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Meet Cyrus, a 3-year-old male pit bull terrier mix weighing 56 pounds. Cyrus came to the SPCA of Texas from Louisiana when his husband reported him missing after White failed to return from an early morning workout at the LA Fitness gym at CityPlace. Video footage from security cameras shows him leaving the gym, and footage from a security camera at a gas station on Inwood shows him leaving the station, headed toward his home after filling up the Porsche Macan he was driving.

The Porsche White was driving was located on Oct. 29 in South Dallas, but there was no trace of White.

White is 5’11” tall and weighs 160 pounds. He was last seen wearing a light gray tank top and dark gym shorts and carrying a maroon-and- navy two-tone sling bag.

Anyone with information regarding White’s whereabouts or information related to the case is being asked to contact Detective Eric Barnes at 214-283-4818 or eric.barnes@dallascityhall.com.

Please reference case #188623-2020.

— David Taffet

LGBTQ, HIV advocates file suit against Trump immigration rule


The rule, which is set to go into effect on Jan. 11, would make it virtually impossible for LGBTQ people and people living with HIV fleeing persecution to secure asylum in the United States. In fact, the new rule eliminates eligibility for asylum to anyone with a gender-based claim.

Further, even if a judge finds that someone is eligible for asylum, the new rule declares that most refugees should be denied protection because they don’t deserve it.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of plaintiffs Immigration Equality, Oasis Legal Services, The TransLatin@ Coalition, Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project and Transgender Law Center.

The population these organizations directly serve, asylum seekers who are LGBTQ or living with HIV, will face insurmountable barriers to asylum in the U.S., despite the fact that they have remarkably strong asylum claims, opponents of the rule change say.

The rule will deny asylum to people who:

• apply for asylum based on fear of persecution due to their gender, which may be interpreted by authorities as including LGBTQ asylum seekers.

• didn’t apply for asylum in a transit country, regardless of whether that nation is safe.

• stayed in a transit country for more than 14 days, even if they were trapped in that country.

• lived in the U.S. for more than one year without permission, even if they qualify for an exception to the one-year filing deadline.

• LGBTQ and HIV-positive people with otherwise strong claims of persecution if they are unable to prove that government officials participated in the abuse (e.g. violence by private actors, such as civilians who perpetrate mob violence or so-called “corrective rape,” will not count as evidence toward an asylum claim).

• are unable to explain the particular social group they are a part of, requiring LGBTQ and HIV-positive people to disclose their identity and intimate details about their personal lives in their first interaction with immigration judges.

— Tammye Nash

Williams Institute releases some year-end data

The Williams Institute issued some year-end data on the LGBTQ community based on research conducted this year that anyone who loves numbers may find interesting.

Religion

In a study, the Williams Institute found that 54 percent of the LGBTQ population across the U.S. is religious. They estimate that translates to 5.3 million people.

The most religious LGBTQ population is found in South Carolina with 75 percent. That’s followed by Mississippi at 70 percent and Louisiana and South Dakota at 68 percent. Alaska and Maine have the least religious LGBTQ communities at 51 percent, followed by New Hampshire and Oregon at 32 percent and Vermont and Washington state at 33 percent.

Texas falls in the middle at 56 percent.

Violence

In a study released early this year, the Williams Institute found LGBT women are five times more likely than non-LBT women to experience violent victimization. About four times as many LGBT people as non-LGBT people experienced violent victimization in their lifetimes. LGBT people are about six times more likely to undergo violence by someone they know well.

Marriage

About 293,000 same-sex couples have married since the Obergefell marriage equality decision in 2015. Those couples have pumped $3.8 billion into local economies with their weddings and spending by their out-of-town guests.

Other topics studies include health and healthcare, racial inequality, DACA and homelessness. The full report is available on the Williams Institute website.

— David Taffet

The TransLatin@ Coalition, Black LGBTQIA+

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On the national level, COVID-19, the presidential election, the Black Lives Matter movement and social justice issues and, for the LGBTQ community in particular, the U.S. Supreme Court’s Bostock ruling banning anti-LGBTQ employment discrimination were the biggest stories of the year.

But here in North Texas, there were some more local stories that ranked at the top of the list, too. As we kick off the first week of 2021, Dallas Voice looks back at the local stories that had North Texans talking in 2021.

