

# dallasvoice

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## A place for us as we age

Resource Center making progress  
on senior living facility

by David Taffet, Page 5



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## Biden overturns trans military ban



President Biden, honoring a commitment he made during the 2020 campaign, announced Monday, Jan. 25, that he is reversing the ban on transgender people in the military put in place by the Trump administration.

"This is reinstating a position that previous commanders — as well as the Secretaries — have supported. And what I'm doing is enabling all qualified Americans to serve their country in

uniform, and essentially restoring the situation as it existed before, [so] transgender personnel, if qualified in every other way, can serve their government in the United States military," Biden said.

"President Biden believes that gender identity should not be a bar to military service and that America's strength is found in its diversity," a statement from the White House Press Secretary's Office said. "Allowing all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform is better for the military and better for the country because an inclusive force is a more effective force. Simply put, it's the right thing to do and is in our national interest."

— Tammye Nash

## Aetna agrees to expand transition surgery coverage

Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund and Cohen Millstein Sellers & Toll, a national civil rights law firm, this week announced a deal with health insurance provider Aetna to expand the insurance carrier's medical coverage of transition-related care for transgender women.

On its website, Aetna announced it had "expanded coverage of gender-affirming surgery to include breast augmentation for transfeminine members of most of its commercial plans" and included the caveat, "subject to plan terms but

other requirements."

Aetna describes the announcement as "a collaboration between Aetna, TLDEF, Cohen Milstein and several transgender beneficiaries." The company wrote in its press release that four trans women "brought access-to-care issues to Aetna's attention after being denied coverage for breast augmentation as part of their gender-affirming treatment."

Brought those issues to the company's attention? Threatened a lawsuit? Both sides are

being much more polite than that. Aetna thanks the attorneys for being so collaborative and TLDEF thanks Aetna for updating its policies.

While all sides are talking about expanded access to breast augmentation for trans women as part of Aetna's coverage, we'll see if Aetna comes up with "other requirements" to deny coverage. Oh, wait. An insurance company would never do that. They only want what's best for their clients.

— David Taffet

## pet of the week / RUBY



Meet **Ruby**, a 6-and-a-half-year-old terrier mix. She's a sweet and loving pup with a big heart who has experienced living in a home and has quite a few skills on her resume, including sit, stay, come, down and fetch. Ruby is crate trained and house trained and rides well in the car. This affectionate dog absolutely loves kids of all

ages and was an attentive and gentle big sister to an infant in her previous home. Ruby gets along fantastically with cats and loves to snuggle up with them on cold nights. Ruby would prefer to be the only dog in the home as play time can get overwhelming for her, but she's friendly to other dogs passing by on her walks. Ruby loves when her human friends dress her up in cute outfits so she can pose for photos, and her goofy personality is hard not to fall in love with. Ruby is ready to protect your home from pesky squirrels and take over your favorite spot on the couch for her own. If you're looking for a great, feline-friendly family dog, Ruby would make a wonderful addition to your home. Ruby is spayed and up-to-date on all vaccinations. To make an appointment to meet Ruby, please visit [spca.org/dogadopt](http://spca.org/dogadopt).

Adoptions are available by appointment. Adopters will need to submit an adoption inquiry form in order to begin the adoption process and schedule an appointment to complete the adoption. Please browse our available animals at [SPCA.org/FindAPet](http://SPCA.org/FindAPet) and visit [SPCA.org/DogAdopt](http://SPCA.org/DogAdopt) to inquire about a dog or [SPCA.org/CatAdopt](http://SPCA.org/CatAdopt) to inquire about a cat.



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# Resource Center plans senior housing

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
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**R**esource Center has purchased property near Inwood Road and Denton Drive Cutoff in Oak Lawn to build an 84-unit senior independent living complex. The project will cost an estimated \$23 million.

The center has begun a \$4 million capital campaign to fund the facility and more than \$1 million of that has already been raised. Resource Center CEO Cece Cox explained that \$750,000 came as a grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank and Veritex Bank in Dallas.

Other money has been raised from individual donors. That includes 100 percent participation of the center's board.

Additional money for the project will come in the form of low income housing tax credits, city participation, a mortgage serviced through rental payments and more.

The project grew out of a growing awareness of the need for such a facility. In Dallas, there's already a 20,000-unit shortage of affordable homes and apartments. In Oak Lawn, so much of what was affordable has been torn down and replaced with so-called luxury apartments.

According to statistics provided by Resource Center, North Texas is home to 13,246 LGBTQ seniors, and that number is expected to double in the next 10 years and triple by 2050. Coalition for Aging LGBT, a North Texas-based senior housing organization, found in a survey that

the biggest need for LGBTQ seniors is affordable transitional housing with appropriate, respectful care.

Lambda Legal is participating in a number of lawsuits involving LGBTQ seniors who have endured bullying or neglectful care because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Many LGBTQ seniors report going back into the closet for safety when they enter senior independent, assisted or full care facilities. That becomes more difficult for people who were never in the closet as a post-Stonewall generation approaches old age.

Dallas won't be the first city to build senior LGBTQ housing. Cox said plans are based on what she has seen at eight other properties in six cities around the country.

Some details are small. Showers are designed as walk-ins so residents don't have to step up and over. Other bathroom safety features will be built in.

The building will include community space; green space on the property overlooks a creek. And some Resource Center staff will be based at the complex to provide appropriate activities for residents.

