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The 2020 LGBTQ Texans of the Year:

Dallas Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano
Dallas City Councilman Omar Narvaez

Story by David Taffet, Page 6

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Fort Worth man murdered; suspect in custody



Mark Alan Elmore

A Fort Worth man is dead and an Ennis man has been arrested and charged with his murder, according to Fort Worth police and Tarrant County Medical Examiner reports. Police reports indicate that officers were dispatched to a report of a deceased person at 2520 N. Edgewood Terrace in Fort Worth's Central Meadowbrook neighborhood shortly after midnight on Monday, Nov. 30. After locating the suspect, 27-year-old Orlando Vaughn Gilbert of Ennis, at a gas station, officers decided to "make entry" into the home on North Edgewood. They found the victim, 53-year-old Mark Alan Elmore, in a hallway inside the house.

The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's Office lists Elmore's cause of death as gunshot wounds, and manner of death as homicide.

Gilbert was arrested and as of Dec. 3 remained in custody at the Tarrant County Correction Center on a \$100,000 bond.

— Tammye Nash

Elliot Page: 'My pronouns are he/they, and my name is Elliot'

The actor formerly known as Ellen Page came out on Instagram as transgender on Dec. 1 in an essay in which he explained that "my pronouns are he/they, and my name is Elliot."

Page, 33, was nominated for an Oscar for their role in the movie *Juno* and now stars in the Netflix series *Umbrella Academy*.

Page wrote on Instagram, "I feel lucky to be writing this. To be here. To have arrived at this place in my life."



Elliot Page

Page went on to express "overwhelming gratitude for the incredible people who have supported me along this journey" and said he is "inspired by so many in the trans community. Thank you for your courage, your generosity and ceaselessly working to make this world a more inclusive and compassionate place."

But Page also asked for patience as his journey continues, acknowledging that while his "joy is real, it is also fragile," and that he is scared of "the invasiveness, the hate, the 'jokes' and of violence," while pointing to statistics indicating at least 40 trans people — mostly Black and Latinx trans women — have been murdered this year.

— Tammye Nash

Stocking, mask auction benefits AIN

The Art+Fashion+Community Designer Mask and Holiday Stocking Silent Auction benefitting AIN is open through Dec. 13.

Items are available for in-person viewing at Martini Consignment/Vintage Martin, 2923 N. Henderson Ave. in Dallas.

View items and place bids online at Murad-Bid.com/bidapp/index.php?slug=ainafc. You will be able to pick up the items you win between Dec. 14 and Dec. 18 at AIN.

— Tammye Nash

Lost Souls holds annual toy drive

Lost Souls Rugby Football Club is holding its annual toy drive benefiting Adelfa Botello Callejo Elementary School.

They'll be collecting toys from noon-4 p.m. in the back parking lot behind the Round-Up Saloon on Saturday, Dec. 12.

"We are hoping to collect nearly 700 toys this year and can use your help," said team head coach Todd Maria. "This is an ambitious goal given the challenges 2020 has presented."

Drop off some toys and make some kids holiday a bright one.

— David Taffet

pet of the week / MIRANDA



Meet **Miranda**, a female, 1-year-old German shepherd mix weighing 42 pounds and a lovely lady looking for a new

adventure. She has a tan-and-black coat, perky ears and a dazzling smile. Her favorite things are squeaky toys, treats and enjoying the sunshine. Because of her age she's still learning new tricks and manners, so hopefully you have some things up your sleeve. She would love a pup playmate around her size that can keep up with her high energy during playtime. She'd do best with older kids and would prefer a home with a yard where she can get lots of exercise. Miranda 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/findapet and visit spca.org/dogadopt to inquire about a dog or spca.org/catadopt to inquire about a cat.

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Caring for our older pets

Hello Woof readers! Welcome back and great to have you reading my column again. There is so much that has happened with our nation since my last column in early November!

The topic for this month is geriatric care, and I will be introducing important thoughts to help us take care of our more mature dogs and cats in a way that hopefully allows us to have our babies healthier for a longer period of time. Some of the things I will present here have been discussed in my prior columns, so feel free to check in previous issues of Dallas Voice for more details. (Woof! publishes on the first Friday of each month.)

There are different ways to calculate how old our babies are in "human years." As a rule of thumb, our dogs and cats are usually considered geriatric after the age of seven. However, with dogs, the larger breeds age faster and, sadly, live shorter lives. This means that, for example, a Great Dane usually has a shorter life than a Chihuahua. Nevertheless, I have seen bigger dogs that have lived long and amazing lives, so do not let this make you feel sad if you have a bigger boy or girl.

The most basic things that apply to our health as humans as we mature also apply to our furry kids. Regular exercise and weight management are very important throughout our lives, but even more so when we get into our later years. Most of our babies may not tolerate the same amount of exercise, but you can break down exercise into smaller, more frequent sessions. Also make sure that you are feeding them a healthy diet meant for geriatric dogs or cats.

One important reason to keep our dogs and cats at a healthy, slender weight is to avoid putting so much work on their joints. It is extremely common for dogs and cats to develop arthritis, and it will affect their lifestyles. Consider getting orthopedic beds for your babies and also area rugs or runners that will help them keep traction around your home. Slippery surfaces are horrible for our babies when they have arthritis, especially when their muscles are not as strong as they used to be.

You may also consider starting them on high quality joint supplements. Keep in mind that there are PLENTY of joint supplement brands, but only a handful are actually worth it. Lastly, there are medications that can truly help dogs and cats with joint issues that are in desperate need of comfort. Please consult



WOOF

Dr. Josh Talks Animals

can also see dental disease, liver disease, kidney disease, skin issues, thyroid disease, and — as much as we hate saying it — different types of cancer as well. It is vital for us to closely monitor our babies for any changes in their behavior, appetite, water intake, urination, defecation and breathing, among others.