— David Taffet

2020: Local stories that had us talking

Mansfield ISD

Despite Joe Biden’s presidential win, relatively few seats flipped in congressional and legislative races in Texas and around the country. LGBTQ candidates, however, did well. Annise Parker, CEO of the LGBTQ Victory Fund said that so many LGBTQ candidates won because they are “simply running good campaigns.”

In Texas, the five members of the LGBT Legislative Caucus were up for re-election and all won their races. Two of them — Jessica Gonzalez of Dallas and Mary Gonzalez of El Paso — ran unopposed. Julie Johnson of Dallas, Celia Israel of Austin and Erin Zwiener of Driftwood each won their races with comfortable margins.

At least six LGBTQ candidates ran in other districts, including two transgender candidates. Only one — Ann Johnson — won her race in a district that includes the Montrose gayborhood in Houston. Although Democrats were hoping to flip nine seats to flip the House of Representatives, Johnson was the only Democratic pick up. Ann Johnson will be joining the LGBT Caucus when she takes the oath of office on January 12.

Nationally, Victory Fund reports that in 2021 more out LGBTQ people will be serving in elected positions than ever in our country’s history.

Before the U.S. Supreme Court in June weighed in on employment nondiscrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Mansfield ISD had already settled with Stacy Bailey, an art teacher at MISD’s Charlotte Anderson Elementary, who was twice selected teacher of the year before being suspended for eight months after being accused of “promoting a homosexual agenda” by showing a photo of her “future wife” along with photos of her family to students during a welcome to school presentation in August 2017.

Bailey sued the school district, and, in October 2019, federal Judge Sam Lindsey ruled that the Constitution clearly protects Bailey’s right to be free from sexual orientation discrimination. She was awarded a cash settlement and allowed to return to teaching but was assigned to a high school. In June, Bailey and her wife, Julie Vazquez, made a $10,000 donation from proceeds of the settlement to Resource Center’s Youth First program.

At that point, Bailey thought her battle with Mansfield ISD was over. But three days later the U.S. Supreme Court issued its Bostock ruling agreeing with Lindsey’s ruling in Bailey’s case and declaring employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity to be illegal. Then a week later, Mansfield ISD voted unanimously not to add sexual orientation or gender identity to its nondiscrimination policy. Other than making a statement about their opposition to employing LGBTQ teachers and staff, their vote was moot and opened the district to future lawsuits.

According to Resource Center’s Rafa el McDonnell, before the Bostock ruling, only two of the 110 school districts in the Dallas/Fort Worth area had employment nondiscrimination policies that specifically included their LGBTQ employees — Dallas ISD and Fort Worth ISD. After the ruling, the Texas Education Agency issued new wording that it recommended school districts adopt in their nondiscrimination policies. School districts across North Texas routinely adopted these recommended updates, and by October, 93 ISDs in the eight-county area had adopted this new wording to be in compliance with federal law. About a dozen smaller districts had simply not yet met to act on the ruling, mostly because of canceled meetings due to the pandemic. But two districts in the area voted against adopting the ruling — Highland Park ISD and Mansfield ISD — opening themselves to future lawsuits. Mansfield remains an island of discrimination surrounded by Arlington, Grand Prairie, Kennedale and Midlothian that have all adopted LGBTQ nondiscrimination.

The Dallas Pride Flag

In June, Dallas became the only city in the U.S. with its own official, specially-designed Pride flag that will fly over Dallas City Hall each Pride month in the future. As “Born This Way” played on speakers, Dallas Mayor Pro Tem Adam

Texas elections

State Rep.-elect Ann Johnson

From left, Julie Vasquez, Stacy Bailey and representatives of Youth First.

Adam Medrano, left, and Omar Narvaez hold the Dallas Pride Flag.
Medrano raised the new Pride flag on Thursday, June 18, at City Hall Plaza. The new flag flew the rest of the month alongside the U.S. and Texas state flags. The day before, the Dallas City Council had approved the new flag at a special meeting held before the regular city council meeting.

This year, the flag only flew half the month because of timing in getting the full-sized flag produced. In its resolution, however, the council approved flying the Dallas Pride flag instead of the official city flag every June in the future.

The flag was designed by Tracy Nanthavongsa, and his design was approved by the council unanimously. It consists of the city’s star from its seal overlaid on a Rainbow flag. The large flag, equal in size to the regular city of Dallas flag, was purchased through donations.

