Angel, the Elf on the Shelf, welcomes you to Dallas Voice’s

Holiday Gift Guide 2020

Begins on page 14
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headlines

- **TEXAS NEWS**
  - 6 A quiet Trans Day of Remembrance
  - 7 Common law, posthumously

- **LIFE+STYLE**
  - 13 Dallas Voice Holiday Gift Guide
  - 15 Gift Guide: Out of the Closet
  - 16 Gift Guide: In the Kitchen
  - 17 Gift Guide: In the Doghouse
  - 18 Gift Guide: In the Garden

- **ON THE COVER**
  - Angel Blanc as Elf on the Shelf
  - Photo by Tammye Nash
  - Cover design by Kevin Thomas

departments

- 4 InstanTEA
- 6 News
- 12 Voices
- 13 Life+Style
- 25 Best Bets
- 26 Ask Howard
- 27 Scene
- 30 Marketplace

Dallas Voice Holiday Gift Guide

**TEXAS NEWS**

- A quiet Trans Day of Remembrance
- Common law, posthumously

**LIFE+STYLE**

- Dallas Voice Holiday Gift Guide
- Gift Guide: Out of the Closet
- Gift Guide: In the Kitchen
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- InstanTEA
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North Texas LGBT Chamber elects board
Voting for the board of directors of the North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce ended Monday, Nov. 16, and President and CEO Tony Vedda has announced the names of new and returning board members.

New board members are Ethan Avanzino with Southwest Airlines, Jake Krysiak with Potsnells PC, Stephen Lewis with Toyota North America, Joli Robinson with Habitat for Humanity, Waylon Tate with J. Waylon & Associates and Gary Sanchez with VisitDallas.

New members join existing board members including Shelley Hunter with Sky Branded Apparel, Armando G. Ramirez with Supreme Lending, Clint R. Thomson with Celeratec Managed Systems, Justin "JT" Williams with Independence Title and Rachel Wolf with Executive Leadership.

Board chair is Clint Thomson, and Gary Sanchez is treasurer and chair-elect. Justin Williams is immediate past chair and foundation chair. Shelley Hunter is ambassador chair, Armando Ramirez is Gala co-chair, and Rachel Wolf is membership chair.

In addition, to Vedda, the Chamber staff includes Lisa Howe as vice president, office volunteer Debbie Hoff and PR head Waylon Tate.

Visit LGBTChamber.com for more information.

AspenOUT announces Aspen Gay Ski Week Lite for 2021
AspenOUT announced it will hold a "Lite" version for its 44th annual Gay Ski Week, the oldest LGBTQ ski week in the U.S. The event takes place Jan. 17-24.

Aspen Gay Ski Week will be presented with the following changes, based on current state and county restrictions:

• Virtual events: Virtual events are being planned, so that people in Aspen and all over the globe can enjoy. Events may include Drag Queen Bingo, Piano Showtune Night and Virtual Happy Hours.

• Rainbow Flag Reveal: Each year, a giant rainbow flag is held by skiers as they descend Aspen Mountain. In 2021, the event will be streaming live. The rainbow flag, which will be updated with Transgender and BLM colors, will make its way down the slope as heartwarming stories of past AspenOUT benefactors are featured. This will be a special opportunity for viewers to donate to our organization that in turn, benefits many LGBT organizations.

• The opening reception, Belly Up events, Downhill Competition, Top of the Mountain Party and Pool Party will not be held in 2021.

• The event will be streaming live. The rainbow flag, which will be updated with Transgender and BLM colors, will make its way down the slope as heartwarming stories of past AspenOUT benefactors are featured. This will be a special opportunity for viewers to donate to our organization that in turn, benefits many LGBT organizations.

• The opening reception, Belly Up events, Downhill Competition, Top of the Mountain Party and Pool Party will not be held in 2021.

The performers, in addition to Cassie, are Chevelle Brooks, Fantasha, Jenna Sky, Kel-
Meet Morris, a male, 2-year-old Siberian husky mix weighing 55 pounds. He's a sweet, fun-loving pup looking for a forever family.

Morris is looking for a home with older teens and adults only and would love to meet any other dogs in the home to see if they get along. Morris is waiting to meet you at the SPCA of Texas’ Russell H. Perry Animal Care Center in McKinney.

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/findapet and visit spca.org/dogadopt to inquire about a dog or spca.org/catadopt to inquire about a cat.
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Transgender Day of Remembrance marks another year of record anti-trans violence

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

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DAVID TAF
A declaration of Dallas couple’s informal marriage may allow release of evidence to help solve a murder

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More than three years after the murder of his husband Joey Paul, Jeff Phillips can finally inherit his portion of Paul’s estate, and he can finally get information from Dallas police about the investigation that had been previously withheld from him — and all because of a court ruling in Dallas County.

The couple had been together for 15 years at the time of Paul’s death, but they were not formally married. Still, probate Judge Brenda Hull Thompson declared Phillips’ claim of common law, or informal marriage as it’s known in Texas, to be valid.

And now that declaration of informal marriage could mean the difference between solving a cold case or never identifying Joey Paul’s killer. Phillips said there’s a video of the murder that Paul’s family blocked from being released. But now Phillips has the right to call for its release.