Cox noted the amenities near the property: A DART station is across the street, and the back of the property adjoins the back of the Dallas Eagle. And the community center is just blocks away.

While Cox acknowledged not all LGBTQ people in Dallas live in Oak Lawn, she said it was important to her that this project be built in Oak Lawn to honor the historic importance the area has to the community. She said center officials were very lucky to find that parcel of land so close to the community center

at an affordable price.

But she certainly isn't limiting future projects to the area.

"We aren't doing this project by ourselves," Cox continued. Resource Center is partnering with local developer Matthews Southwest and the national Volunteers of America, one of the nation's largest nonprofit providers of quality, affordable housing. Angela King, who is married to the Rev. Carol West, former longtime pastor of Celebration Community Church in Fort Worth, is president and CEO of Volunteers of America Texas. "We approached them with the project, and they quickly said yes — they believe in it and in improving our city," Cox said of the center's partners in this project.

Some of Matthews Southwest's local projects are Southside on Lamar, the Alamo Drafthouse and Canvas Hotel in The Cedars, the Dallas High School renovation into office and retail space and the Omni Dallas downtown. The Galbraith, a 217-unit mixed-income project that will include 51 percent affordable housing adjacent to Dallas High School, is currently under construction, and Matthews Southwest is developing the project with VoA. That project should be open this fall.

Rent in the senior living facility will be based on income, and most residents at properties like this around the country are on fixed incomes or supplement their incomes with part-time jobs. Cox said a formula based on income would fix the rental rate rather than the landlord setting a rate based on market rates.

And just as other properties would be expected not to discriminate, Cox said Resource Center's senior housing won't discriminate. She hopes the project will



Cece Cox

include a diverse population from throughout the LGBTQ community, but she specifically said straight people will be welcome.

Of course, décor can play a role in making sure every resident knows where they are. "Thinking through visuals is important," Cox said.

Cox stressed the property is independent housing, not assisted living. She expects that staff at the complex will partner with assisted living properties that are safe for LGBTQ residents to help guide them when necessary.

Resource Center must raise another \$3 million by June 2022 when it plans to break ground. The property would open about a year later.

To request an informational meeting about contributing, please contact Keller Fields at [kfields@myresourcecenter.org](mailto:kfields@myresourcecenter.org), call 214-521-5124 or visit [MyResourceCenter.org/capital-campaign](http://MyResourceCenter.org/capital-campaign).



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# Dressing for SUCCESS

For LGBTQ students and parents, dress codes are only part of the concern

AUBREE CALVIN | Contributing Writer  
aubreecalvin@gmail.com

Just two-and-half hours west of Fort Worth is Clyde Consolidated Independent School District, where, in December, gay male student Trevor Wilkinson was suspended for wearing nail polish.

If you drive five hours south of Dallas, you'll come to Louise Independent School District where, in October, trans student Sanae Martinez was banned from school for dressing according to her gender identity rather than the sex she was assigned at birth.

Both students were accused of violating their school's gendered dress codes, policies that the American Civil Liberties Union and other Texas interest groups call unconstitutional. Students across the DFW Metroplex report similar stories to Wilkinson and Martinez, but because they handled it privately through meetings with teachers and principals instead of taking their stories to social media, these stories have been largely unnoticed.

A review of the school districts in Collin, Dallas, Denton and Tarrant Counties reveal a mixed bag of rules that can make it difficult for LGBTQ students to freely express themselves. Survey data from GLSEN (formerly known as the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network) showed that 70 percent of Texas LGBTQ students report some type of school harassment or discrimination. Discussions with local parents and LGBTQ students reveal similar difficulties navigating many DFW schools.

After I put out a call in a few DFW-area LGBTQ groups on Facebook, several parents and students contacted me to share their stories. To maintain privacy,

last names or specific school districts of individuals will not be used.

Becca, the mother of a trans student in a Dallas County school, spoke of the push back she received from an elementary school principal when her daughter socially transitioned. The principal in all conversations continued to use male pronouns for her child and continued to enforce the male dress code.

But Becca had done her own research and knew their city's nondiscrimination code covered her daughter. Her push back allowed her daughter to adhere to the female dress code, but the daughter still had issues with being continuously outed by teachers and coaches. Eventually, they transferred to a more welcoming school district.

Nathan, a junior living in Tarrant County, spoke of receiving detention for wearing nail polish to school, even though other aspects of the dress code weren't enforced on other students. What Nathan said was echoed by a few other students who said that dress code rules were arbitrarily enforced depending on the teacher and how well liked the student was in school.

In examining the 55 school districts in four metro counties, the numbers show that 67 percent — or 37 — of them have gender-neutral dress codes listed in their most recent student handbooks or student codes of conduct. Gender-based policies are present in 33 percent — or 18 — school districts. Keep in mind that each individual school district can have numerous schools and serve thousands of students.

## What is a gender-neutral dress code?

What does a gender-neutral dress code look like? It looks like a dress code that does not create separate stipulations for boys and girls related to attire, grooming and makeup. For example, if rules about skirts are listed, there's no indication that it is for girls only and that boys must wear pants. These dress codes outline



Sanae Martinez (Photo from Facebook)

what is and isn't acceptable but don't say who can wear what types of clothing.

A gendered policy is one that stipulates what boys and girls are and aren't allowed to wear and how they are and are not allowed to present themselves. Some common attire-related gendered language includes rules on who can wear skirts and dresses, types of belts that are allowed and acceptable strap size rules for sleeveless shirts.