Before raising the flag, Medrano read the mayor’s Pride Month proclamation. About half the city council attended the early morning flag raising along with County Commissioner Theresa Daniel and City Manager T.C. Broadnax. Councilman Omar Narvaez said flying a Pride flag on the plaza has been a goal of his since he joined the Mayor’s LGBT Task Force years ago. “What happens in Dallas changes the world,” he said.

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When the Mayor’s LGBT Task Force first suggested rainbow crosswalks, it was a new idea that a few cities had tried to add something special to their gayborhoods. By the time Dallas got its rainbow crosswalks this year, every other major city already had them. But Dallas decided to do it big — not with one rainbow like most cities had, but with 10 rainbow crosswalks along Cedar Springs Road.

When it was first suggested, the city said no to all crosswalks that weren’t plain white. Then in 2017, a decorative crosswalk was installed on the corner of Lemmon Avenue East and McKinney Avenue adjacent to West Village in the Uptown neighborhood of Oak Lawn. Bond money had been set aside to do some upgrades to Cedar Springs Road, but the bond money couldn’t be used for crosswalks because bond money may only be spent on things that are expected to last 20 years or more, and crosswalks have a much shorter lifespan. So money was raised privately to pay for the rainbow crosswalks.

In February this year, the LGBT Chamber of Commerce presented the city of Dallas with a ceremonial check of $128,250 in the Flag Room at Dallas City Hall to pay for the rainbow crosswalks. The chamber will maintain a balance to pay for any future maintenance work needed on the crosswalks.

Construction along Cedar Springs in 2020 included new landscaping, new sidewalks, new traffic lights and more began earlier this year. Most of the work has been completed and the rainbow crosswalks were installed as sections of the street were completed. Two gateway markers were installed as well. The first stands on the corner of Douglas and Cedar Springs roads on the corner of Kroger’s property. The letters O-A-K-L-A-W-N stand on risers, each a different color of the rainbow, with black and brown added to make eight pillars — one holding each letter and one for a space between OAK and LAWN. The second stands on Oak Lawn Avenue in the center median between The Centrum and Walgreens near the Legacy of Love monument. That marker has 15 pillars that light up at night and Oak Lawn can be read from either side of the street. The markers were part of the bond money allocated to entertainment district upgrades.

**Construction on The Strip**

As 2020 was winding down, Caven Enterprises entered into an agreement with developer PegasusAblon in November to develop two residential-mixed use buildings on land now owned by the company that operates several bars on Cedar Springs Road.

Caven, which owns TMC–The Mining Company, Sue Ellen’s, JR.’s Bar & Grill and Station 4, will sell its properties to PegasusAblon but continue to own and operate its bars. The sale involves property on the west side of Cedar Springs Road, from Reagan to Throckmorton Street, and at 4001 Cedar Springs Road. The existing buildings along Cedar Springs Road will remain as they are, and the new residential buildings and parking structures will be built on what is now surface parking lots. Development will be done in two phases, with the building behind S4 going up first. Among the features is a covered community park behind S4 that will feature a 70-foot waterfall.

PegasusAblon’s principal is Mike Ablon, who ran for mayor in 2019 and is best known for developing property in the Design District, changing the area from industrial to residential, restaurants and retail. Caven CEO Gregg Kilhofer said over the years many developers have come to him with offers, and each involved buying out the property and tearing down the buildings along Cedar Springs. He said Ablon’s offer was entirely different because, as a condition of the sale to PegasusAblon, the bars must remain to become an integral part of the new development.

At a meeting held at TMC–The Mining Company, Caven representative Ed Oakley explained the project to interested community members. Among the biggest concerns was parking. He explained that the 200-car lot behind 4001 Cedar Springs would remain open during construction behind S4. Not until after the parking structure opens in the building behind S4 would construction begin on the 200-car lot.

Another issue was affordability, and Oakley said there would be an affordable housing component in the project.

The project must first go before the Oak Lawn Committee, which can recommend changes. Because the area is on the glide path to Love Field, zoning includes height restrictions. Recently, nearby projects within a block have been given variances to construct taller buildings than have ever been built on that side of Oak Lawn Avenue.

