

dallasvoice

The Paper Published Since 1984 | DallasVoice.com | Volume 37 | Issue 18 | FREE | Friday, September 4, 2020



HUNGRY, FOLKS?

**A State Fair food drive-thru
is just one sign of renewed
life in Dallas' cultural life**

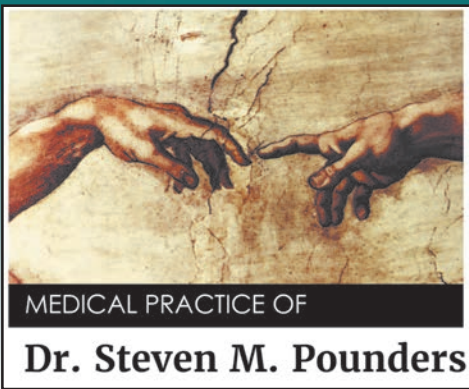
by Arnold Wayne Jones, Page 10

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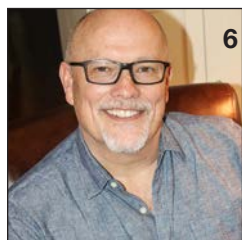
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Black Tie launches Ambassador program



In a year when innovation has become key in fundraising, officials with Black Tie Dinner have launched “a brand-new fundraising initiative called the Black Tie Ambassador Program, officials announced Wednesday, Sept. 2.

“This year has been especially challenging, but we remain committed to raising as much money for your beneficiaries as we can,” according to an announcement on the Black Tie website. “That’s where you come in. By becoming a Black Tie Ambassador, you commit to using your network of family, friends and colleagues to raise money for our annual distribution.”

Ambassadors are encouraged to create a team to fundraise together, to track activity and progress and to see how their progress compares with that of other ambassadors to

“Enjoy a little friendly competition as you help raise money for our inspiring and hard-working beneficiaries.”

Those who sign up are able to create their own Ambassador page where they can tell their story and add photos and videos. They can also earn points by inviting friends, raising and donating money and sharing photos, videos, posts, favorites and more via social media.

For more information on the program and to register as an ambassador, visit the Black Tie Ambassador website at P2P.OneCause.com/blacktie2020.

— Tammye Nash

APInc partnering with city to offer rental, utility assistance to those affected by COVID-19

Officials with Abounding Prosperity Inc. announced Wednesday, Sept. 2, that the agency has been selected to partner with the city of Dallas’ Office of Community Care to provide rental and utility assistance to more than 300 extremely low to moderately low income residents in South Dallas and surrounding communities impacted by COVID-19.

The CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund Emergency Short-Term Rental Assistance Program provides emergency short-term rental and utility assistance to residents within Dallas city

limits who have been impacted by COVID-19. The program also looks to address the needs of residents who are at or below 80 percent Area Median Income.

Eligible applicants can receive up to two months of rental or utility assistance, with a maximum of \$1,500 per month. Applicants who are in arrears on their rent or utility payments are eligible to receive an additional month of assistance for a total of three months.

To date, APInc has received more than \$810,000 in grant funding to combat the disparate economic impact that has been caused by the novel coronavirus. The agency’s COVID-19 relief efforts have provided COVID-19 Prevention and Care Kits and \$125 Visa gift cards for gas and other household needs and have worked to address nutritional needs through the weekly fresh food pantry in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Now, CEO Kirk Myers said, mental health counseling, short-term rental assistance through December 2020 and unstable housing will be added to APInc’s services.

— Tammye Nash

HRC releases Healthcare Equality Index

No Dallas hospitals are listed among healthcare leaders in the 2020 Healthcare Equality Index.

More hospitals than ever participated in this year’s survey by Human Rights Campaign. Results were published differently than in prior years, however. Of the 795 participants, HRC only published the 485 that were listed as leaders or top performers.

Only six hospitals in Texas were listed, although none were in Dallas. In the past, Parkland Hospital and the Dallas VA received top scores. Other Dallas hospitals refused to participate. From the results, it’s unclear if the Dallas VA and Parkland didn’t participate or scored poorly.

The Texas hospitals listed as leaders are: People’s Community Clinic and RBJ Health Center in Austin, VA Michael DeBakey Medical Center in Houston, Metropolitan Methodist Hospital and VA South Texas Health Care System in San Antonio and VA Central Texas Health Care System in Temple.

— David Taffet

National LGBT Chamber endorses Biden for president



Joe Biden

The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce on Monday, Aug. 31, publicly announced its endorsement of Joe Biden for president. This is only the second time in the organization’s nearly 20-year history that NGLCC has endorsed a presidential candidate, and the organization’s board voted unanimously to back Biden in the election.

NGLCC President and Co-Founder Justin Nelson said, “The NGLCC is proud to endorse a champion for inclusion. We need to elect a president with a commitment to LGBTQ equality, ending racism and racial violence, promoting small businesses and entrepreneurship and ensuring a safe and equitable society for every American.

“Joe Biden is that candidate,” he continued, adding that Biden “proudly affirms an essential core value of the NGLCC: that we all deserve our shot at the American Dream and that our economy only succeeds when it is available to all LGBT and allied Americans.”

