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Rising from the ashes

Fire destroyed 2 buildings ASD had planned to renovate.
Now the agency plans to rebuild bigger and better

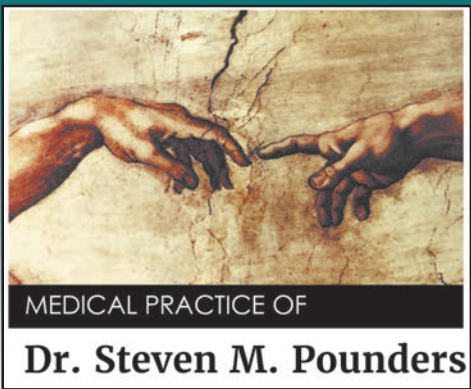
by David Taffet, Page 6

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Gonzalez hosting COVID testing, PPE distribution event in HD 104



State Rep. Jessica Gonzalez

State Rep. Jessica Gonzalez will host a free COVID-19 testing site and PPW distribution event on Saturday, Aug. 29, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 231 N. Marsalis Ave., in her home district, House District 104.

The event, intended to provide testing and PPE for frontline construction workers and their families, is also being hosted by Dallas City Council Member Chad West, the United States Hispanic Contractors Association, the Hispanic Contractors Association de Tejas, the Texas Division of Emergency Management, the Dallas Hispanic Firefighters Association, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church and Tito's Handmade Vodka.

Tests and PPE will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. Those attending are asked to wear a face mask and follow all social distancing guidelines.

For information contact the Hispanic Contractors Association by phone at 512-270-9857 or by email at ushcadeaustin@gmail.com.

— Tammye Nash

Republicans attack Texas congressional candidate Gina Ortiz Jones using homophobic slurs



Congressional candidate Gina Ortiz Jones

Republicans are resorting to homophobia in their campaign to retain the West Texas U.S. House seat currently held by Rep. Will Hurd. Gina Ortiz Jones is the Democratic candidate, and she is facing Republican Tony Gonzales.

The RNCC suggested Gonzales' supporters targeted her because of her sexual orientation. In a podcast, Gonzales said she had a "transgender agenda."

While both candidates are veterans, VoteVets issued a statement on behalf of Ortiz Jones:

"The RNCC attacking any candidate for their sexual orientation is reprehensible, vile and gutter-politics at its worst. That in the year 2020, they think it's a winning strategy against a veteran who has served her country honorably, tells you everything you need to know about Donald Trump's Republican Party. Gina Ortiz Jones volunteered to serve her country selflessly and courageously during 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell.' These desperate and homophobic attacks on her are yet another example of how — just like their standard-bearer Donald Trump — today's Republican Party has nothing to offer the American people beyond faux-patriotism and culture-war grievances."

Ortiz Jones campaign issued the following statement on the RNCC's attacks and Gonzales' past homophobic rhetoric: "Washington

Republicans' efforts to promote bigotry and homophobia have no place in this race, and it shows just how out of touch they are with Texans in this district. Tony Gonzales should condemn this shameless attempt to stoke hate and answer for his own dangerous rhetoric against the LGBTQ community."

— David Taffet

Gavin Grimm wins in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on Wednesday, Aug. 26, ruled in favor of American Civil Liberties Union client Gavin Grimm, deciding that restroom policies segregating transgender students from their peers and denying transgender student accurate transcripts are unconstitutional and violate Title IX, the federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in education.

The decision comes after a five-year long court battle that began when the ACLU and ACLU of Virginia filed a sex discrimination lawsuit against the Gloucester County School Board for adopting a discriminatory policy requiring Grimm and other transgender students to use "alternative private" restrooms.

Grimm, who began his legal fight as a sophomore in high school in 2015, said, "All transgender students should have what I was denied: the opportunity to be seen for who we are by our schools and our government. Today's decision is an incredible affirmation for not just me, but for trans youth around the country."

This week's ruling follows a recent decision from the Supreme Court that it is illegal to fire someone for being LGBTQ. The ACLU argued in the case of Aimee Stephens that federal civil rights laws that prohibit sex discrimination protect LGBTQ people. Today the court once again ruled that Title IX, which also prohibits sex discrimination, applies to transgender students.

Grimm's case itself reached the Supreme Court in 2017, but was sent back to lower court for review when the Trump administration rescinded Department of Education's earlier protections for trans students under Title IX. The court sent the case back to the Fourth

Circuit Court for reconsideration. In 2019, the Supreme Court rejected a challenge to school policies that support transgender students.

— David Taffet

Former Dallas mayor among 27 Republicans supporting Biden



Former Dallas mayor Steve Bartlett

Former Dallas Mayor Steve Bartlett was among three Republican former senators and 24 Republican former representatives who this week announced their support for Democratic nominee Joe Biden for president.

