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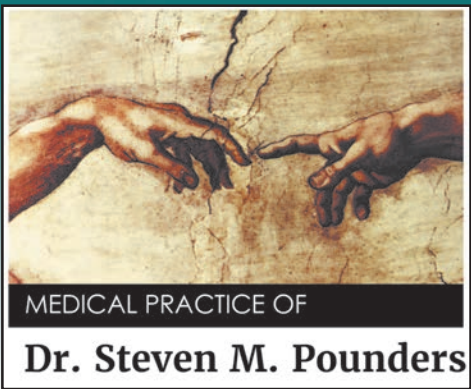
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Dallas trans woman murdered; police ask for community's help



Merçi Mack

Dallas police are asking for the community's help after a Black transgender woman was found shot to death Tuesday, June 30, in the parking lot of a Ledbetter Drive apartment complex.

According to police, a passerby found 22-year-old Merçi Mack unconscious in the parking lot of the Rosemont Apartments, 3015 E. Ledbetter Drive, at about 6:15 Tuesday morning. Dallas Fire and Rescue responded and pronounced her dead at the scene from an apparent gunshot wound to the head.

Residents at the apartment complex told police they had heard gunfire around 5 a.m., but police found no records of any 9-1-1 calls at that time at that location.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Dallas Police Detective Brian Tabor by phone at 214-671-3605 or by email at brian.tabor@dallascityhall.com. Reference case No. 114244-2020.

Mack was the fourth Black transgender woman killed during Pride month, and the 19th trans person killed in the first six months of 2020.

David J. Johns, executive director of the National Black Justice Coalition, said in an

emailed statement: "What do you do when you don't have the capacity to wrap your head around the pain and trauma a community of people continues to experience, and you know that your feelings aren't half of what's required to show up as a member of that community? You continue the work and insist that others, who purport to believe that #BlackLivesMatter, also get engaged.

"What pains me most about the continued loss of Black trans life is that nearly everyone who is identified as Black knows the sting of stigma and the trauma of discrimination," he continued. "We know the horror of being the victim of violence simply because of socially constructed ideas of 'blackness.' This shared experience alone should be enough for each of us, everyone who is Black, regardless of cis or trans experience, to collectively call for and do the work to end the violence that trans and non-binary members of our community experience — too often in silence. Merçi Mack deserves better; as a community we failed her and so many of our trans siblings, and this is beyond unacceptable."

— Tammye Nash

Little Rock trans woman murdered in apparent 'hit'

As police in Dallas continue their investigation into the June 30 murder of Merçi Mack in the parking lot of an apartment complex in South Dallas, police in Sherwood, Ark., a suburb of Little Rock, are investigating the murder of Brayla Stone, a 17-year-old Black trans woman who was found dead in a car near a walking path there on June 25.

According to various sources, a man has posted on social media sites claiming that he was hired to kill Stone and was paid \$5,000 for the hit. Instagram user "@tapnseason" posted a video showing \$100 bills spread out over a gray surface, with "\$5K" superimposed in red over the video and a "jazz hands smiley face" emoticon in the lower right corner.

In the comments, user @its_kaykay567 asked, "What happen?" to which @tapnseason replied, "I zipped em for 5K ... Money Well Spent."

The video has since been deleted from



Brayla Stone

Instagram.

Sherwood police have said they don't know if Stone was killed at the location where she was found, or if she was killed elsewhere and her body then taken to that location. Beyond that, however, police have remained tight-lipped.

Trans advocates have also criticized local news outlet Fox16 for continuing to deadname Stone. A spokesperson for the station said that they were following the family's wishes to use Stone's birth name.

— Tammye Nash

Dallas lively arts have been devastated by pandemic, cultural ecosystem 'at risk,' report finds

Since the spread of COVID-19, the cost to the Dallas cultural infrastructure has been seriously ravaged in terms of money, jobs and, more directly, the health of the city, a new report finds.

The report, compiled and released by TACA, the Dallas Arts District and DACAC, reports on surveys conducted during the first 80 days or so of the pandemic. Among its findings:

- The Dallas nonprofit community has suffered \$33.65 million in financial losses.
- At least 649 staff and artists have been furloughed or laid off.
- Performing arts organizations canceled or

postponed at least 804 live performances.

- Visual arts groups have collectively closed 747 attendance days.
- The losses will continue to soar, affecting groups of every size and genre.

"These survey findings reflect the significant damage the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the arts community in Dallas," said Terry D. Loftis, TACA's executive director. "When we fielded the survey, we anticipated the results would bring that impact to light, but these findings are truly staggering. The Dallas creative community has been impacted in ways we might never have anticipated, and without private and civic investment, we'll be challenged to reverse the damage caused by the pandemic, affecting our community as a whole, artists, arts organizations and audiences for the long term."

Millions of dollars in lost revenue to the city tax base will also affect the arts to their detriment. The nonprofit arts sector generates close to a billion dollars in economic impact, supporting 13,000 jobs and fueling \$45 million in tax revenues, according to a 2015 study.

The survey does not appear to cover all of North Texas but Dallas in particular. Some theaters plan to reopen later this month.

"The arts sector is made up of small businesses and is an important part of our city's economy," said Joanna St. Angelo, president of the DACAC, a political advocacy group representing a wide range of the city's cultural organizations. "We felt nobody had a handle on what was happening to our arts community. This study gave us a pulse rate, and right now the prognosis isn't good."