After approval by the Oak Lawn Committee, the project must be approved by city zoning and the Dallas City Council. Once approved, the property will be sold by Caven to PegasusAblon. Proceeds will be distributed to Caven employees who are owner-operators of Caven Enterprises. Oakley said he would schedule future meetings to keep the neighborhood informed on progress.
The importance of Guncle

A few days before Christmas, my best friend — a gay man I have known since before junior high — sent me a text telling me that his 15-year-old great-niece had just come out to him. He said he had called to ask her what she wanted for Christmas this year, and she told him she wanted a Pride flag. He was surprised that she was so matter of fact about it, but instead of making a big deal he just asked if she would like some more Pride stuff. She was, he told me, so excited that he asked, and he was already having so much fun shopping for Pride stuff for her.

Great-niece is totally “out and proud” at school, Guncle told me, and her mom (my friend’s niece) is totally supportive. And yet, Guncle and I both have some concerns.

See, Great-Niece still lives in Hometown, where Guncle and I grew up. It is a small, rural, very conservative southeastern Texas town — not the most friendly place for an LGBTQ teenager. At least, it wasn’t when Guncle and I were growing up there. Times are changing, as Guncle said, but Hometown is still Hometown. And teenagers — and grown people, too — can be absolutely vicious to anyone who is “different.”

But we have hope, too. Because Great-Niece has a mom who supports her, and knowing Guncle’s family as well as I do, I have no doubts that she is the most fierce Mama Bear you could find. Nobody is gonna come for her little rainbow cub without paying a very high price.

And Great-Niece also has another HUGE advantage that Guncle and I never had when we were scared teens doing our best to hide our rainbow selves in the gray “normality” of Hometown, Texas: Great-Niece has Guncle.

Sure, there are laws protecting LGBTQ people these days that Guncle and I never dreamed of when we were young. Marriage equality? Workplace non-discrimination protections? We never thought we would live to see the day. And there are more and more openly LGBTQ celebrities and public figures and more and more allies, all of whom saying, “Be yourself.”

But Great-Niece has more. She has a man she has known and loved all her life who is out, proud and successful. He has advanced college degrees, a great job, a happy and successful marriage, a beautiful home and even a great vacation home.

She has Guncle. And, she doesn’t know it yet, but she has me, and she has a whole, beautiful, diverse rainbow community standing behind her, standing beside her.

That’s why we do what we do. That’s why Guncle and I chose not to try to stay in the closet, not when it comes to our own daily lives and not when it comes to our more conservative families back in conservative Hometown, Texas. It’s why we stand up. It’s why we speak up. It’s why we keep on fighting.

For LGBTQ people who already have seen the laws protecting us, the lives of LGBTQ people (more than 40 transgender people died violent deaths in 2020 alone), I have seen the despair and the brokenness and the fear, born of that same hate, that have driven far too many of our LGBTQ youth to suicide.

I have watched our community mourn. But I have also watched our community rejoice.

I have seen our victories — when sodomy laws were declared unconstitutional, when marriage equality was made the law of the land, when anti-LGBTQ employment discrimination was banned, and more. I have seen our celebrations — the parades and the festivals, even just a Saturday night at our favorite bar when the music was loud and the dance floor was crowded with people just thrilled to be alive and surrounded by others like them.

It’s no secret that 2020 has been, well, a difficult year, to say the least, for the whole world. And our LGBTQ communities have not escaped the hard times. Our bars and other businesses have spent a great deal of the year closed or operating way under capacity. Our organizations have had to cut back on activities and programs. Our events have been canceled or forced to go virtual.

For LGBTQ people who already often felt isolated, either from being closeted or from being surrounded by a homophobic world, the 2020 quarantine times have been even more oppressive. But we are still here.

There are thousands more out there like Great-Niece — LGBTQ people, young and older — who need us to be role models. So we have to keep fighting. We have to keep shining, being out, proud and real rainbow-colored beacons of hope and promise.
happy NEW YEAR!

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n more ways than anyone would care to count, the COVID-19 pan-
demic has changed the way we live. Near the top of the list are the ways in which we experience music. Live music venues — from concert halls and intimate clubs to festivals and cruises — were hit the hardest, and the future of these performance spaces remains uncertain.

Fortunately, we still have plenty of recorded music to enjoy while we face the possibility of both a vaccine and further lockdowns.