The grooming policies are typically about male hair length and whether they can wear makeup, nails, and one or two earrings. Additionally, most school districts give school-level administrators the discretion to create additional policies to fit their campuses.

State law and court rulings continue to allow schools to create standardized uniform and dress policies, which, on the surface, is not controversial. But groups like Lambda Legal, the Texas American Federation of Teachers, the ACLU, Equality Texas and GLSEN are calling for these policies to be applied fairly without considering the gender identity of the student. In light of recent federal and state judicial decisions, the current guidance from the Texas Association of

School Board encourages schools to alter their policies to be gender neutral.

Texas does not have a statewide law guaranteeing equal treatment and preventing discrimination, but advocates for school gender equality point to recent decisions by federal judges in Texas and elsewhere that ruled gendered dress codes violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. In August, Judge George Hanks ruled that Barber Hill ISD's gendered dress code was unconstitutional. And public schools must follow Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 which requires, among other things, that schools receiving federal funds may not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender.

The Department of Education has affirmed that such protection includes a student's gender identity and gender expression. Further, the Supreme Court's *Bostock v. Clayton County* decision applies the sex discrimination protections of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to homosexuals and transgender persons.

When Betsy DeVos resigned her post as Secretary of Education on Jan. 8, one of her last acts was issuing an anti-trans-

# A scary good time

'Haunt clown' Jeremy Lucas has found his dream job with 'Paranormal Cirque'

Since it was first founded in Quebec in 1984, Cirque du Soleil — the "Circus of the Sun" — has been awing and amazing audiences around the world with its wide variety of shows featuring high-flying acrobatics and often ethereal storylines. Now, with dozens of shows on its resume, Cirque is offering something, well, a little different: *Paranormal Cirque*.

*Paranormal* is, basically, the Cirque version of a horror show. It is, according to the Cirque website, a show with "breath-taking implications, always poised between fun and the most uninhibited fear, that will transport you to a dark world inhabited by creatures with incredible circus art abilities." It is, the website continues, a "crazy yet fun fusion between circus, theatre, and cabaret in perfect harmony with the evolution of a show that brings you back to when we dream — and when we had nightmares and fantasies."

*Paranormal Cirque* has brought its dark vision to North Texas, running through Feb. 7 at the Stonebrier Centre in Frisco, and the show has brought with it gay cast member Jeremy Lucas. And Lucas sat down this week to talk to Dallas Voice about himself and the latest Cirque show.

— Tammye Nash

**Dallas Voice: Tell me a little bit about your background. How did you get started? What non-Cirque productions have you been part of?** Jeremy Lucas: I've been a haunt actor for 7-plus years now. I started in California as a clown at Knotts Scary Farm. I had never really acted before (outside of getting into characters for Hal-

loween), and I had never been to a haunt before. I had a friend who was obsessed with the haunt world, and he convinced me to audition for a role as a clown.

Apparently, I blew the staff away and they gave me a spot on the streets. They gave me complete creative control over my clown character and let me interact with guests however I felt fit. It was an amazing experience that gave me a new purpose in life.

I've worked at Knotts Scary Farm for four years as a street clown, at Queen Mary Dark Harbor for two years as a maze clown, and at The 17th Door one year as the front guard with a taser. They gave me a literal taser and let me do my thing

**Is this your first Cirque show? If not, what other shows have you been involved in? And how long has Cirque been going?** This is my first official Cirque. I've only worked it for a few weeks, but it's been a long-running dream of mine to travel and entertain people. This one has been going for over three years I believe, and I'm hoping to travel with them for a while.

**How did you get cast in *Paranormal*?**

**What is the process that you go through to be part of this (or any) Cirque show?** The operator of Queen Mary Dark Harbor had shared a hiring post from one of the managers. I buffed up my resume, organized all my videos and applied. Haha! Sorry, I wish it was more exciting than that.

**What is the story of *Paranormal Cirque*?**

**How is *Paranormal* different from other Cirque shows?** *Paranormal Cirque* is a part of Cirque Italia, a company that has multiple traveling circuses to its name. We're currently the only 'Rated R' show in the company.

What sets us apart is we take a dark undertone and have a haunted maze before the show actually begins. I haven't seen a traveling cirque that also has a scary vibe, so all of my dreams (aka your nightmares) take life!

**SCARY**, Next Page



Jeremy Lucas (Photo courtesy Sweet Bear Photography)



## SCARY , From Previous Page

I get to travel to random towns and screw with people. I'm living my dream!

**Tell me about your role, your character in *Paranormal*. I think I read that you are a clown; is that right? What is your part of the story?** So I stand at the front gate before the show begins, interacting with individuals and deciding if they need a good laugh or a good scare. My current outfit doesn't say clown, but my personality definitely does. I have various techniques and characters I bring out in the heat of the moment, each different from the last. I also have a stage segment where I invite guests to come join us on stage for a photo.

My stage presence is different from my barker presence. My barker clown is meant to make people uncomfortable with my presence and put them somewhat on edge. On stage, they're uncomfortable because my jokes suck. I also pose as a psychic couples' counselor and talk people through their "problems" while we take a photo together.

**From your perspective, as an actor, what is it that sets *Cirque* shows apart from other theater?** Pure unadulterated improv for me. I can read every individual that comes in and change my act



accordingly. And the overall presence of all the actors and performers is so awe-inspiring, it is people on the road showcasing their talents; you don't get this kind of entertainment on TV.

