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The Premier Media Source for LGBTQ

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Jim Parsons

Lessons learned from 'Boys'

by Chris Azzopardi, Page 14



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Stonewall Democrats of Dallas 2020 Endorsements

President/Vice President Joe Biden & Kamala Harris

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Sheriff
Marian Brown

Tax Assessor-Collector
John R. Ames

County Commissioner, Dist. 1
Theresa Daniel

County Commissioner, Dist. 3
John Wiley Price

DISD District 2
Nancy Rodriguez



StonewallDemocratsofDallas.org

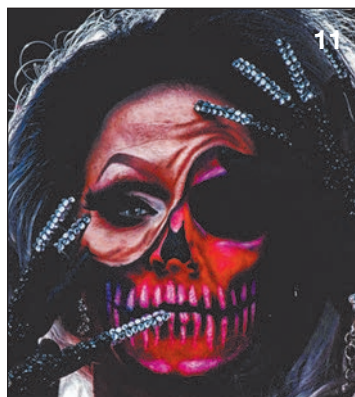
Ad paid for by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas. Brandon Vance, Treasurer



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Jim Parsons as Michael in 'The Boys in the Band.' Photo by Scott Everett White NETFLIX ©2020.

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Redfield Tavern caught up in 'No more gays' controversy

Redfield's Tavern, located on Butler Street in The Medical District, had become a popular hangout for LGBTQ folks looking for somewhere to go after COVID-19 shut down The Strip. But the bar and grill quickly became the target of LGBTQ fury on Wednesday, Oct. 21, after word began to spread on Facebook that Redfield's owners were caught on tape saying their establishment is not a gay bar and they didn't want any more gay people hired.

While a Redfield's representative claimed via comments on several Facebook posts about the controversy claiming the restaurant's owners and management were "really at a loss as to where this is coming from," because "We've been nothing but grateful for our gay clientele," audio tape of a conversation between two men identified as being owners of the establishment and a woman identified as the at-that-time general manager confirms that the owners did say they did not want Redfield's to be a gay bar and instructing the general manager to stop hiring gay men.

Dallas Voice messaged Redfield's via Facebook on Wednesday night when the controversy broke asking for comment about the rumors. We received no reply, and within 30 minutes, the Redfield's Facebook page was taken offline.

The person who sent the tape to Dallas Voice identified the two men, on the tape as "two of the owners, Joe and Scott," and the woman as "Lindsey, the former GM, who left in protest."

The audio tape, recorded by "Lindsey" during a conversation with the two men appears to have taken place on an outdoor patio and has lots of background noises, and the two men's voices are frequently nearly drowned out by the background noise. However, one man can clearly be heard telling Lindsey, "We are not going to try to be a gay bar to keep our business

up ... And I see it in the people that we are hiring. I see it ... and it is very concerning."

The men go on to suggest that customers have been complaining because Redfield's had too many gay men on staff. They also tell Lindsey to stop hiring men and to instead hire more women. Lindsey tells them she only hired applicants based on their qualifications and that she is "not trying to make the staff gay," one of the men replies, "Yes you are." In another place in the conversation, one of the men says, "If we hire someone and they don't fit our image, either they won't be on the schedule or we will fire them."

Dallas Voice is currently arranging to have sound engineers try to clear up the recording to provide a more complete and concise transcript of the conversation. To hear the audio for yourself, visit DallasVoice.com.

— Tammye Nash

Services set for Monica Roberts

Services for Transgriot publisher Monica Roberts have been set for Oct. 23-25 in Houston. Roberts died Oct. 6 of natural causes.

The weekend begins with a wake on Friday, Oct. 23, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. at St. Peter United Church of Christ, 9022 Long Point Road in Houston. Homegoing services on Saturday, Oct. 24, will begin with viewing from 9 a.m.-12:45 p.m. The funeral service takes place from 1-3 p.m. at University of Houston, Cullen Performance Hall, followed by interment at Houston Memorial Gardens, 2426 Cullen Parkway in Pearland.

A virtual funeral takes place on Saturday from 10 a.m.-noon on Transgriot Weekly at facebook.com/transgriotweekly.

On Sunday, friends will honor Monica with a Get Out the Vote Rally from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Houston City Hall, 901 Bagby, Houston. Her last Facebook post read, "I can't wait until Oct. 13," which was the first day of early voting.

— David Taffet

AP Inc hosting food drive, get out the vote rally

Abounding Prosperity Inc. is hosting a food drive and get out the vote rally Saturday, Oct. 24, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at the AP Inc. clinic at 1705 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in South Dallas.

The rally featuring speeches from local officials, will begin at 12:30 p.m., and at about 1 p.m., AP Inc. officials will lead a caravan to the polls at the MLK Jr. Center gym at 2901 Pennsylvania Ave.

Speakers will include state Rep. Lorraine Birabil from District 100, state Rep.-elect Jasmine Crockett from District 100, Dallas Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano and AP Inc. CEO Kirk Myers. Ahmad Goree, AP Inc.'s public affairs director, will be master of ceremonies.

AP Inc. will also be accepting applications for its rental and utility assistance program, offered in partnership with the city of Dallas' Office of Community Care, during the event. For more information visit AboundingProsperity.org.

— Tammye Nash

OBITUARY



Joel K. Haralson passed away suddenly on Friday, Sept. 18, at the Baylor Medical Center in Carrollton. He was born March 26, 1961, in

Wichita Falls to Jess and Paula (Landers) Haralson. He graduated from Nocona High School in 1979 before earning his bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of

North Texas in Denton in 1984.

Joel was a former member of the Classic Chassis Car Club and a long-time weekend resident of Rainbow Ranch Campground. He was preceded in death by his partner of 17 years, Gary McGill; his father, Jess Haralson, and his grandparents, J.C. and Floy Haralson and Roy and Jessie Landers.

Joel is survived by his husband of 12 years, Scott McGee of Dallas; his mother, Paula Haralson; his brother and sister-in-law Jay and Kim Haralson of Nocona; his nephew Jonathon Haralson and wife Holly of Carbon; his nephew Jordan Haralson and wife Haylee of Olney; and his great-nieces and -nephews, Callie, Jack, Jace and Hadlie.

pet of the week / CHICO



Meet **Cinco**, a 3-year-old, American pit Bull terrier mix. He came to the SPCA of Texas as a stray in July, so the staff doesn't know much about his history, just that he's a handsome, sweet boy.

He's spent some time in the staff offices, and he was such a happy dog. He liked playing with toys, meeting new people and getting lots of love and cuddles. If you want a snuggle pup, he's your guy. He would love a house with a backyard, but he'd be okay with a low traffic apartment where he doesn't have to walk by too many other dogs. They make him nervous, so he'll need to be the only pup in the home. He's a friendly, fun-loving guy who will be sure to put a smile on your face and be the best buddy ever. Cinco is waiting to meet you at the SPCA of Texas' 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.