Staying productive

Some musicians have used the opportunity of isolation to create albums. Gay singer/songwriter Mike Maimone, in fact, recorded two solo albums; isolation: 001 consists of original songs, and Borrowed Tunes, Vol. 1 is cover versions (both available online at mikemaimone.com).

Gay smooth jazz artist Dave Koz has the wonders of modern technology to thank for his A New Day (Just Koz) album, written and recorded (with guest artists, no less) during the pandemic. And Bay Area-based lesbian singer/songwriter Rachel Garlin wasn’t sitting idle during the pandemic, releasing her new Julie Wolf-produced album, Mondegreens (rachelgarlin.com), as well as performing the weekly “Sidewalk Mondegreens” live shows from the garage of her Noe Valley home.

Scott Free wrote “This Is Not Our Government,” about the CARES Act, during the pandemic, making it a last-minute addition to his political-oriented The Last Revolution (Leather/Western) album.

Listening to lesbians

Lesbians excelled in 2020. The Greatest Part (Captured Tracks), the breathtaking second album by out singer/songwriter Becca Mancari, available in a limited edition clear pink vinyl LP version, is a sonic departure from her Americana-laced 2017 debut Good Woman. Working with musician/producer Zac Farro (of Paramore fame), Mancari created a forward-thinking audio landscape for her deeply personal lyrics, some of which deal with being raised in and surviving a strict religious background. Songs such as “Hunter,” “Stay With Me,” “First Time,” “Like This” and “Tear Us Apart” deal with heavy subject matter, but the unique musical settings have the ability to transport the listener to another place altogether.

North Carolina-based H.C. McEntire also released an exceptional second album, Ena Axis (Merge), which expands on the promise of her first record, delivering 10 awe-inspiring songs (including the instrumental “Sunday Morning”) and a stunning re-interpretation of Led Zeppelin’s “House of the Holy”.

The third sophomore album included here is the gorgeous Our Two Skins (Jagajuwar), by queer singer/songwriter Gordi (aka Sophia Payten), which ranges from the soul-baring opener “Aeroplane Bathroom,” the early Rickie Lee Jones-esque “Radiator,” as well as “Look Like You” and “Volcanic,” to the livelier “Free Association,” “Unready,” “Sandwiches” and “Extraordinary Life.”

Newly-out singer/songwriter Jaime Wyatt, a distinctive artist whose hard scrabble life has led to sobriety and embracing her queer identity, addresses these subjects on her exceptional new album, Neon Cross (New West), earning her a rightful place among the current crop of reigning country divas.

Singer/songwriter Susan Werner is a national treasure, something she continues to prove with each consecutive album, including her latest, the Americana-style Flyover Country (Susan Werner). Over the course of the 10 songs, Werner gives us something to think about (“Snake Oil,” “Only Later,” “Barn Radio”), swoon about (“How Much”) and even smile about (“Wine Bottles”).

Coming out

Coming out was popular during the pandemic. Maria McKee, best known as lead vocalist for ‘80s cowpunk band Lone Justice (“Ways to be Wicked” and “Shelter”), had a decent solo career (and hit single “Show Me Heaven”), with both major label and independent releases. She also wrote songs covered by Bette Midler (“To Deserve You” and “The Last Time”) and Feargal Sharkey of The Undertones (“A Good Heart”).

La Vita Nuova (American Fire), McKee’s first album in more than a dozen years, fittingly translates as “new life,” as McKee came out as queer.

Singer/songwriter Cindy Bulens, who came out as trans in 2012, had a lengthy recording career as Cindy Bulens. The powerful personal statement Walkin’ Through This World (Blue Lobster) is Bulens’ debut album as Cindy.

The compelling songs on Indistinct Conversations (Saddle Creek) are said to be inspired by Canadian band Land of Talk’s lead vocalist Elizabeth Powell’s coming out as a non-binary femme.

Brittany Howard, the magnetic and supremely talented former lead singer of the Grammy Award-winning band Alabama Shakes, came out, got married and released her solo debut album Jaime (ATO), named for her older sister who died at the age of 13 (when Howard was 9), and the 11 songs are everything you’d expect from a Brittany Howard solo album and then some.