— Arnold Wayne Jones

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Prepare your pets for an emergency

Hello, Dallas Voice readers! I hope everyone is holding up as best as you can during these unprecedented times.

Welcome to my July column, which I am actually devoting to an important topic somewhat associated to crazy times like these. The month of June is our National Pet Preparedness Month, and I want to share some thoughts and ideas on what is needed to be prepared for emergencies as pet parents.

Whenever an emergency strikes, we may not always be prepared for everything that entails. But the more we do to address potential issues ahead of time, the better it will be for everyone involved when the time comes. These emergency disasters include tornadoes, storms, earthquakes and flooding, among others.

The most important things to have prepared and set aside are items to cover the basic needs of our furry friends: food and water. Make sure you have enough dog or cat food for at least several days stored in air tight containers, as well as drinking water. These stores need to be separate from what you use daily, and they need to be readily available in case you need to leave your home abruptly.

Make sure the stored food is the same food you feed daily to avoid any potential vomiting or diarrhea that could happen with some abrupt changes in diet. Also consider having ready treats and a toy or blanket that will make your baby feel safe when away from home. All of these items — as well as the others we will discuss here — can be kept in a backpack or



WOOF

Dr. Josh Talks Animals

duffle bag in a very accessible area, where you can easily just grab it and go so you can evacuate your home safely if necessary.

You also need to have at least a two-week supply of medications your baby may need for chronic conditions, as well as heartworm and flea/tick preventatives. It would also be beneficial to have vaccine records with you, since these are usually required when a pet is boarded.

Boarding facilities usually require the rabies and bordetella (kennel cough) vaccines, but each boarding facility has different requirements. Some may also require up-to-date fecal results, so make sure your baby routinely sees your veterinarian to have all the basic wellness care needs under control.

Consider having a first aid kit stored along with these items, and make sure you check the expiration dates of all of these at least every six months or so. You may also want to save the contact information for at least one emergency veterinary hospital on your phone.

It is important to make sure your baby has a collar with updated ID tags and an updated rabies tag. You can also consider having a copy of the rabies certificate given to you by your veterinarian in your files or saved on your phone.



If your baby is not microchipped, consider doing this, because sometimes dogs and cats can escape during an emergency situation, and if they do not have a collar, it would be even more challenging to get them safely back home.

A microchip is about the size of a grain of rice, and it is implanted underneath your baby's skin, in between their shoulder blades. This microchip, unlike popular belief, does not have GPS. It would only be beneficial if your baby is taken to a shelter or a veterinary hospital to be scanned and only if you have registered the microchip with your contact information. You also have to make sure that if you move or change your phone number, you would have to contact the microchip company to update your contact information.

If possible, also consider having a car-

rier or portable crate handy. If you have a kitty, consider having a separate litter box and new litter on hand as well, along with sanitation products that you may need for the crate or carrier or litter box.

We have had enough challenges and crazy things happen in 2020 already, so hopefully we don't need to worry about any emergencies any time soon. But just in case we end up getting to a Jumanji level that requires us to abandon our home, we want to be as prepared as possible, especially for our little loved ones that depend on us!

To end on a positive note, it is already July!! Happy 4th of July, and try to have fun as safely as possible!! Abrazos, my friends!

Dr. Josh owns *Isla Veterinary Boutique Hospital* at 14380 Marsh Lane, Ste. 110, in Addison. 972-738-1111; IslaVet.com.

Pet of the week • Koi



Meet **Koi**, 5½-year-old, medium-sized mixed breed. She has the prettiest long, milk-chocolate-colored coat and the sweetest brown eyes that plead for love and are sure to steal your heart. She came to the SPCA of Texas through a cruelty case and has been working on building her confidence ever since. She has come a long way but still needs work on learning to trust people and being comfortable in her surroundings. She loves other dogs and is confident when she is with them, so having another dog in

the home is ideal for her. She needs a calm, quiet home without kids and with a securely-fenced yard since she hasn't gotten the hang of leash walking just yet. She recently completed heartworm treatment and is on exercise restriction. But this restriction ends July 6, and she'll be ready to play in your yard. Potential adopters can take Koi on a test drive through a trial adoption. If you're looking for a sweet dog to share your home with, she's the one for you! Koi 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 her.

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

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A voice for his child

CASA volunteer Oscar Orellana says the court system needs more LGBTQ advocates to be matched with LGBTQ kids

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Oscar Orellana is a CASA, and he'd love more people in the LGBTQ community to join the program. A CASA, or court appointed special advocate, makes sure children in the foster system who were victims of abuse get what they need as they navigate through the court system. Orellana began volunteering as a big brother. When his little brother graduated, Orellana said, "I needed a new volunteer opportunity."

He was interested in working with at-risk kids in the foster system, and in looking for those opportunities, he discovered Dallas CASA.

Orellana signed up to take the 30-hour course offered by the local organization to become a CASA. The first step is to attend a new volunteer information session, currently held weekly on Zoom. Now volunteers have eight one-hour online classes, plus independent learning and small group work to complete the 30 hours.

Part of the class involves making good matches with the kids. Orellana said some people prefer babies while others want a teenager. Orellana, who is gay, wanted to help an LGBTQ child.

Once he was matched with a child, Orellana was sworn in by the judge handling the case of the child with whom he had been matched. That's the "court appointed" part of CASA, he pointed out.

But the advocate's job goes beyond the courtroom. They work to make sure the kids get what they need in school, med-

ical care and in their placement, whether with a relative, in a foster home or in a group placement.