It is also important to thoroughly check our babies at least once or twice monthly for the presence of any obvious lumps throughout their bodies. There are masses and certain types of cancers that may not be visible, but a physical exam and a consultation with your veterinarian, along with a detailed history of what you may be seeing at home, will help in identifying what may be happening to your loved one.

As a doctor, I recommend a full physical examination for your baby with the veterinarian at least every six months, along with lab work that includes analysis of blood, fecal and urine samples. Sometimes it is also recommended to consider chest (and even belly) radiographs, as these can give us quite a few details about the overall health of your baby.

Needless to say, it is vital for us as medical professionals to be aware that cookie cutter medicine does not apply to everyone! That is why it is vital to have a good conversation with pet parents and establish goals and expectations, based on a conversation about what is best for our babies and what is feasible for us as parents.

I hope this column has not made you sad, because I know none of us want to see our babies grow old. My goal here is to give you the tools to give your babies the best life they can have at such a crucial stage of their lives. As always, thank you for reading my column and I am sending you a virtual abrazo!

Dr. Josh owns Isla Veterinary Boutique Hospital at 14380 Marsh Ln. Ste. 110 Addison, next to Tom Thumb. Call them at 972-738-1111 or visit online at IslaVet.com.

with your veterinarian in order to determine the ideal approach for your baby.

Arthritis is not the only condition that we see with our geriatric kids. We



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LGBTQ North Texans of the Year

From left, Adam Medrano with Mayor Eric Johnson and Omar Narvaez with Mayor Eric Johnson at the two councilmembers' inauguration; Narvaez, Medrano and Councilman Chad West unveil Dallas' Pride flag. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

For their leadership through the pandemic, demonstrations and more, Dallas Voice honors Adam Medrano and Omar Narvaez

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano and Councilman Omar Narvaez have shown leadership throughout the pandemic, worked to protect Dallas residents through the Black Lives Matter demonstrations and showed creativity to make the lives of the LGBTQ community in North Texas better during a terrible year.

First some fun and creativity: Thanks to Medrano, the city of Dallas has its own Pride flag that will fly over Dallas City Hall each year during Pride Month. Medrano had Tracy Nanthavongsa design the flag — the city seal over a rainbow flag — and unveiled it at a socially-distanced ceremony in June at City Hall Plaza.

For the rest of the month it flew alongside a U.S. flag and a Texas flag in place

of the city's regular flag. And thanks to a council vote spearheaded by Medrano, Narvaez and out Councilman Chad West, the Pride flag will fly over Dallas City Hall each Pride month in the future.

Medrano, now in his final term, has headed the Mayor's LGBT Task Force through his years on the council. Portia Cantrell, a member of the Task Force, said having our own flag "means we're not invisible. I was invisible in this city until I joined Team Medrano."

Cantrell said Medrano earned his promotion at the beginning of this term from deputy mayor pro tem to mayor pro tem because he gets things done.

Bond money was set aside to improve the streetscape of the entertainment district along Cedar Springs Road before Medrano came into office. The community went round and round about what upgrades were wanted and needed, plans flew back and forth for years. When Medrano joined the council, he was determined to get the project completed before he is term-limited out of office this coming June.

Now, markers stand at Oak Lawn Avenue and at Douglas Avenue. Upgraded sidewalks and a new traffic light have been installed at the dangerous intersection of Cedar Springs and Knight Street. Still to come are some landscaping and, at Knight Street, two art panels.

Every gayborhood in cities across the country now have rainbow crosswalks,

including Oak Lawn in Dallas. But that's not an improvement that can be funded by bond money, because crosswalks don't last the average of 20 years required for bond funding.

Not to be denied though, Medrano worked with the North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce and former City Councilman Chris Luna to raise the money needed. And Medrano made sure the rainbow crosswalks were included in the streetscape. And while other cities have one crosswalk or a box of four at a major intersection, Medrano announced Dallas would have 10 rainbow crosswalks.

This year, of course, will be remembered as the year of the COVID pandemic. Narvaez said when the pandemic first hit, he was sleeping only about three to four hours a night and up working the rest of the time, seven days a week.

Medrano and Narvaez ran virtual COVID-related town halls. Narvaez said while he'd never had more than 100 people attend his in-person town halls, for his first online meeting, "more than 1,000 people joined our call."

The two councilmen thoughtfully put together a program that was professionally moderated and included a Spanish language line along with the English line to reach the more people and get out the latest information on the quickly spreading novel coronavirus.

That's one reason the normally even-tempered Narvaez lost his patience

after Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton intervened in the court case over salon owner Shelley Luther opening her hair salon during the mandatory shut down this spring. Luther had claimed she needed to open her business despite the mandated closure so she could earn money to feed her children.

In an open letter, Narvaez pointed out that it was improper for our "indicted attorney general," as he referred to Paxton, to communicate directly with the court. Narvaez was also angry that poor, minority women who had done something similar were sitting in jail without Paxton's intervention.

Narvaez was furious that Luther raised \$350,000 through a Go-Fund-Me campaign — more than enough to feed her children, only one of whom, a teenager daughter, actually lived with her — while at the same time receiving money through the CARES Act.

And when all Dallas County Judge Eric Moyer asked of Luther in exchange for dismissal of contempt of court charges was an apology and Luther refused, Narvaez was infuriated that Paxton intervened. After all, all Moyer had done was enforce Gov. Greg Abbott's emergency stay-at-home orders.

When a group of Black Lives Matter protesters wound up on the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge (some said they were deliberately herded there and trapped

Where's my community?

Through her corporate rise, Kim Langers noticed a lack of mentoring for LGBT employees

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Kim Langers is COO of Rastegar, a “technology-enabled real estate company specializing in recession-resilient commercial property” and based in Austin. She’s also a lesbian who believes LGBT employees throughout the business world have been held back by a lack of mentors. In her company, she’s out to change that.