THE GAY AGENDA

Have an event coming up? Email your information to Managing Editor Tammye Nash at nash@dallasvoice.com or Senior Staff Writer David Taffet at taffet@dallasvoice.com by Wednesday at 5 p.m. for that week's issue.

The Gay Agenda is now color-coded: Red for community events; blue for arts and entertainment; purple for sports; green for nightlife and orange for civic events and holidays.

• **Through Oct. 30:**
Early voting continues

• **Every Monday: THRIVE**
Resource Center's THRIVE Support Group for people 50 and older meets virtually from 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. led by a SMU Intern from their counseling program. A secure Zoom Room opens

at 11:30 a.m. for people to join and chat. Email THRIVE@myresourcecenter.org to request the link.

• **Biweekly: Hope Cottage Foster Parent Information Meeting**

Hope Cottage holds information meetings for those interested in becoming foster parents. The meetings are held alternately on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and Thursdays at 6 p.m. For information email Clyde Hemminger at chemminger@hopecottage.org.

OCTOBER

• **Oct. 23: Vote by mail applications due**

• **Oct. 23: Movie Night**
Movie night in Strauss Square: The Addams Family at 7 p.m. and IT at 9:30 p.m. Strauss Square, 2389 Flora St. Tickets at ATTPAC.org.

• **Oct. 23: Drive-In Film Festival**
Dallas Film presents the film Friday Night Lights. Gates open at 6 p.m. Showtime 7:15 p.m. No reservations. Four Corners Brewery, 1311 S. Ervay St.

• **Oct. 24: Get Up Stand Up!**
Kitchen Dog Theater presents a

socially distanced drive-in celebration of democracy. Concerts held behind KDT's new compound at 7:30 p.m. at 4774 Algiers St. \$30 per car plus \$15 for each additional passenger. Kitchendogtheater.org.

• **Oct. 24: TITAS Does Drag**
TITAS/Dance Unbound, in association with the AT&T Performing Arts Center presents a new initiative, "TITAS/Unfiltered," and the first event is "TITAS Does Drag: The Rose Room on Tour." The special performance event features the cast of The Rose Room, with Cassie Nova as emcee along with Blu Valentine, Chanel LaMasters, Fantasha, Jenna Skyy, Kelexis Davenport, Krystal Summers, Layla LaRue and Sasha Andrews. All COVID safety restrictions will be in place, including masks and socially-distanced seating. Tickets start at \$39; for tickets and information visit Tickets.ATTPAC.org.

• **Oct. 24: Art Walk West**
Art Walk West celebrates the creative culture of West Dallas and winds through Trinity Groves and the emerging Tin District. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free. WestDallasChamber.org.

• **Oct. 24: Drive-In Film Festival**
Dallas Film presents the film The Rookie. Gates open at 6 p.m. Showtime 7:15 p.m. No reservations. Four Corners Brewery, 1311 S. Ervay St.

• **Oct. 24: 'Felt Sense' and 'Coalescence'**
Opening reception for Felt Sense, works by Nicole Havekost, and for Bumin Kim's Coalescence. Both run through Nov. 28 at Ro2 Art The Cedars, 1501 S. Ervay. Noon-5 p.m. Free tickets via EventBrite.

• **Oct. 27: LGBT Grief Group**
Grief group for those who have lost a same-sex partner currently meeting virtually at 6:45 p.m. Contact Ray at raymond.sablack@gmail.com for Zoom room access.

• **Oct. 29-Nov. 4 '1984' at Circle Theatre**
Circle Theatre presents a digitally-recorded performance of George Orwell's 1984, adapted for the stage by Michael Gene Sullivan, available through Vimeo at 8 p.m. Oct. 29-Nov. 4. Tickets are free, but you must reserve your ticket at CircleTheatre.com/1984 (use code "1984" at checkout). After you reserve your ticket, you will receive a link to the video recording via email the day before the performance.

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Most qualified candidate

Eden would be the first transgender member of the Texas legislature

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

LGBT Victory Fund CEO Annise Parker has called Madi Eden one of the most qualified people running for office in Texas. If she wins her race to represent District 17 in the Texas House of Representatives, she will be the first transgender person elected to the House, and a large part of her victory would be credited to the voter registration effort and tools she, herself, developed.

Eden co-founded Register2Vote.org and built tools which have helped register millions of voters across the country. Especially during a pandemic when deputy registrars aren't out at events registering new voters, her website has become an effective tool in registering new voters and updating voter registration information.

Through the tools she built, Eden explained, "We got big data using not extremely advanced technology."

And through that technology, community work and pandemic-style campaigning, she has a good chance of flipping the Texas House seat she's running for in Bastrop County, just east of Austin. If elected, she not only will be the first transgender member of the Texas legislature, but also only the third transgender person elected to a state house anywhere in the U.S.

But Eden is running on a lot more than transgender issues like bathroom bills.

"Sure, it's important to have a bathroom to use," she said. "But let's make sure people have the internet. In a pandemic it's a big deal. Healthcare. Let's fix our economy after the pandemic."

Eden said her opponent, incumbent

Republican John Cyrier who's been in office five years, has talked about fixing the poor internet service common in the district so near tech-savvy Austin.

But Eden is running on a lot more than transgender issues like bathroom bills. "The importance of 2020 can't be overstated," Eden said, referencing re-

districting, which occurs every 10 years in the legislative session following a census. State house and senate districts, as well as federal congressional boundary lines, will be drawn by the 2021 Texas Legislature.

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This race is going to be a referendum on Trump and COVID-19, Eden said, adding that she believes the pandemic has affected a lot more people than even the high numbers that are being reported. Each county is reporting figures individually, she said, which may be resulting in a severe undercount of cases and deaths across the state.

From what she's hearing from voters in her district, Eden said, they're not happy with how the pandemic is being managed at either a state or federal level. And from information she's gleaned from the online tools she's developed, the 3 million people who've moved to Texas since the last election aren't happy with how Texas state government is run.

Eden takes a practical approach. Her website talks frankly about the issues that matter: "Have you ever lost sleep at night because we weren't locking up occasional pot smokers and unregistered voters? Neither has Madi," she wrote.

And from the response she's gotten, she said she believes she has a good chance of winning her district and making that bit of Texas trans history. ■

November blues for Mitch?