Orellana first met his child in her foster placement. "Children in foster care might be falling through the cracks," he said. "Case workers have too many cases. Social workers might not know what's going on in a particular case."

He said while the professionals involved in the case may be reassigned, the CASA remains constant. That's why Dallas CASA asks volunteers for at least a one-year commitment.

"The formal relationship between a child and a volunteer ends when the child's welfare case closes," Dallas CASA Public Relations Manager Rosanne Lewis said. "If, at 18, the child decides to stay in foster care until their 21st birthday, then their case will remain open and a volunteer can continue to work with them."

But, she continued, some volunteers even stay in contact with the kids after the case ends because they've become friends, "but that is then between the person and the family to decide."

Orellana said the CASA is sometimes the only adult that's been consistent in the child's life.

The child Orellana works with is transgender. He said he was the first adult his teen told what name she preferred and what pronouns she was using. That's not something a child, especially one who has been a victim of abuse, would normally be comfortable talking about with a judge.

But Orellana included that information in his report to the judge, who then



Oscar Orellana

ative is the next choice. And if that's not possible, adoption is the next goal.

Orellana explained that some placements are temporary, with the goal of helping a child get some behaviors under control. Some placements are a change to a less-restrictive setting.

With his child, Orellana said, he has seen lots of improvement in their two years working together.

"When we started working, she wasn't comfortable with her identity," he said. Without giving much detail because of confidentiality in the case, he said her family's religious beliefs were a factor in their treatment of their child and the child's acceptance of herself.

"It's great when they have someone in their corner," he said. When she came to court recently in a wig and make-up, it made a difference to have someone there to say, "You look beautiful."

Parents, Orellana said, may or may not have any contact with the CASA. Those who are struggling might see the CASA as imposing themselves on their lives. Those working to gain custody back might talk to the advocate as a resource.

"One thing about being a CASA is you have great supervisors," Orellana said. He's never been left out on his own. As a flight attendant, he's even had a time where he couldn't change his schedule and his supervisor attended a court appearance for him.

He said the judge in his case is a great child advocate, and once he turns in his report, she might have a question for him about the child's placement or something else addressed in the report.

"We're gathering information to get a bigger picture of what's going on for the judge," he said.

Orellana said he struggled as a young gay person. He questioned: "Am I the only one?" Giving his support to a young trans child helps her understand she's not alone.

He's not sure how long he'll be involved in her case, but thinks this case will last a while.

"I want to be there until she no longer needs me," he said.

For more information on being a CASA volunteer, visit DallasCASA.org.

Affirming care

Prism Health North Texas' trans clinic offers healthcare in a safe environment

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
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The Affordable Care Act, commonly known as "Obamacare," includes a provision — Section 1557 — that "prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in certain health programs or activities."

According to Sara Rosenbaum, the Harold and Jane Hirsh Professor of Health Law and Policy and founding chair of the Department of Health Policy at George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Service, when issued in May 2016 under the administration of President Obama, Section 1557 did "what virtually no civil rights law has done before: It extend[ed] the principle of nondiscrimination to the content of health insurance, that is, coverage standards themselves."

Section 1557, Rosenbaum explained, "provides that no individual shall be barred from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity, any part of which receives federal financial assistance."

In issuing the regulations implementing Section 1557, the Obama administration noted specifically that the word "sex" in this case was to be interpreted to include gender identity. In other words, the Obama administration specifically said that Section 1557 protected transgender people from discrimination in health care.

In mid-June this year, however, the Trump administration rescinded those protections for transgender men and women, finalizing new regulations for Section 1557 that "restore the rule of law

by revising certain provisions that go beyond the plain meaning of the law as enacted by Congress."

"What they are saying is that the law recognizes 'sex' as being only biologically male and biologically female, as in a binary system, although that's not how biology works," said Amy Barrier, a nurse practitioner working with Prism Health North Texas' transgender clinic.

"Because of this, there will be providers who refuse to care for someone who is transgender, because they 'don't believe in it' or 'don't agree with it' or whatever it is they say" to try and justify anti-trans bigotry and discrimination, Barrier said.

Three days after the Trump administration finalized its version of the Section 1557 regulations, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its 6-3 ruling in three employment discrimination cases that had been consolidated under *Bostock v. Clayton County*, declaring that the term "sex" in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act does, in fact, include sexual orientation and gender identity. The historic ruling provides, for the first time, federal protections against discrimination in employment for LGBTQ people.

The ruling also sets precedent for the word "sex" in other federal anti-discrimination laws to also protect LGBTQ people — including in the Affordable Health Care Act. But for now, the Trump administration's interpretation of Section 1557 stands.

So, what recourse do transgender people have? "Basically," Barrier said, "somebody's civil rights have to be violated, and they file suit. It will have to go up through the courts — unless there is a change in Washington, D.C."

The trans affirming option

Just knowing that the government has okayed anti-trans discrimination will "deter our trans population from seeking treatment," Barrier said. "And trans people already traditionally have had trouble when seeking healthcare, and one bad experience with one person in the healthcare system will leave someone with a bad taste in their mouth for the whole system."

That, Barrier continued, is what Prism Health North Texas hopes to change with its transgender healthcare clinic.

The clinic, which has had to suspend in-person care temporarily because of the COVID-19 epidemic, will re-open beginning in August, and will be open on the third Monday of the



Amy Barrier

month, with evening hours starting at 5 p.m., offering hormone treatments. The evening hours, Barrier explained, "let the transgender patients access healthcare in a setting where they know the only other patients there will be trans persons."