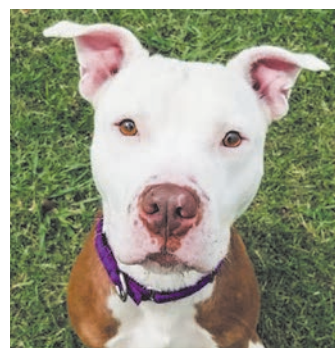
Bartlett was the 55th mayor of Dallas, serving from 1991-95. He served as a member of the House of Representatives from a north Dallas district from 1983-1991 and was replaced by Rep. Sam Johnson.

During his term in office as mayor, the first pro-LGBTQ ordinance came before the Dallas City Council. The LGBTQ community thought they had the votes supporting non-discrimination in city employment to pass with a 8-7 majority. Instead, before Bartlett voted in favor of the ordinance, he said, "We don't discriminate in my business. We shouldn't discriminate in the city," surprising everyone around the horseshoe as well as people in the council chamber on both sides of the issue.

The Republicans supporting Biden issued a statement that Trump's failure in office superseded partisanship.

— David Taffet

pet of the week / ART



Meet **Art**, a 3-year-old male mixed breed pup looking for a new leash on life. He came to the SPCA of Texas after being mistreated, and when he arrived, he had no

idea that he had found a safe place. He was scared of people and didn't want anyone to come into his kennel. The staff described him as very depressed, and it took him a bit of time to recover. Thankfully, the staff didn't give up on Art, and he has gained so much confidence since then. He loves going outside, playing with his favorite red ball and getting treats from humans. Due to his

past, he still has fearful tendencies, so he must have a house with a securely fenced-in yard. He is looking for an adopter who will be patient, loving and kind, and who will give him all the love he was previously deprived of and work with him on his basic obedience training as he gains his confidence. He would love a family who will spend lots of time playing with him and give him lots of opportunities for exercise, and he would do best in a home with adults only. Potential adopters get to take Art on a test drive through a trial adoption. Art is waiting for his new family at the Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas.

In an effort to reduce the potential for spreading COVID-19, the SPCA of Texas' shelters, clinics, mobile adoption events and mobile wellness events remain closed to the public until further notice. Adoptions are available by appointment only. 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/findadpet and visit sPCA.org/dogadopt to inquire about a dog or sPCA.org/catadopt to inquire about a cat.



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Hoping for bigger and better

AIDS Services Dallas was about to start renovating a property acquired more than a year ago; a Saturday night fire means starting from scratch

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

A fire that destroyed a two-building apartment complex owned by AIDS Services Dallas that was about to be renovated into affordable housing for people living with HIV could turn out to be a blessing in disguise for AIDS Services of Dallas: Plans had called for the property to be renovated into 16 affordable apartments for people living with HIV. Now,

though, ASD CEO Traswell Livingston is optimistic that what will replace the planned renovation will be bigger and better new construction.

The blaze that broke out at about midnight Saturday, Aug. 22, leveled one of the two buildings and severely damaged the second. The property was purchased in 2019, and the renovation project broke ground in February just before the beginning of the pandemic shut down.

Residents of the new property will mostly be people who currently live at other ASD properties but have become more independent.

Zoning for the neighborhood allows construction up to eight stories. Livingston said it's unlikely they'll build that high because there wouldn't be enough room for parking without an underground garage, which would be extremely expensive. He said a new design would surely be for a three-story — maybe four-story — building.

But before any new plans for the property get underway, Livingston has several steps ahead of him.

The fire that destroyed the buildings is under investigation.

Atmos Energy was on site during the fire. Gas had been turned off at the property, but water and electric services to the buildings were still on. The property was uninhabited and the buildings secured. But fire investigators will be looking for any signs of arson. As of press time, Dallas Fire and Rescue gave ASD no indication what may have caused the fire.

Now Livingston has to deal with the insurance company. Thankfully, the property is covered, but what he doesn't know yet is whether insurance will cover expenses ASD has already paid — like the architect's fees for a design to renovate existing buildings that will now have to be scrapped in favor of a design for a whole new building.

In February, work was about to begin when the pandemic hit. Design plans were finalized earlier this month, and work was again about to begin when the property was destroyed by the fire.

ASD kept the property fenced and boarded up between February and August. The agency also kept the lawn mowed and trash taken out. Still, Livingston said, there was evidence that someone was sleeping there, even though ASD checked the property regularly.

"We did everything we could to secure the building," Livingston said. "From time to time, we had to re-secure the place."

While building something better than what was there before was always the goal, Livingston said he didn't know what obstacles there are to building something bigger.

Part of the renovation was being funded with federal funds through HOPWA — Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS. That funding, which comes from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, may have been specifically designated for a renovation project.

One of the two buildings is nothing more than rubble after the fire. The second is severely damaged, but city inspectors haven't decided if it needs to be torn down. The fire damaged the roof and part of the structure, and it would take quite a bit more money to rehab what is left.