U.S. Senate races worth careful attention as November nears

LISA KEEN | Keen News Service
lisakeen@mac.com

Control of the U.S. Senate is almost as important to LGBTQ people this year as is control of the White House. Under Republican control, the Senate has ignored bills to make schools safer for LGBTQ students and bills to stop discrimination against LGBTQ youth seeking child welfare services. While the Equality Act — which would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing and federally funded programs — has passed the House, it has languished in the Senate Judiciary Committee without even a hearing, much less a vote.

And, under Republican control, the Senate has “rubber stamped” confirmations, at every level of the federal court system, for nominees who have records of hostility to LGBTQ people.

“In nomination after nomination, [President Trump’s] picks for federal courts are hostile to civil rights in general and specifically hostile to LGBTQ rights,” said a spokesperson for Lambda Legal. Twenty-four judicial nominees have already been confirmed for appointment to the federal appeals courts, and, by month’s end, the Senate is expected to confirm Trump’s third pick for the U.S. Supreme Court.

It also warrants particular notice that the Senate, under Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, openly flouted the majority’s own rules governing SCOTUS nominations to deprive Democratic President Obama of his choice of a nominee during the 2016 election year but is insisting that Republican President Trump get to replace Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg not just in an election year but during the actual 2020 election season.

Not every LGBTQ person or group has given up on the Republican Party. Charles T. Moran, managing director of the national Log Cabin Republicans group, signed on to a letter supporting the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to become a U.S. Supreme Court justice, even as every other national LGBTQ group opposed her confirmation.

Log Cabin Republicans has not endorsed any U.S. Senate candidates this year, but its chapter in Illinois has endorsed the Republican challenger to incumbent Democratic U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin. Log Cabin national also considers U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, a strong ally, even while the Human Rights Campaign and Equality Maine have turned against her.

But on an even more practical level, having Democrats control the Senate and the House would create a line of defense against any number of schemes President Trump might employ to declare himself the winner of the presidential race. It would also provide Congress with a realistic means of holding Trump accountable for any crimes he might commit, or has committed, against the nation. And it would improve the chances that any upcoming U.S. Supreme Court vacancy could be filled by nominees who have a commitment to equal rights for LGBTQ people.

So, what are the numbers? And which are the states that could decide who controls the U.S. Senate next session?

There are 35 U.S. Senate seats up for election Nov. 3, but only 10 of them are contestable enough to warrant attention and funding by supporters of either party. Nine of those 10 are currently held by Republicans seeking re-election; one — in Michigan — is a Democrat.

If Trump retains the White House, Democrats would need 51 seats in order to take control of the Senate. They currently have 47, but polling indicates they will lose one of those seats — the one held by Alabama Sen. Doug Jones.

Michigan’s Democratic U.S. Sen. Gary Peters is also in a tough race for re-election. The latest poll there shows



MJ Hegar

Republican challenger John James with a 1.4 percent lead and only 2.5 percent of voters undecided. But an average of polls, calculated by RealClearPolitics, gives Peters a 4.9 percent edge.

Assuming Jones and Peters lose, the Democrats would be down to 45 seats and would need to flip six Republican seats to take the Senate. FiveThirtyEight.com, the website founded by gay statistics guru Nate Silver, calculated last week that Democrats have a 73 percent chance of winning the Senate.

Here are the races where U.S. Senate seats have the best chance to change from Republican to Democrat:

- **Arizona:** Democrat Mark Kelly, husband of former U.S. Rep. Gabby Gifford, is running to replace first-term Republican Martha McSally. The Human Rights Campaign endorsed Kelly, saying he has been a “steadfast ally.” McSally’s score from HRC on LGBTQ issues stands at 0. An average of recent polls, calculated by RealClearPolitics.com, shows Kelly with a 8.3 percent lead, as of Oct. 16.

- **Colorado:** Democrat John Hickenlooper, the former governor, is leading incumbent Republican Sen. Cory Gardner. The only recent poll there, conducted in early October, showed Hickenlooper up by 9 points. Gardner merits a 0 on HRC’s Congressional scorecard; Hickenlooper has won HRC’s endorsement. One-Colorado calls Hickenlooper a “pro-equality champion.”

- **Georgia:** Democrat Jon Ossoff, a media owner and journalist, almost won a U.S. House seat in Georgia two years ago. He had HRC’s endorsement

then, and he has it now, and he and special election Senate candidate Raphael Warnock (see below) have both earned gay presidential contender Pete Buttigieg’s endorsement. Ossoff is hoping to unseat Republican incumbent David Perdue who has a 0 score from HRC. RealClearPolitics’ average of polls shows Perdue ahead by only one point as of Oct. 12.

- **Georgia:** Democrat Raphael Warnock is the personal pastor of openly lesbian Georgia state Rep. Park Cannon, who has endorsed him as has HRC. While having “evolved” on issues such as marriage for same-sex couples, Warnock has welcomed LGBTQ people and promised leaders to passionately argue against anyone trying to use religion to discriminate. The Republican incumbent, Kelly Loeffler, has not been in the Senate long enough to obtain a score from HRC, but she recently introduced legislation to limit Title IX protection in educational sports to sex discrimination “based solely on a person’s reproductive biology and genetics at birth.” RealClearPolitics calculation show Warnock leads by 7.7 points as of Oct. 12.

- **Montana:** Democrat Steve Bullock, former governor of the state, has seen a recent surge in support, from 9 points down on Oct. 7 to a tie on Oct. 10. As governor, Bullock signed an executive order prohibiting discrimination against LGBTQ state employees and supported the U.S. Supreme Court decision to strike state bans on marriage for same-sex couples. HRC has endorsed Bullock, and scored the Republican in-

BLUES, Next Page



Mark Kelly

cumbent at 0.

• **North Carolina:** Democrat Cal Cunningham appeared to be running away with the election in his bid to unseat in-

cumbent Republican Thom Tillis. Then news broke that he had been engaging sexting with a woman other than his wife, and his polls slipped. But FiveThir-

tyEight.com reported last week that Cunningham appears to have survived. A recent New York Times polling shows him with a 1 point lead, but RealClearPolitics' average of polls shows him with a 4.3 point lead. HRC and Buttigieg have both endorsed Cunningham.

• **Iowa:** Democrat Theresa Greenfield, a real estate executive, has been consistently polling 3 to 5 points ahead of incumbent Republican Joni Ernst in recent weeks, but the "undecided" votes are running about 10 percent. Greenfield's got the support of HRC and Buttigieg, and Ernst's HRC score is a 0. Two early October polls showed Greenfield up by 4 points but with a margin of error of 3.5.