Dazzling debuts

Recorded in late 2016, but not released until 2020, Nobody Cries Today (matlovellusic.com), the brilliant debut by Southern gay singer/songwriter Matt Lovell, was well worth the wait. In possession of a powerful and expressive set of pipes, Lovell delivers an album of original, soulful and country-influenced tunes that are worthy of repeated listenings, including the knockout tracks “90 Proof,” “Be Free,” “Alligator Lily,” “The Way That It Was” and a pair of duets with Leigh Nash — “The Gospel” and “Dime Adios.”

Father (izzyheltai.com), the debut album by trans singer/songwriter Izzy Heltai, whose powerful voice at times recalls Jeff Buckley, goes a long way in giving his songs the necessary passion to convey their messages to listeners, as you can hear on “Marching Song,” “To Talk About Yourself,” “Songbird” and “Anyone to Anybody.”

Pass Like Pollen is the debut album by non-binary trans-masc singer/songwriter Cartalk aka Chuck Moore. It plays like a hybrid of modern twang and vintage grunge with a general indie rock vibe, which works well on “Noonday Devil,” “Las Manos,” “Driveaway” and “Sleep,” parking itself in a space reserved for irresistible pop on “Wrestling” and Elliot Smith-like folk on “Something or
Expectations (Rounder), the debut album by young lesbian singer/songwriter Katie Pruitt, is an admirable introduction to a talented artist, especially for fans of Brandi Carlile and the aforementioned Becca Mancari. Pruitt’s extraordinary and commanding vocal abilities as well as her way of drawing the listener in with her personal lyric style are exemplified on the amazing “Georgia” (“There is a place past the Georgia pines/With people who welcome you with an open mind”) as well as “Normal,” “Loving Her” and “It’s Always Been You.”

Young, queer, Scottish-Canadian singer/songwriter Evangeline Gentle made an indelible impression with their eponymous Sonic Unyon debut album, on which she struck the right balance between personal love songs (“Sunsets,” “Long Time Love,” “Neither of Us”) and universal observations (“Ordinary People,” “The Strongest People Have Tender Hearts”) and the lightly twang-tinged tune “Even If.”

Almost everything you need to know about gay singer/songwriter Kyle Motsinger, a self-described “theater queen who loves his pop,” can be found in the title track to his debut album Any Way I Want To (kylemotsinger.com), on which he sings, “My music sounds any way I want it to,” and then follows it with “My voice sounds different than the other boys/It’s not a sound that everyone enjoys.” But he thinks it suits him well.

If you’ve ever wondered what it might sound like if David Sylvain (of Japan) fronted Prefab Sprout, your answer can be found on the soaring Flight by Tenant From Zero (aka queer Brooklyn musician Paul Darrah); a 21st century reimagining of the best of ’80s Brit-pop. Fiddler and banjo player Jake Blount, described as “one of the few queer, Black voices in Appalachian music,” called his album Spider Tales (Free Dirt), and proceeded to spin an elaborate and beautiful web on this reclamation project, adding a distinctly queer perspective to many of these tunes from early-to-mid 20th century. Blount’s take on Lead Belly’s “Where Did You Sleep Last Night” was particularly dazzling.

L.A.-based quartet Girl Friday’s brilliantly titled Androgynous Mary (Hardly Art), with a cover photo depicting what can be best described as an old school butch, merged Riot Grrrl sensibilities with those of groundbreaking acts such as The Raincoats and Kleenex/LiliPUT.

Familiar faces

Gay modern rock legend Bob Mould is among the hardest working men in music, proving that point by following up 2019’s aptly titled Sunshine Rock with the somewhat bluer Blue Hearts (Merge). Blue in terms of sexual content (check out “Leather Dreams”) as well as in the liberal political messaging in songs such as “American Crisis,” “Next Generation” and “Heart on my Sleeve,” all delivered in his trademark crunchy and blazing guitar rock style.

Still going strong after more than 35 years, Indigo Girls returned with its first studio album in five years, Look Long (Rounder), which continues the musical tradition that Amy Ray and Emily Saliers established all those years ago: a blend of modern Americana pop on the title tune, “Country Radio,” “When We Were Writers” and “Sorrow and Joy,” and memorable rockers including “Change My Heart,” “Shit Kickin’” and “Favorite Flavor,” all with an eye towards social commentary.