Livingston said he's not sure how the fire will affect the existing HOPWA funding, but the city does have two funds that he's hoping ASD can tap into to provide some of the money they'll need to proceed.

One of those sources is Community Development Block Grants, which "fund local community development activities with the stated goal of providing affordable housing, anti-poverty programs, and infrastructure development," according to HUD. The other is HOME, another HUD program that "provides grants to state and local governments to create affordable housing for low-income households."

The original plan was for the new property to open to residents by the end of this year. With renovations just set to begin, the opening date had been pushed off until summer 2021. Now, Livingston said, the fire postpones the project until at least spring 2022.

He said among residents there is disappointment and frustration. That's after six months of stress caused by COVID-19, and ASD lost one resident to the virus.

Still, during the pandemic, ASD was able to take in 14 new residents. Most had been sleeping on cots while living in the makeshift shelter at the Dallas Convention Center.

"They can much better maintain their health at Hillcrest House," Livingston said.

During the pandemic, ASD had to restrict all visitors from coming into their residences, and, Livingston said, "Isolation builds anxiety."

Livingston said he's ready to start opening the properties in slow, incremental steps. And he hopes to get the project at 511 N. Lancaster underway. That would be one way to accommodate some of the 148 people currently on the waiting list for ASD housing.

No matter what HOPWA, insurance and other government funding comes through, rebuilding bigger and better is going to take additional fundraising. ■

To make a donation, visit AIDSDallas.org and click on the 511 Lancaster tab. Scroll down to hit the donate button.



‘One clear choice’

Comparing party platforms shows Dems support for equality

TAMMY NASH | Managing Editor

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With both the Democratic and Republican national conventions now complete, and the 2020 presidential election entering its final stretch, a look at each party's platform leaves little if any question which of the two major parties offers the most support for LGBTQ Americans, representatives from two national LGBTQ organizations said this week.

Democrats formally adopted their party platform during their virtual convention held Aug. 17-20, at which they officially nominated former Vice President Joe Biden as the party's presidential candidate and Sen. Kamala Harris as his vice presidential running mate. The platform, drafted and approved by the platform committee in June, pledges support for full LGBTQ equality.

The GOP, however, announced in June that because of the difficulties of trying to stage the convention during the COVID-19 epidemic, that the party was choosing to forego a new party platform. Instead, the Republican National Committee's Executive Committee voted in June to adopt the same platform used in 2016, and on Aug. 22, the RNC adopted a resolution reiterating that the party would not adopt a new platform and pledging the party's continuing support for Trump's "America First agenda."

That recycled platform includes a number of anti-LGBTQ planks and, according to Politico, isn't satisfactory to either the party's more conservative members, who "wanted new language of gender identity and late-term abortion," or more moderate factions who worry the platform's more extreme planks will "alienate suburbanites."

"This year, the stakes for our movement could not be higher as we face the



Alphonso David

most important election of our lives," Human Rights Campaign President Alphonso David said via video, adding that the Democratic Party's 2020 platform is "the most pro-LGBTQ agenda" in the party's history.

Elliot Imse, senior director of communications for Victory Fund, agreed. "The Democratic Party platform is the most pro-LGBTQ platform ever adopted by any major American party," Imse said. "It calls for full equality not just for LGBTQ people in general, but full equality for transgender people, for LGBTQ people of color, for LGBTQ people with disabilities, for LGBTQ children and LGBTQ parents — for ALL LGBTQ people."

Imse continued, "Every policy and every piece of legislation these politicians promote and pass and sign into law affects the LGBTQ community in some way because our community is

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CHOICE From Previous Page

so diverse. When you look at this platform, it proves that the Democratic Party is clearly on the side of equality, and is not shying away from that in public or in private."

The GOP's 2016 platform, Imse noted, explicitly opposes legal recognition of same-sex marriage, despite the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 ruling, explicitly opposes allowing same-sex couples to adopt and explicitly supports conversion therapy for LGBTQ youth.

"Even though there are fair-minded Republicans — both voters and elected officials — the party itself has declared itself to be anti-LGBTQ," Imse said. "Before the Trump administration, there were a number of Republican elected officials at the federal and state levels that were willing to embrace some LGBTQ issues. But now, Trump has completely taken over the party."

"There may be some [in the party] who are trying to argue that Trump isn't anti-LGBTQ," he added. "But their party platform is entirely clear, and it is anti-LGBTQ. There is literally nothing to

debate. Unfortunately, we are at a place in American politics where there really is only one party that supports equality."

What the Democratic Party platform says on LGBTQ issues

A search of the 2020 Democratic Party Platform shows that the acronym LGBTQ+ appears 30 times — not counting two mentions in the table of contents — beginning in the document's preamble, which pledges that the party will "give hate no safe harbor," will "never amplify or legitimize the voices of racism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry or white supremacy."

"Democrats will," the documents continues, "protect and promote the equal rights of all our citizens — women, LGBTQ+ people, religious minorities, people with disabilities, Native Americans and all who have been discriminated against in too many ways and for too many generations."