• **Maine:** Democrat Sara Gideon, Speaker of the Maine House, might once have been considered a long-shot to unseat long-time Maine incumbent Republican Susan Collins. Collins was seen by many in the LGBTQ community as among the very few allies on the Republican side. But then she voted for Trump Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, whom HRC characterized as a "dangerous, unqualified nominee." Collins' impassioned floor speech and vote for Kavanaugh and repeated willingness to stay in lock-step with Senate Majority

Leader Mitch McConnell has rendered Collins' re-election "simply untenable," said HRC President Alphonso David. On the other side of the aisle, Log Cabin Republicans announced its endorsement of Collins this week. RealClearPolitics' averaging of polls shows Gideon up by 4.2 points in early October.

• **Texas:** While Texas has long been considered a reliably red state by the GOP, there has seemingly been a blue surge of late, with Beto O'Rourke's challenge to Republican incumbent Sen. Ted Cruz ended up being the closest Senate race here in 40 years. O'Rourke came up just 220,000 votes short, out of 8.3 million votes total cast. But this year, another Democratic challenger has an eye on the Senate, and incumbent Republican Sen. John Cornyn finds himself in an even closer race. Both Texas senators — Cornyn and Cruz — have consistently been scored at 0 by HRC. As of Tuesday morning, Oct. 20, Cornyn was just 3 points ahead, according to poll tracker FiveThirtyEight, of Iraq War veteran and Purple Heart recipient MJ Hegar. Those numbers, Hegar pointed out to CNN's Don Lemon, put her within the margin of error, meaning the race is essentially a toss-up.

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A ghoulish good time

'Ghoul's Night Out' virtual Halloween party to stream Oct. 30

It's that time of year again, when all the ghosties and goblins and other spooky creatures come crawling out of hiding to frolic through the gayborhood, all dressed up in their best costumes. This year there will be far fewer costumed partiers making the rounds, thanks to that evil troll called COVID-19. But don't worry, Dallas Voice has just the thing to keep your Halloween-loving hearts happy.

We call it "Ghoul's Night Out," and it's a virtual party featuring some of the best entertainers around.

"We know that in the LGBTQ community, Halloween is the 'Gay Christmas,' and we also knew some time ago that the Halloween Block Party wasn't going to happen this year," noted Chad Mantooth, Dallas Voice's advertising director and producer of "Ghoul's Night Out." "So we wanted to create a Halloween experience for our readers. And we hope that this show will not only entertain, but also keep those Halloween spirits alive!"

The show, which will stream online at 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, is directed by Israel Luna and hosted by "The Queen of Halloween," Jenna Skyy. The party will feature performances by Raquel Blake, Bleach, Moltyn Decadence, Gloria Devine, Jada Pinkett Fox, May May Graves, Porter Bella Graves, Layla LaRue and Dee Ranged. There will also be appearances by Peaches Christ and Willam, and some spooky tunes from DJ Drew G.

Keep an eye out for the ghosts of Halloween past, too: We've included archival footage, provided by Israel Luna, from Halloween on the Strip in the 1990s, complete with a trip to the Rose



Jenna Skyy in "face" for the 2018 Dallas Voice Halloween issue. (Tammye Nash/Dallas Voice)

Room before the remodel and glimpses of stars from the past (Donna Day and Whitney Page, anyone?).

"As a media company, it is important to stay relevant and engaged with your readers. In addition, it is also important to seek out alternative revenue sources and different ways to reach your community," Dallas Voice Publisher Leo Cusimano said. "With the success of the Dallas Voice PRIDE Party online in June, we decided to explore other opportunities. So when the annual Halloween Block Party on Cedar Springs was canceled due to the pandemic, it opened up a can of worms.

"We decided to take a bite, and Ghoul's Night Out emerged," Cusimano continued. "This will be a thriller and an opportunity to have a virtual Halloween house party — staying safe, of course."

Presenting sponsor is Bud Light Seltzer. Other sponsors include Prism Health North Texas, AIDS Outreach Center and Stoli. The video will be hosted on the Dallas Voice YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzLKquBnVnmwE8LBYSQTK3w/> featured?view_as=subscriber) and will be embedded at DallasVoice.com. You can also watch for the livestream on the Dallas Voice Facebook page.

— Tammye Nash

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Opening the door to discrimination

Gov. Abbott's social worker rule change threatens our lives

LGBTQ Texans, those living with a disability and those living at the intersections of LGBTQ identity and living with disability are outraged, and rightfully so. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has once again cast our communities aside by singling us out for exclusion and differential treatment. To make matters worse, Gov. Abbott has done this at the height of a public health crisis when we are more vulnerable and the services upon which we rely for our daily needs are all the more precarious.

Simply put, there is no doubt that this unfair and unequal treatment threatens our very lives.

On Monday, Oct. 12, 2020, the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council and the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners voted unanimously to remove the terms "sexual orientation," "gender identity," "gender expression" and "disability" from the nondiscrimination rule contained in the Social Workers' Code of Conduct. This is the rule intended to prohibit social workers from discriminating against their clients on the basis of these identities.

The rule change was a last-minute request that came from Gov. Abbott's office, contained in an email to the board and council sent the Friday before the Monday meeting. Council Executive Director Darrell Spinks explained that the purpose of the rule change was to make the rule align with Texas law, which contains a similar nondiscrimination provision but does not include the terms sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or disability. The board unanimously approved removing the language, and the council voted unanimously to adopt the change.

Now the change is the law: Social workers, who we rely upon to hear and carry our deepest confidences, have now been invited to refuse to provide



Avery Belyeu
Special Contributor

us — and those living with a disability — with critical mental health and social services. To put this in context, as of March 2019, 4.1 percent of our state's population identified as LGBT, or approximately 893,350 Texans. Of those Texans, 768,000 identify as LGB, and .66 percent of our population, or approximately 125,350 people, identify as transgender.

Prior to COVID-19, 8 percent of LGBT Texans were unemployed; fully 26 percent had no health insurance; 27 percent were food insecure, and 26 percent made less than \$24,000 a year.

Approximately 41 percent of LGBT seniors have a disability.

For transgender Texans and transgender Texans of color, who are often by far the most discriminated against and marginalized of all Texans, the situation is far worse. Fully 17 percent of transgender Texans are unemployed; 34 percent are living in poverty, and 77 percent do not have identity documents that match their gender.

In the last five years, more transgender people have been killed in our state than in any other state. And again in 2019, Texas led the nation in the number of transgender people murdered, with more than half of such deaths occurring in Dallas. This year the number of transgender deaths across the country now stands at 33.

Behind every one of these numbers is the story of an LGBTQ person who will often rely on a social worker to find essential resources, support and care.

Social workers are on the forefront of providing lifesaving and life-affirming social services and mental health care to all Texans. As a profession, social

us — and those living with a disability — with critical mental health and social services.