Paul was shot and killed on Elmwood Boulevard in Oak Cliff on May 19, 2016, less than a year after the Obergefell marriage equality decision. He and Phillips had been together for 15 years and had talked about getting married but hadn’t gotten around to it.

To qualify for informal marriage status, Phillips had to show evidence that he and Paul had presented themselves as a married couple. As part of his proof, Phillips showed that he and Paul had purchased a house together in 2003 and that they had lived together and acted as a committed couple. He provided a stack of evidence about a foot high that included cards they sent to one another over the years, photographs and employee benefit forms that had named the other other as beneficiary.

In addition, two witnesses — former Fort Worth City Councilman Joel Burns and his husband JD Angle — signed and submitted sworn affidavits that said Paul and Phillips presented themselves as a married couple.

Attorney Brian Hill represented Phillips in the case, and he referred to the U.S. Supreme Court’s Obergefell marriage equality decision in arguing for common law recognition.

“Although their marriage date preceded the Supreme Court’s decision in Obergefell on June 26, 2015,” he said, “the well-established doctrine regarding the retroactivity of decisions on constitutional issues is clear and requires that Texas Courts recognize the validity of informal same-sex marriages, even those that existed before the Obergefell ruling.”

Hill said it was important to determine when the informal marriage began for the purpose of determining what property the two men acquired as a couple. So even though the Obergefell ruling didn’t happen until 2015, the court recognized the marriage retroactively to 2003.
GSAs “provide visibility, safety and social support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students and their allies,” the ACLU website notes. Among other things, GSAs help connect students and create a community, help keep students safe in the face of harassment and advocate for a strong and supportive school climate.

One problem in many school districts is the dress code, according to the ACLU: “Many schools have gender-specific dress codes with different rules based on students’ assigned sex at birth,” ACLU’s website points out. “For transgender and gender non-conforming students, this can mean risking disciplinary action for wearing affirmed clothes or hairstyles.”

But progress is being made; ACLU attorney Brian Klosterboer said we’re seeing more school districts adopt a gender-neutral policy.

In the recent Arnold v. Barbers Hill ISD, a black student sued after he was disciplined for wearing longer locks. Klosterboer said the school district’s antiquated dress policy said boys must wear short hair. The ruling, Klosterboer said, has mostly affected Black and Native American students, but it is being applied to transgender students in Texas as well.

Another issue that comes up for students is equal access to bathrooms. On its website, the ACLU writes, “School districts across the country have been successful in ensuring that transgender and gender non-conforming students have access to facilities that match their gender identity while still protecting the privacy of all students.”

Klosterboer said more and more of his organization’s work on this issue as well as access to gender-appropriate locker rooms is being done “quietly and privately.” Schools are generally learning to work out a solution that doesn’t escalate to a court battle.

Although bullying in schools is illegal in Texas, 75 percent of transgender youth feel unsafe in school; attendance and grades suffer because of it, and, ultimately, trans youth have a high dropout rate. Attorneys for the ACLU recommend reporting bullying and harassment to a friendly teacher, counselor or administrator.

Several federal courts have ruled school must enforce their anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies equally among students. As a victim of bullying, harassment or discrimination, a student, parent or guardian has the right to file a complaint with the school or school district. The ACLU can assist in filing a complaint or mediating a resolution.

While every court case has resulted in a ruling in favor of access to bathrooms for trans students, Klosterboer said he is watching for discriminatory bills in the upcoming session of the Texas Legislature that would prevent trans students from participating in sports. But to fight those discriminatory laws, he said, we have the Bostock decision. This year’s Bostock ruling says sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination are both sexual discrimination and are covered by Title IX.

“That was a transformational moment,” Klosterboer said of the Bostock case.

All sides are still sorting out how the ruling affects employment, housing and a wide variety of accommodations, he said, and it should make a huge difference bettering the lives of transgender men and women and non-binary people.
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The ruling also affects Phillips’ ability to collect any Social Security benefits due him as a legal spouse and to receive crime victim funds.

Even though this ruling is not the first of its kind in Texas, Hill said this case is important because it showed you can have a common law marriage declared posthumously, although the level of proof is higher than just showing they lived together, since one of the spouses isn’t there to testify.

Most importantly though, Hill added, “Now Jeff can be involved in the homicide investigation and be informed about the status of the case by Dallas Police, a right which is typically reserved only for legally-recognized members of the victim’s family and the surviving spouse in particular.”

Phillips said not being recognized as the spouse included other indignities. Paul’s family claimed his body from the Medical Examiner’s Office and refused to let him see his husband’s body before he was cremated. They also excluded any mention of Phillips in his husband’s obituary.

Phillips and Paul had had wills drawn up just before Paul was murdered, but Paul hadn’t finalized his or signed it. He had, however, signed a will several years before the couple met when his family started a business. That will specified all property would revert to the family. Although she had a copy of that will, Paul’s mother never filed it in probate court.

For Phillips, Judge Thompson’s declaration of informal marriage was vindication. “It was special to get the declaration,” he said. “The court said we were married.”

While this isn’t the first case of a posthumous declaration of common law marriage, it is the first involving a homicide.

Lambda Legal attorney Shelly Skeen said the case is “one more example of Texas courts following Obergefell. What applies to opposite-sex couples applies to same-sex couples.”