LGBTQ+ for Biden and the NGLCC will celebrate the chamber’s endorsement with a virtual town hall Friday, Sept. 4, at noon CDT.

— Tammye Nash

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Ending the secrecy around suicide

As Suicide Prevention Month begins, a report from the Williams Institute discusses stats in the LGBTQ community

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor

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Every day, according to the Centers for Disease Control, about 123 Americans die by suicide. That means there is one death by suicide every 12 minutes in this country. And that makes suicide the 10th leading cause of death for Americans.

And for LGBTQ Americans, the percentages appear to be even higher, thanks to the constant discrimination and victimization the community faces.

This week, as National Suicide Prevention Month began, the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law released a summary of current data on suicidality among LGBTQ people. And according to that summary, the research shows a high prevalence of suicidal behavior among LGB people. In fact, a 2016 review of research published by the American Journal of Public Health — “A Lifetime Prevalence of Suicide Attempts Among Sexual Minority Adults by Study Sampling Strategies: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis” — 17 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual people had attempted suicide during their lifetimes, compared to 2.4 percent of the U.S. population in general.

For those who had been through conversion therapy, the numbers were even higher, according to “Sexual Orientation Change Efforts, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Suicide Ideation and Attempt Among Sexual Minority Adults,” a recent report from the Williams Institute’s Generations Study, is a nationally representative study of cisgender LGB people.

That same study showed that LGBQ people were 92 percent more likely to think about suicide, 75 percent more likely to plan suicide and 88 percent more likely to actu-

ally attempt suicide that resulted in no or minor injury.

The prevalence of suicidal thoughts and attempts among transgender adults is “significantly higher” than in the U.S. population in general, according to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality. In that study, 82 percent of respondents reported having thought seriously about suicide in their lifetimes, and 48 percent had had such thoughts within the past year.

Of the trans people responding to the USTS, 40 percent said they had attempted suicide at some point in their lifetimes; 7 percent said they had attempted suicide within the previous year. An analysis of the USTS findings conducted last year showed that 51 percent of respondents who had faced discrimination, rejection and violence — things like losing a job, being evicted and experiencing homelessness or being physically attacked — in the previous year had attempted suicide, and a full 98 percent had seriously thought about suicide. Those rejected by their family of origin were twice as likely to report having attempted suicide compared to those not rejected by family (11 percent to 5 percent). And more than 30 percent of those physically attacked in a place of public accommodations reported attempting suicide in the previous year, compared to only 7 percent who had not been attacked.

On the other hand, transgender people with supportive families and those who wanted and received gender-affirming surgical care reported a lower prevalence of suicidal thoughts and attempts.

A report from 2014 showed that LGBTQ youth are at a heightened risk for suicidal thoughts and attempts, but risk varies based on sex and race or ethnicity. While LGBTQ youth are three times more likely to think about suicide, make a suicide plan, harm themselves or attempt suicide, the risk was higher among LGBTQ females than among LGBTQ males. Asian and Black LGBTQ youth were at lower risk compared to white LGBTQ youth, but Alaskan Native/Pacific



Jimmy Owen

Islander and Latino LGBTQ youth were at significantly higher risk.

Anti-bullying laws that explicitly protect youth based on sexual orientation are associated with fewer suicide attempts among all youth, regardless of sexual orientation, a 2019 report shows.

How do we change it?

The numbers paint a dire picture of suicide in the LGBTQ community. But we can turn the statistics around. Slowly but surely, more and more laws are being passed banning discrimination against LGBTQ people; just this summer, the U.S. Supreme Court

"Asking does not increase the risk," he

If you know someone is thinking or talking about suicide, “remove the lethality,” he continued. That means taking away a gun or pills or knives — anything they could use to cause themselves harm. When you have removed the possibility of immediate harm, then work on getting them connected



Jimmy Owen, LPC-S, has offices at 3838 Oak Lawn Ave., Ste. 1000 in Dallas. Call him at 214-546-8852 or visit his website at JimmyOwen.com.

09.04.20 ■ dallasvoice 7

Flipping the Texas House

Ann Johnson is running for a seat centered in the Montrose gayborhood that's seen as the most flippable for Democrats

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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To flip leadership in the Texas House of Representatives, Democrats need to capture nine seats this November. Considered the most flippable seat is District 134, which includes the Montrose area of Houston, that city's LGBTQ neighborhood.

Democrat Ann Johnson is challenging five-term incumbent Republican Sarah Davis, generally considered the most moderate Republican in the House, for the right to represent District 134. Equality Texas rated Davis higher than any other Republican serving in the Texas Legislature.

But Johnson disagrees. "She was first elected as a tea party candidate," Johnson said of her Republican opponent.

Davis' rating with the NRA remains high while her score with the Sierra Club is zero. Although she's moderated her views to more closely reflect her district, she came to the legislature as pro-life but now claims to be pro-choice.

She voted to cut education funding by \$5.3 billion in 2011, and she led the fight prevent Medicaid expansion in the state, leaving hundreds of thousands of Texans without healthcare insurance.