The clinic, located inside Prism's Oak Lawn Center at 2801 Lemmon Ave., Ste. 200 where the agency plans to also open a pharmacy soon — is a "totally gender-affirming environment. We do have two gendered bathrooms with a couple of stalls each. But we also have multiple single-person bathrooms that anyone can use," Barrier said. She added that all the clinic staff make sure to always use the proper pronouns and patients' chosen names, and "We have made systemic changes in our record keeping processes to make it obvious what name [patients] use versus what name might be on their IDs."

She continued, "Our providers, of course, make sure when we are dealing with a trans person that we are mindful of the healthcare they might need for the organs they were born with," such as mammograms and checking female reproductive organs for trans men, while making sure that trans women have access to procedures for prostate health, etc.

And when it comes to procedures that require examinations of a patient's genitalia, "we make sure we give our patients the privacy they need. We want to make sure we don't cause any embarrassment for anyone involved," Barrier said.

The Prism Trans Clinic is set up to provide hormone services at little to no cost to the patients themselves. "With outreach efforts to trans patients in the past, the patients themselves had to pay some cost. They had to pay for their labs, things like this," Barrier explained. "Here, the testosterone is completely free. With the estrogen it depends on the modality; the

injectible estrogens will have a fee, but the oral estrogens are free.

"For our patients who are uninsured, we can also provide some primary care services, too. We can treat their high blood pressure or their diabetes," she added. "If someone has insurance and just want to use our clinic for their hormones, that's fine. But if they need other services, we can do that, too."

The trans clinic also offers free STI testing and free PrEP [pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV] for those who fall under the income level cutoff set by Gilead, the pharmaceutical company which makes the PrEP drug Truvada. "And most people who are uninsured fall under that cutoff," Barrier said. "I always offer all my patients STI testing and PrEP. I am not going to push it on someone who doesn't want it, but I want them to know it is available."

Barrier said that while the trans clinic won't re-open until August, transgender patients who need care now can contact the Oak Lawn Center (469-687-3200) or one of Prism's other two clinics — the Oak Cliff Health Center at 219 Sunset Ave., Ste. 116-A (214-807-7370), or the South Dallas Health Center at 4922 Spring Ave. (214-421-7848) — to set an appointment. Patients can also submit an inquiry via the Prism Health North Texas website, PHNTX.org.

"Our other locations provide care for trans patients for HIV and PrEP, and all of our providers are trans-affirming," she said.

While the COVID-19 epidemic has affected the way the Prism clinics operate, Barrier acknowledged that it has also had an impact on trans men and women who have lost their jobs, and with it, their insurance coverage.

"Going off your hormones during an insurance loss could certainly cause some backsliding" in terms of the bodily changes a trans person goes through when taking hormones," Barrier said. "Technically, we are not seeing patients right now who are not sick, but we have worked with some people to help them make sure they get their meds. We have seen quite a few folks coming in and requesting care because of loss of insurance due to being laid off, temporarily or not. And we are absolutely here to serve as a place keeper, if necessary, until they are able to go back to work and their insurance kicks in again. But we are also happy to keep them on as patients if that's what they need."

Taking Pride back to its roots

Pride for Black Lives Matter march fills streets of Oak Lawn

STEVEN MONACELLI | Contributing Writer

Dallas' 2020 Pride march on Sunday, June 28, started with about 500 people in Turtle Creek Park and eventually swelled to nearly 1,000 as it wound its way through the Oak Lawn gayborhood. This march was unique for a number of reasons: First, it marked a return to the roots of Pride by rejecting corporate sponsorships, and second, it united previously separated communities for a common cause.

The city's annual Pride celebration — moved last year from September to June, and from Oak Lawn to Fair Park, and featuring the Miller Lite Music Festival and the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade — was initially rescheduled from the first weekend in June to the last weekend in July due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In June, organizers announced that, with concerns over the pandemic continuing, the 2020 Pride celebration would be a virtual event rather than an in-person party.

But, in the wake the May 25 murder of George Floyd and with protesters continuing to fill the streets in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, a group of Dallas LGBTQ activists decided to organize the DFW Pride for Black Lives Matter rally and march.

Eric Ramsey, one of the event's organizers, described the thinking behind the rally: "In previous years, Pride has been more of a party, a celebration. ... But it began as a protest directly against police brutality, led by black trans and queer women. We wanted to remind the community what Pride is meant to be. We didn't just want to dance in the streets to Lady Gaga."

That was not all. The absence of major corporate sponsors that help pay for and participate in the annual parade was notable at Sunday's event. In their place came a coterie of community groups ranging from trans activist organizations to the local chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America. Ramsey framed that change as intentional.

"This year, we really wanted Pride to be for the people, by the people," he said. "Over the years, Pride has become corporatized. Corporations that 11 months of the year don't really care about the LGBTQIA+ community decide to slap a rainbow on their website and call themselves an ally. But that's never sat right with me as a gay man."

This year also saw Black, Latinx and "big" Pride events joining together under the same banner. "Over the years [Dallas Pride] has been more white-centric and party-centric here in Dallas and has left more marginalized communities behind, and we wanted this event to put our black trans and queer brothers and sisters front and center," Ramsey said.

Reflecting back on Sunday's march, long-time black LGBTQIA+ activist C.d. Kirven described the rally and march as a "dream come true. ... They brought the communities I love so much together and we stood up for each other.

