

dallas voice

The Premier Media Source for LGBTQ Texas | Est. 2010

| Issue 51 | FREE | Friday, April 23, 2021



Going over the **Rainbow**

Satirist **Randy Rainbow**

is ready to get back on the road

by Tammye Nash, Page 8

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Created three business crime watch organizations

FOR SENIORS

Helped create a call center network of nonprofits and closed city amenities like library and recreation staff to call seniors to check in on them to offer resources and to help prevent isolation and loneliness

FOR STREETS

Passed nearly \$600 million in bond funds to fix roads throughout Dallas

FOR JOBS & WAGES

Passed first-ever business district Neighborhood Empowerment Zone for small and medium businesses

FOR PARKS & RECREATION

Constructed a trail around the Pavaho Wetlands in Los Altos

FOR TAX RELIEF

Voted four years in a row to lower the property tax rate

REGARDING THE PANDEMIC

Passed eviction moratorium ordinance for families affected by COVID-19

Set up vaccination registration hubs with local nonprofits and churches, as well as with local elected officials.

FOR PRIDE

Helped pass an ordinance to commemorate June as Pride Month in Dallas annually in June and fly the official City of Dallas Pride Flag at City Hall

Advocated and added fully comprehensive healthcare benefits, including gender-affirming surgeries for transgender employees

Earned a 100% score all four years serving on council for the HRC's Municipal Equality Index

FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Appointed by Mayor Johnson as Chair of the first Environmental Committee and passed the City's first Environmental Plan (CECAP)

FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Reduced the tax rate four years in a row for property owners

RECOGNITIONS

"LGBTQ North Texans of the Year"
— Dallas Voice 2020

"Best Dallas City Council Member"
— Dallas Observer 2018

Dallas Pride Parade Grand Marshall 2017



2020 Texan of the Year
— Dallas Voice

Re-elect

**OMAR
NARVAEZ**

Dallas City Council District 6

ENDORSED BY



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DEMOCRATS
OF DALLAS**



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ELECTION DAY
May 1st

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Omarfordallas.com

Pol. Adv. Pd. by Omar Narvaez Campaign.

RE-ELECT

DAVID BLEWETT

☆☆☆ *for* ☆☆☆

DALLAS CITY COUNCIL #D14



David will Focus on

IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY

Continue to provide leadership and pressure to solve the street racing and street takeover problem, improve 911 response times, and provide the necessary support to our men and women in blue so that they can better protect and serve our neighborhoods.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Commit to adding additional bike lanes, create more and safer sidewalks, hold contractors accountable for road restoration and alley patches, repair roads and potholes in a timely fashion, and improve traffic signalization throughout our neighborhoods.

IMPROVING YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE

Require accountability for nuisance properties to include bars and restaurants, direct city staff to develop AirBNB “Party House” regulations, allocate funds and support for local parks, aquatic centers, and trails, install numerous flashing crosswalks near schools, libraries, and parks to ensure that we can safely cross streets. Proudly support a vibrant Dallas ISD, where all seven of my kids have gone to school!

REDUCING YOUR PROPERTY TAX

In 2019, I voted to lower the tax rate followed by passing another tax rate reduction in 2020. This year, proposed a new tax ceiling for our over 65 and disabled homestead neighbors. This resolution is scheduled for Council action in May.



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To learn more information
about David Blewett,
please visit blewett.com



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April 27th**

**ELECTION
DAY:
May 1st**

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Highlights from the Dallas Voice Website

Clyde ISD adopts gender neutral dress code



Clyde ISD adopted a gender neutral dress code on Monday, April 19, a little more than four months after school officials suspended student Trevor Wilkinson for wearing nail polish.

Clyde is along I-20 just east of Abilene.

On Twitter, Wilkinson wrote, "My high school's dress code is gender neutral forever oh my goodness."

In December, Wilkinson wore nail polish to school and was suspended. Female students were allowed nail polish and makeup in school, but male students weren't.

"I went into my class, and immediately my teacher sent me to the office because she said I broke dress code," Wilkinson told *Good Morning America*.

According to Clyde's policy, students who don't meet the dress code are given a chance to correct the "problem," and a student will remain in suspension until the "problem" is corrected. Wilkinson never backed down, and it took the school district four months to correct it's problem.

— David Taffet

LCR Texas supports anti-trans legislation

Representatives of Log Cabin Republicans of Texas this week went to the Texas Capitol to testify in support of Texas House Bill 4042, legislation "requiring public school students to participate in interscholastic athletic activities based on biological sex."

HB 4042 and its companion bill in the Senate, SB 29, would in essence, if enacted, prohibit transgender students from participating in gender-specific school sports. Such efforts here in Texas and in state legislatures around the country have been roundly criticized by most LGBTQ advocacy organizations as well as many business organizations and a number of large companies. The NCAA last week announced it will not hold any playoff or title games in states that pass such legislation, and the state of Georgia has become the target of boycotts since enacting such a bill earlier this month.

LCR Texas, however, issued a statement in support of HB 4042 and SB 29 as well as testifying in favor of HB 4042.

In the statement, posted online at LogCabin-Texas.US, LCR noted that the "policy position" regarding the anti-trans bills has been "adopted

unanimously by the representatives of all LCR chapters in Texas."

The statement reads in part, "Log Cabin Republicans of Texas supports House Bill 4042 and its companion Bill 29. While we may have reservations about the bills' lack of nuance allowing schools latitude to address very unique situations, and about the issues it leaves unresolved that will certainly arise if this bill becomes law, we nonetheless believe this law takes a necessary step in protecting interscholastic athletic activities that are currently segregated by biological sex for the benefit and safety of both boys and girls."

To read the Log Cabin statement in its entirety and the accompanying FAQs, visit LogCabinTexas.US.

— Tammye Nash



SDEC opposes voter suppression bills



Voter suppression bills are on the move in the Texas House and Senate. The State Democratic Executive Committee called this an "all-hands-on-deck moment" to defeat HB6 and SB 7. The House bill has passed committee and is waiting for a floor vote.

The bills would make it harder for people with disabilities to vote, reduce the amount of time polls are open and create long lines, especially in minority voting districts. SDEC has developed tools to contact representatives before the vote. They encourage people to call their state representative to oppose HB 6 and publicize it on their social media.