The platform specifically includes



Elliot Imse

LGBTQ equality in its pledges to fight employment discrimination, homelessness and racial, gender and health inequalities. It also condemns the Trump administration's "discriminatory actions against the LGBTQ+ community, including the dangerous and unethical regulations allowing doctors, hospitals and insurance companies to discriminate

against patients based on their sexual orientation or gender identity."

The platform pledges that Democrats will "take action to guarantee that LGBTQ+ people and those living with HIV/AIDS have full access to needed health care and resources, including by requiring that federal health plans provide coverage for HIV/AIDS testing and treatment and HIV prevention medications like PrEP and PEP, gender confirmation surgery and hormone therapy."

One plank in the platform is dedicated specifically to protecting rights that the LGBTQ community has already won and calls for passage of the Equality Act to "outlaw discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in housing, public accommodations, access to credit, education, jury service and federal programs." It also promises the party will work to protect LGBTQ people from discrimination in foster care and adoption programs, to protect LGBTQ youth from bullying and to "guarantee transgender students' access to facilities based on their gender identity" as well as making sure LGBTQ seniors are included in federal programs. ■



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We have to care. We have to vote

In the middle of a pandemic, Trump is literally destroying the post office right before our eyes because he doesn't want people to be able to safely vote by mail. He'd rather people go to the polls ...

Wait a minute! What am I saying? Republicans don't want people to vote! High voter turnout is good for Democrats.

Regardless, the Republicans think nothing of driving people out into a public space when there is still a deadly virus ripping through the country.

To be clear, Trump and his wife have applied for absentee ballots so that they can vote by mail in the November election.

I love the post office. Maybe because I was born a couple decades before the internet boom. Maybe because I met my wife in 1997, right before she left for 11 months to study in Japan. Getting letters and postcards from her made my life. And I sent many to her as well.

Republicans have long been after the post office, wanting to privatize it because — as far as the GOP sees it — if it doesn't make a profit, then what's the point? This also helps to explain why they hate public schools and would like to see the system taken over by for-profit corporations who have to answer to shareholders, not parents and students.

But Republicans have never been so brazen in their attempt to steal an election before. Trump is 100 percent not interested in running a campaign and competing on his merits — because he has no merits. He's a trash human whose resume boasts racism and rape. It's astounding to me that anyone still supports him, but they do.

While phone banking for the state house race I'm working on, I talk to a good number of people. Most do not want to talk to me. Frankly, a lot of people are rude. Some holler, "Put me on the 'do not call list!'" and hang up the phone, as if they think that I have access to some grand master list I can delete their name from.

But nothing makes me more disheartened than when I talk to someone who says, "I'm not interested in politics." It



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

is often younger, presumably white men, who say such things.

And my first instinct is to yell, "MUST BE NICE!" into the phone.

we would have 200,000 people dead by the November election. And we're on track to even surpass that.

In 2016, we had a choice between a good person and a bad person for president. We chose the bad person. And we have paid a price.

In 2020, we have a choice between a good person and a bad person for president. We need to choose the right person this time.

I DGAF how you feel about Joe Biden. He wasn't my first choice. Or my second. Or my third. But putting someone in charge who actually cares about Americans

dying in droves should be an easy lift.

This is why Trump is throwing tantrums so hard right now. He has shown us who he is over and over again. And, sadly, his words and actions have become normalized in this



It's a luxury to not care about politics. Or, I should say, it's a luxury to not have to think of the policies that other people are making for you because you are not the one who will be harmed by such policies.

I've been an out lesbian my entire adult life. There has never been a single day when I didn't have to think about how policy affected my life. There were literally laws against me loving another person.

So yeah, I take it personally when a registered voter tells me they don't care about voting.

That is especially true now! Trump has literally been the worst president. He is a terrible person who has spent his entire life harming other people. And since he took office, his ability to hurt people has become seemingly limitless.

We're in the neighborhood of 170,000 deaths from COVID-19, certainly more by the time you are reading this. I remember reading a dire prediction that

country. But he isn't normal. This isn't normal.

I urge you to vote. Get your friends to vote. Get your family to vote, unless they're the family you dread seeing at Thanksgiving because they love Trump and think that racism isn't real.

If you're planning on voting by mail, get your shit together. Make a plan. Know your state's election laws. In Michigan, I advise that you get your application for a ballot in early. Take your completed ballot to your clerk's office yourself. Put a mask on and drop it off.

On Twitter I keep seeing posts like, "Retweet if you would crawl naked over broken glass and rusty nails to vote Trump out in November." The way things are going, that's not far-fetched. And that's not normal.

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

What makes sammies run?