"This event represented a pushback against separation of prides along racial lines, as well as a radical taking back of Pride from the white, corporate-sponsored version that has become dominant," Kirven said. "It was Pride coming back to its roots as a protest, as a riot."

This Pride march was certainly a protest. But thankfully — due to skillful de-escalation efforts on behalf of the organizers — it never became a riot, a phenomenon integrally linked to the presence of police violence.

It's worth remembering that LGBTQ Pride was, indeed, birthed from a riot, one that led by trans and queer women of color Marsha P. Johnson and Silvia Rivera.

This fact was brought home in a pow-



The Bicycle Ride for Pride and Black Lives, top, and activist C.d. Kirven. (Photos by Steven Monacelli)

erful way during a Bicycle Ride for Pride and Black Lives, organized by a Dallas-based chef and artist Jordan Edwards and taking place just prior to the rally at the park. The ride concluded at the mural on the side of the building at 4010 Cedar Springs Road. It is one of the largest murals in the world dedicated to trans women, and it focuses on portraits of Johnson and Rivera.

It also features a quote from Rivera: "I was a radical, a revolutionist. I am still a revolutionist. ... I am glad I was in the Stonewall riot. I remember when someone threw a Molotov cocktail, I thought, 'My God, the revolution is here. The revolution is finally here!'"

To be clear, there have been no Molotov cocktails thrown in Dallas. But the atmosphere here over the last month has definitely been radical.

On Sunday morning, Pride, Black Lives Matters and Abolish ICE supporters gathered together to protest Vice President Mike Pence's visit to First Baptist Dallas. Tensions rose, but coordination across communities and generations allowed for an attitude of joyful militancy to dominate the crowd instead of rage

and violence. Protesters dangled donuts on strings over police barricades and shot off confetti cannons in the direction of the police.

Kirven said the events were necessary. "You have to have these moments of levity in the midst of the struggle. ... If you only focus on the reality of it, you'll never make it through this whole process.

"It's not just standing up; it's a long journey," she continued. "We have to dance, joke, but also take things seriously."

This echoes the apocryphal quote attributed to Emma Goldman, an early pioneer of feminist politics, among other things, who said, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution."

That joyfully militant atmosphere was redoubled at the march on Sunday evening. The outfits and costumes were festive, ranging from the less-is-more crowd to the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence who used their habits and wimples to block out the distractions — those distractions mainly being aggressive religious counter-protesters. And the mood was dynamic — joyful, somber and enraged, but always underscored by a strong sense of unity.

Although the Dallas mainstream media's attention on the ongoing protesters seems to have waned, the protest communities continue to join together, finding common strength. Sunday's events marked the 31st consecutive day of protest against police brutality in Dallas; those protests continue daily, even now.

Perhaps we should believe the protesters when they chant: "Are you tired? We don't get tired!"

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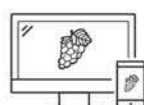
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Déjà vu all over again

I got news recently that another friend had been hospitalized with COVID-19. They told me he was on a ventilator and had only a 10 percent chance of surviving. He is not the first of my friends to get sick, and I suspect won't be the last.

I am reminded of the dark times of the 1980s, when friends were wasting away from the newly-diagnosed human immunodeficient virus — HIV — and the ensuing complications that made up the diagnosis of AIDS. I watched far too many friends become ill and die and this latest pandemic is very reminiscent of the previous one.

The big difference is that, in the 1980s when friends were dying in hospital beds hooked up to IV lines and machines, we could at least be with them. We could hold their hands; we could hug them. Now we are relegated to saying our goodbyes over Zoom or social media. The pain of this isolation is palpable for all of us still; we ache to touch and hold and comfort physically, not as a disembodied voice on a cell phone or face on a computer screen.

I suspect I am not the only one who is experiencing this melancholy déjà vu. And it doesn't end with the COVID-19 pandemic. The weeks and weeks of marches and protests and police brutality are playing out like the 1960s and 1970s again. I was one of those who marched in the streets back then — marched against the war; marched in support of civil rights; marched for LGBTQ Liberation.

I would never have imagined back then that today, these decades later, we would still be marching for the same reasons!

Apparently, our country has a hard time learning from its mistakes.

Here in Dallas in 1973, a young boy names Santos Rodriguez was murdered by police who were playing Russian roulette while interrogating him. It was a horrible example of racist hatred and police brutality, and Dallasites marched in the streets, demanding justice.

You would think our city and police would have learned a valuable lesson from that tragedy. Apparently not.



Hardy Haberman
Flagging Left

Instead, police have become para-military squads that resemble an invading army rather than men and women sworn to protect and serve their own community.

Jim Crow laws were designed to extend the disparity of rights that was left over from slavery. And even though millions marched in the streets — all the way to Washington, D.C. — and even though the segregation of the 1950s and 1960s ended, the economic segregation did not. Still today, beyond the police actions against people of color, we have an underlying undercurrent of racism in employment and economic opportunity that works still to suppress black and brown Americans.

America is slow to learn from its mistakes.

If there is any good news to be found today in this miasma of déjà vu, it has been the recent Supreme Court ruling affirming the rights of LGBTQ Americans and protecting us from workplace discrimination. It is a landmark ruling that will have far reaching effects, though it may take some time before effects truly become evident.