In her position, Langers oversees acquisitions, marketing, technology and business strategy, and she coordinates the activities of the asset management and development team. While her corporate profile says she is “also instrumental in fostering the growth of the company and building a team that takes it to the next level,” she is determined that her team shows diversity in observable traits such as race and gender and internal traits like gender identity and sexual orientation.

Langers moved to Texas from California in 2019 and sees her goal of mentoring a diverse workforce in Austin as very attainable because she calls her new home progressive and inclusive. But how does she find the time? She said because it is important, she deliberately sets aside time to work with her team. And, she said, when she teaches them to share common goals, they make their goals together.

Langers said she gives her team members the opportunity to grow in their own job as well as opportunities to gain experience outside their current area. “Someone might start in property man-



Kim Langers

agement but want to become a financial analyst,” she explained. So she helps provide them with those opportunities for personal growth with training on topics that interest them. She said her company has opportunities in underwriting and acquisitions.

If a team member shows willingness to learn, Langers said, her goal is simply to give them the tools they need. “I’ll guide them and give them opportunity,” she said.

Throughout her career, Langers said she has seen young white men being mentored. But “younger women don’t get the same attention to groom them to reach top management,” she said.

COMMUNITY, Next Page

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LGBT TOTY

From Page 6

by police), Medrano was in a police car with Dallas Police Chief Renee Hall, and he heard her give the order that no tear gas was to be used.

But then, Narvaez said, he saw smoke on the bridge. Narvaez, who lives at the foot of the bridge and watched the event unfold, was on the phone with Medrano through the demonstration. Hall assured Medrano that police were using smoke, not tear gas.

"I took it very personally," Narvaez said. "That was in my district. On my watch."

Narvaez and Medrano along with Councilman Adam Bazaldua spent the rest of the evening getting the hundreds of people who were arrested and cited released — including a team reporting for Dallas Voice, who were among those taken into custody.

Narvaez said there was something he didn't trust about the official report that claimed the tear gas used was deployed before the chief gave her order. He was the first city councilman to say, "I lost trust in the chief." Others on the council soon followed.

When Hall turned in her resignation several months later, she didn't give a reason for her resignation, but loss of trust among city leadership played a role. Narvaez said he disagreed with the city manager's request that Hall stay on through the end of the year because "her heart is not in the job."

He also said others within the department could be leading during the national search for a new chief. Either way,

Narvaez doesn't expect the new chief to be appointed until after the New Year, and Hall will be gone at the end of this year.

And ever since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Dallas has taken in hurricane evacuees from South Texas and Louisiana ever more regularly. This year was a record year for hurricanes, and on multiple occasions, Dallas sheltered storm victims.

The difference between this year and others? This time it was during a pandemic.

Although their hurricane relief efforts hardly hit the news, Narvaez and Medrano were at the center of caring for evacuees. When one storm hit just days before school was starting, Narvaez said he and Medrano were busy enrolling kids in school.

"Even if it was just going to be for a week or two, those kids deserved to be in school," Narvaez said. And during a pandemic, that meant equipping them with iPads and making sure wifi hotspots were installed.

Because of how they helped lead the LGBTQ community and the city of Dallas through this year's pandemic, stood up for citizens during the BLM demonstrations and worked to upgrade and improve our community, we name Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano and Councilman Omar Narvaez our LGBTQ North Texans of the year.



COMMUNITY

From Previous Page

Women with a certain, more corporate look" will get attention in their 40s and 50s and may eventually be promoted. But by that time, they have fewer work years left and are less likely to reach the top of the corporate ladder.

And, Langers added, she hasn't seen many LGBTQ people climbing the corporate ladder either. "Where is my community?" she said she asked herself. As an LGBTQ person in the corporate world, "You don't see yourself."

In her case, Langers took it upon herself to gain the experience she needed to move steadily upward in terms of the positions she held with Herbalife Nutrition, Coca-Cola and Merle Norman Cosmetics.

"I wanted to be an executive," she said, adding that she knew to do that, "I'd have to work hard, dedicate myself to my career."

And, she said, she knew she needed to seek out a mentor. So she found someone who identified her talents.

Langers believes it's important to be open about who you are at work so you can bring your whole self to work. She said the best way to do that is through informal conversations.

"Those moments are your opportunity," she said.

When someone asks about a partner or spouse and misgenders them, she suggested simply noting, "'No, I have a girlfriend,' or 'I have a wife.'"

But just being out at work isn't true diversity; diversity is something you have to be able to see, Langers said. "As a leader," she added, "I have to be authentic."

Leading isn't about authority, Langers continued. It's about influence and trust.

If you're not out, you're not a leader because you're not honest, she said.

In her first job, she said, she was scared of the unknown, and in her quest to always be better at her job and always have the answers, she tended to "overcompensate for my sexuality." That overcompensation grew out of a sense of insecurity and fear.

And she did get called out when she was young — but not for flaunting her sexuality; she was called out for hiding who she was. "They wanted me to take a risk," Langers said.

When she was the only one in the room, doing things a little differently — usually the only woman, almost certainly the only lesbian — she received criticism, Langers acknowledged. But she took the criticism as constructive, using it to grow and learn to open up about herself. She took being different from the straight white men in the room as a challenge.

"I made it better the next time," she said.

Women are more detail oriented and organized, Langers said, and she used that to her advantage. LGBTQ people often may be more creative, and she used that to her advantage, too. She'd take the extra training offered and work harder and has been rewarded for her efforts.

Now Langers is passing on the lessons she has learned by mentoring her team. And, she added, encouraging people to be themselves brings more creative and diverse solutions to business and is resulting in some of the biggest growth her company has seen, despite the stresses of working through a pandemic.