— David Taffet

Business leaders rally to oppose discriminatory legislation

Texas Competes, represented by business leaders and of chambers of commerce, held a press conference at the Capitol in Austin Monday, April 19, to oppose a long list of

discriminatory bills working their way through the Legislature.

The legislation includes bans on trans athletes participating in sports to bans on providing medically necessary gender-related treatment to a number of license to discriminate bills, both specific and broad. Other bills would ban gender marker changes, criminalize HIV infection and invalidate local nondiscrimination ordinances.

State Rep. Jessica Gonzalez, D-Dallas, kicked off the presentation. Gonzalez authored an omnibus LGBTQ nondiscrimination bill also working its way through committee.

Among those speaking in opposition to anti-LGBT legislation was an executive from North Texas-based Gearbox.

Gary Sanchez, currently chair of the Texas LGBT Chambers of Commerce and formerly with VisitDallas, asked lawmakers to remember the small businesses of Texas. He said, "When you attack one of us, you attack all of us," and asked legislators to keep Texas an inclusive and welcoming state to live and work.

Texas Competes CEO Jessica Shortall said, "Business thrives on certainty and stability," but right now businesses are faced with the uncertainty that discriminatory policies cause.

— David Taffet

Dallas Voice's Taffet wins SPJ award

Dallas Voice Senior Staff Writer David Taffet has won first place in the Community Journalism category of the Fort Worth Society of Professional Journalists' 2021 First Amendment Awards. Taffet was recognized for his article, "Donald Zarda recognized by medical organization," published Sept. 11, 2020. Judges wrote, "This feature personalizes the compelling story of some prominent advocates for employment rights for the LGBTQ communities."

Entries in the contest were judged in two divisions: print/online and broadcast. Each division was subdivided by market size, circulation (over or under 100,000) and reach (large print/online, medium print/online/large broadcast, medium broadcast).

Members of the Los Angeles Society for Professional Journalists judged the entries.

— Tammye Nash

OBITUARIES



David Andrew Smith, 65, passed away March 25, of an aneurysm. Born July 23, 1955, he was a native of Kentucky and Baltimore and had lived in the Dallas area for the past 30 years, spending much of that time working as a bartender in LGBTQ bars, most recently at TMC. He had also worked at Dallas Eagle, Woody's, Moby Dick's, the Brick, and The Wave. He also worked as a manager as well as a bartender at Dallas Eagle and Moby Dick's.

David was also an interior designer and a painter, and he was the cover model for Bear Magazine #29 in 1994 as well as a model for Harley Davidson and other magazines.

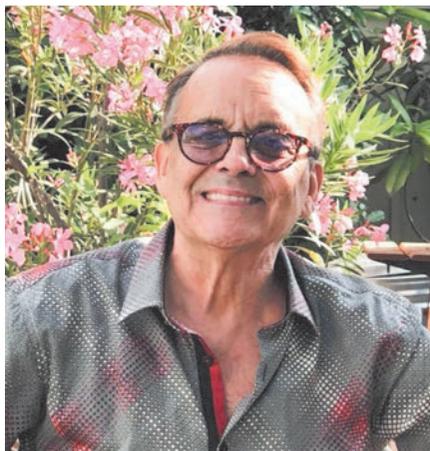
During his years as a bartender and manager in Dallas' gay bars, he was a friend and mentor to so many others, bar industry employees and customers alike. He was known as Daddy David to his coworkers and loyal customers.

David was a sweet teddy bear — humble and loving, loyal and giving. He was always helping others but never asked anything in return. He loved animals and was a friend to all. He will be dearly missed by everyone who knew him.

David is survived by his partner, Kerry Shatzer of Dallas; his mother, Juanita Haught of Baltimore; and his father, Leamon

Sims, of Hustonville, Ky.

A memorial will be held at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, May 2, at TMC in Dallas.



William B. "Bill" McGowen III, passed away Friday, April 2, in Dallas. Bill's life began in Floresville, Texas, on July 28, 1945, and ended in Dallas earlier this month. But oh, how eventful were those 75 years in between, filled with travel and excitement.

Bill's work took him from Asia, where he was instrumental in developing computer programs for opening new banks, to New Mexico where his love of food and cooking led him to open his restaurant. He became a connoisseur of art and literature, and he loved to entertain and host dinner parties in his home, where he tastefully displayed his collection of paintings and books. Bill was well known in high society circles of New Mexico.

Upon returning to Dallas, his above average intelligence and great work ethic qualified him to write programs for selecting grand jury members in the court system.

An interesting conversationalist with a great sense of humor, he always had a story to tell to his spellbound listeners.

Proud of his gay orientation, Bill lived his life to the fullest. He will be missed.

pet of the week / SIMON



Meet **Simon**, a 9-year-old, male Great Dane mix. He's a big fellow with a red merle coat and a dazzling smile. Don't let his age fool you, he still has the energy of a young lad. Simon enjoys hanging out by your side and going for short walks. He came to the SPCA of Texas as a stray, so not much is known about his past. But he has shown what a big sweetheart he is while at the shelter. You can bring your whole family, kids and other dogs included, to meet him and make sure everyone gets along. Simon is waiting to meet you at the SPCA of Texas' Russell H. Perry Animal Care Center in McKinney. Now through April 25, you can adopt any adult dog or cat for 50 percent off regular adoption fees. To request an appointment to meet Simon, please visit SPCA.org/DogAdopt to submit an inquiry.

Adoptions will be 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 and visit SPCA.org/DogAdopt to inquire about a dog or SPCA.org/CatAdopt to inquire about a cat.

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The Rainbow connection

What's next for America's favorite musical-video satirist?

Randy Rainbow became a star with his musical videos sending up Trump and his minions. And when the COVID-19 pandemic shut everything down, Rainbow's hilarious work kept people entertained since he was, thankfully, able to keep turning out new work from home.

Still, he says, the isolation of quarantine was a hard burden, and he is happy to finally start getting back out into the world — including a live virtual concert tonight (Friday, April 23) presented by Dallas Democrats..

Amid the hustle and bustle of planning new tour dates while also writing a book and recording a new album, Rainbow took the time this week to answer a few questions for Dallas Voice.