The other dim light of good news comes from our Dallas County judge, Clay Jenkins, who instituted mandatory wearing of masks in Dallas County businesses. Studies have shown that if the population wears masks and practices rigorous hygiene practices COVID-19, transmission rates drop drastically. It is, again, a little bit of déjà vu for me, since



my father was an immunologist and microbiologist, and he always taught me that hand washing could prevent a multitude of diseases.

In the meantime, though, this pandemic is not over, not by a long shot. Though the state and national governments are pushing to reopen shops and businesses, the engines of our economy, we still do not have a viable vaccine or a universally accepted treatment for COVID-19. I sincerely hope our country can respond to this crisis with some common sense and put every effort into finding not just a cure, but a way to mitigate the spread and minimize infections.

That means we will have an important choice to make on Nov. 3. That election might be the most important one in our lifetimes. I hope we have learned something from our past and that we get it right in November.

In these historic and chaotic days, I am reminded of a quote from Winston Churchill: "You can always count on Americans to do the right thing — after they have tried everything else." I hope we don't have to wait that long. ■

Hardy Haberman is a longtime local LGBT activist and a board member of the Woodhull Freedom Alliance. His blog is at Dungeon-Diary.blogspot.com.

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Healthy(er) eating for summer

LIFE+STYLE
dining

With the 4th and swimsuit weather upon us, these vegan, keto, low-fat, organic and/or just yummy snacks are worth a taste

During the lockdown, we were all cursed with the dual penalty of no gyms being open and having (choosing?) to eat a lot more pizza and take-out. But as we begin to emerge like Punxatawny Phil from coronahibernation and embrace pool-party

season, it's time to recommit to healthy eating... well, healthier, at least. Here are some food options to keep in your pantry that taste good and have dietary provenance.

— Arnold Wayne Jones



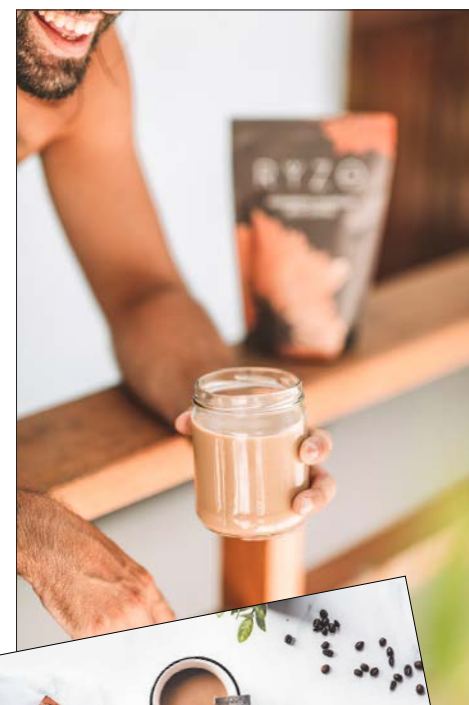
Diestel turkey. I've long preferred turkey meat to beef — it tends to be less fatty, better for you and creates a smaller carbon footprint, and it is just as versatile. And flavor? ... Well, that can be a sticking point. But Diestel's Italian sausage version is jam-packed with taste (I made some into meatballs), and the patties cook up quickly for a great, flavorful and low-fat summer burger. \$13.95 for four ¼ lb. patties or 1 lb. sausage. Available at DiestelTurkey.com. And serve up that turkey patty on **Eastern Standard Pretzel Buns**, an artisanal bread you can toast and coat with chili-lime salt for a hearty kick. \$34.99 for Sun's Out Griller Pack. Available at ESProvisions.com.



Pop Bitties. If you're asked to bring chips to a pool party, consider these flavorful alternatives to corn or potato chips. Air-popped from whole grains like sorghum, brown rice, quinoa and chia, these non-GMO ancient grain crisps look like tiny rice cakes but eat like Lay's. Kosher, vegan and gluten- corn-, trans-fat- and tree-nut-free, the Hickory Barbecue chips are munchable on their own, or scoop up some guac with the vegan Sour Cream and Onion or salsa with the Pink Himalayan Salt. Available for \$15.99 per four-pack at MarksMindfulMunchies.com and Amazon.com.



Omnom Chocolate. All the way from Iceland, this brand of caramel milk chocolate has been a long-standing sponsor of Iceland Pride and waves its rainbow flag (and a unicorn!) gaily on its packaging. It's made with Nicaraguan cocoa, delivering a rich, satisfying crunch. Available at Amazon.com.



RYZE Mushroom Coffee. "Instant" coffee gets a bad rap, but when you take Arabica beans and blend them with six kinds of mushrooms and MCT oil from coconuts, you get this super-special superfood that's both keto and vegan with a nutty flavor for an earthy boost to your morning. \$30 (for 30-serving pouch). Available at RyzeSuperFoods.com.



Dandies marshmallows. Sitting around a fire pit when the sun goes down all but requires you to make s'mores, and these all-natural, vegan marshmallows have a surprising and unique flavor and texture to really up your game. (You don't need to use the Omnom chocolates for your s'mores, but hey, why not?) And get the minis in the winter to put in hot chocolate. \$4.99. Available at Whole Foods.

Runamok Maple syrup. Now that Aunt Jemima is no more — and, honestly, why would you be pouring runny corn syrup over your food anyway? — time to up your game with some more artisanal Vermont maple, including the new strawberry/rose-infused version from Runamok. Consider it in summer cocktails and desserts as well as at breakfast. \$16.95. Available online and at RunamokMaple.com.