A streak of exciting sandwich options turns a staple of the lunchbox into works of culinary indulgence

Text and Photography

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor

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We call many sandwiches by different names, even when they are just bread, protein and garnish. (Point of controversy: “A hot dog is a sandwich; a taco is not.” Discuss.) Well, I’m willing to defy that reductionist view. Some sandwiches really *are* unique. A Cubano can have multiple things in it, but if there’s no pickle and mustard hot-pressed with the bread, Swiss and pork, you don’t have a Cubano, you have a croque-monsieur. A Reuben earns its moniker with the presence of sauerkraut and corned beef. Anything less is merely a loose-meat stack. A po’ boy needs crunch and fried seafood, period.

So what makes for a distinctive sandwich experience? A recent run of sandwich outings has reinvigorated my valuation of this familiar meal (so named because in the 18th century the notorious gambler John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, refused to leave the betting table to dine, and requested meat be brought to him between two slices of bread). Here, then — just as National Sandwich Month nears its end — is a brief primer of some of the best, most specific sammies around right now.

Homerun: Ngon perfects the authentic banh mi for Texas palates

In an early episode of *The Simpsons*, Homer laments his limited sandwich choices in Springfield: “I’m sick of eating hoagies. I want a grinder, a sub, a foot-long hero! I want to *live*, Marge!” Homer was *waaaayyy* off. If that episode had aired within the last decade or so, he would definitely have wanted to include a *banh mi* in his litany. The classic Vietnam snack — around since the 19th century following the French colonization of Indochina — became a staple in its homeland more than a century ago, but lingered on the fringes of “ethnic goods” in the U.S. from the mid-1970s until about 2009. That’s about when food trucks and specialty shops, buoyed by the prevalence of idiosyncratic culinary options (Korean tacos! Vegan wraps! CBD-infused smoothies!), began to spread the word about this seemingly simple sammie: a baguette, braced with meats and veggies.

Seems basic. So what makes a *banh mi* a *banh mi* and not, say, a French dip *sans jus*, or a stubby lobster roll?

I have come to believe that a true *banh mi* owes its life to three things that accompany the base of French bread: pickled vegetables, a savory-sweet emulsion and pate de foie gras. I came to that conclusion after I enjoyed that style of *banh mi* (several, actually) at Ngon, a new Vietnamese restaurant that just soft-opened on Lowest Greenville. (Its grand opening is set for the next week or two.) I’d had my share of Americanized *banh mi* before, but none seduced me as winningly as the ones here.



AvoEatery's B.L.A.T., top, adds avocado and a lot of sass to the classic club-style sandwich; above, the amazing ingredients in Ngon's Hanoi-influenced *banh mi* make it our favorite sandwich.

The pickled veggies are a no-brainer — if you drew a picture of a generic *banh mi*, chances are it would be topped with carrots, cabbage and cilantro. The emulsion at Ngon is a housemade butter-mayonnaise; some places use regular mayo, which is fine, though a step down in terms of texture, complexity and sophistication. The butter here is rich and viscous; every bite left a little on my fingers, and I’m not complaining about having to lick it off.

This last ingredient may be one to put off diners, but I am convinced it’s the key: A shmeat of cognac-infused pate bivouacs on the opposite side from the butter, slathered onto the inner cradle of the bread,



Liberty Burger's mouthwatering Hatchback.

a kind of palisade girding the other components from being subsumed by the airy but carbo-dominance of the baguette. Its creamy tang conspires with the butter to balance each bite, sandwiching (literally) the meat and veggies between creamy phalanxes of hearty versatility. In the past, I've often eaten a *banh mi* like a girthy, unwieldy taco, something to be forced into my mouth in a few morsels. Often, the bread is crusty and dense, giving heft and structure at the expense of subtlety and, frankly, elegance. The *banh mis* at Ngon were eye-opening on that score.

Partly that's due to the meats. Ngon only offers chicken and pork protein options right now, but the styles are satisfyingly unusual. The vegetarian option presumably omits the pate and possibly the foie gras. I began to ask how they make it, but I demurred. Best to linger in happy ignorance, imagining a world where pate lives in harmony with wokeness, as sweet as butter and a lush baguette. The alternative is a sad realization of incompleteness, one likely to make me declare "D'oh!"

Also to get while there: A Vietnamese egg coffee.

Netflix and chile: The luscious Hatchback at Liberty Burger

Clearly a burger is also a sandwich — perhaps even the apotheosis of the phylum "sandwich" — and yet people have argued the point with me: No, it's a *burger*, as if that changes its essential character. I think some people just don't like to think of themselves as "sandwich people" (with the implied suburban domesticity, or perhaps the infantilizing childhood connotations) but *burger men*. No matter; they are wrong.

Better men than I (well, not better, just

more obsessive) have chronicled their perceived taxonomy of "the best burgers in town," which I shan't dispute or try to counter. I will only note that great burgers can be like comets — appearing in the sky for too-brief a period of time, dazzling us with their brightness then fading until they reappear just when we need them. Such is the Hatchback from Liberty Burger.