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Obergefell and the demise of ‘freedom’

In 2015, the Supreme Court’s *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision changed my life. That decision meant that Michigan had to recognize my legal marriage to my wife and that, as her spouse, I could be covered under her health insurance. I was also able to legally “adopt” my own son.

And it couldn’t have come at a more crucial time for my family, seeing as I had breast cancer at the time. I’d had surgery on my 37th birthday in April, and in June, when the *Obergefell* decision was issued, I was getting chemo. And it sucked. Do not recommend. All thumbs down. (Except for the saving my life part: Worth it.)

So, while my family was celebrating — I mean, as much as we could celebrate considering that I was kind of a downer at the time — one thing I neglected to ask myself was, “How does Justice Samuel Alito feel about all of this?”

Well, it turns out the answer is: Not great. I mean, considering that he was one of the four justices who dissented, that’s not really a surprise.

In his dissenting opinion, Alito wrote that marriage was “inextricably linked” to making babies and that the decision would “be used to vilify Americans” who didn’t support marriage equality.

On Nov. 12 this year, during his keynote address at the 2020 Federalist Society National Lawyers Convention (which was held virtually even though conservatives don’t even believe in the novel coronavirus because it is proof of their oppression) Alito made clear that he is. Not. Over. It.

The Federalist Society is, of course, an ultra-conservative group of attorneys from which Trump has plucked many of his judgeship appointees. They no likey the gays.

Alito told the group that “religious liberty is fast becoming a disfavored right” in America. That is completely divorced from reality. Then again, “religious liberty” doesn’t mean religious freedom, because that would include



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

Muslims and stuff, and the Federalist Society is not down with that.

No, instead religious liberty means white Christian domi-

nance and unfettered power to discriminate.

Is he mad about good Christians like the folks at Masterpiece Cakeshop being forced to make wedding cakes for gays? You betcha. Not only, Alito pointed out, did the couple in the *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* lawsuit get a free cake out of the whole thing — from another bakery — but “celebrity chefs have jumped to the couple’s defense.”

Whew! What a relief for every LGBTQ couple seeking cake. Apparently they get it for free! Free cake for gays from celebrity chefs! Why am I just now hearing about this?!

Clearly anti-equality folks are fueled by jealousy because FREE CAKE!

Obviously straight people are going to pretend to be gay now just for the cake. And who could blame them?

Alito goes on to point out that “until very recently” the “majority of Americans” thought that marriage was a union between a man and a woman. But now that’s “considered bigotry.”

This is true and is strictly enforced by Antifa.

“That this would happen after our decision in *Obergefell* should not have come as a surprise,” Alito said.

He saw it coming all along, of course, and he points to what he wrote in his dissenting opinion at the time: “I assume that those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in

the recesses of their homes. But if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers and schools.”

In other words, no one will be able to speak about one-man-one-woman marriage ever again in public. People clinging to this idea will end up committed not to a person of the opposite sex but to insane asylums. They’ll all be living out their own real-life version of “The Yellow Wallpaper.” (It’s a short story; read it. I can’t explain everything to you.)

Then Alito says, “That is just what is coming to pass.”

I just checked, and it looks like governments, employers and schools still allow heterosexuals within their halls, in their employ and in their classrooms. The memo must not have been widely distributed. You know what they say: Change takes time.

Then again, there are fewer weddings happening at the moment ...

Oh my God! I just realized that the reason there have been fewer weddings isn’t because of COVID-19. It’s because of the gays! What have we done?! Will we never be happy until heterosexuality is destroyed? Is that what it all boils down to?

If only I would have known that my family’s legal recognition and the safety and security that has brought us would hurt so very many people. “*Obergefell!*” I yell, shaking my fists at the sky.

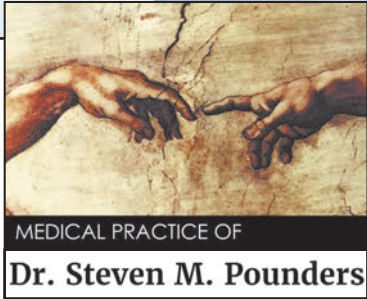
“One of the great challenges for the Supreme Court going forward will be to protect freedom of speech,” Alito told his Federalist audience.

It turns out that freedom, just like everything else on the internet, is actually cake. Grab your free slice before Alito and the conservative majority on the Supreme Court take it away.

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



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A gem of a park sits in the Arbuckle Mountains just north of North Texas

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

There's just something enthralling about waterfalls. Rivers may be wider, deeper, longer. But there's just something dramatic about water rushing toward that precipice and falling.

Turner Falls is less than two hours north of Dallas and is the most dramatic waterfall in the area.

Niagara Falls is wider — so wide, in fact, that the Niagara River splits and falls in two countries as the New York Falls and the Canadian Falls. But the best view of either falls is from the Canadian side, and Canada doesn't want us visiting right now.

Angel Falls is higher. That Venezuelan waterfall plunges more than 2,600 feet and is the world's highest uninterrupted waterfall. Getting there is problematic.

Turner Falls, in Davis, Okla., however, is right off I-35 in the middle of the Arbuckle Mountains, making it the perfect day trip.