Ch'eesy MAC. Upton's Naturals' vegan dishes, such as its mac and cheese (with or without seitan "bacon") give a comfort-food twist to products that don't make animals uncomfortable. But they also do a **Thai Curry Jackfruit** that turns pulled pork sandwich into "fooled pork." \$4.99. Available at Whole Foods and online.



RAISE A GLASS TO INDEPENDENCE

With the Fourth of July upon us — at a time especially when social justice has never been more important — it's a good time to really reflect on what freedom and the Bill of Rights provide to us all. You can show some patriotism with a set of liberty-inspired tumblers with the opening text of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution printed on them. The glasses (available as lowballs or water glasses) have substance and heft, but you can also get a plastic insulated mug for carrying around the pool. Available at WellToldDesigns.com



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Pulp friction



Brutal and erotic, 'The Prince' is a throwback to queer potboilers

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

Anyone who has ever seen *Oz* knows that prison (at least cinemaprison) can be a scary, violent, yet erotic location. If we're being honest, somehow, that combination actually makes the taboos more exciting.

For Jaime (Juan Carlos Maldonado), all those things are true. He's 20 and pretty and newly-sentenced to a high-security prison in Chile, circa 1970. His first day in lockup is no picnic, but he's guided through the process by The Stallion, an older inmate who shows him the ropes ... but at a price. Jaime is expected to be his punk, to the frustration of The Stallion's current boy-toy, who quickly gets exiled. Jaime gets clothes and sleeping privileges and protection and a nickname (The Prince) ... and nightly sexual assaults.

It's not like such exploitation is new to him. Even before he landed in jail, Jaime used sex to get what he wanted — clothes from older women or the attentions of hot guys, including one called The Gypsy, whom Jaime mysteriously murdered (it's why he got sentenced to prison).

Based on an underground Chilean novel, *The Prince* is a gritty and titillating homoerotic drama, an engaging throwback to the queer pulp fiction of the past which entertained and enticed closeted (and out) gay men for decades. Erotic, yes, though not exactly sexy — despite the predominance

of full-front nudity, the violence and meanness, as well as the desperation, can be brutal as well as sad. In that way, it fully conjures the reality of prison life, where sex doesn't equate to romance but power.

South American gay prison dramas have a minor history, and *The Prince* shares some common ground with *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, beyond the setting, the era and sexual encounters, including how Jaime entertains his cellmate with stories and the specter of betrayal. And the cruelty and corruption of the prison guards feel especially poignant at this point in history.

The director, Sebastian Munoz del Rio, cribbs concepts and themes from the works of Jean Genet (who was previously explored by the experimental gay filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder), and he's about as daring in his unflinching frankness. But if the film lacks visual nuance, it does have a sense for character. Jaime is a selfish narcissist in the flashbacks to his pre-prison life. We've all met guys like him before. We like to think they'll learn. Few learn so definitely the hard way.

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There are lots of ways to celebrate the birth of our nation — fireworks, or a history lesson, or just a look at the people who have built the country but remained largely invisible. Here are some ideas.



Addison Kaboom Town. Maybe one of the surest signs that normalcy is returning in some degree might be the return of North Texas' favorite fireworks show... albeit with a pandemic twist. Addison's traditional Kaboom Town display, which lights up the sky every July 3, will return this year on a smaller scale: No air show, no party in the park and not even in Addison but an out-of-town location. Nevertheless, you can watch it all from home as the display will be livestreamed on social media. *July 3, beginning at 9:30 p.m. AddisonKaboomTown.com.*



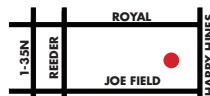
Disclosure. Movies like *The Celluloid Closet* turned a light on the portrayal of gay characters throughout cinema history, but the new documentary *Disclosure* shines its light on an even narrower focus: The presence of transgender characters throughout the history of cinema, with discussions of transmasculinity on screen, cross-dressing for comedy and more. Laverne Cox, Lilly Wachowski, Chaz Bono and more provide the context. *Now playing on Netflix.*



Hamilton. Independence Day: When the Founding Fathers staked their formal withdrawal from the tyranny of England in a great protest. What better way could there be, then, to see a modern interpretation of that volatile, historic period than seeing a different historic document — the generation-defining musical *Hamilton*. Lin-Manuel Miranda's unstoppable live-theater juggernaut was stopped after all, by a tiny virus, but you can celebrate the 4th a day early: A recording of the full live Broadway production will debut for broadcast TV. *July 3 on Disney+.*



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Cassie Nova

Online drag shows,
talk shows from home
and keeping hope alive

Hi guys! Is it me, or does it seem the amount of stupid in the world has grown exponentially? Every day I see more and more stupid shit. People I thought were, you know, sensible seem to have lost their fucking minds. Social media has turned everyone into an expert on everything.

It wouldn't be so bad if the "stupid" would just be stupid at home behind their computers, but these assholes are out in the public every day. Driving on our streets, not wearing masks and spreading their stupidity along with whatever virus and bad breath they have.

I can't stand it. Between the Karens, Trumpsters and the Corona-is-a-hoaxers, I start every day pissed off and wanting to slap the shit out of everyone. Also, putting almond milk in coffee is disgusting — completely unrelated, but since I was bitching I thought I'd throw that in too.

Alrighty then! Enough of that.

How is everyone enjoying their summer?