**If someone asked you why they should come see this show, rather some other show, what would you tell them?** Well, in my personal — and somewhat biased — opinion, 110 percent see this show. We have a little bit more edge to us from other circuses, so we keep it interesting as possible. Between our interactions and the audience's reactions to the overall show, I'd say it's well produced, and we all definitely have a unique presence that will make you come back.

**What did I not ask you about that you want people to know?** I think everything was pretty much covered. I have a lot of stories though, so if you ever want to hear about the people I've tormented, message me on Instagram, @headsmell-puppys!

*Paranormal Cirque continues through Feb. 7 at Stonebrier Centre in Frisco. Tickets start at \$20. No one under age 13 will be admitted; those ages 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult. For details or to purchase tickets, visit ParanormalCirque.com.*



## SUCCESS , From Page 6

gender policy memorandum stating that the *Bostock* did not apply to education law. It was the last action in her four-year effort to rollback protections for marginalized students.

President Biden has since stated that such policies will be rescinded, and Obama-era civil rights protections will be restored.

Equality focused interest groups have signaled their support for Miguel Cardona, Biden's pick for Secretary of Education. Mr. Cardona has a strong track record of championing equity issues in public schools.

Supportive parents of LGBTQ students say that dress codes and bathrooms are only part of the issue. One mother, Nancy, talked of the difficulty her trans son had trying to audition for male theater roles and having a teacher willing to only cast him in female parts. Nancy and others spoke of the difficulties navigating gendered extracurricular activities related to the arts and sports. This is especially difficult when the student identifies as gender fluid or gender nonconforming.



Trevor Wilkinson (photo via Facebook)

Amber Briggle (who gave explicit permission to use her full name), the mother of a trans son, says that what is needed is statewide legislation to ensure these students are treated fairly in public schools. And she cautioned us to remember that

a student being LGBTQ is just one part of their life; kids have interests in arts, sports, games, music, etc., that are just as big a part of their school and daily lives.

But it takes parents and other adults supporting students' sexual orientation and gender identity for the youth to fully enjoy the other parts of their lives.

I received emails from two students, one gay and one lesbian, saying their schools tried to stop them from bringing a same-sex date to a school dance. By advocating for themselves and showing administration that laws prohibit this discrimination, they were eventually allowed to bring their same-sex dates.

Students today are coming out as LGBTQ at much younger ages than in previous generations. We must have policies in place that protect their 1st Amendment rights to free expression while balancing a school's legitimate interest in ensuring proper student behavior to have a safe and encouraging learning environment and to encourage proper student behavior. But the district-by-district method is not working for students.

What we need are state laws guaranteeing equal treatment and non-discrimination in schools. Written policies protecting LGBTQ students should be the norm rather than parents and students having to advocate for themselves for fair treatment. ■

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## Why school dress codes matter

Like most LGBTQ people that graduated in the '90s, I wasn't out in high school. I had never heard the term "transgender," and outside of many hateful jokes about men in dresses or trans people "tricking" straight men into some romantic encounter (I'm looking at you, Ace Ventura), we were absent in media, especially most teen shows.

I was confused in high school, trying different clothing styles and friend groups to figure out where I fit in. My suburban Oklahoma school had your typical assortment of athletes, goth kids, popular people, and of course, band nerds (my people).

I was also frequently angry and confused — struggling with anxiety, undiagnosed ADHD and gender/sexual orientation-related depression. And, all too often, I regrettably took that out on the few friends I did have. I look back at the bad fashion choices I made, and I'm sure they violated my school's dress code at least a few times.

High school can be hard, and often we carry those insecurities with us into adulthood. Pre-COVID, I actually avoided my 20th high school reunion because another trans woman from my class, who is drop-dead, model-level gorgeous, was going to be there. Now, during COVID, I regret that I missed my chance to reconnect with some old friends.

That's why this generation of kids and teenagers impresses me so much. So many more of them are out and honest about who they are. As adults, it's our job to ensure this young generation of LGBTQ students are safe, protected and supported in a way that we weren't in the 20th century. They shouldn't have to bear the discrimination that so many report facing, especially in a place they're required to attend.

As my tween daughter often reminds me, kids don't have much control over their lives. Adults control where they live, what they wear, what they eat and, ultimately, where they go to school. A little individual expression in a place they are forced to spend 7-8 hours a day isn't a bad thing.

And yes, teachers, administrators,



Aubree Calvin  
Contributing Columnist

and other staff have the difficult jobs of managing classrooms full of kids undergoing continual emotional and physiological changes,

more LGBTQ people want to express themselves in the ways in which they feel most comfortable.

A specific gender presentation can lead to greater self esteem and confidence. But for many Texas LGBTQ students, schools are a place where that expression is stifled by discriminatory policies. My article on student dress codes (see elsewhere in this issue of Dallas Voice) started as two random thoughts. The first was related to the attention Trevor Wilkinson received over his nail polish. The second was a bored dive into the or-



all while teaching subjects that students may or may not care about. As a teacher myself, I'm sympathetic to that.

But we adults chose these professions. We get paid — in the case of K-12 teachers, grossly underpaid — to be there. Students are there by law. We need to be sensitive to this power imbalance when looking at these issues. And we should be careful comparing workplace rules about proper dress with school policies.