While not as mighty as some of the world's highest or widest waterfalls, Turner Falls is impressive on its own terms. The clear, emerald green water tumbles 77 feet in what's known as a fan-type falls. That means that rather

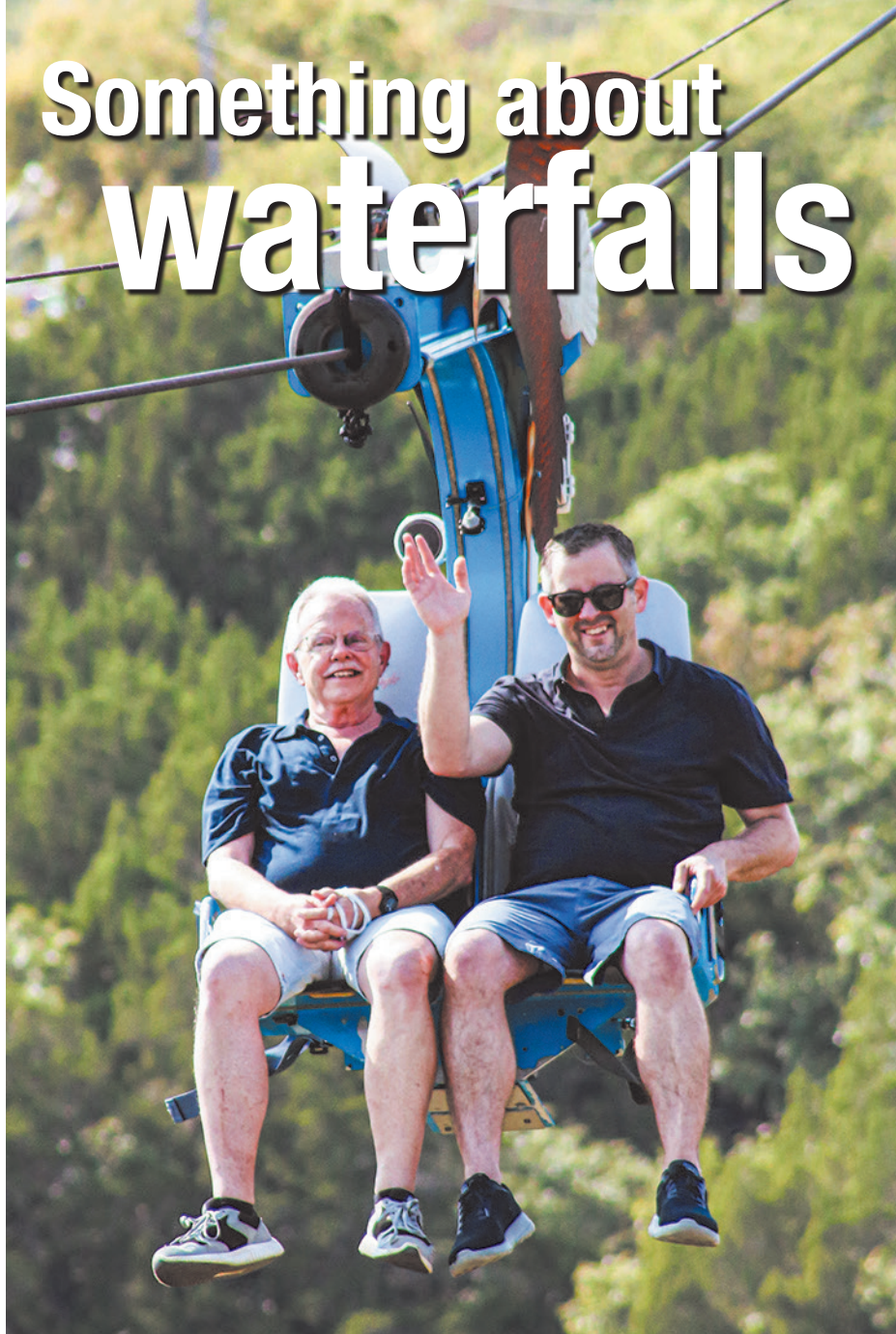
than hit the cliff as a single chute of water, it spreads out across the rocks above and, in this case, descends as four

separate streams. Turner Falls was discovered in 1878 and named after the man who settled in the area and discovered it. The nearby city of Davis acquired the area in 1919 and turned it into a city park. In 1950, Davis leased the park out but then re-acquired the property and has operated it again since 1978.

The falls empties into a pool that flows out into a stream. Although I was there in October, people were still swimming in the stream. And the stream flows over the road that leads to the parking lot closest to the falls.

Park in the first lot inside the park if you don't want to drive through running water. Foot bridges cross above the stream that runs through the park, and a horse-drawn carriage offers another way to cross the flooded roadway without your car.

Something about waterfalls



And while at Turner Falls, don't miss the castle. Climb up a steep flight of steps to the stone structure built in the early 1930s by a professor at "Oklahoma University," according to a sign — presumably today's University of Oklahoma in Norman. The castle was his summer home.

The architecture style is based on that of old English castles with turrets, winding staircases, low ceilings, parapets and outdoor stairs that lead to higher levels and additional rooms. We took an hour to climb stairs and explore the mountainside that the castle is built into.

In addition to viewing Turner Falls from the base, one of the best views is from outside the park at 777Zip on Highway 77 just before the park entrance. From there, you can see Honey Creek as it flows to the precipice and tumbles over the rocks into the pool below. Get a great panoramic view of the area right from the parking lot.

And for those who love heights — and I don't — take the 777Zip zip line across the canyon and over Turner Falls Park. This is not the usual zip line that requires some strength and daring. Here, riders are strapped into a seat that zips 1,444 feet across.

777Zip is open Thursday to Monday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and costs \$15 for a single rider and \$25 for two. A single rider must weigh less than 300 pounds and two riders no more than 450 pounds combined.

Reservations aren't available. And leave cameras, wallets, phones and anything else that can fall out of your pockets in the car. If you don't have someone to take your picture soaring toward the opposite mountain, a video and pictures are automatically taken, Six Flags-style, and are available for purchase at the gift shop or later online.

Turner Falls Park is open 6 a.m.-midnight. Tickets are \$16 during the summer and \$6 from October through April. Online tickets are available and ensure entry, especially around holidays when the park hits maximum capacity, but advance tickets are not normally necessary.

Overnight camping and cabins are available. Reservations are required.

From Dallas or Fort Worth, take I-35 north to exit 47 in Davis. Make a left on Highway 77, go about 4 miles, following the signs, make a sharp left into the park.