While Skeen wasn’t worried about Dallas judges following the law, she said, it was important for there to be precedent for smaller, rural counties that rarely handle cases involving same-sex couples. She said that precedent would be set in Texas’ largest cities, because this is one of just a few states that recognize common law or informal marriage.

Skeen said one thing the case demonstrates is how important wills still are. Marriage, she said, confers certain rights and benefits, but property acquired before marriage could still be challenged. A spouse could also be forced to prove in court that other property was acquired during marriage, and that could be difficult in some cases, expensive to defend and not something someone who just lost a spouse should be put through.

For Phillips, the ruling is important because it may now lead to a break in his husband’s murder.

The couple had been renovating their house, and the night he died, the dust from the remodel was causing Paul’s asthma to act up. While Phillips was away, Paul left on foot to spend the night elsewhere. But somewhere on Elmwood Boulevard near Rugged Drive, less than a mile from their house, tragedy struck.

Neighbors at the time told police they heard men arguing in the street, then a gunshot.

But what wasn’t made public at the time was the fact that one of the nearby houses had a security camera, and that camera caught the murder on video. The license plate of the car that the assailant escaped in is blurry in the video and isn’t legible. But still, Phillips believes that if the video had been made public at the time, someone might have recognized the killer or the vehicle and been able to give police the lead necessary to solve his husband’s murder.

When then-LGBT police liaison officer Laura Martin read the file in 2016, she told Phillips she had never seen anything like it, Phillips recalled: Paul’s family refused to let the video be released, and their refusal tied detectives’ hands. Now, though, the decision is in Phillips’ hands, and he is already completing the paperwork necessary to get the video released publicly. Police have said that could take months, he said. But still, Phillips remains hopeful that the blurry video footage that has remained hidden away for more than four years now holds the key to the heart-breaking mystery of who killed Joey Paul. And he hopes that once it is made public, someone out there will turn that key, and his husband will finally be able to truly rest in peace.
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Stop the madness!

Trump continues to embarrass and endanger our country; it’s up to GOP leaders to make him stop.

It’s finally over. Well, it’s ALMOST finally over. I am talking about the 2020 presidential election, of course, and while it’s clear that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris won and will become the president and vice president, respectively, on Jan. 20 at noon, there are still a few, shall we say, “loose ends” left to clean up.

The 2020 race between the incumbent duo of Donald Trump and Mike Pence and Democratic challengers Biden and Harris has been called the most consequential election of our time. Would we continue down the dangerous and destructive path the Narcissist in Chief set us on four years ago? Or would we wrest the wheel of this ship of state from his grip and set our country on the road to sanity once again?

We have our answer now; we chose sanity. But I have to tell you, the five days it took us to get from Election Day to knowing for sure who won were perhaps the most difficult, gut-wrenching, insomnia-inducing bipolar five days of my life. I went to sleep Nov. 3 (well, in the early morning hours of Nov. 4) in despair. I was sure that Trump had won, and my exhausted brain was racing haphazardly through the options available for moving out of this country while keeping my job and my family. I woke up later that morning overcome by the same despair.

Then I looked at the news, and the despair lifted. As I had slept, the vote-counting had continued, and slowly but surely, Biden was pulling ahead. I didn’t truly relax until around 10 or 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 7, when word came: Pennsylvania had gone to Biden. And that put the Democrat over the top in terms of the Electoral College votes necessary to clinch victory. Final tallies were still out in Arizona and Nevada and Georgia, but it didn’t matter anymore. Biden had passed the magic mark of 270.

Arizona and Nevada finally finished their vote tallying and declared for Biden, as did — surprise, surprise — Georgia, although the paper-thin margin in Georgia has prompted a recount, which is still expected to go Biden’s way. And two Senate seat runoffs there will determine who has control of the Senate for the next two years — something nearly as important as the outcome of the presidential race.

So it is done. At least, it should be done. But there are those “loose ends” I mentioned.

There’s really only one loose end, when you get right down to it. But man, is it a doozy.

That loose end, of course, is Donald Trump. He didn’t manage to totally destroy our democracy over the last four years, but he is certainly giving it his best shot in his last nearly three months in office.

Donald Trump has lost the popular vote by — at last count — 5.7 million-plus votes. And as things stand now, he will lose the Electoral College vote 306-232 (the same margin by which he defeated Hillary Clinton in the EC vote in 2016 and that he and his minions then called “a landslide”). And yet, this lunatic continues to claim, in nonstop tweets, that he won. He claims he won “by a lot.” He claims the Democrats are trying to “steal” the election, and his campaign is bombarding those on their email list with constant pleas for money to help them “stop the steal” and “defend the integrity of the election.”

It would be laughable if it weren’t so pathetic. And embarrassing. And dangerous to our democracy.

Short of an outright military coup — and no, I don’t believe that will happen — Donald Trump has lost the presidency and will have to leave the White House no later than noon on Jan. 20, 2021, even if he has to be dragged out, kicking and screaming, like the ill-mannered toddler he is. But his insistence on challenging the election outcome, his constant claims of “widespread voter fraud” are tainting our whole election process, casting doubts that will take decades to clean away, if they ever can be.