So much of queer culture is centered around gender expression and identity. It is present in everyday labels like "femme," "butch" and "gender-fluid" or "gender-nonconforming." There are memes, pins, flags and emojis that we can use to express ourselves. You also see it in the larger media landscape with shows like *POSE*, *Queer Eye* and *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Rather than conforming to traditional heterosexual cultural rules,

igins of the myth of wearing an earring in your left ear to show that you're gay. I still haven't found out where the myth started, but I'm going to keep searching.

Initially, I meant to just write a story on dress code policies and the law. I reached out to hear from parents and students because, halfway through scouring school websites, I realized that written policies only tell part of the story. I know that the most significant interactions in a school day between authority figures and students are guided by subjectivity, reactions to situations and things that aren't written down.

My hope is to expand on this research in the future, but for now, if you want to use it, please reach out to me. ■

Aubree Calvin ([aubreecalvin@gmail.com](mailto:aubreecalvin@gmail.com)) is an assistant professor of government at Tarrant County College and the co-host of the new podcast, *Southern Queeries*.



# Stage woke

Echo Theatre production - *The Lucky Chance* 2013

Echo Theatre reinvents its mission with “women+”

**RICH LOPEZ** | Contributing Writer  
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For more than 20 years, Echo Theatre has produced stage and theater with a focus on women playwrights and creatives. But as times, identities and conversations progressed, the theater company realized it needed to progress as well. Thus, as part of its new initiative, Echo Theatre was inspired to adjust its mission “to champion the diverse voices of women+.”

With a new board of directors and mission and vision, Echo has a whole new outlook.

“We wanted to take a look at ourselves and see if Echo was doing what it is we set out to do,” Artistic Director Kateri Cale said by phone. “Through a lot of self-examination and asking about our place in the arts community and what values are important to us, we knew our mission needed to be

refreshed.”

And so they came up with their inclusive term, “women+,” which expands to include the wider variety of voices they expect to present in the future.

“The old words we were using didn’t seem sufficient, and society has opened up to different ideas of gender and identity,” Cale said.

In short, Echo Theatre is evolving into a space that is open to — and insistent about, even — presenting voices by cis, transgender, lesbian, gender fluid and non-binary individuals, among other identities that are in line with the company’s mission.

The theater was already gearing up in 2019 to shift its future. But then the pandemic happened. Shows had to be put on hold, and everything came to an abrupt halt in 2020. Still, the theater found its own silver lining.

“It was frustrating and awful to see everything shut down, but it was kind of the perfect time to revisit what we were doing and having some quality Zoom discussions,” Cale said. “We

spent hours getting really philosophical and it was wonderful.”

A strong point in the company’s self-reflection was how to act within its own nature but also reach out to holistically support society’s changes.

“This is definitely very exciting for me,” Marketing Director Lauren Floyd said. “Echo can advocate for what we believe in and also now uplift other artists and promote people whose work may have not been supported yet.”

The revamped mission is proving to be an ongoing learning experience: There are different generations involved along with the potential for blowback and, simply, modern language barriers.

“We’re having to educate everybody. The younger generation seems to have a perfect handle on it, but the rest of us don’t wanna say the wrong thing,” Cale said. “I want to learn about people and what they want to be called. We adopted this term to recognize that the words ‘woman’ and ‘female’ just don’t work anymore.”

Floyd added that those binary terms

## Echo’s 2021 Season

### April

- *The Other Felix* by Reina Hardy: Hit the road with private detective Marlow Sharp and her reluctant client, Felix Betelman, an on the trail of the other Felix, you can lose yourself a little. A digital play about obsessions and breaking them. Directed by Kateri Cale and featuring Lauren Floyd and Andrew Albitz. Ticketed online streaming performances and four free socially-distanced outdoor screenings.

### May-July

- Echo Reads: This free theater experience will be presented on Zoom. Directors lightly rehearse readings of plays with professional actors who carry their scripts as they perform for the audience. After the Zoom reading, the audience is invited to stay and discuss the play with the actors, director and Echo Creatives in a casual conversation online.

### September

- *It’s My Party!* by Ann Timmons: Based on real, historical figures, *It’s My Party!* delves into the backstory of the fight to pass the 19th Amendment. Facing an uphill battle in Washington, some suffragists employ increasingly radical tactics to make their voices heard, leading to bitter rivalries and a generational split that threatened to tear the suffragists’ movement apart from the inside. Directed by Carson McCain.

### October- December

- Echo Reads: The winter season.
- *The Big Shout Out 3* — International New Play Contest for Women+ Playwrights: Submissions and blind judging process will take place throughout 2021. Finalist honorees receive public readings in 2022, and the winning playwright’s script has the chance at a full production in 2022 plus \$500 in prize money.

Echo Offstage is the theater’s podcast hosted by Catherine Whiteman and available on the website and most podcast streaming services.

For more information about tickets, the play contest, upcoming auditions and the podcast, visit [EchoTheatre.org](http://EchoTheatre.org).

often negate a bigger picture.

“We found that the experience of womanhood is so vast and diverse and falls into so many experiences,” she said. “We don’t want anyone to feel they are being put into a box that society has been putting them into.”

There are always naysayers, and Cale has considered that. A board member



Andrew Albitz and Lauren Floyd in Echo Theatre's production of *The Other Felix*.  
(Photo by Robert G. McVay)

played devil's advocate, questioning whether this new direction will change the way Echo produces. Essentially, they were asking, "Is Echo prepared for this?"