And if that isn't enough, Johnson's overriding argument is that District 134 voters need to elect her so Democrats will gain control of the House. Her party, she points out, is just nine seats away from that goal.

Johnson asks Democratic voters in her district who think Sarah Davis is moderate enough if they love her enough to hand the House of Representatives back



Ann Johnson

to Gov. Greg Abbott. Handing Republicans control means one thing to Johnson — another 10 years of gerrymandered districts.

One of the main jobs of the House of Representatives in the 2021 session is to take the newly released census figures and new number of U.S. House seats and create districts for the legislature and Congress. Texans will live with the lines drawn for the next 10 years.

Johnson points out that statewide, Republicans hold only a 3 percent majority over Democrats, but gerrymandering of congressional districts has resulted in two-thirds of the 36 Texas seats in Congress being held by Republicans.

For those looking at the issues, Johnson said, the difference is "clearly definable."

On the COVID crisis, Johnson said follow the science. She said Houston was in the same situation as Dallas until the governor finally encouraged wearing masks — a mayor and county judge who had to tiptoe around the governor's order that masks couldn't be mandated.

She called Houston's spike in cases, which caused its ICUs to be over capacity (something we haven't experienced in Dallas) a result of a failure of leadership that was supported by her opponent.

Johnson says gun safety is a concern for people living in her district, and she thinks it should be a concern to everyone in Texas, where four of the top 10 shootings in the last two years have occurred. And she has three proposals that she says most responsible gun owners support: universal background checks, safe storage and extreme risk protection orders.

When a gunman drove from his home in Allen to El Paso to go on a killing rampage last year, the shooter's mother had already warned police her son was a danger to himself and others. But officials did nothing, and the man was able to keep the weapons he then used to kill 20 people.

Johnson said her risk prevention protection proposal could have prevented the El Paso shootings. And, she added, safe storage of firearms to keep them out of the hands of children is a common sense proposal that responsible gun owners already follow. No one wants children finding guns and playing with them like they're toys.

On crime, Johnson points to her experience as a former human trafficking prosecutor who's now in private practice specializing in juvenile and criminal law and defending those whose lives have been affected by human traffickers.

Davis has signed on to Dallas Rep. Jes-

sica Gonzalez's omnibus LGBTQ nondiscrimination bill. Johnson said joining the LGBTQ caucus would be the first thing she'd do, and signing onto the nondiscrimination bill would be the next. She said she understands discrimination first hand.

"I've lived it," she said. "My wife and I got married, but we had to wait for the U.S. Supreme Court to give us that right."

Johnson said she has no doubt Davis will support Gonzalez's bill, but she questions whether Davis will bring any other votes for it along with her. And with Republicans in control of the House, Johnson said, she doubts the bill will get to the floor.

The LGBT Victory Fund CEO Annise Parker is the former mayor of Houston where she worked with Johnson. She said Johnson's work there around human trafficking "was transformative."

Johnson's challenge to Davis, Parker said, is the strongest since Davis was first elected. Although Davis has been returned to the legislature by an electorate that perceives her as moderate, "In the Trump era, even Republican-light is not what they want," Parker said.

And, the former mayor added, Davis supports racist, sexist and homophobic ideas — even if she doesn't believe them herself — by caucusing with the Republicans who do believe and promote them. And that, Parker said, is why "she needs to be gone."

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Subscriptions via First Class Mail are available: Three months (13 consecutive issues), \$65. Six months (26 consecutive issues), \$85. One year (52 consecutive issues), \$130. Contact Dallas Voice at 214-754-8710 x123.

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Outlaw and disorder

Greetings and F.U. to Trump and his enabling Republicans who pretended COVID-19 was a Democratic hoax and STILL have no national plan to mitigate the virus, because my kid started his first day of middle school alone online in his room today. And, he reports, it sucked.

If it baffles you that anyone would still support Trump after he killed off 180,000-plus people in the U.S. through his indifference, inaction and lies about coronavirus, you aren't alone. If it's hurting your head, you need to do yourself a favor and shut off your logical brain that uses things like facts and science to order the world around you.

Trump supporters don't use that part of their brain.

Whether that part of your brain is active depends, largely, on where you get your news. If you read about Trump's scandals and insanity in places like The New York Times, CNN, NPR, the Washington Post or Fangoria, then you might have the notion that breaking the law and being a misogynistic racist con man is, like, bad.

But if you get your "news" from Fox News, then you laugh at the idea of drinking liberal snowflake tears. You'll also be treated to the exact same security briefing Trump himself gets when you watch Sean Hannity's show, which I believe is called Hannity Insanity (and if I'm wrong about that, well, all I can say is what a missed opportunity).

For so many white people in the U.S., racial justice and equality are far more terrifying than fascism. Under fascism they'll be fine. But if faced with racial justice, they might have to, you know, address this country's horribly violent racist past and present.

Fascism may be what your great grandpa fought a war against, but it's what your uncle fantasizes about to lower his blood pressure after he sees protesters on Fox News demanding that Black people not be killed indiscriminately by police.

Trump is talking to that exact uncle when he rage tweets, "LAW AND ORDER!"