Rufus Wainwright took even longer — 12 years! — between albums of original pop music, and thankfully Unfollow the Rules (BMG), didn’t disappoint, setting the political tone with opener “Trouble In Paradise,” which is echoed in “Only the People That Love.” Wainwright also didn’t skimp on the operatic excesses on the dramatic “Early Morning Madness” and “My Little You,” while adding a dash of hopefulness (and even humor) on the songs “You Ain’t Big,” “Peaceful Afternoon,” “Damsel in Distress” and “Alone Time.”

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SAT 01.02
The SPCA of Texas wraps up its “Comfort and Joy” donation drive on Friday. Shelters are requesting blankets, toys, treats and canned food for animals in shelters. SPCA is in most need of dog toys to keep their pups happy year-round. Visit SPCA.org for more information.

SUN 01.03
Ella’s Swinging Christmas, WaterTower Theatre’s tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, featuring Felecia Wilson, ends Sunday. The theater is located at 15650 Addison Road in Addison. Visit WaterTowerTheatre.org for tickets and information.

SUN 01.03
The last day to travel a newly-constructed pathway to enjoy the Dallas Zoo Lights is Sunday. Fee is $65 per car. Visit ZooLights.DallasZoo.com for more information.
Deep Inside Hollywood

By Romeo San Vincent

Billy Porter in the director’s chair

He’s one of the stars of Pose, due to return for a third season sometime in 2021; he co-hosted Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve with Ryan Seacrest 2020 with Seacrest and and Lucy Hale; he’s a recording artist and musical-theater veteran and exuberant fashion titan, and now Billy Porter will add filmmaker to his resume.

He’ll be directing the upcoming high school coming-of-age feature called What If? The rom-com involves a teenager named Khal who posts about his crush on a transgender classmate named Kelsa, and with the internet cheering them on, the pair embark on a senior year romance. Lesbian and and Lucy Hale; he’s a recording artist and musical-theater veteran and exuberant fashion titan, and now Billy Porter will add filmmaker to his resume.

Selena Gomez is going to climb every ‘Mountain’

One of 2020’s TV pleasures has been watching a homebound Selena Gomez earnestly trying to learn to cook via Zoom calls with various famous chefs on her HBO Max series Selena + Chef. We had no idea that in between mastering the mechanics of a proper French omelette she was negotiating new deals for herself, but coming soon(ish) she’ll take on the role of real-life lesbian mountain climber Silvia Vásquez-Lavado. Writer-director Elgin James (Little Birds) will adapt Vásquez-Lavado’s memoir, In the Shadow of the Mountain, as a starring vehicle for Gomez (whose casting got a nod of approval from the queer Peruvian climber herself).

Vásquez-Lavado not only climbed Mount Everest, she also became the first out lesbian to climb the highest mountain on each continent, a challenge known as the Seven Summits. No production or release dates are known yet, but this is already Appointment Cinema.

Guess what pandemic ‘The Second Wave’ will be about

Queer screen darling Taylor Schilling (Orange is The New Black) is back for an upcoming limited series from Michelle and Robert King (The Good Wife, The Good Fight). It’s called The Second Wave, and it’s about two neighbors, played by Schilling and Audra McDonald, who find themselves locked down again in New York City when an unexpected second wave of the coronavirus breaks out. The women are forced to handle their lives and jobs from the confined space of their apartments, while contending with an even more deadly version of the virus, one that may spell the end of humanity itself.

The six-episode series will co-star Leslie Uggams (Deadpool), Steven Pasquale (The Good Wife) and Hamilton’s Phillipa Soo, and with vaccines currently rolling out, maybe by the time this series hits your TV screen, it’ll have the retro feeling of scary science fiction that can’t possibly happen again. Fingers crossed!

‘Guardians of The Galaxy’ hero Star-Lord is bisexual and polyamorous. Now what?

This isn’t an announcement, really, even though it is. And it hasn’t made an official impact on the films that draw inspiration from Marvel Comics canon. But Guardians of The Galaxy protagonist Star-Lord has been revealed to be both bisexual and polyamorous in the ongoing comic book series. This is both a very significant development and, annoyingly, possibly not going to matter at all when it comes to the film adaptations. That’s because Star-Lord is played in the films by Chris Pratt, an actor who has always been quietly friendly to the LGBTQ+ community, but whose recent surge of public religious devotion has made the prospect of him playing a bisexual space hero somewhat unlikely, given his association with an anti-queer church.