Cale's response: "I don't think it will. I think it will invite people into the theater that didn't know there was a place for them," she said.

That means people in every aspect of a show — most notably actors.

The mission is going to open doors. "There's a place here that embraces more non-conforming actors in Dallas and invites those creatives and performers to flourish," Floyd said.

General auditions will be happening soon, which perhaps could allow theatergoers to see an added layer of diversity to the local scene in future seasons. To make up for last year's pandemic crisis, Echo Theatre has pushed some shows from then to its upcoming 23rd season beginning in April. (see sidebar).

Now, Echo can look ahead to its second initiative: finding where the new mission takes the company, establishing partnerships and determining how to get there. In the meantime, they will get back to business, follow the proper CDC and theater union guidelines for safety



Kateri Cale, managing artistic director of Echo Theatre

and get creative with its streaming shows and its podcast *Echo Offstage*.

"Theater is funny," Cale said. "You

■ STAGE Next Page

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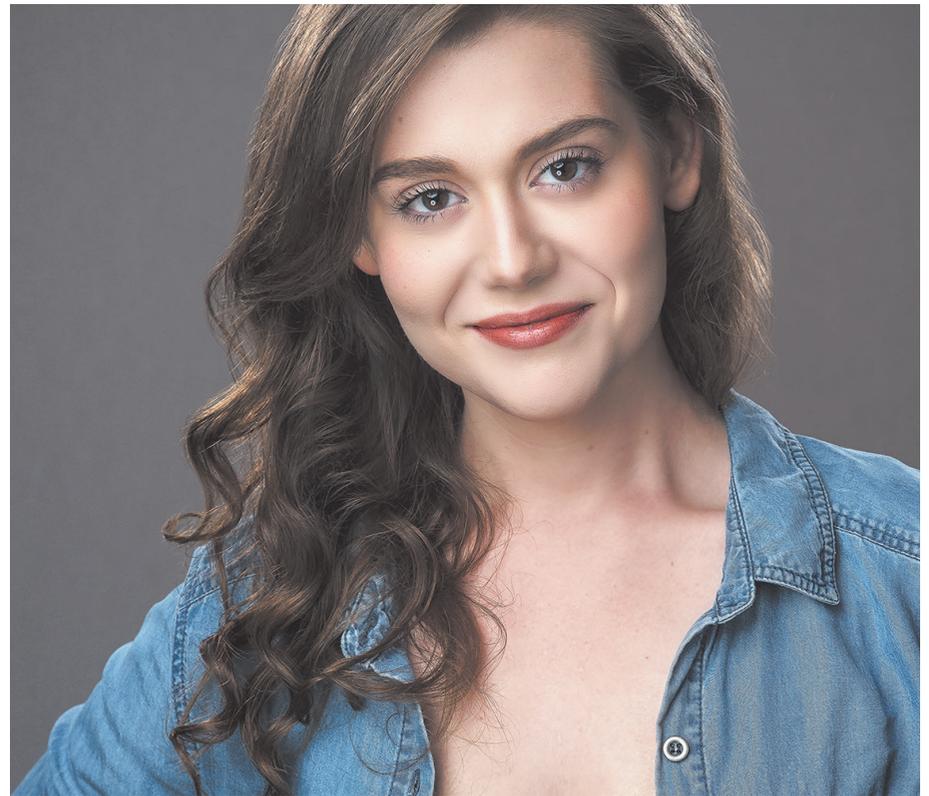
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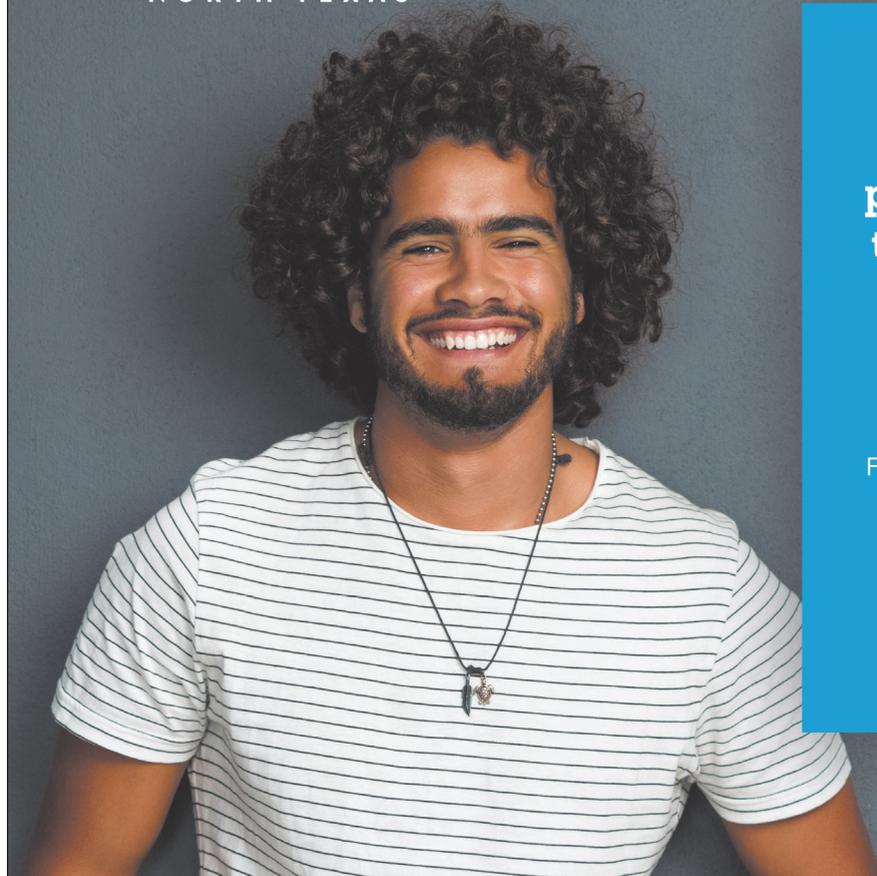
Marketing Director Lauren Floyd

