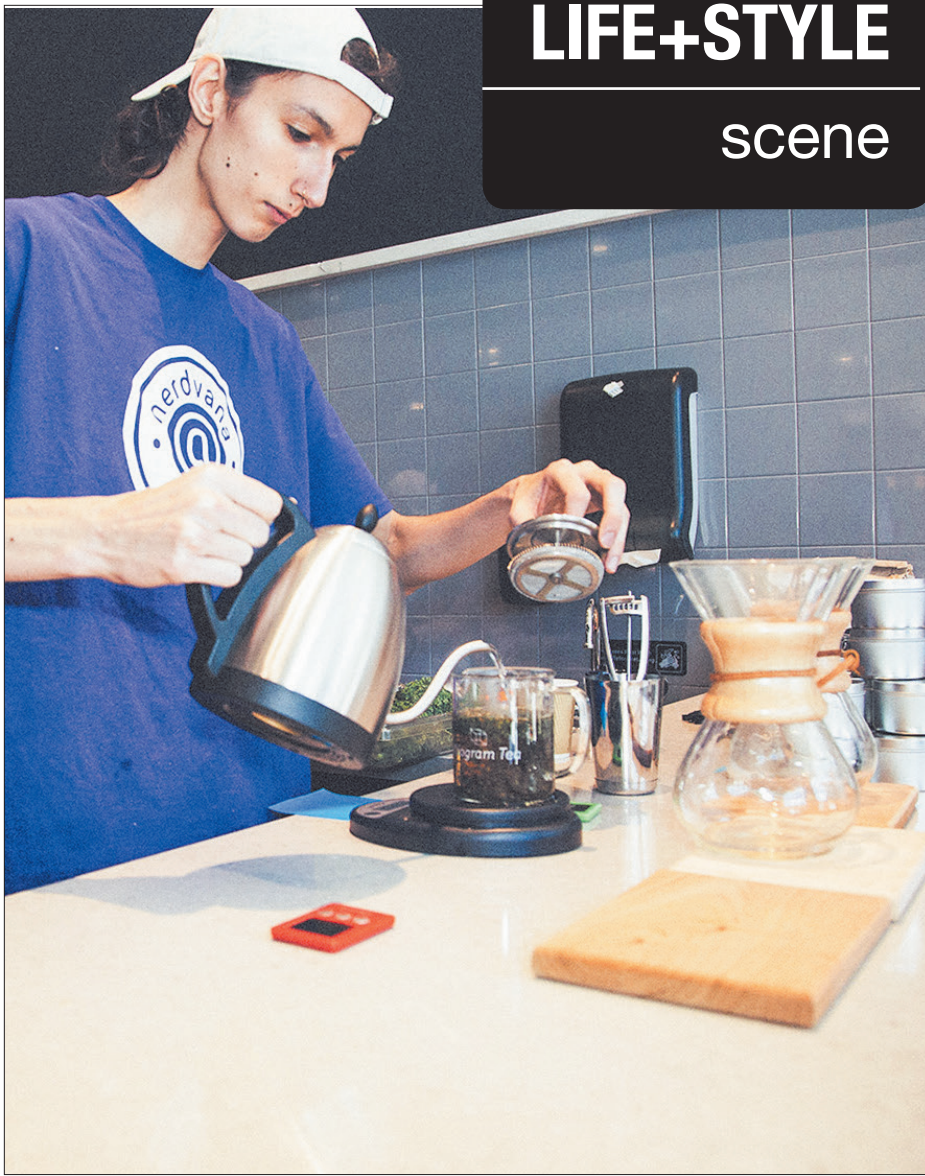
For a more complete Community Calendar online, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.

📄 submit

To submit an item for inclusion in the Community Calendar, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.

LIFE+STYLE

scene



Braden at Nerdvana Coffee



Girl time at Sue's

Gratitude

is one of our core values!

As our community joins together to celebrate Pride, we at Club Dallas would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our community, for 46 years of support and loyalty. During these confusing and troubling times, we want you to know that we are here for you, whenever YOU feel the time is right.

In the meantime, please stay safe and continue to take care of yourself and others. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

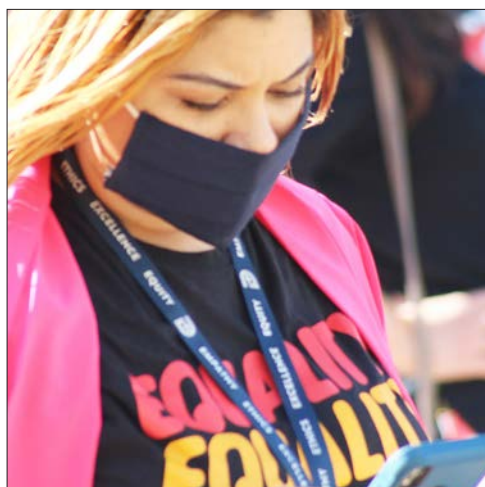
Plan your July 4th weekend. Join us! Beginning Friday, July 3rd we will be open 24/7 for safe clean fun!