One sexy roadster

Faster acceleration, better handling and better tech than any previous Corvette

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
autocasey@aol.com

I was getting out of the car at my hair stylist's place when she walked out and screamed, "You have got to be kidding me!" She thought I was driving a Ferrari.

I said, "What? It's the new Corvette!"

She took a long walk around, looked at me and said, "Yeah, I can see that."

And, that's the beauty of the 2020 Corvette Convertible.

Its exotic looks derive from the engine's change of latitude from the nose to behind the seats — a move to enhance handling and acceleration, but



which also freed designers to change the car's proportions. The pointy nose, flared fenders and angled LED headlamps give the car a Corvette face while black accents imbue a sinister aura.

From the side, the optional black roof over Torch Red paint hints at the Ferrari LaFerrari, but the rear haunches, quad tail lamps and flying buttress rear roof bring us back to Chevrolet. Fenders are filled with 19/20-inch wheels front/rear.

Convertibles trade the coupe's fastback with engine window for a flat deck. That's to enable a feature no Corvette has ever flaunted: a folding hardtop. Press a button on the door to watch windows retract, the deck lid open and the roof bend itself into a space above the engine. It's quite a maneuver that gives the car a suave look with the sail

panels still in place.

I'd prefer the removable targa panel of the coupe, but the hardtop gives Corvette enthusiasts a new option with considerable convenience.

Top up or down, the cabin welcomes a couple to a high-tech command center with a reconfigurable flatscreen instrument cluster, squircle steering wheel and intuitive infotainment touchscreen. Climate controls are housed atop a thin panel running from dash to console. Tech includes a 10-speaker Bose audio system, Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and 4G Wi-Fi hotspot.

Seeing out was bound to be more difficult with an engine in the way, but a rearview camera mirror, rear parking sensors, crosspath detection and blind zone alert alleviate any concerns.

Mid-engine cars tend to have cramped interiors and minimal luggage space, but the Corvette has wide footwells and nearly as much cargo volume — split front/rear — as the previous generation. A golf bag fits in the trunk while roller bags occupy the frunk. I wish our car had a higher trim package

with heads-up display and heated seats, but the entry-level Bose audio system still sounded fantastic.

Performance is spectacular. The 6.2-liter V8 delivers 495 horsepower and 470 lb.-ft. of torque — all sent to the rear wheels through an eight-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission. There's no manual option, so flip the paddles if you wish to control shifts.

Fully kicked, the car runs 0-60 mph in under 3 seconds and reaches near 200 mph on a track. Fuel economy rates an efficient 15/27-MPG city/highway.

The new Corvette Convertible is a car enthusiasts will recognize, but also one that younger, more fashionable drivers with eyes towards Europe will desire. It accelerates faster, handles better and adds technology no Corvette ever enjoyed before.

It's also surprisingly affordable. A base coupe starts at \$58,900, but rises to \$70,380 for our open-top fantasy. Competitors include the Porsche Boxster, Mercedes-AMG GT, Jaguar F-Type and Ferrari 488.

Storm Forward! ■

Send comments to Casey at AutoCasey@aol.com; follow him on YouTube @AutoCasey

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Love and repo

***The Big Tow: An Unlikely Romance* by Ann McMan (c.2020, Bywater Books); \$17.95, 340 pages.**

Two wheels hooked. That was your vehicle: Two wheels on the ground, the other two in the air, safely attached to a bar hooked on both ends to a big truck. Oh, how you hate shredded tires, check-engine lights, busted radiators, dead batteries and the guy with the rig. But in the new book *The Big Tow* by Ann McMan, a wired starter isn't the only thing that's hot.

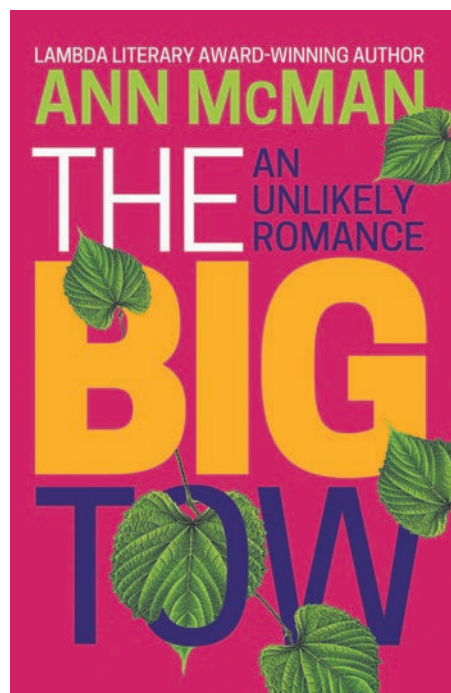
Vera "Nick" Nicholson had put in her time. After six years at Turner, Witherspoon, Anders and Tyler, Attorneys at Law, Nick thought she might've achieved partner. But no. Instead, because she was the firm's only "brown" employee, and because senior partners figured "floor-scraping assignments" would be "second nature" to her, that's what she got — like, for instance, the latest case: a stolen car.

Nick didn't know jack about stolen cars. She had no contacts there in North Carolina to ask for help. And that's how she ended up at National Recovery Bureau, a back-lot repo business run by a chain-smoking, no-nonsense older woman with zero patience and a guy named Fast Eddie.

For \$500, they helped Nick find the car. When Fast Eddie enticed her with 10Gs in cash for "profit sharing," that was a big surprise. So was the offer of a part-time job from NRB. And so was the co-worker NRB assigned to Nick, a gorgeous blonde named Frankie. She had a killer body and enough imagination to figure out how to complete the toughest cases.

Meanwhile, Nick used her imagination to think about Frankie's killer body.

Despite the danger and the hassle, working for NRB did have its benefits; the money was great, and the company was even better. And Nick cautiously



allowed herself to fall in love. She and Frankie were becoming more than just partners at work; They were a couple that happened to work together, and they did a good job.

But there was something off about Fast Eddie . . .