Funny, isn't it, how law and order doesn't apply to Trump and his admin-



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

istration? Law and order, you see, is what white people use to keep Black people in line. (And by "in line" I mean, they are not making pesky demands like "Don't kill us.")



There is nothing Trump can point to that hasn't been a disaster during his presidency. Sure, the stock market rebounded after a huge drop. But millions are still out of work, and 1,000 people a day are dying from a virus just about every other country managed to get under control in some way.

So Trump has to scare folks into voting for him. And he doesn't care that he's escalating clashes between anti-racist protesters and white supremacist militia groups and that people are being killed because of his scare tactics.

But Joe Biden sees Trump.

"Trump and Pence are running on, quote, 'You won't be safe in Joe Biden's America.' And what's their proof? The violence we're seeing in Donald Trump's America," Biden said recently. "These are not images of some imagined 'Joe Biden America' in the future. These are images

of Donald Trump's America today."

But, of course, Trump is the president who said, "I take no responsibility at all." For anything.

"He keeps telling you if only he was president, it wouldn't happen," Biden continued. "He keeps telling us that if he was president, you'd feel safe. Well, he is president, whether he knows it or not. And it is happening. It's getting worse, and you know why? Because Donald Trump adds fuel to every fire. Because he refuses to even acknowledge that there's a racial justice problem in America; because he won't stand up to any form of violence."

Trump's largely white supporters love a "strong man" and are so desperate and afraid right now they're willing to pretend that Donald Trump is one.

But he's not. He is pathetic; he is cruel;

he is ignorant. But strong? No.

Remember in 2016 when everybody was like, "There's no way in hell Trump can win. What a joke!" But he did. And now here we are in 2020, and Trump has exceeded all of our most nightmarish expectations, and he absolutely has the chance to win again.

And if he does, goodbye Democracy. Goodbye civil rights. Goodbye marriage equality. Goodbye transgender people being treated like anything other than pariahs.

You need to vote. And, yes, voting isn't the end-all be-all. There is deep healing work to do in this country. But we can kiss any hope of healing goodbye if we end up with another four years of Trump. ■

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.

Signs of life

Arts groups
redefine the
new normal as
museums, venues
and even Big Tex
slowly come
back online

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
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The pandemic has affected everyone in all sectors, but in North Texas and elsewhere, the cost to the artistic and cultural communities has been staggering. Last week, a survey conducted through the Dallas Arts District and other nonprofits reported tremendous losses: Nearly \$70 million from the shutdown in mid-March until the end of July (when the survey was conducted), doubling the toll from a prior survey that ended May 31.

"All of these organizations are just struggling to hold on," says Terry D. Loftis, who runs the arts-funding organization TACA, which distributed more than half a million in emergency relief to 70 arts organizations. Jobs have been lost. Salaries slashed. Foot-traffic drastically curtailed.

But slowly, the city is seeing that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

"You know, we closed on March 14 and opened again on Aug. 14, so we were closed exactly five months," says Augustin Arteaga, executive director of the Dallas Museum of Art. One of the shows at the DMA right now, the massive and colorful *For the Dreamer of Houses*, has literally remained overlooked since its opening: The preview was March 12; two days later, the museum closed.

When Big Tex is unveiled later this month, he will be wearing a face mask; inset, the impressive *For a Dreamer of Houses* exhibit at the DMA finally gets a public showing.



But it's still there, inviting locals to explore it. (Reservations are required and patrons are given a two-hour window to visit.)

It's all still a work in progress. The DMA, the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum and Nasher Sculpture Center all opened their doors last month; the Sixth Floor Museum and Crow Museum of Asian Art are set to welcome the public on Sept. 9 and Sept. 18, respectively. (The Perot Museum of Nature and Science — which in June had been one of the first venues to announce reopening plans in July that eventually fell through — is set to open later in the fall, though no exact date has been revealed.)

But these baby steps come at a time when they are much needed.

Perhaps the most encouraging sign that we are all adjusting to the new normal arrives thanks to the DMA, which has just opened its first new exhibit, a portmanteau collection of more than 20 recent acquisitions (within the last two years) called *Contemporary Art + Design*.

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Notes on ‘Camp’

Queer coming-of-age book will make your teen’s summer

Camp by L.C. Rosen (Little, Brown 2020) \$17.99; 374 pp.