I don’t expect Trump to suddenly grow up and start acting like a reasonable adult. That will never happen. But it is time — past time, really — for men and women of conscience in the Republican Party to stand up and demand that this lunacy end. Stop enabling Trump’s temper tantrum (I’m looking at you, Mitch McConnell and Lindsey Graham and Ted Cruz and John Cornyn). Step up and do your duty to this country and your constituents. You can stop this madness and make sure we see a peaceful transition, so that we can put these last four years of endless bad decisions and embarrassing antics behind us and take the first step on the road to recovery.

Tammye Nash is managing editor. The opinions expressed here are her own and do not necessarily represent the opinions of her coworkers or of Dallas Voice as a whole.
Holiday Gift Guide 2020
The centerpiece of Christmas decorations is always, of course, the Christmas Tree, and Treetopia gives you a wide, wide variety to choose from, in all colors of the rainbow, even include one with all the colors of the rainbow! This year, Dallas Voice chose Treetopia’s Color Blast silver tree ($409.99), complete with programmable LED lights. You can choose clear lights today, single-color lights tomorrow, and multi-color lights the day after. Or choose to have them changing constantly from one to the other!

Dallas Voice brought in our personal Elf on a Shelf, Angel, to decorate, and he chose a bright yellow decorative star gift box from the Beekman 1802 “Twinkle Twinkle Collection” ($65), filled with a variety of of Beekman’s finest skin care products to top the tree, and a couple of Beekman “Ornaments” ($25-$30) as well, also filled with Beekman products, all designed to make your skin as beautiful as your Christmas tree.

And because Santa got our letter, Elf Angel left us a Christmas cactus from North Haven Gardens and a couple of bottles of Charles-Le-Bel Brut Champagne ($45.96) from Goody Goody Liquor under the tree.

Treetopia.com; Beekman1802.com; Goody Goody Liquor, 3316 Oak Lawn Ave. and other DFW locations, GoodyGoody.com, North Haven Gardens, NHG.com.

Elf Angel: Dallas Voice’s personal Elf on a Shelf

Dallas Voice this year brought in our very own Elf on a Shelf to help us get ready for the holidays and make sure that this year’s Holiday Gift Guide is the best one yet. And we thought you’d like to get to know our Elf Angel a little better:

Dallas Voice: What is your “real” name, as opposed to your Elf name? Elf Angel: Angel Blanc on social media.

When did you move to Dallas from the North Pole? I was born and raised right here; I’m a native Dallasite.

When you aren’t being one of Santa’s elves, what is your daytime job? I manage an apartment community.

Are you single, or is there a Mr. Elf Angel? I’m very single and always ready to mingle! Take me off the market!

What are you hoping Santa leaves under your tree this year? Tickets for a vacation trip to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.

Happy Holidays from the staff of Dallas Voice and our Elf Angel!
Chill Boys

This is Texas, and even in winter things can get uncomfortably warm, especially if you are still wearing drab old tighty-whitey underwear. But you can keep your boy business cool and comfy year-round with Chill Boys bamboo underwear. ChillBoys.com; From $19.95.

Shinesty Ball Hammock

Men’s Health calls Shinesty’s Ball Hammock pouch underwear “the most comfortable underwear you’ll ever wear.” And with the company’s wide variety cheeky designs for all seasons — like the “Kiss Me There” design our elf is modeling — you’ll never run out of fun drawers to wear. Shinesty.com; $25.99 and up.

Happy Socks

You never have to have boring feet again! Make your feet happy and spread some joy with Happy Socks. Available at Skivvies; starting at $14.

Woxers

Hey girls, are you tired of uncomfortable thongs and itchy lace? Who said the comfort of boxer briefs is just for men?!! Women can get in on the comfort too with Woxers, the original boxer briefs for women. Woxer.com; $18 and up.

Merrell Nova 2

If you are looking for a holiday surprise for the hiker on your list — or that person that just wants to be stylish and comfortable when they are out and about — take a look at the Merrell Nova 2, the shoe offering both sneaker-light comfort and hiker-like durability, not to mention this eye-catching rainbow-striped option. (Solid color options are also available if you want to keep it low-key.) With a padded collar, breathable mesh lining, air cushioning in the heel and TrailProtect rock plating protecting your foot from underfoot debris, you are ready for a day on the trails. Merrell.com; $110, men’s and women’s styles available.
Yelibelly Chocolates

Award-winning, locally-crafted artisan chocolates — that’s what you get when you get Yelibelly Chocolates. But we ain’t talking about your plain-old bonbons here. Yeli and her crew are always hard at work brewing up something new and exciting. Maybe you want a tried-and-true favorite, like Yeli’s popular chocolate-covered Oreos ($12 for 6) or an assortment of their signature bonbons and truffles ($15 for 6). Or maybe you want to raise your game and learn some of Yeli’s secrets for yourself by taking one of her online classes that range from how to make truffles to how to make French mendiants to a private one-on-one class with Yeli herself — and more. One of their newest offerings are the Chocolate Whisky Disks, chocolate bites curated to compliment the flavors in your favorite whiskey. Get your own Whiskey Tasting Kit ($35), or choose one of the other options. Check out the websites for more. Yelibelly.com, WhiskeyDisks.com.