Despite that it leans a bit toward wordiness and could have used may-

be one less caper, *The Big Tow* is a true delight — but not for the reasons you might think.

Author Ann McMan's two main characters are certainly likable: Nick is one of those people you want in your corner, and Frankie seems like someone you'd have drinks with.

The real appeal of this book, though, lies in the world surrounding these two. The dispatcher at NRB and Nick's gay roommate are spit-out-your-coffee funny, and you must read this book to learn who Carol Jenkins is. There are dotty mothers, wise fathers, a goth girl at a funeral home and a Yoda-type butcher who speaks in hints. Though he's really basically a caricature, even Fast Eddie is someone you'll look for as you're reading this book.

This is the kind of story that, if it happened to you, you'd get plenty of mileage out of it at your next party. It's got romance, action, humor and theft — how can you go wrong? Start *The Big Tow* and you'll be hooked.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer



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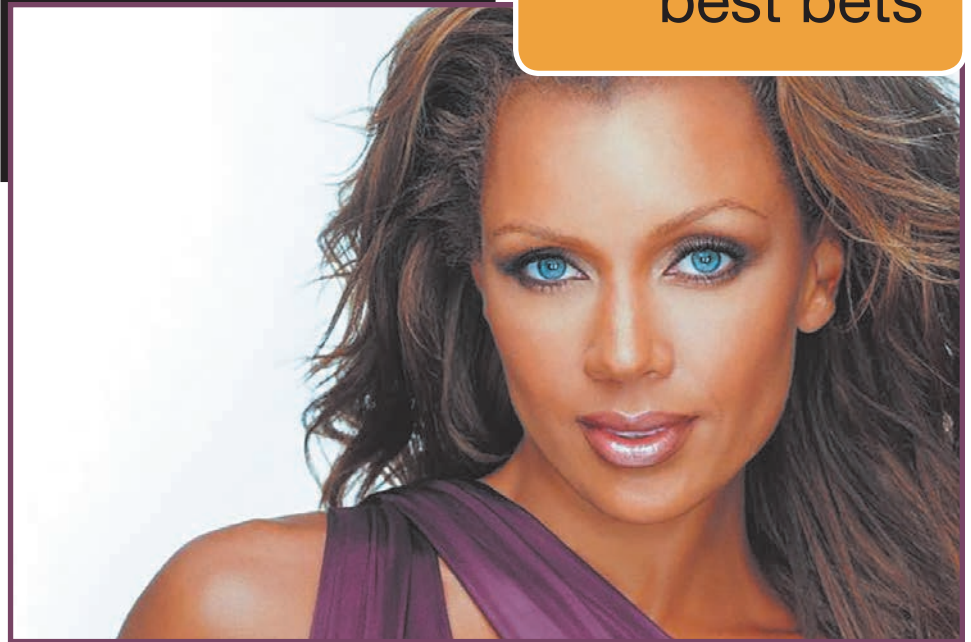


FRI 12.04

Say amen and get ready to get your holiday jolly on when Uptown Players presents Sister Helen Holy's Holiday Streaming Spectacular starring Paul J. Williams as his altar ego Sister Helen and an all-star cast DFW favorites singing dancing their way through a rousing repertoire of songs and scripture sure to brighten up the season. You also get a look at some of the items up for grabs in Uptown's silent auction. *Available for streaming Dec. 4-20; tickets are \$20-30, available online at UptownPlayers.org or by phone at 214-219-2718.*

SAT 12.05

The queens of the Rose Room are back by popular demand for another round in TITAS Does Drag II: The Rose Room on Tour. After October's sold-out performance in Strauss Square, TITAS Unfiltered couldn't wait to get the girls back again for a show featuring emcee Cassie Nova, Chevelle Brooks, Fantasha, Jenna Skyy, Kelexis Davenport, Kennedy Davenport, Krystal Summers, Layla LaRue and Sasha Andrews. *Saturday, Dec. 5, 8 p.m. at Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St.; tickets start at \$39, available at ATTPAC.org.*



SAT 12.05

Vanessa Williams performs live from New York's Shubert Virtual studios in a cabaret-style concert being streamed live by Dallas Summer Musicals on Saturday. The show will offer a mix of Broadway show tunes and pop songs peppered by personal stories from Williams' life, and the at-home audience will be able to email questions that she will answer during the show. *Saturday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$30, available at DallasSummerMusicals.org. This concert is part of the three-show Women of Broadway series also featuring Patti LuPone and Laura Benanti; get all 3 shows for \$75, and save \$15.*



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Deep Inside Hollywood

By Romeo San Vicente

The queer Christmas movies are heating up

We told you about the Kristen Stewart/Mackenzie Davis holiday rom-com *Happiest Season* (dropping on Hulu as we speak); and how the two big cable holiday movie factories — Hallmark and Lifetime — are also offering *The Christmas House* and *The Christmas Setup*, respectively. But now, out of the blue, comes *Dashing in December* from Paramount, starring Peter Porte (*The Young and the Restless*) and Juan Pablo Di Pace (*Fuller House*, but gays are really going to remember him best as the Aerobics Class Guy in Eric Prydz “Call On Me” video).

Like all holiday TV movies, the premise is simple: Two men meet on a ranch in the Midwest as Christmas approaches, and one of them tries to convince ranch owner Andie MacDowell to sell the property. Short version: The holidays and rugged rural hot dudes = gingerbread-based romance and a happily ever after.

It drops on the Paramount Network Dec. 13. Get that boozy cocoa ready for the Zoom watch party.

Charmed reboot adds transgender actor J.J. Hawkins for Season 3

One of the more heartening developments in scripted narrative TV in the past few years has been the mini-wave of transgender and non-binary actors being cast in shows as both trans and cis characters. It's just starting but the ranks keep growing. And now you can add newcomer J.J. Hawkins to that mix.