So, last week Gov. Abbott and Costello closed up the bars again — and on the very



day we were going to start doing shows again in the Rose Room! I was nervous about going back to work, but we were doing everything possible to follow our own safety standards, which were stricter than the Texas guidelines. In the end, I know it was the right decision. I wish the almighty scientists would hurry up and find a cure or a vaccine so we can get back to work.

Since this all started, we have tried to

adapt and have started doing online shows. I'm surprised by how much fun they can be, but I still really miss the interaction with the audience. The great thing about my online show is that I can see people's comments in real time, so there is still some interaction.

We have had people watching our online show that never have been to a real drag show. Hell, I've even had family members watch and comment on the shows (shout out to my Aunt Tammy). The great part of it is, I don't have to wear pads or anything from the waist down! Don't worry. I have never done the show without at least underwear on. But the eye rolls I get from my husband when, from the waist up — beads, rhinestones, boobs, lashes and big hair, but from the waist down — underwear, hairy legs and house shoes. Plus, you know that side view of my belly without my corset just ain't right.

My good Judy Larry The Fairy produces the show and has done an incredible job considering we are doing the shows from our individual homes. He has made hilarious clips for the show that signal it is time to do a shot or just something stupid to make you smile. And the girls in the show have really turned it. I have some very creative friends.

I have to say, as far as television shows going live from their houses go, I am sick of it.

Jimmy Fallon: Bless your heart, but I had to stop watching because I am tired of your kids interfering with your monologue. Your live shows are a wonderful reminder that I do not want kids.

Ellen: Bless your heart. I know you are trying, but somedays I wanna punch average Andy. I actually really like you, Andy, but you interrupt more than an interrupting cow. What is an interrupting coMOOOO!

Jimmy Kimmel: You, my friend, are doing it right. You've cut your show down to a tight 30 minutes and really sum up how I am feeling each day with your opening monologue — somedays angry; somedays sad, but always with a twist of humor. You are

really f-ing funny.

Now, y'all know I love me some Kelly Clarkson. I love how she opens each show with covers of other artists' songs. The great thing about her doing this during quarantine is that the songs don't have the live audience applauding, which makes it better for me when I want to perform one of those covers in the show. Plus her not being all done up by a professional make-up artist makes me feel better while I'm sitting in my living room looking like the Grinch.

During this pandemic, I have stayed constantly on the verge of tears. I choke up and get that awful lump in my throat so easily now. The drive by birthday parties, the girl that beat cancer and came home to her street lined with her friends and family cheering for her, the 7 p.m. beating of pots and pans for our healthcare workers — it all makes me cry.

But the tears truly flow over what has happened to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and the countless other people of color senselessly killed by police. When George Floyd called out for his mother — it felt like a gut punch. If you were not affected by that, then my heart breaks for you and your heartlessness.

Truth is, this whole "We will get through this together" stuff sometimes feels like a joke. But we have to have hope — hope that the world can change; hope it will get better. Did you ever notice how much light comes from the glowing numbers on a watch in a dark, dark room? Hope is like that little bit of light. You gotta keep hope alive, even if it is only a little bit.

I know; I know — I am getting corny. But I hope you understand what I am saying. But if you can't keep hope alive — Fuck it. Start a fire.

Remember to always love more, bitch if you need to and be fabulous! XOXO, Cassie Nova

this week's solution

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63						64					65			
66						67					68			

Solution on Page 18

Across

- 1 Gunners shoot it off
- 5 Terence of *Priscilla*
- 10 "There Is Nothing Like a ____"
- 14 At no time, in poems
- 15 Moore costar
- 16 Ready for press
- 17 *Julius Caesar* costume
- 18 Wonder Woman accessory
- 19 French composer douard
- 20 Start of a Hannah Gadsby quote, after she said that she doesn't hate males
- 22 More of the quote
- 24 Looker's leg
- 25 Way off
- 26 Where to stick your tool
- 28 Dick Button's milieu
- 31 Kelly once of *All My Children*
- 34 Batman and Robin, et al.
- 35 More of the quote
- 37 Like Cockney's pubes?
- 39 The Buckeyes, for short
- 40 Be expelled from a basketball game
- 42 Peebles of *Fame*
- 43 Financial
- 45 Horseman that sticks it in you

Down

- 47 More of the quote
- 51 Bentley of *American Beauty*
- 52 Prepare to drag
- 53 A.M.A. members
- 54 Word with donna
- 56 Home st. of Harper Lee
- 57 Physical therapy, briefly
- 60 End of the quote
- 63 Tied, as a score
- 64 O'Connor of *Xena*
- 65 Fruit center
- 66 Wagon train's direction
- 67 Bedroom arouser
- 68 "____ off?"

- 13 Alfred Douglas' school
- 21 Sonny, to Chaz
- 23 General activity
- 26 Bright, in book credits
- 27 Desperate women in a series
- 28 Letters for debtors
- 29 ____-de-sac
- 30 Rock trigram
- 32 One that is often penetrated
- 33 Moon of Uranus
- 34 Remove from the head
- 35 Fairy tale huffer
- 36 As it should be
- 38 Stat exaggeration?
- 40 King of Lawrence's land
- 41 Cheap and gaudy
- 44 Like mild weather
- 46 Product with three heads
- 48 The "T" in IGLTA
- 49 *All's Well That Ends Well* heroine
- 50 Artful dodger
- 54 Response to the SCOTUS transgender ruling
- 55 *Spamalot* review, perhaps
- 58 Popular '60s hairstyle
- 59 Queer ____ (fruity beverage)
- 61 Lyricist Gershwin
- 62 Calculator button

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