— Tammye Nash



Dallas Voice: 2020 was a really hard year for everybody, especially performers and entertainers, many of whose livelihoods ended up in dire straights when everything shut down. What was the hardest part of 2020 for you? And what was it that kept you going? Randy Rainbow: The hardest part was the isolation, just like everyone else. I'm really fortunate that I was able to keep busy and keep creating. That really kept me going!

At the same time, 2020 provided some amazing materials for comedians, especially a satirist of your skill. What was your favorite story from 2020, and which of your videos from the last year do you think was the best? My favorite story of 2020 was Trump losing the election. And my videos are like my children. How dare you ask me to pick a favorite!

Despite being such an absolute buffoon, Donald Trump and his MAGA cult followers were a real danger to our country, as we saw on Jan. 6. Do you think

that your videos showing how ridiculous he really is played a role in turning more people against him and getting him voted out last November? My intention is never to make a political statement, believe it or not, but satire does have a way of exposing the ugly truth. So to answer your question, yes, I 100 percent take full credit for the removal of former President Donald Jessica Trump.

Other than Trump himself, who do you think was the most outrageous character from his four years in office? Who gave you the most material to work with? We got so many outrageous characters out of that administration, but you know my girl is Kellyanne Conway. She gave me so much material. I really owe her lunch!

With Trump gone from the White House, who — or what — do you think is going to be your biggest source for material now? I mean, there are so many to choose from how do you narrow it

down? We still have quite the cast of characters lingering around. There remains an abundance of material, and it's hard to pick and impossible to predict! I just try to follow the bouncing ball of what everyone's most heated about or amused by.

I would think that it would be easy, especially in politics where everything is over the top anyway, to go too far. How do you determine where the line is between what is funny and what is going too far? What would you consider to be off limits? I'm a comedian, and these are jokes. My goal is to lighten and entertain, never to hurt or offend. I used to say nothing was off limits, but in these times, as our collective sensitivities are changing so rapidly, it is becoming a little trickier to toe the line. I wish it were different, because I tend to believe that the less taboos there are in comedy, the better things are going in reality.

What's next for you? When do you expect to get back on the road and start doing

live shows again? And how do you see yourself expanding or changing your career? We are planning tour dates right now, and I can't wait to get back on the road with a brand new show. I'm also currently writing a book and working on a new album. I have so much more to tell you, but unfortunately, I can't right now. Stay tuned!

And now, for the important question: How is Tippi [the cat]? And when will she begin posting her own Tippi Rainbow videos? Tippi is growing beautifully and is currently an Instagram model. You can all follow her @TippiRainbow. Regarding videos, she prefers cameos.

What did I not ask about that you want to mention? Dallas Voice was my first cover ever in 2010! Thanks for all the love through the years!

The Randy Rainbow Live Virtual Concert begins tonight (Friday, April 23) at 7 p.m. For information and tickets, visit [DCDP. Link/RandyRainbow](https://www.dcdp.org/Link/RandyRainbow).

Different sides



LGBTQ advocacy groups come down on different sides of a case headed to the Supreme Court

LISA KEEN | Keen News Service
LisaKeen@mac.com

A case to be argued before the U.S. Supreme Court next week on Wednesday, April 28, presents one of those rare instances in which different LGBTQ groups are on opposite sides. The case is *Mahanoy v. BL*, an appeal which asks the Supreme Court to take a new look at a long-standing First Amendment decision from 1969 and say whether it needs to be re-thought given today's new social media and cyber-bullying realities.

In friend-of-the-court briefs submitted in the case, different LGBTQ groups and leaders are taking different sides. Some argue that schools need the authority to discipline students for inappropriate messages, even when those messages are delivered off-campus and after-school. Others say students need protection from school authorities over-reaching into the personal views and expressions of students.

Both sides say the case, which has no LGBT-specific elements, could have important implications for LGBTQ students.

The case before the court started in 2017 when a student at a small public high school in central Pennsylvania posted an angry message on Snapchat expressing her anguish at having been rejected for the varsity cheerleading



squad. The student, identified in numerous news reports as Brandi Levy, is identified in court documents as B.L., and she attended Mahanoy Area High School. (She has since graduated and is attending college.)

On the weekend after learning she would have to stay on the junior varsity squad, Levy was out shopping with a friend when she decided to post a photo of herself on Snapchat, gesturing with her middle finger with a caption that read, "Fuck school fuck softball fuck cheer fuck everything."

The post reached about 250 people, including other students at her high school which had an enrollment of only about 280 students. One of the students

who saw the post captured the Snapchat image and forwarded it to Levy's JV cheerleading coaches. School officials suspended Levy from the JV squad for the year.

Mahanoy school officials' brief to the Supreme Court said that "students were visibly upset" over Levy's Snapchat post, that the post violated school rules against "foul language and inappropriate gestures" and that they felt they had to take disciplinary action to "avoid chaos and maintain a team-like environment."

Levy's parents attempted to reverse that decision by talking with school officials. When they got nowhere, they sued in federal court, charging that the school had violated their daughter's First

Amendment right to free speech.

A federal district court agreed, noting Levy's Snapchat post was done off-campus and had not caused any substantial disruption of school activities. The Third Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals also agreed citing the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision *Tinker v. Des Moines*, which held that students have a right to freedom of speech unless a school can prove that the students' actions or speech would "substantially interfere" with school operations.

The *Tinker* case involved students wearing black armbands at school during school hours in protest of the Vietnam War. The Mahanoy case involved some-

'Lights' fantastic

'Tuna' co-creator Jaston Williams takes on West Texas in new virtual show

RICH LOPEZ | Contributing Writer
richlopezwrites@gmail.com

This past year has seen little in the way of new productions after the pandemic eviscerated live arts, and playwright Jaston Williams was over it. So, he stepped up.

Plus, he had a script that he'd been holding on to for the right time, and, as it turned out, this was that time.