To put this in context, as of March

workers often take the lead in creating positive social change, which is why Texas social workers worked together to define their code of conduct and standards of practice specifically to include sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Removing a prohibition on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and disability from the Code of Conduct for Social Workers, a change that occurred without opportunity for public comment, is egregious and places social workers in Texas out of step with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers, which explicitly states, "Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of ... sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression ... and mental or physical ability."

This is an attack on our community, and Lambda Legal is fighting back with its partners in the All in for Equality Coalition to take a stand and say that no Texan should be afraid to access necessary care and services because of a fear of discrimination.

Here is what you can do to help Lambda Legal and our partner organizations fight back: To protect your life, the lives of those you love and the lives of those in our communities, join the All in for Equality Coalition by visiting our website (https://secure.everyaction.com/-rSvT-clhMk2SIOKaKu-t_A2?emci=f-990b7c0-1e13-eb11-96f5-00155d03aff-c&emdi=cf2d5f9d-3013-eb11-96f5-00155d03affc&eid=7436708) and sending a message to Gov. Abbott that the social workers know what is right for them and their profession and that he should stay out of their business.

No one should ever be discriminated against or denied services simply because of who they are. Our very lives depend on it. ■




Avery Belyeu is the South Central Region regional director for Lambda Legal. She is based in Dallas.

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A different side of Jim Parsons

'Boys in the Band' actor talks about reviving the gay classic, his personal takeaway and playing bitchy queens

A lot has happened this year, and that's aside from Jim Parsons dancing around in a bra. That bit, of course, graced screens across the world thanks to Netflix's *Hollywood*, *The Big Bang Theory* actor shedding his well-established onscreen TV persona to play a sleazy Hollywood agent in the flashy revisionist drama.

The Ryan Murphy series garnered him an Emmy nomination, but — best of all — it wouldn't be the only time in 2020 that Parsons, who was on the cover of *OUT* North Texas in 2015, would be taking on the role of a bitchy queen.

In Netflix's *The Boys in the Band*, again produced by Murphy, Parsons is a standout among standouts in the remake of the pioneering 1970 gay-centric drama, directed by William Friedkin. Initially staged as an Off-Broadway play in 1968, the film is based on Mart Crowley's screenplay, written about a group of gay friends and frenemies living in New York City. An awkward birthday party for their friend Harold, a self-proclaimed "ugly, pockmarked Jew fairy," becomes the breeding ground for savage takedowns, as they tear into each other, exposing the kind of self-hatred familiar to gay men trying to survive the oppressive state of pre-Stonewall America.

Parsons plays seething party host Michael, a semi-lapsed Catholic whose aggressively nasty observations about his friends reveal more about him than

it does about them.

In the remake, Parsons reprises his role alongside the original — and entirely openly gay — cast of the 2018 Broadway revival: Zachary Quinto, Matt Bomer, Andrew Rannells, Charlie Carver, Robin de Jesús, Brian Hutchinson, Michael Benjamin Washington and Tuc Watkins. Parsons's out *Hollywood* co-star Joe Mantello, who directed the Broadway revival, once again directs.

On Zoom recently, Parsons talked about the revealing conversations he shared with Crowley about *The Boys in the Band* before his death in March, and how working on the project led to a deeper understanding and questioning of his own self-worth.

— Chris Azzopardi

Dallas Voice: Being the bitchy queen doesn't seem like something that comes naturally to you. Jim Parsons:

Apparently I have an affinity with it, or an interest in it. Or Ryan Murphy has an interest in forcing me to do it! I'm not sure which.

What has that experience been like for you? It's been heaven. As an actor, I'll be honest with you: Both of these men are complicated characters, and the two roles this year in *Hollywood* and in *Boys in the Band* were very different in many ways, but they had a similar feeling to me. Going into the projects, there was a mystery and an unknown quality about the challenge that lied ahead. I felt confident that I would be able to get there with both of them, but it was exciting to know it wasn't a done deal. I was going to work to get there, and I was going to have to, most importantly, get on set and start doing these scenes for both these characters and see what happened, and that was exciting.

Playing more challenging characters such as these, when do you know, "OK, I think I've got it"? I feel like that specific feeling comes in little spots through the process, where you just feel good about something. But in general, everything I do, by the time it's all done and the months go by until it's released, suddenly I start having trouble remembering any of the good moments and I'm like, "Oh god, oh god. It's coming."

When I worked on *Hollywood* on the character Henry, that was a longer process than the film because it was episodes, and it went on for about six months. We were about midway through the process when I actually wrote Ryan Murphy an email just telling him how appreciative I was of the experience, and it was because I had crossed some bridge about working on that character. It had really clicked in me what a special opportunity this was, this character, that I just hadn't seen as clearly when I first started.

With Michael, the reasons for his ruthless disdain really reveal themselves at the end of the film. When you're playing characters as vicious as Michael and Henry, what's your process for exposing the layers of humanity beneath the surface of these characters' rough edges? In the case of Michael, I think that's a big part of what you carry with you going into the beginning of the rehearsal process, knowing that you're dealing with a character who is compensating as much as he can. I always had this phrase in my head every time I was working with the character: He's just dancing as fast as he can in order to keep things afloat.

But it's so superficial because there's this elemental part of himself that he is completely unhappy with, and so, as happens in this, just the right amount of things

break the wrong way and he's cracked.

What's interesting about both characters is that Henry in *Hollywood* was based on a real man, Henry Wilson, the man who invented Rock Hudson, and so I had this beautiful book by Robert Hofler that is Henry's biography. Robert had done so much research about who he was and when he was young and when he got old, and we focus on one specific part of Henry — and invented so much around it, too; it wasn't all pure truth — so to have all that information gave me a humane quality to Henry that I understood.

Michael was a little different. Even though I consciously knew that he was a rough stand-in for the writer, Mart Crowley, I didn't want to presume how much, nor did I want to put that responsibility on myself. At the time, both for the play and the movie, Mart was alive, and I just thought, "Don't even think about it." But it kind of couldn't help creeping in, and the more chances I had to be around Mart and talk to Mart and exchange emails with Mart, one thing after another began to click, and I was like, "The character of Michael is a writer, just like Mart is." From this distance, now that we've had this put to bed for so long, although it's just now being released, I see a version of it where this is partly the story of Mart before he was able to write *Boys in the Band*.

For me, the main magical thing about *Boys in the Band* comes from the fact that Mart was finally able to reveal himself and his situation and the people that he knew and loved with so much brutal honesty. I think that's why it connected with so many people. I think that's why it stood the test of time. I think that's why, as a piece of literature, it has stayed bubbling in our consciousness this long and, lo and behold, has expanded to become something that's not just about gay men.