■ STAGE From Previous Page

can't quite pin us down because the shows we do already are so far-ranging. Now, those shows by 'women+' expands that. We wanna open the door

and reach out to people who are reflective of the world we live in now." ■

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FRI 01.29

What happens when the kindergarten assistant at an elite Manhattan prep school suddenly finds himself stuck doing the job of head of admissions? Safe to say, mayhem is likely to ensue. And since this Uptown Players production of **Application Pending**, the 2015 Broadway World Award for Best Off-Broadway Play stars the inimitable B.J. Cleveland playing all 44 characters, it's also safe to say hilarity will ensue as well. Directed by Linda Leonard. Streaming from Jan. 29-Feb. 7. Viewing tickets are \$20-\$30, available online at [UptownPlayers.org](http://UptownPlayers.org) or by phone at 214-219-2718.



FRI 01.29

"But one thing that makes us feel special in and around Lubbock is the fact that we have just seen so many UFOs! I mean, if it's not a big one, we don't even pay attention!" That is definitely a story worth hearing, and who better to tell it than the iconic Jaston Williams. Williams plays nine different characters telling their own experiences of having seen the mysterious lights over Lubbock in 1951 in *"I Saw The Lights,"* a virtual theatrical event presented by The Paramount Theater in Austin. North Texans can watch the premiere of the new show via livestream at The Eisemann Center's Hill Performance Hall. Streaming live at 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29. Virtual event tickets are \$25, available online at [Tickets.AustinTheatre.org/events](http://Tickets.AustinTheatre.org/events).



MON 02.01

Like just about every other event over the last 11 or so months, **Dash for the Beads**, the annual Mardi Gras-themed 5K that raises funds to help local schools promote healthy eating and physical activity for grade school children, has had to make some adjustments due to COVID-19. This year, the 5K Dash goes virtual, with registered runners either choosing to run their own route or to run the traditional Dash route through Kessler Park any time between Feb. 1-Feb. 14. And the 1-mile walk has been replaced by a live Parade-Walk and Costume Contest — masks required — to lead off the Go Oak Cliff Mardi Gras Parade on Feb. 14. For information or to register, visit [DashForTheBeads.org](http://DashForTheBeads.org).

# Deep Inside Hollywood

By Romeo San Vicente

## 'Together Together' hits Sundance with Patti Harrison, Tig Notaro

*Together Together*, a new comedy making its debut at the 2021 very online Sundance Film Festival, is another push forward for trans actors. The movie's co-star, comedian Patti Harrison (*Shrill*), is a transgender comedian who's already got a reputation for turning perceptions about comedy upside down. In *TT*, she plays opposite Ed Helms as a young loner who goes to work for him, and their growing relationship forms the basis of the story.

No word on whether her character is trans or what the on-screen relationship entails, but what's exciting here is that a trans actor is co-headlining a feature. With the exception of Laverne Cox in the remake of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* that's still a rare enough occurrence to be exciting news. Nikole Beckwith (*Stockholm, Pennsylvania*) wrote and directed the film, which co-stars Nora Dunn, Tig Notaro and Los Espookys creator Julio Torres.

Now all it has to be is funny.

## Little Richard really was Everything

When Little Richard died in early 2020 at age 87, the world lost the great queer inventor of rock and roll. In the 1950s he brazenly took on musical norms, white racism and anti-queer cultural norms, defiantly making music that terrified parents and turned on young people. And though his religious beliefs led him to a lifetime of conflict with his own queerness, he maintained his position as a voice for liberation until his death.

Now a documentary is in the works, one that will try to capture a small part of the musician's world-changing legacy. *Little Richard: I Am Everything* — produced by queer filmmaker Dee Rees (*Mudbound*) in collaboration with Rolling Stone, and directed by Lisa Cortes (*All In: The Fight for Democracy*) — will focus on the man's influence and musical innovation, as well as his fearless (and often contradictory) public discussions about sexuality.

Expect lots of famous musicians, queer and otherwise, to lend their testimonies to this one. And a 2022 release is also a safe bet.

## Zachary Quinto and the Secret Court

Podcasts are everywhere, and now Zach-



Zachary Quinto

ary Quinto's got one. No, he's not sitting at his dining room table talking about *Star Trek*. He's producing and starring in a scripted podcast series, called *Secret Court*, based on a 100-year-old tragedy that took place at Harvard University.

It was then that a young Harvard sophomore named Cyril Wilcox, a member of the

class of 1920, killed himself. He had been part of a small group of gay male friends on campus, and his suicide led the school to secretly purge the other students from the university.

Nobody had done anything wrong except be homosexual, but they found themselves branded as offenders and removed from

school, their official records — as well as the record of the purge — erased.