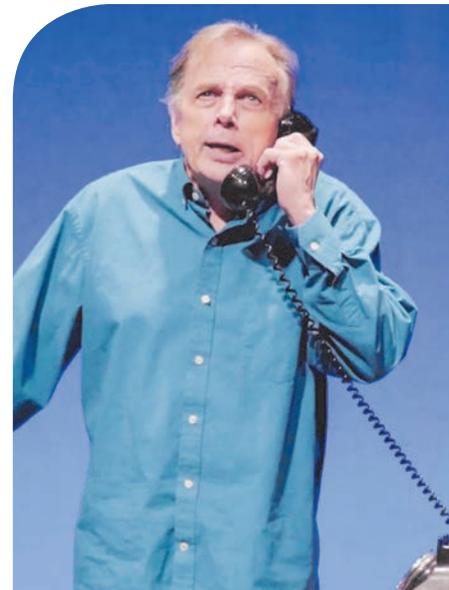
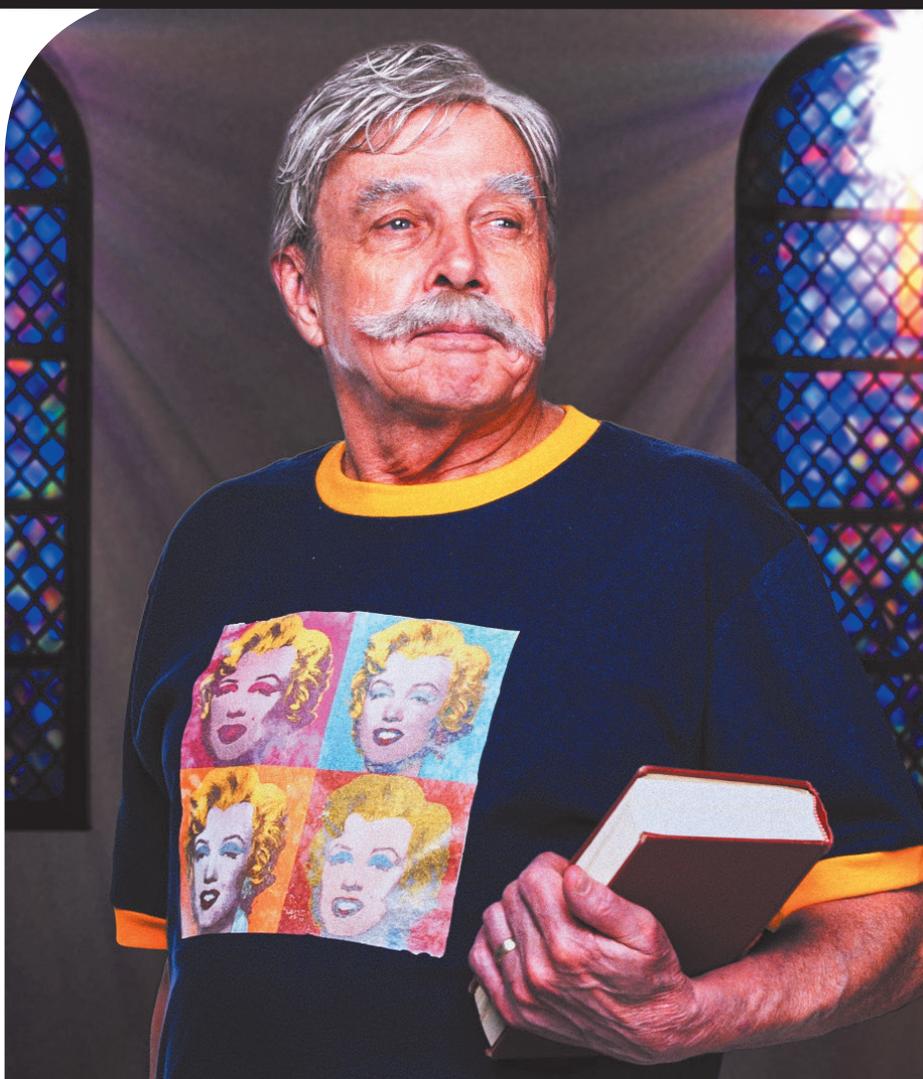
Truth be told, Williams has actually been very busy working on different projects during all the COVID-19 mess.

"I'm working on two shows, so I assume this is 'Lights,'" he said by phone as he figured out which show to talk about. "I could do an interview about the wrong show, and my agent would kill me."

He may feign confusion, but Williams is as sharp as they come. As one of the co-creators of *Greater Tuna*, alongside Joe Sears, Williams has become not only a noted humorist and playwright but easily an icon among Texas literary figures. Through the Tuna universe alone (the Tunaverse?), the eccentricity of Texas comes through in over-the-top characters and plucky storytelling, and that world has spread to theaters nationwide as well as Broadway.

This time, Williams mixes that formula into his one-man virtual show *I Saw the Lights*, only he sets it in his childhood home of Lubbock in West Texas.

"I grew up outside of Lubbock on the high plains, and we always told stories like this," he said of the stories in *I Saw the Lights*. "It's a tradition that's passed down around the campfires from our ancestors out there."



He added that he was surprised that not very many people have written about the area and what it has to offer. "I was fascinated by the culture out there," he said. "You know, everyone thinks people out in West Texas are Protestant, white,

FANTASTIC, Page 15

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MAY 1, 2021 GENERAL ELECTION



City of Dallas

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES COUNCIL DISTRICTS / BALLOT ORDER

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- 1 Gerardo Sánchez
- 2 Stephani A. "Skyle" Kyle
- 3 Chad West
- 4 Giovanni "Gio" Valderas

Council District 2

- 1 Jennifer Cortez
- 2 Jesse Moreno
- 3 Sana Syed
- 4 Raha Assadi
- 5 Michael Fetzer

Council District 3

- 1 Casey Thomas, II
- 2 Irby Foster

Council District 4

- 1 Maxie Johnson
- 2 Lelani Russell
- 3 Matt Canto
- 4 Carolyn King Arnold
- 5 Johnny Aguinaga

Council District 5

- 1 Jaime Resendez
- 2 Ruth Torres
- 3 Yolanda "Faye" Williams
- 4 Terry Perkins

Council District 6

- 1 Earl D. Thomas
- 2 Tony Carrillo
- 3 Omar Narvaez
- 4 Mónica R. Alonzo
- 5 Wendi Macon

Council District 7

- 1 Kevin Felder
- 2 Donald Parish
- 3 Calvin D. Johnson
- 4 Tramonica Brown
- 5 Walter "Changa" Higgins
- 6 James "JT" Turknett
- 7 Israel Varela
- 8 Adam Bazaldua

Council District 8

- 1 Tennell Atkins
- 2 Subrina Lynn Brenham
- 3 Davante "Shawt" Peters
- 4 Lakolya London