It's become something that's about all people suffering under oppression and shame. And that's the way the world went, but ... you can't create something that impactful and be that honest until you accept yourself for everything that you are. That's where we leave Michael, with Harold telling him, "You will always be a homosexual. There's nothing you can do to change it." And we don't see Michael transition into a healthier, self-loving person, but the more I think about it, the more I think that if he's truly a stand-in for Mart, then that's where Michael goes. Maybe he goes off to write his *Boys in the Band*.

It's interesting to think that the film, when it was released in 1970 — before the lexicon of LGBTQ identities expanded — resonated with an especially niche group of people. And that was specifically gay men. Now that specific demographic seems almost antiquated because identity is far less restrictive. Stonewall happened shortly after *Boys in the Band*. It was a moment that created a real backlash from the gay community against *Boys in the Band*, and for all the complaints, the main one was, "We don't want to be represented like this, as unhappy, self-hating, have-to-hide-at-home [people]." And I totally understand that. Especially in that infantile time, that embryo of this independence starting to form, you need all the nutrition you can get, ha!

But because of the efforts of so many, we have come far enough that we are more than OK to look at an honest portrayal of a real side of what it was to be gay. And even though it's not as intense in this way, [there are] residual [issues].

One of the things I discovered going through this and having the luxury to spend so much time with this part, both in the play and in the movie, was how much of those feelings that I thought I didn't really have because of my age and the acceptance in the world. Bullshit. I do. I do. It's not as intense. It's a different world. But it's not gone completely.

And there is still a part of me that, as a gay person, I see more clearly having played Michael for so long. [I'm] still dealing with — and it's truly OK, consciously I know this — that little voice inside sometimes that still goes, "Am I enough? Am I OK?"

I recognize that there's a language that we speak with each other that's tart-tongued and lovingly bitchy. I'm wondering if the way these gay men talk to each other on-screen translated off-screen since you worked with a cast of all gay men. You know what? I don't know if it was because of who we are or because of the time we're living — ha! — or because we were actually working together. It was certainly not as biting; it's a lot kinder, although Charlie, sweet thing, may disagree. He takes a beating from us! But you know what? That's youth, and that's what you get. Ha!

But no, definitely, it was one of the most profound things about going through this process, and I'm not even speaking about whether or not this is reflected in the final product on film. I'm really talking about my own personal experience of working on this. I feel we have the luxury now of not needing for safety and for personal comfort to be surrounded by your tribe of gay men.

Many people have plenty of gay friends,

and so many people solely, but it's not for the same reasons, in my opinion, that it would've been in the late '60s, early '70s, where it was like, "Truly, we have to stick together." That's wonderful. But what I realized working with these guys is there's a language spoken. I don't know if it's all gay men all over the planet, all gay people. I don't know if it's strictly specific to a gay American male. I will say it's the only time I've gone to curtain call and repeatedly — and I don't even know why because I hate saying this, but I'm like, "Hey heney!" I mean, I never talk like that. Ha! But every once in a while, I would grab Zach Quinto's hand on stage before the bow and I'd go, "Hi heney!"

Ryan Murphy has said we need more stories about the history of LGBTQ people. Aside from starring in *Boys in the Band* this year, you are producing the LGBTQ docudrama *Equal* for HBO Max. What are some other LGBTQ stories you would like to see revived for new generations of LGBTQ people to experience? That's hard to say. You know what's funny to me, and I don't know what this says about me, exactly — well, it says that I'm a child of privilege, that I'm a gay man of privilege living in the world that I've grown up in — but I've been so fortunate that the people that I've worked with have called on me to be a part of these things, whether it was *Normal Heart* or *Boys in the Band*. Even *Equal* was something that was being created and thought of, and they included me in on it. So I have been blessed with this story lesson since I was, again, just too privileged and going about my own daily business in order to go research on my own.

But I guess my answer is twofold: I don't know what the next story is that should be revived, and the second thing is that I do realize the importance because of the impact that it's had on me being exposed to these stories, and a strength and a well-roundness that I feel as a gay man by understanding more specifically the historical context within which I walk as a gay man in 2020 now. It's crucial for making me the person I am.

And I get sweaty palms at the thought of, were it not for the sliding-door moments of these people asking me to do this, I might miss it or not understand it or feel it the way that I do now. So I hope that these projects go out to people and give a similar level of that. I don't want to say education because it's entertainment, and I want people to watch it, for Christ's sake. Ha! But I hope that we've portrayed it in a way that is realistic and humanizing enough that you can't help but get the point.

Chris Azzopardi is editor of Q Syndicate. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.



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Looking back at a plague

Doctor's memoir of the early years of AIDS brings back the heart-breaking reality

***Plague Years: A Doctor's Journey through the AIDS Crisis* by Ross A. Slotten, MD (University of Chicago Press, 2020) \$20; 214 pages.**

Cover your nose and mouth. Wash your hands with soap and water. Stay six feet away from strangers and those you think might be infected; better yet, stay at home. And that's how you squash a pandemic — more or less — although, as in the new book *Plague Years* by Ross A. Slotten MD, sometimes it's not that easy.

It wasn't until Slotten saw his former lover, Art, that the reality hit him. He hadn't even considered that he'd be at

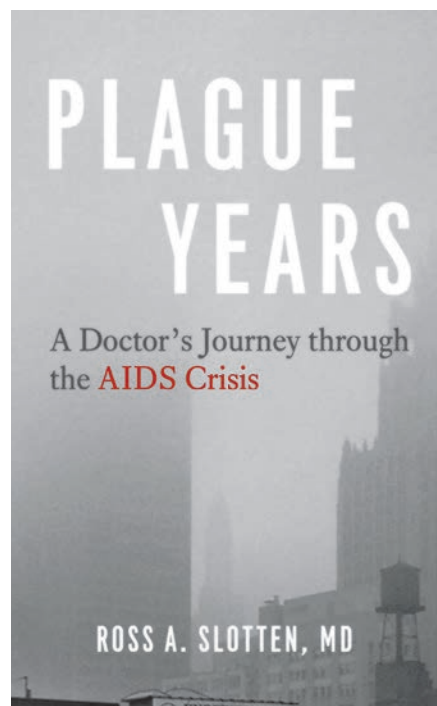
risk for AIDS, though he'd been ministering to AIDS patients for several years by then. He knew the risks, of course, and had taken precautions. But Art was in his far past.

There was a time when Slotten thought he was straight, had dated girls, had imagined life as a husband and father. That changed in college. And though he was desperate for love then, he was careful with his heart.

He fell for Art, and believed he was in love. But Art slept around with countless men, and, one night, he broke Slotten's heart for good.