*Secret Court* will feature Quinto in a voice role (no other is known at this point) and is being written by Abdi Nazemian (*The Artist's Wife*), produced in partnership with Quinto's production company. We're also guessing that its potential success might lead to a film or TV version of the story, one that deserves to be brought to light.

## A Samantha-less 'Sex and the City'?

You heard that correctly. HBO is in talks with Sarah Jessica Parker, Cynthia Nixon and Kristin Davis for a possible *Sex and the City* reboot. Kim Cattrall is not part of that conversation. We all know why.

And it doesn't matter if you're Team Cattrall or Team Everybody Else in this fractured friend-scape. What matters is the fact that a *Sex and the City* reboot is a great idea that we all need.

This is a dire historical moment of people not having frivolous sex with total strangers and not being able to afford very large Manhattan apartments or Manolo Blahnik shoes or even a fancy brunch. This culture needs frothy, shallow, glamour-based entertainment, and *Sex and the City* is a brand you can trust. Solution: A new character who is extremely horny, young and queer; one who runs circles around the other three women and treats them like the scolding aunts they've all turned into — a chaotic Gen Z sex demon who'll shake things up and make Parker's outfits look tame.

Maybe Zendaya.

The script can figure out why she'd be hanging out with the rest of them. Maybe she's someone's niece. It doesn't matter. It could work.

Romeo San Vicente would very much like a brunch left at his front door and would tip big for it.

## this week's solution

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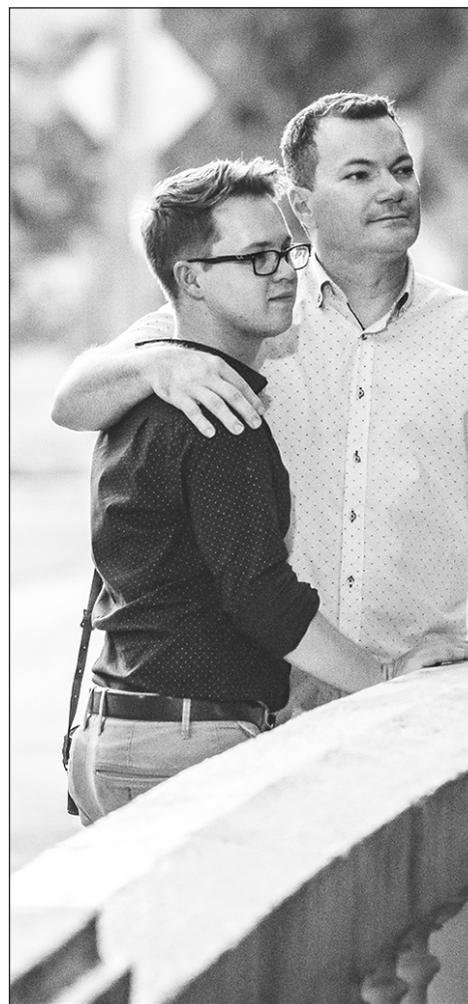
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Dylan and Rick (Photo by Taylor Moulton)



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58	59	60						61					62		
63								64					65		
66								67					68		

Solution on Page 14

Across

- 1 *The Seven Year* \_\_\_
- 5 Leave marks on the back
- 9 Bathhouse room type
- 14 What a flasher may drop
- 15 Fireman, at times
- 16 Like a nervous Nellie
- 17 AMC's *Better Call* \_\_\_
- 18 At least once
- 19 Recesses for Rev. Spahr
- 20 Start of a quote by 54-Across
- 23 Fla. clock setting
- 24 "Money \_\_\_ object!"
- 25 Tasty oral pleasures
- 29 Verb of Verlaine
- 31 P. Hearst's kidnappers
- 32 The Lyon king
- 33 *Star Trek* character
- 34 More of the quote
- 37 Island of Mead's research
- 38 Writer Harper
- 39 Begin in earnest
- 40 End of the quote
- 43 Climax time in a western
- 44 *Psych* network
- 45 "There is no there there" town

Down

- 47 Financial deficit
- 50 Connections
- 54 He made haute couture accessible via ready-to-wear (1922-2020)
- 58 Pansy part
- 61 Tiny bit
- 62 Edison's middle name
- 63 Remove a slip, perhaps
- 64 RBI, to Billy Bean
- 65 Computer nerd
- 66 Symbol for Rev. Perry
- 67 Sushi selections
- 68 River of Wilde's land
- 13 Month for Kahlo
- 21 Margolyes of *Ladies in Lavender*
- 22 Northern metropolis
- 26 Poet's muse
- 27 Partner of the Lone Ranger
- 28 Enjoy, as someone's face
- 30 Ren or Stimpny
- 31 Dumbledore might cast one
- 33 Resort lake
- 34 *Casablanca* role
- 35 Like a milquetoast
- 36 Time when teens may find that they're gay
- 37 Rouse from sleep
- 41 Coupling device
- 42 Business biggies
- 46 Peoples of *Fame*
- 48 Transvestite boast?
- 49 Frasier's brother
- 51 One sitting on one's ass
- 52 Oscar-winner David
- 53 Phallic creature
- 55 Souffl es do it
- 56 Kind of learning
- 57 And others, for Nero
- 58 Delt neighbor
- 59 Pull a boner
- 60 Way of the East

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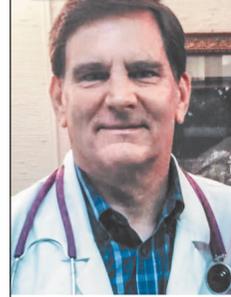
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