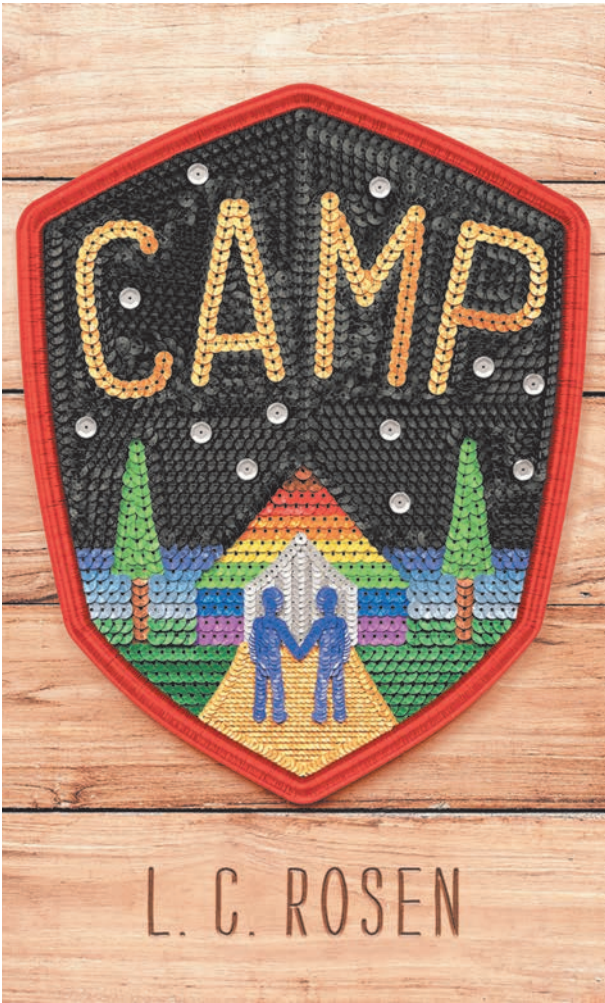
Sixteen-year-old Randall Kappelhoff had been thinking about his plan all winter. This year at Camp Outland, a camp for queer teens, everything would be different. He’d cut his hair and change his name — no more “Randy,” he’d be “Del” at camp. He’d act totally masc, sign up for sports and reluctantly give up performing in the annual play. And at the end of the four weeks, Hudson Aaronson-Lim would be Randy’s ... um, *Del’s* ... boyfriend.

He’d been hot for Hudson every summer for years. This plan *had* to work. And it does. At first.

Hudson is everything Del wants: He’s solid, sweet and his kisses are ah-may-zing. And as much as Del wants to “get naked” with Hudson, he knows he has to wait. Every past summer, while he lusted after Hudson, he watched Hudson find some random boy, let the boy fall in love with him, and then he’d dump said boy within two weeks. *That* was *not* going to happen to Del. Hudson would be permanent; He just didn’t know it yet.

But staying in character was not easy. Del’s cabin-mate, George, brought nail polish to camp but while Randy would wear nail polish, “Del” could not. Everyone in Del’s cabin was really into theater and they were all looking forward to the camp show, but “Del” was too masc for singing and dancing. Still, Hudson was worth it.

Almost everyone in camp knew about Del’s rom-com plans — everyone, that is, except Hudson. Del knew that he’d eventually have to tell Hudson the truth, but by that time, he was sure Hudson would be in love with him, and



nothing else would matter.

Camp is adorable. It’s all puppyish first love and awkward kisses and fumbling virginity loss. It can also feel long. That may be the first thing you notice, since author L.C. Rosen jumps right into the beginning of Randy’s first week at camp and the plan. That doesn’t leave much literary foreplay, and it makes for a rough opening; fortunately, it doesn’t last, and it doesn’t drag.

To the good, the teen angst inside this book is perfect, as is the authenticity of its language. There’s also a great mix of LGBTQ+ characters, but the story’s neon-sign is the thing most readers will celebrate, to wit: Be true to yourself... but *be careful*.

One caution: This is a cute story with a strong message but also contains some pages of explicitness if you’re turning it over to younger readers. For older queer teens who need to read, though, *Camp* is just-right, with a little heat. ■