Council District 9

- 1 Paula Blackmon
- 2 Judy Kumar
- 3 John Botefuhr

Council District 10

- 1 B. Adam McGough
- 2 Serrano Keith Baldeo

Council District 11

- 1 Jaynie Schultz
- 2 Hosanna Yemiru
- 3 Barry Wernick
- 4 Candy Evans

Council District 12

- 1 Elva Curl
- 2 Cara Mendelsohn

Council District 13

- 1 Ryan M. Moore
- 2 Da'On Boulanger-Chatman
- 3 Gay Donnell Willis
- 4 Leland R. Burk
- 5 Mac Smith

Council District 14

- 1 Paul E. Ridley
- 2 David Blewett
- 3 Elizabeth Viney

VOTE 2021

MAY 1, 2021 SPECIAL ELECTION AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF DALLAS

PROPOSITION NO. A

Eliminating the Requirement That A Member of a Board or Commission Created by the City Charter be Registered or Qualified to Vote.
Shall Chapter IV, Section 5; Chapter XV, Section 3; and Chapter XVII, Section 1 of the Dallas City Charter be amended to eliminate the requirement that a member of a commission created by the city charter be a registered or qualified voter?

PROPUESTA NO. A

Eliminar el Requisito de que un Miembro de una Junta o Comisión creada por la Carta de la Ciudad de Dallas sea Registrado o Calificado para Votar.
¿El Capítulo IV, Sección 5; Capítulo XV, Sección 3; y el Capítulo XVII, Sección 1 de la Carta de la Ciudad de Dallas será enmendado para eliminar el requisito de que un miembro de una junta o comisión creada por la carta de la ciudad sea un miembro registrado o calificado?

PROPOSITION NO. B

Eliminating the Requirement That a Member of the Civil Service Board be a Qualified Taxpaying Citizen.
Shall Chapter XVI, Section 1 of the Dallas City Charter be amended to eliminate the requirement that a member of the civil service board be a qualified taxpaying citizen?

PROPUESTA NO. B

Eliminar el Requisito de que un Miembro de la Junta de Servicio Civil sea un Ciudadano que Pague Impuestos.
¿Se modificará el Capítulo XVI, Sección 1 de la Carta de la Ciudad de Dallas para eliminar el requisito de que un miembro de la junta de servicio civil sea un miembro calificado que pague impuestos?

DALLAS COUNTY DATES / TIMES / LOCATIONS

April (abril) 19 – 23	Monday-Friday (lunes a viernes)	8a.m. to 7p.m.
April (abril) 24	Saturday (sábado)	8a.m. to 7p.m.
April (abril) 25	Sunday (domingo)	1p.m. to 7p.m.
April (abril) 26 – 27	Monday – Tuesday (lunes y martes)	7a.m. to 7p.m.



thing done off-campus after-school.

While acknowledging that social media has blurred the lines between what constitutes on and off-campus, the Third Circuit said Levy's Snapchat post was clearly off-campus and that "the 'online' nature of that off-campus speech makes no constitutional difference."

Attorneys for the school appealed the Third Circuit decision to the Supreme Court, arguing that other federal appeals panels have ruled that *Tinker* can apply to off-campus speech "that has a close nexus to the school environment." The Third Circuit decision, they said, "broke ranks with all other circuits" on the matter.

The Mahanoy school attorneys noted that "schools face hard calls about how to address such off-campus speech," including instances of where students use social media to harass other students and teachers. But "schools have exercised authority to discipline speech that disrupts the campus or harms other students, whether that speech originates on campus or off."

Joining several other anti-bullying organizations, the Garden State Equality group, the Tyler Clementi Foundation and Stomp Out Bullying — which focus on LGBTQ issues — all submitted a brief on the side of the Mahanoy school district. They noted that a study found that more than 80 percent of LGBTQ youth reported being bullied or harassed at school. "There must," they said, "be a clear and unmistakable pronouncement that school officials may take reasonable measures to curtail peer bullying that negatively impacts students' ability to access their education, wherever and in whatever form it takes place."

A large number of other LGBTQ groups submitted a brief in support of the student. "Bestowing schools with overly broad authority to regulate off-campus speech risks school overreach," those groups said, pointing to studies showing that historically marginalized groups — like LGBTQ students — "are more likely to receive un-

warranted school discipline" for their off-campus speech. At the very least, the groups argue, the Supreme Court "should make clear that any restrictions to off-campus student speech only apply to prevent invasions of students' rights to safety and access to equal educational opportunities, and not to regulate all potential substantial disruptions of school activities."

That brief was submitted by Lambda Legal, Equality California, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), the Human Rights Campaign, National Center for Lesbian Rights and more than two dozen other groups "committed to gender, LGBTQ, racial, and disability justice for students."

"We support B.L. in this case because we believe the school was not within its authority to discipline her and violated her First Amendment rights to speech and expression," said Camilla Taylor, director of constitutional litigation for Lambda Legal and one of the authors of the brief supporting the student.

"When student speech occurs off-campus and does not threaten harm to anyone," said Taylor, "... students enjoy an unfettered right to express themselves without school interference."

The groups' brief urged the Supreme Court make a very careful ruling — one that enables schools to respond to off-campus speech that "invades a student's rights to be safe and to access equal educational opportunities" but one that "does not impair a student's off-campus speech that is otherwise protected under the First Amendment."

Acting Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar submitted the Biden administration's brief in March and will be speaking before the court April 28. Her brief supports the school district, saying that schools must be able to address any speech, including off-campus speech, that threatens or targets specific individuals or groups in the school community.

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BEST HIV Specialists



Dr. Donald Graneto named to D Magazine's Best Doctors in Dallas for 2017 in Infectious Disease and Family Medicine respectively.



Peter Triporo, NP named Top 10 in 2018 America's Top Nurse Practitioner Awards presented by Point of Care Network



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FANTASTIC

From Page 10

Levis, but I tell you, it's a hell of a mix. Eccentricity has always had a safe place out there."

In 1951, the Lubbock Lights were a formation of unidentifiable lights hovering over the city and seen by a wide variety of residents. Although it was concluded the lights were a natural phenomenon, some speculated that they were UFOs. Williams puts a pinpoint focus on that time in *I Saw the Lights*.