That was at the beginning of the AIDS crisis. It was a lifetime ago, back when Ronald Reagan all but ignored the disease, before treatment was available — before Art was dying.

In med school, Slotten hadn't intended to specialize in AIDS medicine, but as a gay man, how could he ignore those who came to him after he'd opened his Chicago practice? How could he turn his back on them, as did the nurse who placed a gauze pad between her fingertips and a pulse, or the co-worker who felt relief at having avoided mouth-



to-mouth resuscitation on a dying AIDS patient?

On his rounds, there were times that the best Slotten could do was to give comfort or a hug or keep vigil. He tried to be truthful, always, but denial was a real thing — including denial for Art, who slept with the wrong man or men.

Art, whose illness forced Slotten to take an AIDS test ...

Though you may not notice it at first, there's one thing in *Plague Years* that will eventually sneak up on you, tap you on the shoulder and crush you: So. Many. Names.

Before you learn any of them, though, you need the tone-setting biography and background here, and you need to claw your way past the harrowing parts in which author Ross Slotten battles the idea that he might've gotten AIDS from a man he once loved. You'll be well and firmly invested in this book once you get through that — and exhausted, as though you just finished watching a Kubrick movie with a dream sequence set in a full morgue, and there's more story left.

This is a devastating book, made more so by Slotten's viewpoint as both gay man and doctor, and by casual reminders of the things we didn't know then and the things we know now. *Plague Years* is profane and blunt and nail-biting and heartbreaking and hopeful. And that pretty much covers it.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer

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10.23-24

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Ozarka and Dallas Film present *Friday Night Lights* on Friday and *The Rookie* on Saturday at the Four Corners Brewery in The Cedars. Gates open at 6 p.m. First come, first served. Attendees have the chance to receive a premium Ozarka goodie bag with movie concessions and snacks from local Texas companies when they bring 10 empty plastic bottles to recycle.

Four Corners Brewery, 1311 S. Ervay. Films start at 7:15 p.m. on Oct. 23 and 24. OzarkaWater.com/driveinfilmmfestival.



10.24

Kitchen Dog Theater presents protest songs throughout history

Get Up, Stand Up! is a series of unique, one-time events featuring a variety of local artists performing protest songs from throughout history. From "Yankee Doodle Dandy" to "This Land is Our Land" to "Alright." Kitchen Dog seeks to celebrate democracy as we move through the election season. Performer lineups will be different for each individual performance and are always subject to change. Kristin Colaneri is featured on Oct. 24.

The parking lot behind the new Kitchen Dog Theater Compound, 4774 Algiers St. on Oct. 24, 31 and Nov. 3. \$30 per car plus \$15 per additional passenger. Tickets must be reserved in advance at KitchenDogTheater.org or 214-953-1055.

10.24

The Rose Room goes on tour

TITAS/Dance Unbound usually partners with dance companies from around the world. But during the pandemic, the Dallas arts organization is partnering with the Rose Room to bring drag to the Art District. The performance is the first in a new series called TITAS/Unfiltered that comes with the warning: "Some might find these works objectionable. There may be nudity, adult language and themes. And there may be drag!" Hosted by Cassie Nova and featuring Blu Valentine, Chanel LaMasters, Fantasha, Jenna Skyy, Kelexis Davenport, Krystal Summers, Layla LaRue and Sasha Andrews, there will definitely be drag.

Annette Strauss Square, 2403 Flora St. Oct. 24 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$39 at ATTPAC.ORG.



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Cassie Nova

Tall tales and memories

Good mornin' folks. I woke up on this beautiful, cool fall day in the best mood. I made myself a cuppa coffee with some vanilla syrup in it and sat down to my computer to write this this week's column all about tall tales you hear from your family growing up. We all have them — some little random thing that your grandparents or parents say in passing that makes you do a double take and say, "WHAT?"

For me, there was the time my mom said she kicked Jamie Lee Curtis' ass, or when my grandma said she went to school with Willie Nelson or that one of the little people from *Wizard of Oz* was her neighbor and used to play with her kids at the playground.

These are all things that I had heard growing up and kept in my memory but never really thought about too much. Then as an adult, it made me stop and think: What the fuck?!

These aren't normal family stories. My grandma on my momma's side is a character. When I was little, she was this little mean-ass woman with a Pall Mall unfiltered sticking out of her mouth. Now that I'm an adult she's still a little woman, but she has definitely mellowed in her old age. Now she is just funny to me.

I feel guilty that I don't talk to her enough, so, to get some clarity on the above subjects, I called her this morning. For a good 30 minutes I grilled her like I was some sort of top journalist. Truth is, I'd ask one question, and she would tell me the story. As she spoke, I could feel her going into her memory, and I smiled as she told these old stories.

First I asked her if my mom actually kicked Jamie Lee Curtis' ass. Since I wrote about this a few years ago, I will give the short version here:

Apparently, my pawpaw worked as a ranchhand on Tony Curtis' ranch in Palm Springs in the 1960s. My mom was with him one day and saw Jamie Lee Curtis, Tony Curtis' daughter, hitting a horse with a stick. Ma, who was just a kid herself — like 7 or



8 — told her to stop hitting the horse. Jamie Lee didn't stop, so my mother proceeded to whoop that little bitch's ass.

Needless to say my pawpaw was fired, but when I asked him a few years before he died about this story, he confirmed it was true and said he had never been as proud of my mother as he was on that day. And to this day, every time we see an Activia commercial or a Halloween movie, my Mom says, "I whooped her ass," as she points to the TV.

My Grandma has now confirmed that story, too, and that story led her into the story about the little person from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Apparently Billy Barty — who I found out wasn't in *The Wizard of Oz* but was in a shit-ton of other movies from the 1930s all the way to 2000 when he died (That little guy worked!) — lived in the same apartments as my grandparents and their kids. He would go to the nearby playground and play with all the children. Grandma said he was the nicest guy and was about the same size as the kids, so they loved to play with him. I remember him being on the *The Love Boat*, the *Masters of the Universe* movie and *Willow*. This apparently took place in Palm Springs, too.

The next story she told was about her going to school with Willie Nelson in Abbott, Texas. I have heard that she went to school with Master Bud Willie since, well, since forever, but in my head it was in a tiny little one-room school house. She was quick to point out that, in fact, it was a three-story school house, and the gymnasium and auditorium were on the third floor.

Grandma and Willie were in the same class room. I asked what she remembered about him, and she said he was a shy, sweet boy. She said the reason he always kept his hair long is because they couldn't afford haircuts. The one time his daddy made him cut his hair, he cut it using a bowl, and Willie Nelson hated it so much he vowed he would never cut his hair again.