Hawkins, a gender-nonconforming trans-masculine actor, is joining the cast of the *Charmed* reboot on the CW network. Entering Season 3 after a 2018 start, the supernatural drama that stars Madeleine Mantock, Melonie Diaz and Sarah Jeffery will add Hawkins to the mix, where they'll be the series' first transgender character, a college



J.J. Hawkins

student named Kevin. (Hawkins also uses pronouns he/him interchangeably).

Hawkins' career to this point has been spent playing supporting roles as non-binary characters on series such as *The Red Line* and the CBS legal drama *All Rise*. The new season hits the air Jan. 24 to brighten up your post-holidays malaise.

Falling finds Viggo Mortensen behind the camera

The queer child having to deal with conservative parents is, at this point, a cliché in LGBTQ+ dramas about family conflict, but Viggo Mortensen's new film, *Falling*, will put its own spin on the familiar narrative trope.



Viggo Mortensen

Mortensen writes, directs and stars in the film as the gay son who chooses to care for his aging, conservative father (Lance Henriksen), transplanting Dad from a rural area to a new life in Los Angeles. We're going to assume a sort of mutual understanding develops between these characters, the reconciliation so many queer people long for from reactionary family members.

Ozark star Laura Linney and Hannah Gross (*Tesla*) round out the cast of the heartfelt drama. It premiered in January at the Sundance Film Festival — which now seems like a decade ago — and drops in the UK in December. A U.S. release is forthcoming, probably in the new year, and maybe you'll be able to convince your right-wing parents to watch it. Wouldn't that be nice?

Waiting to Exhale: the TV series

A recent Twitter game: name something that isn't queer, but actually is queer. The usual responses of iced coffee, Carly Rae Jepsen and Selling Sunset were to be expected. But now that we've heard that a *Waiting to Exhale* series is in development at ABC, we'd like to play along.

Naturally Lee Daniels is behind it, because he's seemingly behind everything. And it comes with some excellent behind-the-scenes talent with a pilot from sisters Attica Locke (*When They See Us*) and Tembi Lock (*Never Have I Ever*), and will be directed by Anthony Hemingway (*Genius: Aretha*).

Terry McMillan, who authored the original

book about four women navigating romance and friendship on which the 1995 Loretta Devine-, Whitney Houston-, Lela Rochon-, Angela Bassett-starring film was based, will act as consulting producer.

There's no cast yet, but we have high hopes for this one. Stay tuned.

Romeo San Vicente has never set a bad ex's clothes on fire. He stole them instead.

this week's solution

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58									59					
60					61			62						
63					64						65			
66					67						68			

Solution on Page 18

Across

1 Klinger portrayer on *M*A*S*H*
5 Roman deity related to Diana
9 Watts in King Kong's hand
14 R.E.M.'s "The ____ Love"
15 Genesis man
16 Conversation filler
17 Relief of Lincoln
18 Pt. of PGA
19 Jocks' antitheses
20 Start of a quote by
61-Across about creative risk
23 From ____ Z (the whole shebang)
24 LGBT Money advises about this
28 Has a bottom line of
33 React to gay bashing, perhaps
34 William Tell's canton
35 More of the quote
37 Walks unevenly
40 Jodie Foster's *Panic ____*
41 Brit. word ref
42 Opens, as a barn door
44 Hard woody one
46 What an inflated doll might whisper?

Down

47 Boy in a Johnny Cash song
48 Fir kin
50 End of the quote
54 Tell pests to take this
58 How Nureyev dances
59 Lion, tiger, or bear
60 Prompted on Broadway
61 *Eat, Pray, Love* director
63 Narc's find, maybe
64 They're above tenors
65 Phallic fishes
66 Tommy may shoot it off
67 Simple kind of question
68 Fruit flavor for gin

Down

1 Ellipse's pair
2 From the top
3 City near Tahoe
4 Circumcision, e.g.
5 Bat first, to Glenn Burke
6 USA's Cold War rival
7 It sends no one to Uranus
8 Em and Mame
9 Assyrian capital
10 Ferrera of *Ugly Betty*
11 On top of, to Byron
12 Foaming at the mouth

Down

13 Powers that be
21 Some O.C.S. grads
22 '70s Soap title woman
25 Forbidden acts
26 Taunting remarks
27 Ride them in Aspen
28 Takei, on the Enterprise
29 Sinead O'Connor's country
30 Bird perch
31 Rowers pull them
32 City of Carnival
36 One under a captain
38 Ship in a 1972 Roddy McDowall flick
39 Sound of sucking
43 Hot beverage carrier
45 Reeves of *My Own Private Idaho*
48 Skirt folds
49 Queen's counties
50 Emulates Harper Lee's bird
51 Alaskan language
52 Erection of antiquity
53 "I Dreamed a Dream" singer Susan
55 Force along
56 Frida of self-portraits
57 *Family Ties* mother
59 Schoolyard retort
62 Rimbaud's refusal

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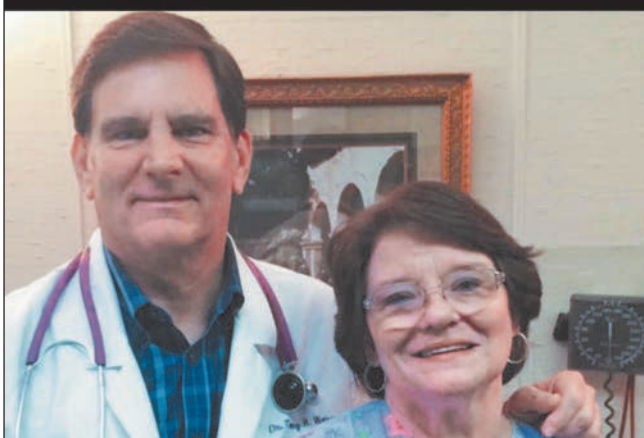
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