"I wanted to write a love letter to these people. It is fictional, but I wanted to write about that culture that people didn't easily recognize and include their frailties and fears and humor," he said. "Once in a while you feel the need to write about something that hasn't been touched on."

Williams plays nine characters in the show, including a preacher, a hippie and a beautician.

"You can't do a play about West Texas without a beautician," he insisted. "That's where it all happens — in the

church and at a beauty parlor."

Williams described the characters as composites of real people — except for his beautician. She was created from scratch.

"She was transformed by the lights, and she lost the ability to be a mean person, which is tough for a beautician in West Texas," he explained.

Dean Barley, the gay character in *Lights*, was sent to the mental hospital for charging rhinestone jewelry to his daddy's card. "Being out in West Texas then, they were always so unapologetic," Williams said. "So this character, to me, he's so alive and honest and brave."

In lieu of incorporating all the costume changes in the show, Williams was photographed in costume as each character, and those photos are displayed in the show. But he performs all the characters wearing slacks and a shirt.

"The only costume [changes] we had were the shoes," he noted. "I cannot play a woman without some heels."

The play was filmed at the State Theatre in Austin with about 14 people involved in the project. Not only did Williams work to fill a void in theater, he wanted to fill a void for theater folk.

"The great thing was that we employed people. There was no work, and people were desperate to work," he explained. "When we all got together [to film the show], it was a revelation. We had been away from it for so long."

Even though the show takes place in the past, Williams believes that it can still speak to today "I think we are always hoping for miracles, but really, you find those in other people," he said. "I love these characters, and they show that you're not alone."

"I think that's the main thing I want people to take away [from the show] — finding hope in other people can be a pathway to love and kindness." ■

The I Saw the Lights local presentation will air at 6 p.m. Friday and will be available to view for the 48 hours to follow. Tickets are \$25-\$35 at downtowncowtown.com.



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Our path to PARENTHOOD

For same-sex couples wanting to start a family, there are a lot of ways to get there. Here is one

My son is graduating from high school this year, a fact that has me reflecting back on how our family started. And if my social media feed is anything to go by, a lot of folks are wanting to start their families in similar ways today. So I thought I'd share our story in hopes of offering some insight or at least some inspiration (though I'm not a doctor or lawyer; please consult your own).

My now-spouse Helen and I spent our first eight years together focused on our careers before we decided to start a family. Once we began discussing starting a family, we knew almost immediately that we wanted to do reciprocal in vitro fertilization (RIVF), with Helen carrying my eggs so that we could both be a part of the process in a physical way. I'm a few years younger, so we used my "fresher" eggs.

We then juggled the three areas of biggest import: healthcare, insurance and law.

First we talked with our regular doctor and got physicals; she referred us to a fertility practice. I approached my employer's health insurance provider to be sure that IVF was covered; at \$20,000 per attempt, we couldn't have done it otherwise. The IVF was covered, but we had



Dana Rudolph
Contributing Columnist

to pay for the sperm ourselves, at about \$300 per try. Next stop was the lawyer to make sure none of the paperwork we had to sign at the clinic would mean either of us were waiving our rights since it was set up for egg donors who would not be parenting the child. We also updated our wills and powers of attorney just in case.

At the same time, we started looking at online catalogs from sperm banks. We wanted an anonymous donor who would have no possible legal claim to the child. Looking back, we might have considered a donor who was "willing to be known" when the child turned 18, but, unfortunately, we didn't know this was a possibility.

Mostly, we wanted a donor who was healthy, but that still left us with a lot of choices. We were almost driven to putting printouts of the finalists' profiles on the floor and choosing the one the cat sat on. (Ultimately, we made the call ourselves without getting the cat involved.)

Then began the real attempts. We met with the fertility doctor and brought home a large paper grocery bag full of medicines and needles. Helen needed to

take hormones to prepare the lining of her uterus to receive the egg; I needed hormones to produce many eggs at once instead of the usual one per month.

Helen started with a "test cycle" of hormone pills to make sure her uterus responded appropriately. Then I went on birth control pills to sync my cycle with hers. I still laugh about the fact that the first time I ever went on birth control was in order to have a child.

I then spent several weeks giving myself daily injections in my belly. The needles were tiny and nearly painless, though I did feel a little bloated as my ovaries grew. Helen started with a daily injection, also via small needles, and then another injection for a week or so via a two-inch needle in her backside, which I had to give her. (It was a bonding experience.)

We also both went to the clinic every other day at 6 a.m. for blood tests and ultrasounds. We had cut out caffeine for the duration, so that was rough. But we figured it was good preparation for parenthood.

My final injection, to release the eggs, had to be exactly 36 hours before my clinic appointment, when I went briefly under general anesthetic and woke up with the eggs painlessly removed.

The clinic then fertilized the eggs with the sperm we'd had shipped to them. Five days later they inserted the embryos via a tube into Helen's uterus. They usually inserted more than one; this boosted the chances of at least one succeeding but at the risk of multiple births. The doctors recommended how many, based on how the embryos were developing, but the fi-

nal choice was up to us.

This was the most difficult question we faced after selecting the sperm donor.

We then waited for the results — a lo-o-o-ng 10 days, especially since most over-the-counter pregnancy tests didn't work with IVF, and we had to go to the clinic.

The first time didn't succeed.

None of our remaining embryos had been good enough to freeze, so we started again from scratch. We chose a different donor, in case the sperm was the problem. I also took an additional medication to improve egg quality and — Success! Helen was pregnant!

But this was all before marriage equality or civil unions. In New Jersey, where we lived, I would not have been able to be on the birth certificate or have any parental rights, even though the child was genetically mine — except that with the help of our lawyer, we successfully petitioned the state for a pre-birth parentage order, making me a legal parent from the moment of our son's birth. We thought we were going to be the first RIVF couple in the state to get such a parentage order; we ended up being the second, and we were happy to be part of a trend.

RIVF was definitely the extra complicated — and needle-filled — route. It's not for everyone, but we both value the different connections it has given each of us to our son. To those also considering RIVF — or any path to parenthood — I'd say be patient; try to find the humor in it, and realize it's just the start of the long but worthwhile adventure of parenthood.

Good luck! ■

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory, with a searchable database of 600+ LGBTQ family books, media, and more.