— Terri Schlichenmeyer



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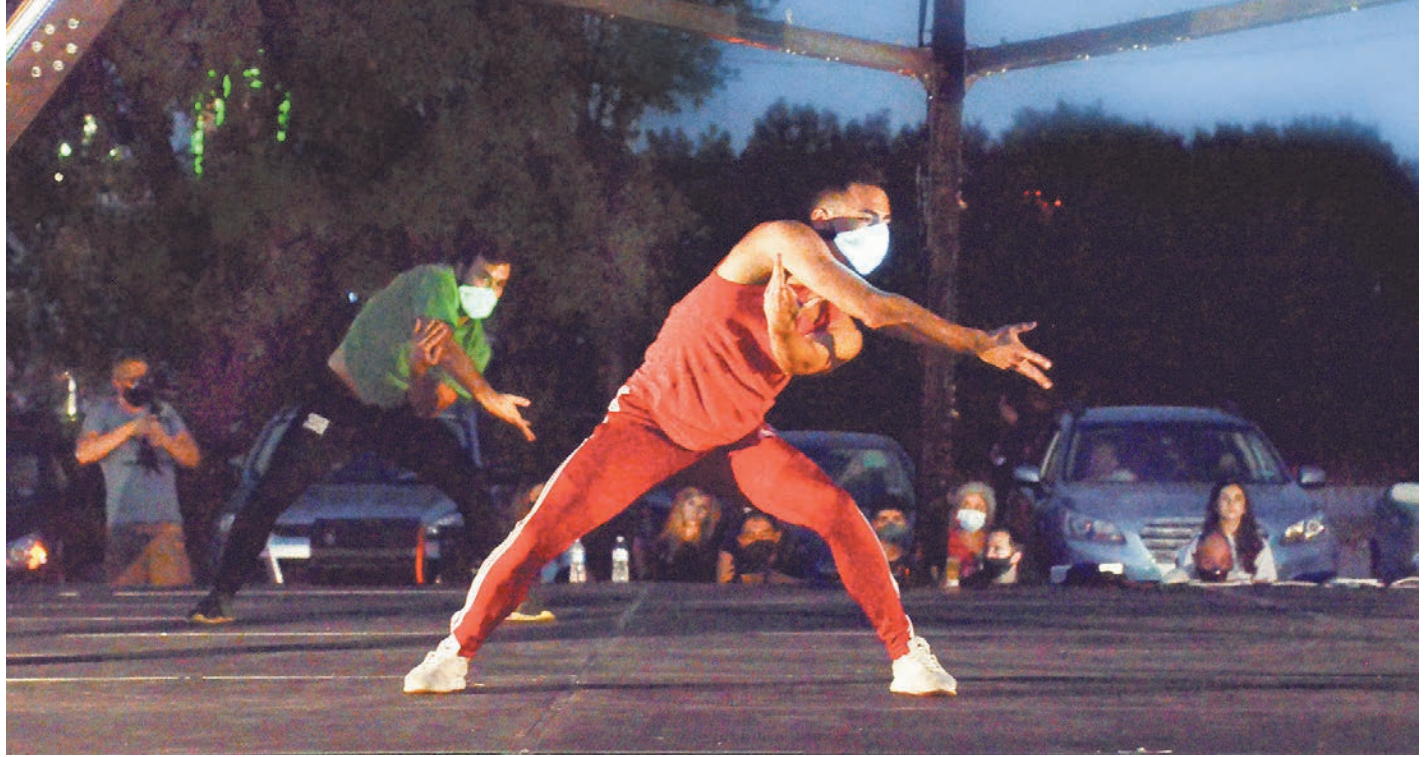
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Although a version of the exhibit had been planned before the shutdown, DMA curator Sarah Schleuning notes that it grew and transformed as a result of having more time to think about the role of the museum in the life of the city. A second exhibit, set to debut later this month, was created entirely since shutdown.

"All 12 curators worked together and asked, 'What [works in our respective collections] can cross over?' Even though the art didn't change, our perceptions of it did," Schleuning says. "We have done groupings to let the [pieces] speak to each other."

It's not just the museums. Last week, two different performing arts groups — Bruce Wood Dance and Fort Worth's Stage West — showed their inventiveness by mounting outdoor, car-based evening performances of their experimental shows; BWD's actually inaugurated a new space in West Dallas, the Tin Star Theater, which was the brainchild of Booker T. alum Nolan DeMarco McGahan. The AT&T Performing Arts Center revives its long-shuttered Elevator Project in a few weeks with outdoor



Bruce Wood Dance was one of three groups to perform at the inauguration of the Tin Star Theater, an outdoor, car-based performance space. (Photo courtesy of Brian Guillaux)

performances on the Annette Strauss Square stage, and early next month, TITAS returns with its slate of curated dance performances starting with Complexions Contemporary Ballet, perhaps the first touring live show to make it to North Texas since the winter.

And although the State Fair of Texas as we know it will officially *not* take place in 2020, organizers have announced a new drive-thru concept that will allow 50,000 cars to picnic while socially-distancing inside the fairgrounds, munching on fair food and

even getting their photos taken with a mask-wearing Big Tex. While that is a fraction of the millions who stream through in a typical year, a corny dog and heartfelt "Howdy, folks!" may be the surest signs of life fighting back in North Texas. ■

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Sam Jay: 3 in the Morning. Sam Jay is the kind of person who sends your pronoun game into overload: A butch queer woman with a masculine first name with a short haircut who dresses like a frat boy, talks about her girlfriend and goes by “she.” Jay, a staff writer for *Saturday Night Live*, mounted her woozy inaugural stand-up special on Netflix earlier this month, a smart, funny, confessional hour. Available on Netflix.



Derby Day. Among the many events postponed in the last half-year was the annual running of the Kentucky Derby in May. Well, it's only four months late, but the derby will be run this Saturday. And you can enjoy it virtually while celebrating the Turtle Creek Conservancy, the nonprofit that maintains Turtle Creek Park. This year, the fundraiser becomes Derby in a Box: You can pick up a general (\$75) or premium (\$150) box and watch a livestream hosted from the park, including an auction, “virtual” best dressed and best hat contests and more. Premium boxes contain such items as Maker's Mark, macarons, a mint julep cup and more. Sept. 5, 4:30–6 p.m. More info at <http://bit.ly/DATR2020>.

Another Derby Day option: There will be a socially-distanced live watch party at Jaxon Beer Garden in Downtown, with \$5 mint juleps from 3 p.m. until the end of the race. 311 S. Akard St. JaxonBeerGarden.com.

Garland eateries team up to offer fair food in September. While Fair Park will be allowing a controlled number of cars to enter and purchase staples of the food concourses later this month, 13 restaurants in Garland's downtown are letting anyone come by all September long with Fair Fare on the Square. You'll be able to enjoy classics like turkey legs (Fish 'n Tails Oyster Bar), fried Oreos (Dos Banderas), funnel cake (Intrinsic Smokehouse & Brewery), corn dogs (Paw Paw's Sweet Shop) and more ... all without an admission fee or use of coupons. Main Street in Garland, through Sept. 30. Visit GarlandTX.com.