Instant Pot Duo Crisp+Air Fryer

Get the best of both Instant Pot worlds with the Instant Pot Duo Crisp+Air Fryer, an 11-in-1 multi-use pressure cooker. The Instant Pot Duo lets you make your favorite meals — including guilt-free fried foods — in a snap. InstantPot.com; $179.99, available at a variety of retail outlets.

WOATS Oatsnacks

Eating healthy does not have to be boring or flavorless. WOATS Oatsnack made of a blend of gently-baked whole grain oats, honey and other premium ingredients, WOATS is a healthy snacking option any time, any place. Pour yourself a bowl full, or just eat it right out of the bag. Facebook.com/ WOATS; $25.30 for a variety four-pack at HSN.com.
In The Doghouse

Don’t forget the furry four-legged loves of your life this holiday season! Pet Supplies Plus carries a wide range of Play On goodies to make any dog’s day, including the Play On Collar ($3.98), the Play On Holiday Plush Bone ($7.98) and the Play On Holiday Sweater ($15.98), Doggie Den Dallas has Walk-e-Woo Dog Collars in various sizes ($10-$19.99), and their Neon Collection is sure to get attention. And your pet can dine in style with Fiesta IQ Food Bowls in assorted collars ($18.99), and dress in style, too, with the Lupine Dapper Dog collar ($9.99) or the Huxley & Kent Bowtie ($6.95), all from Hollywood Feed. Pet Supplies Plus, 2525 Wycliff and other DFW locations, PetSuppliesPlus.com; Doggie Den Dallas, 6444 E. Mockingbird Lane, DoggieDenDallas.com; Hollywood Feed, 3425 Knight St and other Dallas locations, HollywoodFeed.com.
**In The Garden**

North Haven Gardens

Whether you are looking for some house plants and planters to liven up your home or office (or home/office), or for some garden projects to grow on your own, North Haven Gardens is the place to go. North Haven, rebuilt bigger and better since the October 2019 tornado, has a wide variety of plants, decorative items and more. North Haven Gardens, 7700 Northaven Road, Dallas; NHG.com.

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**In The Bar**

We all have that friend who has that retro vibe going on. Now you can help them class up their home bar with the coolest of retro finds at Lula B’s, including this RCA transistor radio ($65), vintage cocktail shaker ($85) and Georges Briard plaid rocks glasses (4 for $75). Throw in a bottle of Barr Hill Gin ($37.99) or any of your other favorite adult beverages from Goody Goody Liquor, and you are good to go. Lula B’s, 1010 N. Riverfront Blvd. and 1882 Fort Worth Ave.; Caledonia Spirits.com; Goody Goody Liquor, 3316 Oak Lawn Ave., and other DFW locations, GoodyGoody.com.
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*Holiday Wine Sale runs 11/16/20-12/24/20. Discount applies to wines 750ml or larger, includes Sparkling Wine. No further discount on Sale Items, Final Few or Closeouts. Some exclusions apply. Please drink responsibly.

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APEROL FIZZ
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1 oz Cointreau Orange Liqueur
1 oz Aperol
¾ oz Lemon Juice
1 Egg White*
Shake all ingredients without ice (dry shake); then add ice and shake vigorously; strain up into a coupe glass; garnish with Luxardo cherry

*Caring raw or uncooked eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness.

CLASSIC KAMIKAZE
1 ½ oz Wheatley Vodka
1 oz Cointreau Orange Liqueur
1 oz Lime Juice
Shake & strain up into a coupe glass; garnish with lime peel

Look for more Cocktail Combo Packs in stores and at sigels.com this season!

COSMOPOLITAN
2 oz Wheatley Vodka
1 oz Cointreau Orange Liqueur
1 ½ oz Lime Juice
1 ½ oz Cranberry Juice
Shake & strain up into a coupe glass; garnish with lime twist

VODKA SIDECAR
2 oz Wheatley Vodka
1 oz Cointreau Orange Liqueur
1 oz Lemon Juice
Shake & strain up into a martini glass with a sugar rim; garnish with lemon peel

$29.99

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No further discount on Sale Items, Final Few or Closeouts. Some exclusions apply. Please drink responsibly.
The Great Outdoors

Mambe Waterproof Blanket
EcoVessel
Fleur Pinot Noir
Queer Heroes

Everybody’s yearning to get outside more these days, and a relaxing picnic in the park could be just the thing you need to destress after a long day or week. Be sure to pack your Mambe Waterproof Blanket ($79 and up). It’s waterproof, so you can spread it out without worrying about any dampness seeping through to ruin your picnic. Stop by any Goody Goody Liquor store — there’s one at 3316 Oak Lawn in Dallas — to pick up a bottle or two of your favorite adult beverage, like maybe some Fleur de California ($15.99 and up). And don’t forget to pack your EcoVessel vacuum insulated stainless steel tumbler so you have something to drink that wine out of ($24.95 as shown). They also have reusable rainbow stainless steel straws. Queer Heroes by Arabelle Sicardi. Mambeblankets.com, GoodyGoody.com, EcoVessel.com.