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Bobrow Trust donates \$250K

O

ver the last two weeks, the Anthony Bobrow Trust has, in its second round of donations this year, donated a total of \$250,000 to

four separate community organizations, according to co-trustee Harvey Meissner.

The trust has already made smaller donations this year totalling about \$10,000.

Beneficiary organizations in this round of donations are Legacy Counseling Center, AIDS Services of Dallas, Dallas Hope Charities and AIN. Each agency received a check for \$62,500.

The Anthony Bobrow Trust owns and is funded in part by proceeds from The Hidden Door, of which Meissner is president and general manager. Jim "Pollock" Roberts opened the bar in 1979 and owned it until his death in 1988. Anthony "Tony" Bobrow, a long-time employee, took over as owner of the bar then and as manager of the Jim Roberts Trust. When Bobrow died in February 2018, the bar and the rest of his estate went to the Bobrow Trust, with Meissner as president and general manager of The Hidden Door and as co-trustee of the Bobrow Trust.

Following Bobrow's wishes, Meissner and his co-trustee then closed out

the Jim Roberts Trust by donating its assets and developed a plan to make ongoing donations to LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS community organizations from the assets of the Bobrow Trust.

Although the Hidden Door has been shuttered since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Meissner said this week that the bar and the trust are "legally separate entities," and that the trust is "well-funded and able to continue its donations without Hidden Door revenues."

That does not mean, however, that Meissner and Hidden Door staff are not working toward re-opening the bar. They just intend to do so in the safest possible manner.

"Dallas is still recording 200-plus new [COVID-19] cases and 20 or so deaths each day," Meissner said in a statement. "Hidden Door doesn't think it's safe to re-open, even with precautions, until those numbers go down and more of our community is vaccinated."

He said the bar does have a target date for re-opening in mind, but that date is dependent on "the rate of new infections and deaths continuing to drop." And even after the bar re-opens, "The policy of being open every legal hour will probably be curbed for the time-being."

Meissner said he hopes to announce specifics soon.

— Tammye Nash



Harvey Meissner and Evie Scrivner from Dallas Hope Charities



Harvey Meissner with Brook Henderson from Legacy Counseling Center



Harvey Meissner, left, and Christopher Turman from AIDS Services Of Dallas



Harvey Meissner, right, with Steven Pace of AIN



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DIY Tutorial: How to build a backyard bar

BROOKE CRIBBS | Cribbs Style

Courtesy of Homes.com/Blog



Move over, DIY firepits: We're building a backyard bar! Perfect for entertaining or even storage, this DIY project works for indoor and outdoor spaces, and with the weather starting to warm up, that means more outdoor time is definitely on the agenda. And while we're not sure what these next few months may look like for entertaining, it's still nice to have some fun outdoor amenities.

If you've thought about sprucing up your outdoor entertaining area, what better way than by making your own backyard bar? Whatever your beverages of choice, this easy DIY project will give you plenty of options for your outside, or even inside, lifestyle. Take a look!

The \$600 Inspiration

I found the inspiration for this piece floating around the internet, and it got me thinking how it would be a perfect addition for our own home. But, the \$600 price tag was way too much for my budget; I was confident I could make it for a fraction of the cost. I wanted to keep it simple, so I've kept the steps relatively short, using straight cuts. Be sure to follow all the guidelines and safety precautions when using power tools. And be sure to protect your eyes, ears, mouth and nose around power tools, saw dust and paints or stains.

The Supply List

- Solid wood board, 1-inch x 16-inch x 3-feet (I'm using a teak project panel I found at Lowe's, but any wood will do)
- (2) 2-inch x 4-inch x 8-foot studs
- (8) 1-inch x 4-inch x 8-foot boards
- 1.75-inch wood screws (my favorite are Power Pro #8 exterior screws)
- 1.5-inch finish screws
- 4 wheels (these are optional, but adding them can give you an outdoor and indoor bar)
- 100-grit and 220-grit sand paper
- Exterior paint or stain

Start building

To make the legs, I started out by cutting four 2x4s into 38.5-inch pieces.

NOTE: To make painting or staining easier, I would recommend doing it after you've made all of your cuts. It also makes it easier to use a paint sprayer for all the difficult nooks and crannies that might pop up. If you wait until it's all assembled, it may be difficult to get paint or stain in all the areas evenly.

I then cut six 2x4s into 9-inch pieces for supports for the legs. Using the wood screws, I secured these pieces at the top and bottom of the two 2x4 pieces to create two rectangles.

For the width of the bar, I cut the 1x4 boards into nine 35-inch pieces. I spaced the boards using a piece of the 1x4 board. The edges of these boards should line up the edge of your rectangle pieces you made for the legs.

I worked one row at a time to secure the side pieces as well, using the same spacing method as the front. The side pieces fit inside the front piece to give a wrapped look.

If you want to add a middle shelf inside the bar for storage, measure down from the top, about 14 inches, and secure the remaining two 9-inch pieces to be the support of the shelf. This is a personal preference, but a shelf can also add additional support to your bar.

At the bottom of the bar, and in the middle where I attached the support piece, I used two 30-inch pieces of 1x4 for the middle shelf and two 32.75-inch boards for the bottom shelf.

Once everything was assembled, I sanded the entire piece, first using 100-grit sandpaper then finishing with 220-grit sandpaper.

After I spray painted the bar, I attached the wheels. If you'd like to include wheels, be sure to space them out evenly on the bottom as the front of the bar may be a bit heavier and will need proper weight distribution among the wheels.

Next, I attached the piece of teak board on top, making sure it lined up evenly with the back of the bar and that there was an overhang on the front. I also made sure the overhang on the sides was even too. I attached the top using four finish exterior wood screws.

I would recommend a couple coats of an exterior waterproof sealer on your wood bar. If you decide to stain, make sure that it's protected as well.

For the final touch, I added a bottle opener, and voila!

I love how this bar turned out, and the best part is that it cost less than \$200 to build. My favorite feature is the wheels, which allow me to use it inside my home if the weather is less than ideal.

I also love that it's so customizable; you can add other accessories, like a towel bar or a wire rack to hold wine glasses. The possibilities are endless.

Maybe drinks aren't your thing; if that's the case, this doesn't have to be a backyard bar. You can use it however you see fit. For example, it could be a great plant stand that you could move inside during the colder months, or handy storage for bug spray and sunscreen to keep close by during warmer months spent outside.