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Girl on girls

Jenny Block on living a private life in public

We never really know what's going on in anyone else's marriage. Social media exacerbates that situation. There's a vomiting of personal information... except that it is all perfectly curated so that we only see exactly what the person wants us to see. Even #unfiltered is a curation of sorts — curating by not curating. And the more content there is, the more we feel like, "This must be real. Look at all of it. There's no time or space for anything else." But there is, and it's what we don't see that just might be the most telling of all.

I've been thinking about this a lot with the majority of us still quarantining, all of us alone or in our little pods or bubbles; all of us allying ourselves within one of two camps on every front: "Putting on the quarantine 15" versus "Using this time to get #ripped;" "Feeling grateful to have more time with my kids" versus "How early is too early to start drinking;" Embodying Marie Kondo versus figuring we can just move and leave it all behind when this is all over.

And people are very clear via social media about where they stand.

This goes for relationships, too: "Finally, time with my bae" versus "Can you break up with someone you have to keep living with?"; "Creating an aquaponic farm with my love" versus "Is it possible to live in 2,500 square feet and never bump into the person you live with?" #Blessed versus #Stressed.

The truth most likely lies somewhere in between, and remembering that that is true for most people regardless of their social profile can make it a lot easier to stop comparing how your own home fires may — or may not — be burning.

People can keep the most incredible secrets: loneliness, abuse, addiction and, sometimes, love. Because, yes, the awful stuff is what most of us want to keep to ourselves. I don't need anyone to know how hopeless I am on a bicycle or just how much you do not want to be around me if I am hungry, tired or cold ... and not necessarily in that order. But we also don't always know the depth and breadth of people's relationships or even the nature of them because some people can't, or don't want to, reveal that.

Chadwick Boseman's tragic passing has certainly brought this to mind. He was so sick for so long, and, yet, there, he was, playing — literally and a figuratively — a superhero on the big screen. He got married in secret with zero fanfare or exposure. I think I know why he kept both of those things private. It must be as difficult as it is spectacular to be famous. You are so

wholly adored you may also become wholly swallowed, and no one wants every looky-loo in their beeswax, and there are some things you want to keep all for yourself because they are either too dreadful or too wonderful.

The release of the new documentary *Surviving the Silence* is about a female colonel who was forced to oust an army heroine for being a lesbian while she herself was in a longtime closeted relationship. All those years, Pat Thompson and Barbara Brass had hidden their relationship, posing as friends and roommates. They even had a secret door installed between their two bedrooms. And then Thompson, many, many years later had to lead the effort to have Margarethe Cammermeyer removed from service because of her sexual orientation.

What must all of those women have been thinking? How did they manage, day after day and year after year, to hide behind a lie? How does love grow in such shadow? Those are the questions the film addresses, of course. And the answer, I might add, is, "Quite beautifully." But all of those answers left me with even more thoughts and questions about how little we really do know of one another and what a terribly dangerous thing that can be.

That guy who cut you off on the highway? He just lost his job. That young waitress who was so slow and inattentive? She just found out she's pregnant. That boy who can't concentrate in class? His dad hits his mom. And that couple with all the #CouplesGoals photos? They fight with such venom that the psychological bruising is as bad as any physical ones.

Why does any of this matter? Because it's easy to hate people whose stories we don't know. And, so, too, is it true in reverse. It's hard to hate those whose stories we do know...

That doesn't mean we have a right to be in everyone's business. We don't have to access every sordid detail. What it does mean is that we need to be respectful and cautious, because we simply don't know. This is true when it comes to the world at large. But it is equally true when it comes to our own little lives within our own four little walls in our own little relationships.

We can never truly know another person. Not entirely. Hell, it's hard enough just to know oneself. So tread lightly. Give your partner the benefit of the doubt. Be kind in both directions. She is not able to know your every thought and pain so don't lash out at her when unspoken expectations aren't met. And you don't know her every pain and scar



— especially those of which she may not be wholly aware, so don't internalize words that may land on you but are not meant for you.

There are no perfect relationships. There aren't. I think there are some that come pretty close. Those that are, are the ones that remain conscious and active. To love is an action verb. It requires constant action, a commitment to wanting to love and be loved enough to care for the relationship like any other living, growing, breathing thing. I've said it before: We are not perfect. Not a one of us. But living by The Four Agreements is what gets us as close to that as humanly possible.

The one thing I do know is that what you see is not the whole story. Ever.

So be gentle, with yourself, with your partner, with others, with the world.

We know not of what we know not.