The Fuschia Throne

Every queen — and king — needs a throne. And if you are still looking for yours, Dulce has you covered. This custom fuschia throne chair, complete with bolster pillow, is definitely fit for any royal behind. Dulce Interior Consignment Showplace, 1208 N. Riverfront Blvd., MyDulce.com; $1,500.

Ceramic Menagerie Animals

Bring the grace and elegance of the African savannas’ most distinctive denizens to a living room near you with these silver ceramic giraffes and gazelle statues. Dulce Interior Consignment Showplace, 1208 N. Riverfront Blvd., MyDulce.com; $72 each.

Bronze Art

This art piece from Global Views brings to mind Superman’s crystalline Fortress of Solitude, only with the warmth of bronze rather than the distant cold of ice. NUVO Dallas, 3311 Oak Lawn Ave., NUVODallas.com; $300.

Glass Art

Dragonflies symbolize, wisdom, change, transformation and light, and are thought to bring us messages from Heaven. And there is no denying the heavenly beauty of this Dragonfly vase, hand-etched and signed by Dallas artist Polly Gessell. NUVO Dallas, 3311 Oak Lawn Ave., NUVODallas.com; $425.

In The Spa

Art of Shaving

Everybody’s crazy ’bout a sharp-dressed man. The same goes for a well-groomed man. And the Art of Shaving has just the thing to keep your special man well-groomed, from the Sandalwood Shaving Kit ($95) to the Beard Prep Grooming Kit ($40), each of which comes in a TSA-approved zip-top pouch. ArtofShaving.com.

Quickys Body Wipes

Get the gym rat on your Christmas list Quickys Body Wipes by Ballsy, extra-large cooling and cleaning wipes to quickly wipe away sweat, smell and dirt. Ballwash.com; $12. Available at Outlines Men’s Wear, 3906 Cedar Springs Road, OutlinesMensWear.com.

The Living Room

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Every queen — and king — needs a throne. And if you are still looking for yours, Dulce has you covered. This custom fuschia throne chair, complete with bolster pillow, is definitely fit for any royal behind. Dulce Interior Consignment Showplace, 1208 N. Riverfront Blvd., MyDulce.com; $1,500.

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**Tiny Tina and a Borderlands wedding**

If you are looking for the perfect gift for the LGBTQ gaymer in your life, look no further than Gearbox Loot, home of Borderlands, one of the queerest video game series ever. “Tiny Tina’s Robot Tea Party” card game ($20 Gearbox Software, Nerdvana Games and XYZ Game Labs) let’s you spend the afternoon at a claptastic tea party with all your favorite Claptraps. And to help you keep hydrated while you play, check out the “Guns, Love and Tentacles Tumbler” ($19.99), a copper, vacuum-sealed piece of official Borderlands merch celebrating the marriage of queer couple Wainwright and Hammerlock. GearboxLoot.com.

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**A Game of Queens**

Drag is all the rage these days, thanks in no small part to the original glamazon, RuPaul, and the many iterations of the award-winning RuPaul's Drag Race. Now you can get in on the action, even if you don’t know which end of a wig is up, with “A Game of Queens,” a drag queen card game. Glue on those eyelashes, tighten that tuck and get your game on. Alternatives, 1720 W. Mockingbird Lane, $18.99. Alternatives-of-New-Fine-Arts.business.site.

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**Simply Organic Bamboo**

What better way to alleviate the stress of another day in the pandemic than to get a good night’s sleep? And these bamboo sheets from Simply Organic will help make that happen. SimplyOrganicBamboo.com; $199 for king; prices vary for other sizes.

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**The Cozee**

Electric blankets for your bed have been around forever, but now Life Giving Warmth has made that cozy comfort portable with The Cozee, a battery-operated heating blanket that can keep you snug as a bug in a battery-operated rug for up to five hours. LifeGivingWarmth.com; $249.99.
Tiny Tina and a Borderlands wedding

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Delicora
Simple gold hoop earrings never go out of style. And when they are Delicora earrings, you get not only elegant jewelry but the added bonus of knowing you are helping others since Delicora participates in numerous charitable programs. Check out the Anna May hoops ($62), the Amelia Huggies and more ($42) at their website, Delicora.com.

LumiCharge-II All In One Desk Lamp
This year is a good year for staying home and reading a good book. And the LumiCharge II premium smart lamp is the perfect accessory for anyone who wants to shed a little light on their reading material of choice — or on their work-from-home desk, for that matter. ($149, on sale now for $99) LumiCharge.com.
11.20

TDOR vigil

So far in 2020, at least 34 transgender people are known to have been murdered or to have died under suspicious or violent circumstances. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality, at least 23 of the victims were trans women, four were trans men and one was non-binary. And most of the victims have been Black or Latinx trans women.

Nu Trans Movement, Prism Health North Texas and DFW Human Rights Campaign have organized a Transgender Day of Remembrance vigil for Friday near the Marsha Johnson and Sylvia Rivera Mural on Cedar Springs to honor those who have been lost and to focus attention on the ongoing epidemic of anti-transgender violence.

Come light a candle and say their names. 6:30-8 p.m., beside the Nelson Tabedo Clinic, 4012 Cedar Springs Road; 214-521-5191.