What makes it unique — and temporary — is the availability of Hatch chiles from New Mexico. These historic peppers are known for their mild, earthy flavor as well as their versatility in preparation... as well as their truncated growing season (usually just August and September; the town of Hatch has a festival every Labor Day). Liberty Burger's version is always ready to go as soon as the harvest gets underway, and they do it up right: Diced green chiles blended into the ground beef, then more chiles in a salsa topping the burger and sealed with a slap of Emmenthaler and a criss-cross of bacon, plus lettuce, tomato and purple onion. It's one of the juiciest burgers around, with a rustic but elevated flavor and tons of gooey Swiss binding it all together. You've got about a month more to enjoy it, then it'll be next summer before you get the chance again. Though we've all grown accustomed to waiting for good things lately.

Also to get while there: The Saboteur, or one of the other alcohol-infused adult milkshake.

Gee, B.L.T.s worth queueing up for: AvoEatery's sophisticated club redux meets One90 Meats' re-ducks

The B.L.T., the avatar of the club sandwich (minus the slices of chicken



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■ **SAMMIES** From Previous Page

breast), is perhaps the most traditional of American sammies. It's also among the least interesting. I can barely imagine a B.L.T. and not envision sun-cracked women in tennis skirts and portly men in golf shorts ordering one with a martini and hint of racism. Picture it in your head: High but narrow triangles of toasted Wonder Bread, pre-cut and served with a limp pickle and friseed toothpick struggling to keep it from toppling before it gets to the table.

Yeah, well, the B.L.A.T. doesn't look remotely like that. Or taste like it.

As you might well imagine, the one constant among the options at AvoEatery in Trinity Groves is the creamy, rich appeal of the alligator pear, aka a Mexican avocado: Its flesh is mashed, sliced, fanned or otherwise incorporated into every dish on the menu, as well as many cocktails. But the one iteration that sold me the most was the B.L.A.T. (guess what the A stands for?).

Wide, buttered slices of Signature Bakery bread are grilled and left intact before being layered with lettuce and tomato, then tons of crisp bacon strips, two fried eggs and half an avocado, completed by a spread of avo-aioli. It's a savory, gooey feast — a B.L.T. in components but not execution. There's the ooze from the yolk, the crunch from the bacon, the cool dance of the avocado evening out all the components. It makes you rethink all those lunches Mom made you sit through silently with her bridge partners, and how maybe they would have played less if they had this on their plates.

Also to get while there: Avocado toast, natch.

Compare, though, AvoEatery's variation to the D.L.T. from One90 Smoked Meats: The B gives way to a D, for duck. "It's a pretty simple sandwich," says owner Kyle St. Claire, "except you don't often see duck on a sandwich." Ya think?

Smoked with a mix of local pecan and oak, the thick breast of a well-fed mallard is sliced with a cap of fat in each edge, giving it a bacon-like quality, though it's layered more like a cheesesteak on thin slices of rustic bread (plus, of course, the L and T). The addition of a spicy-sweet reduction of cherries and jalapeno soothes it out, for



Duck subs for bacon in One90's D.L.T.

one of the most unusual B.L.T.s you'll find.

Also to get while there: Smoked brisket.

Full house: Meddlesome Moth's gastropub twist on a staple deli sammich

Speaking of sandwich styles that go underappreciated in carb-conscious America, the one I kept thinking of when I was presented with the One-Eyed Jack from Meddlesome Moth is the Dagwood — a sammie known not so much for its ingredients, but for its size. It's not that the Jack is all that tall, though I did take half of it home with me to eat later; it's that it packs so much between its slices of bread that it feels like one of those vertical, gravity-defying lunches from a cartoon.

Like the *banh mi*, it's a pork-lover's fantasia: a crisp plank of thick bacon crosses the bread diagonally, a sort of introduction to the flavorful duroc ham layered underneath. The ham is buffeted by a stratum of Tillamook cheddar, thick and cheesy and uniting the components. Adding an air of croque-madame to the mix, a fried egg is embedded in the upper piece of bread. The entire enterprise perches atop a nest of french fries, which I enjoyed but are supporting players to the pigalicious proteins that crowns it. Dagwood — and Homer — would be proud.

Also to get while there: Spicy duck wings.

Ngon Vietnamese Kitchen, 1907 Greenville Ave. NgonKitchen.com.

Liberty Burger, 1904 Abrams Parkway and other locations. GiveMeLibertyBurger.com.

AvoEatery at Trinity Groves, 3011 Gulden Lane, ste. 116. AvoEatery.com.

One90 Smoked Meats, 10240 Northwest Highway. One90SmokedMeats.com.

Meddlesome Moth, 1621 Oak Lawn Ave. MothInThe.net.

Live performance continues to make a comeback, as theater and dance figure out how to grow during the era of COVID. And eating out still has teeth!