Send your questions or comments to GirlOnGirls@gmail.com.

this week's solution

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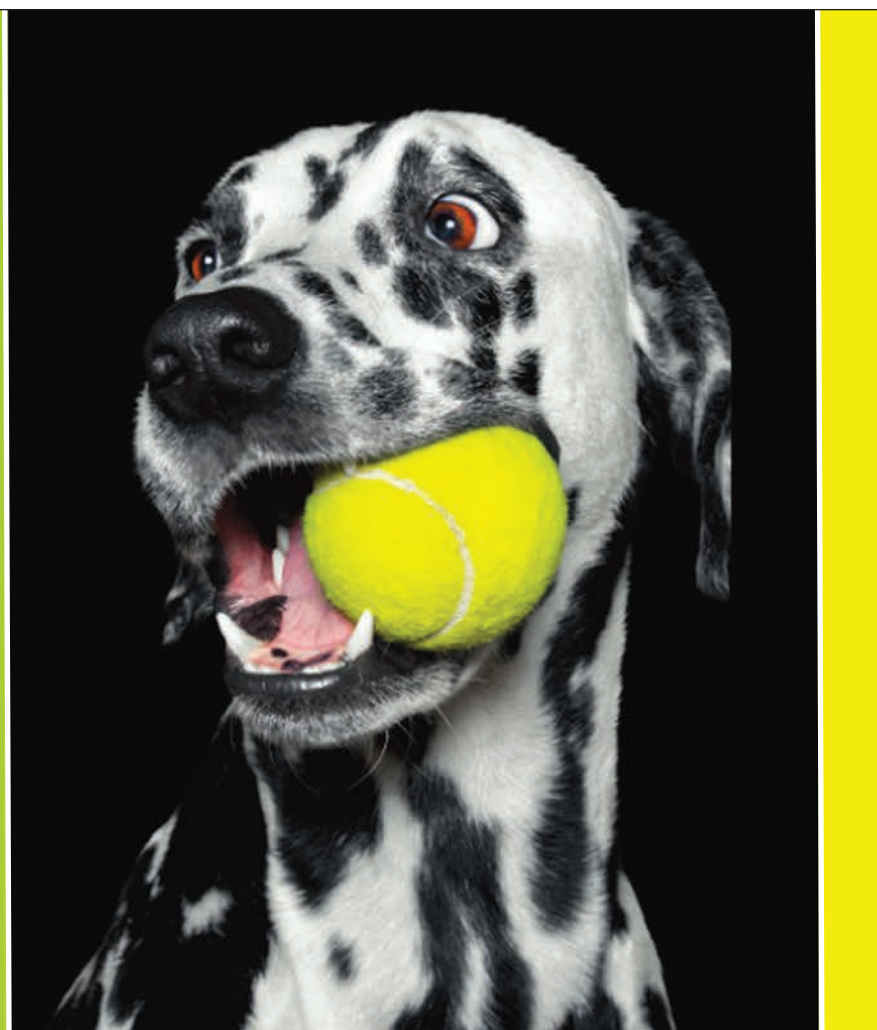
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69						70					71			

Solution on Page 14

Across

- 1 Climax, e.g.
- 6 Antigay prejudice, e.g.
- 10 Queens stadium name
- 14 Pound poem part
- 15 Fairy tale start
- 16 David Hyde Pierce and peers
- 17 Place to become wife and wife
- 18 Star Turner
- 19 Todd Oldham designs
- 20 Start of a quip by Holland Taylor
- 23 Matching notes for Rorem?
- 24 Get ___ deal
- 25 Supermarket employee
- 29 Deity identified with Diana
- 31 Hairy Addams family member
- 34 R.E.M.'s "The ___ Love"
- 35 Lone Star sch.
- 37 Spud, to Gomer
- 39 More of the quip
- 41 More of the quip
- 43 Magna ___
- 44 Nick and Nora's dog
- 46 Tow job
- 47 G. Burke's greatest hits
- 48 Obi, e.g.

Down

- 1 Play for a sucker
- 2 Lorca's stick
- 3 They crawl around your mound
- 4 RBI, to Billy Bean
- 5 Down in the dumps
- 6 They keep your nuts in place
- 7 Behind
- 8 Troubling spots
- 9 Billy Budd, for one
- 10 Allstate rival
- 11 Like Derek Zoolander
- 12 Cole Porter's "Ridin' ___"
- 13 Big name in pumps

- 21 Discussion venue
- 22 Urania's sister
- 25 Mismanage
- 26 Lend it to Marc Antony
- 27 They're very engaging
- 28 Signorile's column, with *The*
- 30 Opening for the crack of dawn
- 32 Beat, to Barber
- 33 Check out, in a fitting room
- 36 Some like them hot
- 38 Ambience
- 40 Made less difficult to bear
- 42 Light, woody material
- 45 You can get some in bed
- 49 Takes as one's own
- 51 Dr. J's last name
- 53 Use a rubber
- 55 Shakespearean taming target
- 56 Michael of *Six Feet Under*
- 57 Personal lubricant ingredient
- 58 Tide type
- 59 Ghostbusters role
- 60 Meat that goes in your boxers
- 61 Linguist Chomsky
- 62 Time of *Spamalot*

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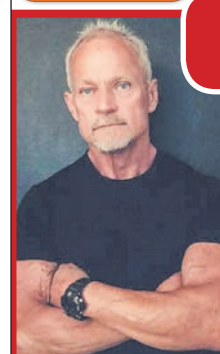
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