11.21

Canned Food Drive

Lost Souls Rugby Football Club is not just committed to promoting inclusion in the North Texas rugby community, the team members are also committed to serving the communities in which they live. As part of that commitment to serve, Lost Souls RFC will be holding a canned food drive benefiting Resource Center Food Pantry on Saturday in the parking lot of the Round-Up Saloon. Noon-4 p.m. behind The Round-Up Saloon, 3912 Cedar Springs Road; Facebook.com/LostSoulsRFC.

11.26

Thanksgiving Potluck

The House of Rebirth is hosting a Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner Thursday to “bring the family together.” House of Rebirth was created a little more than a year ago to “provide life-giving resources to under-served Black trans-identified women through transformative housing programs and to build power within the intersection of LGBTQIA communities of color in order to spark sustainable change and solidarity.” 2-9 p.m.

For more information, visit Facebook.com/TheHouseOfRebirth.
Ask Howard
How to do the wrong thing right

And then came November: Our nation of (officially) 8 percent unemployment is mourning a quarter-million COVID-19 deaths from a virus infecting well more than 100,000 new Americans every...single...day. With trepidatious anxiety, “blue” America decided to lay blame for this latest new hyper-driven upswipe of “Rona” squarely upon our Oracle L’Orange’s now quacking, blustery-lame shoulders. No presidential candidate in American history ever received more votes than “Sleepy Joe” Biden, who’ll turn 78 come Nov. 20. (Useless factoid: Of our 45 prior presidents, only 11 of them ever lived past the age where Biden begins his own presidency.)

Four out of five Americans now believe our country (subsequent to L’Orange’s petulant reign of tyrannical bombast) is headed in the wrong direction. Yeah, I know: How only four out of five? Of the sole presidents (Harding and Trump) who ever ran and won on isolationism, Harding at least had the good sense to die in office before the exposure of his cronyism saw the voltage of daylight.

2020 was a referendum on the triage measures needed for an electrified democracy’s very survival. To quote a frazzled gentleman in my building’s elevator, shaking his head somberly on Election Day, “I had no idea our sacred institutions were so vulnerable.” Sighing, his mask ruffled, “America either lives or dies today. I don’t recognize my country anymore — I went to the cemetery, but it was closed.”

This reminds me, kids: Next month, we’ll have cycled full-circle since America’s Patient Zero became diagnosed with COVID-19 (upon Rona’s stealthy escape from Wuhan’s sieve-tight borders) to make her debut on freedom’s shores last January in ...where was it now? Portland? Spokane? How fitting a hippie-commune region of our nation played host to that slatternly kane? How fitting a hippie-commune region — a piquant spoonful each of the following ground spices: cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, allspice and cloves (actually, make it two spoonsful of each cinnamon and ginger).

Dear Howard: At 31, I feel I’m past the age of soliciting private-life advice from strangers, but I think I could use some Howard wisdom. I snooped and read my boyfriend’s texts, thinking maybe he’d be sorry for telling me to move out and trying to figure out how to win me back. Instead, a mutual friend is already trying to find him a rebound, surprised that he was even still with me, that I was terrible “marriage material,” yadda, yadda.

It just really hurts, and makes me livid at the same time. I could use a comforting, Howard ego-booster. — K.E. Van

Dear Kevin: I don’t consider myself a cook, but I do enjoy baking, especially desserts — cakes and pies. It gives me pleasure giving them away to friends, all of whom are brutally honest with their truthful opinion(s) regarding my gift’s palatability. Everyone has his/her own personal favorites, but my palliative pumpkin pies of November always seem to hit a sweet spot. The recipe’s easy, too; however, I insist upon one caveat regarding its main ingredient: One cannot shortcut it by opting for canned pumpkin. (If you’re gonna go Libby’s, don’t bother at all.) Real, fresh pumpkin is the Thanksgiving difference between those who give a damn about authenticity vs. those whose wattles should be wrung at sunrise with the turkey’s. Should you be brave enough to attempt a scratch pie crust, then, by all means, please give it your whole Martha (Stewart); otherwise, just do as I and buy a deep-dish frozen crust. It’s the only fudging allowed.

Ready? First, you’ll need a real pumpkin. You’ve seen those pretty “sugar” pumpkins festooning the grocery entrance; they’re about the size of a toddler’s head. They’ll keep forever — or until you decide it’s time to impress the natives. Take a large, gleaming knife to the thing, splitting it down the center from the stalk. Claw out all the seeds and place both domes on a cookie sheet, cut-side down. Bake for an hour at 350. Remove, then dial your oven up to 425.

Now for the fun part! Peel away the puckered, crispy skin from its steaming flesh, and trash this whole sticky mess along with the woody stem. Quickly dump your pile of orangish flesh into a large mixing bowl and then root through the cabinets until you find that hand mixer your ex left behind (or, should you be one of the fortunate, a food processor). Shove both beaters in and whip that warm punkin’ meat ’til it screams, i.e., morphs into a smooth, glossy puree. To your slurry add the following (it matters not the order): three eggs, one can of evaporated milk (12 oz.), one large handful each of white sugar and brown sugar, a big pinch of salt, a good slurp of vanilla extract (the real Madagascar bourbon shit, not imitation) and a piquant spoonful each of the following ground spices: cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, allspice and cloves (actually, make it two spoonsful of each cinnamon and ginger).