Bruce Wood returns with dance from your car. Bruce Wood Dance has continued to entertain during the pandemic by releasing video performances of past shows. But thanks to a bunch of creatives, the company is now back with a new, in-person work. Friday BWD will inaugurate the Tin Star Theater in Trinity Groves with *Twilight at the Tin Star*. An immersive in-the-round drive-in event, it will feature dancers performing site-specific choreography from Gregory Dolbashian and live music under the canopy of the TETRA, an illuminated structural art piece by Colin Hendee. *Tin Star Theater*, 2712 Beeville St. Aug. 28. Gates at 7 p.m., show at 7:30 p.m. \$20/vehicle (via Eventbrite or at the gate).



Stage West presents live drive-in theater. The last time we saw Stage West produce a show, it was a filmed version of its pre-corona live staging of *The Children*. The Fort Worth-based company is back on the boards... in a way. Stage West presents a live version of the dance-theater production of Prism Movement Theater's socially-distanced piece *Everything Will Be Fine*, a title we can all benefit from hearing now. The piece deals with a woman dealing with an unthinkable loss and how she copes. The drive-in experience will take place in a Texas Wesleyan University parking lot, with audio piped in through your radio. Sept. 3-27, Thursdays-Sundays, 8:15 p.m. \$40 per car. StageWest.org for details and exact location.



Restaurant Week kicks off. Many of us have braved the occasional restaurant sit-down experience in the last five months, but this may be the thing to get more of us out and about: The official launch of Restaurant Week... later than usual, and with new protocols, new options (lunches!) and a host of great restaurants. It officially runs from Aug. 31-Sept. 6, with preview weekend starting Friday and extended weeks through Sept. 27. Cost is \$39. For reservations and lists of participating restaurants, visit DFWRestaurantWeek.com.

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From job history to job hunting

Hey everybody. I hate to say it, but I think it may be time for me to find a job. Like, for real. This pandemic has fucked up so much, and not doing shows has put an end to my life security. Yes, I said life — not just financial.

Doing shows is like therapy for me. It's like I have a battery inside me that can only be charged by a live audience. I have continued to do my Freakshow online (Mondays at 8 p.m.), and it really is fun. But there is nothing like a live crowd that you can feed off of and react to.

Plus, the camaraderie between all of the girls working in a show is something I miss more than I thought possible. There is a sisterhood between drag performers that is uniquely strong. My fellow castmates in the Rose Room and at J.R.'s know me better than any member of my blood family does.

A job though ... What the hell am I qualified to do at this point? I have done drag as my main job for almost 30 years now. Sure I have had other jobs in the past, but what could this jaded and bitchy man-child do now that doing drag is off the table?

I need ideas.

I've worked since I was 14 years old. One week before my 15th birthday, I got a job at a Dairy Queen that was owned by a friend of my mother's, way the fuck out in Richardson. We lived in Balch Springs, and my PawPaw would drive me to work every day then pick me up.

I lied and said I was 16. The owner, I think, liked my mom so he didn't pry. But there was no way I looked 16. The customers were constantly asking me how old I was: "I'm 16; now mind your business."

I actually kind of liked being the Dairy Queen. I killed it running the drive-thru, even though I got called "ma'am" a thousand times a day. By the time I was 16, I was shift leader — or whatever it was called then.

Then I worked for a very short-lived dollar theater in Balch Springs. My best friend Adam and I would literally get off the bus



from school and go open the movie theater. We took turns being ticket seller, working concessions and running the projector. The owner stopped by once a week and picked up the money to take to the bank.

It really was a shitty little theater, and we usually only got movies after they went to video. On the busiest nights, we might have had 35 to 40 people between the two movie screens we ran. Needless to say, that poor place did not last long. But it was fun while it lasted.

When it closed, the Boss Hogg-looking owner didn't have enough money to pay us our last paycheck. He told us to take whatever we wanted as payment. Adam took a couple of giant speakers, and I got my first CD player. (Back then CD players were crazy expensive.) Random fact: The first CD I ever bought was the Batman soundtrack by Prince.

Then I was a butcher. No, seriously: I worked at Winn Dixie as the night butcher.

That sounds so much cooler than it was; it was so gross. Of course, I only applied for the job because there was a guy that worked

there that I liked. I did everything I could to get that guy to notice me. I would walk past that stupid swinging door with the little round window so much that I wore a trail of tears onto the floor.

When I would finally find what aisle he was restocking on, I would find a reason to walk up and down that aisle. I'd say shit like, "Yup, looks like we need a can of shoestring potatoes in a can for dinner tonight." Or "Wow! That is a great price on Comet cleaner! I better get two!"

And, nothing! I don't remember his name, but I do remember his fine-ass mullet that was spiked on top and permed in the back. Believe it or not, that was considered sexy in the late '80s.

Back to me being a butcher: Winn Dixie made me take a training course on butchering meat, using the machines and cleaning up at night. I hated working there. The meats were so gross. I would get there at about 5 p.m. as the day shift was leaving, and they would leave a list of shit work for me to do.