Of course, I don't know how much of that is true. But it makes for a great story, so I believe it.

This last bit of family folk lore comes from

my dad's side of the family. Unfortunately, my Dad's mom, Christine, passed when I was in the sixth grade, so I can't call her up to ask her a few questions. That would be awesome if I could; she was a great lady.

So, the legend goes that the night that Bonnie and Clyde were killed, they asked my grandma Christine to go with them. She said she couldn't because she had to watch the kids. I'm not sure who the kids were, maybe her brothers and sisters. My aunt Mary told me this story a thousand years ago. She said that Bonnie Parker was my Grandma Christine's cousin.

We did "23&me" a few years ago, and I have not found any distant relatives with the last name Parker — yet. The Grandma I talked to this morning said that it could actually be true because lots of our relatives knew Bonnie Parker. She said everybody knew everybody back then and that she knew for a fact that Bonnie and Clyde hung out a lot under the Sylvan Street bridge near downtown.

It's probably all tall tales and folklore, but it's cool to feel a connection to the past. Do you have any family stories like these? If you do, let me know. My mind is already full of useless crap. Who needs facts when you can have hearsay and gossip?

It was nice to talk to my grandma today. Y'all need to call up a relative that has been on your mind lately. Do it — and remember to always love more, bitch less and be fabulous! XOXO, Cassie Nova.

this week's solution

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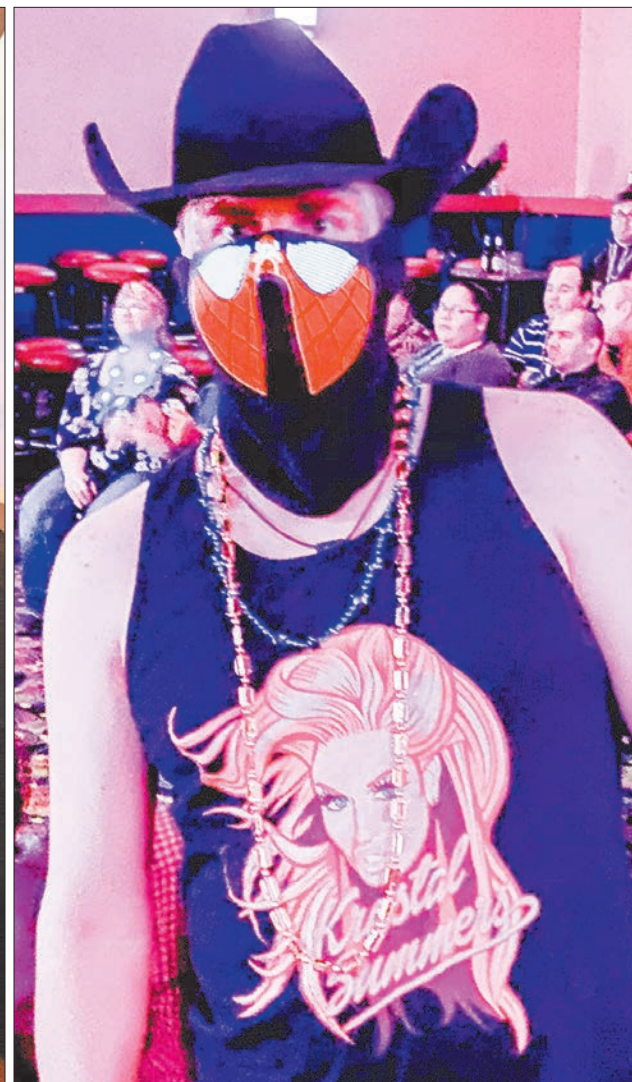
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Solution on Page 18

- Across**

1 Drivers get off on it

5 Guitarist Eddie Van ____

10 Like sex with protection

14 Nevada neighbor

15 Manhandle

16 Opposed to, to Jethrene Bodine

17 Walk-way connector

18 Flashy Chevy, for short

19 Porn actor Sulik

20 Condom, in slang

21 Start of a question asked of 1-Down

23 Like premature ejaculation

25 Tickled pink

26 Prepares for press

27 Juicy fruits

29 "Hoedown" composer Copland

31 Big Lovely band singer

36 End of the question

40 Corduroy rib

41 Cheri once of SNL

42 Myra Breckinridge author Vidal

43 Woody woe

45 Like many a *Hairspray* review

47 Famous artist "of Finland"

48 Golden Girl McClanahan

49 *Modern Family* network

52 Cause of Apr. angst

54 What 1-Down says she has, to answer the question

60 *Baby Doll* director Kazan

61 Like phone sex

62 Hung jury event

64 Ball of film

65 Handle a shrew, for Shakespeare

66 *Love Affair* costar Dunne

67 Unit of force

68 Killed, to King James

69 "She Bop" singer Lauper

Down

1 Dear ____ (advice columnist Mark Hagen)

2 A good place to keep lube

3 Fruity rum drink

4 Acidity nos.

5 Utter chaos

6 Aid's partner

7 Prot. denomination

8 Look up to

9 Andersen's "The Darning-____"

10 Mideast peacemaker

11 With a wide-open mouth

12 Penalized, as a speeder

13 Mireille of *Hanna*

21 Cul-____

22 Bob Marley, e.g.

24 Maryland, and others

27 Trent of Mississippi

28 "What does she see ____?"

30 Socrates' P on paper

32 HRC, e.g.

33 Britten's bit of tea

34 Deli sandwich

35 Agenda listing

36 How to compensate for your lover's absence?

37 Camus, by birth

38 The Gay '90s, for one

39 Like some war, ironically

40 Tip of what a missile launcher may shoot off

44 Choice marble

46 Like many a Paul Cadmus painting

50 Chiwetel Ejiofor's *Kinky* ____

51 Pinkish yellow

53 "Pardon me"

55 Shakespeare's Hamlet, e.g.

56 Edna, for one

57 Used airplanes

58 Love, to Amelie Mauresmo

59 Material for Sylvia Beach?

63 Island necklace

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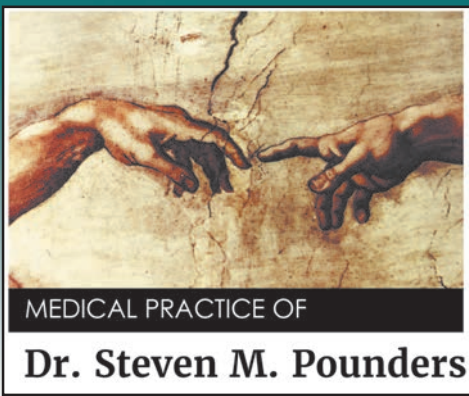
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