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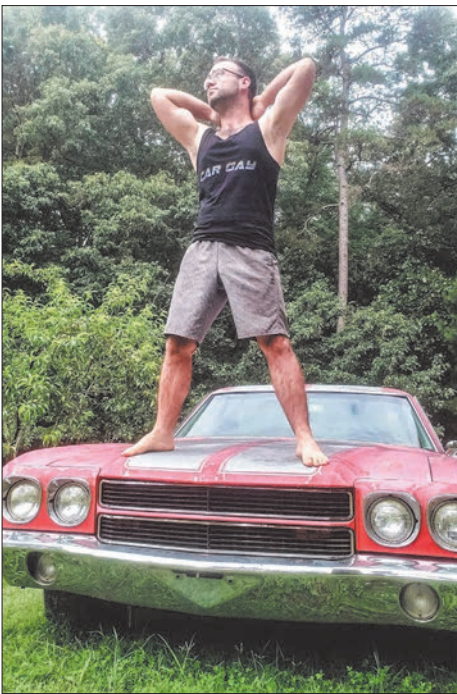
Graeme and Richard at Nerdvana Frisco



Jared and Jonathan help paint murals downtown



Ross paints murals downtown



Now that is a hood ornament: Casey from Lambda Car Club International.

q-puzzle

Maupin Up

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13	
14						15					16				
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	51	52					53	54					55	56	57
58						59					60				
61						62					63				
64						65					66				

Solution on Page 50

- Across
- 58 Sons of, in Hebrew
- 59 Make less difficult to bear
- 60 Nuts
- 61 Leather strap for a stallion
- 62 ___ and the Detectives
- 63 Our, to Vivien
- 64 Tolloed
- 65 Ms. Right-now
- 66 R.E.M. follower?
- 22 Org. in many spy movies
- 25 Linney, who plays Mary Ann in the series
- 26 Buddy almost of The Wizard of Oz
- 27 Intense sounds in the sack
- 28 Holy war
- 29 Israeli author Oz
- 30 Disney's middle name
- 31 Round of fire
- 32 Page, who plays Shawna in the series
- 34 Old strings
- 38 Earhart's velocity
- 39 Male organs, in slang
- 42 Like Palm Beach palms in the wind
- 45 Kahlo's tongue
- 47 One with limbs spread wide
- 48 Batting instructor Charlie
- 50 "Hello" singer
- 51 Ready to go in
- 52 Reposed
- 53 Isherwood's ___ Camera
- 54 Words before "were"
- 55 Shakespeare's shrew
- 56 About, in memos
- 57 Penetrate slowly
- 58 Cold response
- Down
- 1 Ditch in some Flynn flicks
- 2 Pac 10 school
- 3 Lounge about
- 4 They reproduce nonheterosexually
- 5 Bit in the Windy City Times, e.g.
- 6 Plays Sheehan's sport
- 7 Not much
- 8 ___ Hashana
- 9 Hook role for Robin Williams
- 10 Tee of Cunt Coloring Book fame
- 11 Go off, on Broadway
- 12 Say "She's just a friend" to a jealous lover, e.g.
- 13 Put a halt to
- 21 Rene Auberjonois role
- 23 Auction actions
- 24 ___ Tin Tin
- 25 Flowing, for Bernstein
- 28 Like a Samurai
- 33 Put down
- 34 Vegetable soup bean
- 35 Airline to the land of the cut
- 36 "Enterprise" initials
- 37 She plays Margot Park in the series
- 40 Not in the pink
- 41 Muscle Mary stat
- 43 Gershwin and Levin
- 44 Word before "ho!"
- 46 Shot back
- 48 Scripture reading
- 49 South Park's Big Gay, et al.
- 50 Golden years org.
- 51 She plays Anna Madrigal in the series

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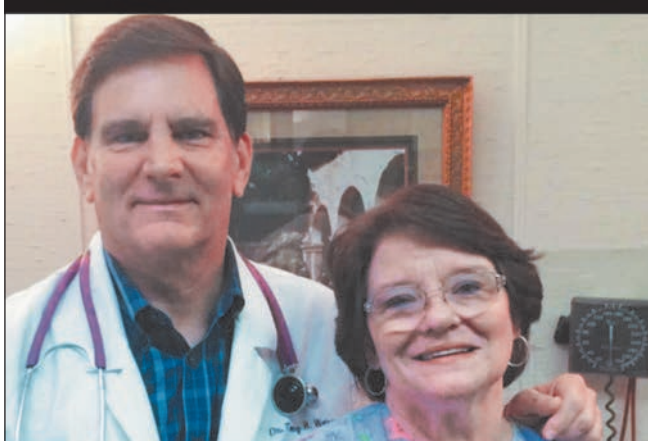
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