I would have to grind pork meat and fat to make sausage, then put it on those Styrofoam trays and wrap it in plastic. Customers would ask me to cut up hams — and always after I had just cleaned the slicer for the night.

I'd have to take apart all of the equipment — slicers, grinders, tenderizers. They had a machine for everything, and it was my job to clean out all of the little bits of fat and grossness that clogged every nook and cranny of the machines. I hated it so much that I seriously thought about being a vegetarian for a bit. But, you know, steak.

I would leave every night soaked in meat water and smelling of bleach. No wonder I never got anywhere with the mullet guy. Plus, I think he may have been straight — at least that is what I tell myself.

I worked for years at General Cinema behind Town East Mall. I was even assistant

manager for a while. But then I finally got a car.

Once I had a car, it was much more important for me to go to Oak Lawn and be with my people. I found reasons just about every day to drive from Balch Springs to Oak Lawn. I just had to have a burger from Hunky's, or I just had to go to Oak Lawn Records to see what was new.

I was addicted to the Lawn!

Eventually, I started working at Hunky's and moved to Oak Lawn. That was such an exciting time for me. I loved working at Hunky's and catering for The Hamburger Man. I was around gays all day every day, and I never felt more like myself.

Then I started to do drag. Cassie made it hard for James to get up every morning and go to work, so eventually I tried to live off of just doing drag. That was so stupid. Doing just drag when you are first starting out — hell, even when you are a seasoned show girl — is hard. One night of great tips can change everything, but the constant worrying about paying bills is stressful and can make drag a lot less fun.

Luckily, I found Sound Warehouse, Warehouse Music and Blockbuster Music — all the same place, BTW. I loved working at a music store. I was really good at knowing what songs people were looking for, plus I found so many obscure songs to do in the show. And my bills were getting paid, so drag became fun again.

I would go to work at a music store in a heartbeat — if they still existed or were still relevant.

So what to do? Retail? I don't think I'd be any good at that anymore; I kinda hate people. Maybe I should apply at a Spirit Halloween store? I love Halloween, but the first time I get called a fag, I'm gonna fight. Like I said: people, yuk. If y'all have any ideas, lemme no!

Remember to always love more, bitch less and be fabulous! XOXO, Cassie Nova

this week's solution

G	A	V	E	S	M	E	A	R	S	L	A	V
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Solution on Page 14

Across

1 Put out

5 Accuse of pedophilia, e.g.

10 Navratilova, for one

14 Glenn, in *Fatal Attraction*

15 Ricky Martin's Peter

16 Greek meat container, perhaps

17 Adult filly

18 Beach birds

19 Shakespearean stream

20 With *The*, Netflix series with the phrase "When evil rains"

23 Like Julia Morgan's models

24 Black Sea port

25 "___ De-Lovely"

26 Got some beds ready

28 Word after "fag"

31 Second name in sci-fi and Trojans

37 She plays 13-Down

40 Character in 20-Across

41 Home of T. Bankhead

42 Dated

44 Showboat's "Nobody ___ But Me"

45 What Madonna did to Evita

47 Rinks org.

49 Split one in the locker room

50 Like a sauna

51 Hibernate with the bears

53 She plays 40-Across

58 "Dancing Queen" band

61 Bridge bid, briefly

62 Breakfast spread

63 Where Louganis worked out

64 Shrek and others

65 GI Jane portrayer

66 "The Black Clark Gable" Diggs

67 Monterrey mom

68 James VI, e.g.

Down

1 Full sweep

2 You must remember this

3 Cut and paste, e.g.

4 Work out with Richard Simmons

5 Takes part in a bee

6 Cosmetician Norman

7 First name in Pulitzer Prize poetry

8 Part of BART

9 A gangster shoots it off

10 Your gardener's tool

11 *Days of Our* ___

12 Molecule constituents

13 Character in 20-Across

21 Enjoy orally

22 ___ Ababa, Ethiopia

26 Downs of 20/20

27 Titanic, for example

28 Loads

29 Dispense carefully

30 Dazzling light

31 Chablis title

33 Fairy tale, so to speak

34 Lesbos, e.g.

35 Grp. or org.

36 Like Easter eggs

38 Desmond of *Sunset Boulevard*

39 Rec area

43 1979 Bette Midler film

46 Some like it hot

48 One side of a ship

51 Edgar Bergen's Mortimer

52 Walks like being fagged out

54 *Young Frankenstein* woman

55 Trump portrayer Baldwin

56 He went down under the sea

57 Cole Porter's "Let's ___"

58 Quick on the uptake

59 Drag queen's favorite snake?

60 Type of toy

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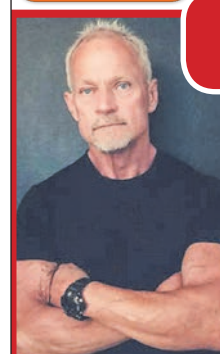
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