The Guardians film franchise continues, of course, and not everything canon in the source material finds its way into comic book-based films, but if queer fans were to consider lobbying hard for a little inclusion, now would be the time to start. And while we’re waiting for some official Pratt reaction, here’s what we’d like for starters: some cuddling with Drax. We’re pretty certain that the perpetually shirtless Dave Bautista would be up for that.

Romeo San Vincent is giving to his local food bank and wants you to do the same.

Billy Porter

Selena Gomez

this week’s solution

To submit an item for inclusion in the Community Calendar, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.

AMBER JITBE A NEW CARNE MELT IOWA EGADS PROTESTED DINO JUST PHASE WALLET PAS GOA MOSLEMS TSE ANGLE EYRE PITA FIGURE SKATER FORM MESH INCAN ENA CURT TEST HMS NCO ORATES INDICATIVE TWOS LAID SIDE GIANT SIZE OVEN ALLIE ARES NESS GLENN

For a more complete Community Calendar online, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.
Vote for your local favorites in nine categories!

VOTING ENDS JANUARY 31st!

Who are the BRIGHTEST STARS? Each year our readers select their local favorites in our annual Best Of survey. Enter to win a DREAM DATE PACKAGE!

- $500 CASH
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- A pair of tickets to Uptown Players

Winner announced in our March 26th issue.
SCENE Flashback
A look back at the days before COVID when the bars were full

Jacob, Nicholas and Ryan at Magnum

James cookin’ up some smiles at TMC

Jennifer Hudson performs at The W Hotel

Kathleen and Al glow with the flow

Lisa and Matt at The Teddy Bear Party

Leslie Jordan performs for Legacy Counseling

Hola boys at Latinx Pride

Lady Bunny and Cassie Nova

Jeremy and Blair at Magnum

Kathleen and Al glow with the flow
q-puzzle

Team USA-LGBTQ

Across
1 With 69-Across, Olympic athlete who just came out as bisexual/pansexual
6 “How can ___?”
10 From the top
14 Antonio Banderas’ meat
15 Get soft
16 Early caucus state
17 “Great Caesar’s ghost!”
18 Demonstrated for gay rights, e.g.
20 Flintstones’ pet
21 Mischaracterization of bisexual women, per 1-Across
22 Artful Dodger target
24 Swan Lake step
25 “Can you ___ little faster?”
28 Pilgrims to Mecca
30 Poet who inspired Cats, initially
33 Avoid going straight
35 Broniti’s Jane
36 Gyro bread
37 With 39-Across, 1-Across as an Olympic athlete
39 See 37-Across
41 Variety
42 Sexy clothing material
46 Like Machu Picchu
47 Doe in Disney’s Bambi
48 Most abrupt
50 ___ Pinafore
51 USMC barracks boss
53 Uses a gifted tongue
55 Another mischaracterization of bisexual women, per 1-Across
58 Animal groups that cruised with Noah
62 Tabled
63 Rock Hudson/James Dean flick
64 They say it matters
65 Where to find hot buns
66 Grant of Weeds
67 Hawkish deity
68 Untouchable head
69 See 1-Across

Down
1 Served like Billie Jean
2 Christmas threesome
3 Part of a healthy muffin?
4 Give a large bosom, e.g.
5 Hi-___ graphics
6 Some have sex on this
7 Without wasted words
8 He smoothes out his lipstick
9 Sundance’s Place
10 Tyler of The Talk
11 What to wear on nudist beaches
12 Some of Mary’s lambs
13 Go in only partway, at the beach
19 Actor Omar
21 “Gigli” actress, briefly
23 Nat. counterpart in MLB
25 Faux pas
26 Cocktail ingredient
27 Claim 10 inches, for example
29 Month for Kahlo
31 Get the cappuccino foamy
32 Picks up
34 Abner’s comic strip partner
36 He blew on pipes
38 Avian Aussie
40 Box with a tail
43 Eating away
44 Headway
45 “Good grief!”
48 Partner of Caesar, in comedy
49 Sault ___ Marie
52 Yields
54 Hooch maker in Gomer’s Mayberry
55 Ingrid’s Casablanca role
56 Drag queen’s leg need
57 The race ___
59 Corduroy Rib
60 What comes after “Come…”
61 A Brit soldier may shoot it off
63 Not swallow easily

Solution on Page 14
Legal

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