Blend it all together into an evenly-colored, butterscotch-ish bisque, pour into a cold pie shell and just pop into the oven — easy as pie! Keep in the 425 oven for 15 minutes, then reduce it to 350 for another 45 minutes.

Voila! Remove your bronzed beauty, cool it down long enough so that it’ll slice rather easily as run (mine simply migrate directly to the fridge the following day will prettily look like its collected a few sparkling dew drops. God knows, too, nobody has ever turned down a little dewy sparkle.

Oh, wait! My sincerest apologies, Kevin: You didn’t ask me at all how to bake this sparkling dessert for your man, did you?

List up, girlfriend: I know how irresistible it is to sneak just a tiny, quick peek into someone else’s mail/phone/texts/life; hence, as I also learned long ago, if your name ain’t on it, sweetheart, don’t open it. Don’t touch it. Don’t go near it. Ever!

There’s an old Arabian adage: “The dogs may bark, but the caravan rolls on.” Just keep on a rollin’ onward. Don’t let the petty confetti of others’ gossipy backstabbing bring you down to their level. Toxicity does not the path of transcendency take. In good pilgrim spirit, just leave a freshly baked pumpkin pie for him on your way out his door ... and try to resist pullin’ any kind of The Help tomfoolery. Dontcha even give me that furrowed brow, either. You know exactly what I mean. Take the high road.

Finally bois, lemme give a shoutout here to my little brother, Command Sergeant Ma- jor Russell, who retires this month, following a long and distinguished Army career: Two stints in Iraq and surviving a crashed Blackhawk — You rock, Wiley! A grateful nation is thankful for your service. Also, a happy birthday to you, President-elect Biden; we’re rootin’ for you, sir!

This month has been the emotional equivalent of lancing, in the nick of time, a gangrenous pustule; suddenly, near-miraculously, all the putrid rot of these past four years in a lunatic asylum is over. We went to the cemetery, but it was closed.

Happy, happy Thanksgiving, bois and girls!

— Howard Lewis Russell
Send your question to AskHoward@dallasvoice.com and Howard may answer it here!
Johnny and Eskee at Campuzanos

Adam and Jenny at Kaliente

Thanksgiving

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Barbie Mulan and Ariel — Ladies who brunch
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Stonewall Democrats of Dallas

Ivana, Kandy and Ashantee at Illusions Celebrity Brunch at Gaslight Dallas

Stonewall Democrats of Dallas President Brandon J. Vance, Senate candidate MJ Hegar, Stonewall Legislative/Political Affairs Chair Josh Cogan and Stonewall Voter Registration Chair Joey Casiano at the Stonewall’s socially-distanced and televised rally on Nov. 2 (above), and Stonewall officers at the rally with Congressman Colin Allred (below).

Solution on Page 28

Across
1 Shakespeare’s foot, but not his 12 inches
5 Old Queens location
9 “Livin’ La ___ Loca”
13 It’s sold in bars
14 Loads
15 Dry as a bone
16 Like a Peter Lorre film
17 Incur, as debts
18 WKRP actress Anderson
19 Kelly’s song about “what doesn’t kill you…”
21 Airport area
23 Game with “Skip” cards
24 Kelly’s song about “There’s a wolf that preys…”
26 Bewitched actor Dick
28 48 Kelly’s song about the negative side
30 Floor covering
31 “Well, Did You ___”
32 Steinem’s “___ Playboy Bunny”
34 Charlotte of Facts of Life
37 Kelly’s song about self-sufficiency
41 AOL, e.g.
42 Bearing
43 Give a lot of mouth
44 Successful pitch
45 Novelist Brown
48 Kelly’s song about “As ___ Me Down”
52 Wheel tooth
53 AARP concern
54 Kelly of Kellyoke
59 Kopay’s team
60 One who screws around
62 Sophie B. Hawkins’ “___ Me Down”
63 LA Dodger, for one
64 Style some hair, in Hairspray
65 Re or so
66 They have boughs for bows
67 Match parts, to Navratilova
68 Tale of adventure

Down
1 Charged particles
2 Loads
3 Golda of Israel
4 Queens and others
5 Andrew of Melpomene Place
6 Painter Matisse
7 La mer, essentially
8 Appreciation display on Broadway
9 Addams Family ___
10 Subtle sarcasm
11 Dog from Down Under
12 “…farewell, auf Wiedersehen, ___”
14 About one percent of air
20 U-turn from SSW
22 Phantom’s Opera instrument
25 Cloth merchant
26 Sweet opening?
27 Hertz competitor
28 Sound like Harvey Fierstein
29 Made neat
33 Bentley of American Beauty
34 Paper amount
35 Tales of the City’s Madrigal
36 Novel conclusion
38 Successful crossdresser’s boast?
39 “Wide open”
40 Impersonator of males
44 They go down
46 Empathetic phrase
47 Hard top?
48 Kaye of Hans Christian Anderson
49 Able to bend over
50 Continue to get The Advocate
51 Ostentatious display
55 More, to a minimalist
56 Fruit flavor for gin
57 Stallion’s supper
58 No, in Moscow
61 Sandra, in a Grease song

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Ivana, Kandy and Ashantee at Illusions Celebrity Brunch at Gaslight Dallas
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