It truly is the perfect addition to any backyard. ■

Brooke Cribbs has a lifestyle blog called Cribbs Style (CribbsStyle.com), and she currently lives in Charleston, S.C. A wife, mom of two human children and three fur children, she enjoys all things DIY and organizing, and she loves helping others tackle the chaos of life.



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North Haven rises

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer

taffet@dallasvoice.com

The nursery recovered from the 2019 tornado, then a pandemic, a freeze and a blocked Suez Canal have contributed to a crazy year

When the 2019 tornado destroyed all of the buildings at North Haven Gardens, it gave the staff the chance to re-imagine the 70-year-old nursery.

General Manager Cody Hoya said that when the tornado hit northwest Dallas two years ago, trees were overturned, and greenhouses were bent. But underneath the rubble, North Haven employees found undisturbed flats of African violets. On top of that, historical photos were saved, and the art gallery fared pretty well.

They were able to salvage enough to hold a clearance sale before the rebuilding began.

Today, North Haven is transitioning to the third generation of the family that has owned the business, which opened on this spot in 1951 before Northaven Road was paved and when Central Expressway was still two lanes this far north.

Hoya said he was proud of the diversity of its staff that has always employed Blacks, even when Dallas was strictly segregated. And today, almost a third of its employees are members of the LGBT community. He's also proud of founder Ralph Pinkus' role as a founder of the Dallas Arboretum.



North Haven Gardens General Manager Cody Hoya

A new vision

"The tornado gave us the opportunity to apply a new vision," Hoya said.

For years, when a new office was needed, an extension was slapped onto one of the existing buildings. Now, new buildings are efficiently designed, leaving more room for plants. Other amenities — like the cafe and new retail space — have been built, and the interiors are being finished out now. They're set to open in June.

But even though North Haven Gardens is open, the nursery is facing what Hoya called a global shortage of plants. While the tornado of 2019 affected the nursery locally, the global COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on the garden industry around the world.

Hoya said there are global shipping issues as well as supply issues. There's a cardboard shortage. There's a shortage of metal used in everything from wind chimes to tomato cages that was caused by a stuck freighter that closed the Suez Canal for a week.

In addition, demand has increased because of a houseplant craze Hoya attributes to the pandemic and people working at home. People haven't been able to spend their disposable income on travel or eating out, so people have spent more money on improving their homes. That includes adding indoor plants to new home offices and spending more time outside in the garden.

And after the historic Winter Storm Uri in February, spring plants are flying off the shelf as people replace what was killed by the deep freeze. Fortunately, Hoya said, North Haven didn't lose too much of its inventory during that nearly unprecedented cold snap.

And this whole series of events adds up to a spring that Hoya described as "bat-shit off-the-wall crazy."

When the pandemic began, customers turned to North Haven to provide a replacement for fresh pro-



duce that suddenly became scarce at the supermarket. Of course, not all vegetables grow at the same time of year or in one place.

But Hoya said his staff can make good recommendations for what herbs and vegetables to grow at that time during the year. February and March, he said, are good months to plant tomatoes, which won't grow or produce during our summer heat.

But, "When it's out of planting season, it's gone," Hoya said of the herbs and vegetables.

He added that his nursery experts will need to know type of soil the customer is dealing with — most of Dallas sits on clay and loam — and how much sunlight the plants will get. So customers should come ready to provide that information.

Flower gardens

When it comes to flower gardens, Hoya said, "Beauty isn't enough anymore."

The trend these days is to support pollinators and butterflies and to use native species. Milkweed, for example, feeds monarch butterflies as they migrate north from Mexico. To help keep the bee population healthy, reduce use of pesticides and plant a garden that blooms throughout the season. Hoya said to even consider what's considered to be weeds to flower to support the bees.

What will grow in your yard depends on amount of sunlight or shade the area gets and how rich the soil is. Composting is always recommended, but if you don't have the time or patience to recycle your clippings as they decompose into mulch,

pick up some bags of organic matter to work into the soil.

Again, which blooming plants should go into your yard? New varieties of old favorites have been developed, so ask a garden specialist.

And what about the garden perfectionist? "Indoors or outdoors, go easy on yourself," Hoya said. "Nature isn't something one masters. It's something you participate in."

"Plants are like people. Each has a personality," he said.

But Hoyas' best gardening advice is to be informed: Just get to know your plants. ■



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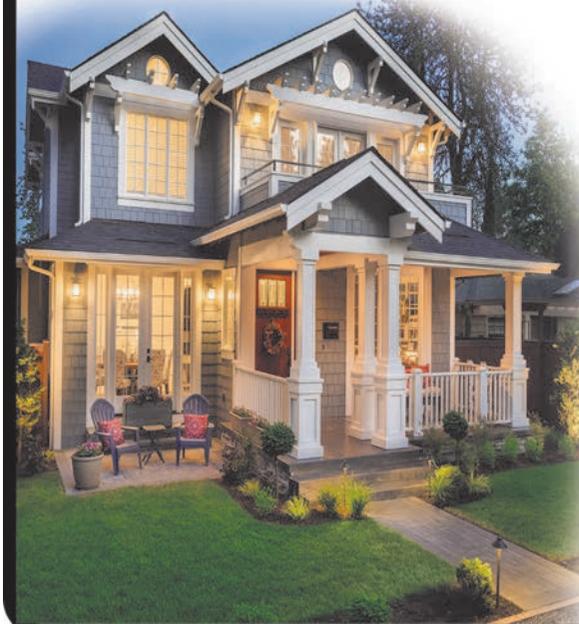
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A muscular man wearing a yellow hard hat is the central focus of the image. He is shirtless and looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background shows a construction site with a large yellow crane and a building under construction against a clear blue sky.

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DIY Recommendations: The best and worse projects for DIYers to try

BROOKE CRIBBS | Cribbs Style

Courtesy of Homes.com/Blog

We love DIY. But let's be honest: Some projects should be left to the pros. Taking on do-it-yourself home projects is incredibly satisfying, if not empowering. But some projects are simply too complicated for the average DIYer considering that they can potentially impact the integrity, safety and resale value of your home. If you're a homeowner, check out this list of the best and worst projects for DIY so you can decide which route is best for the next project.

Worst: Flooring

Replacing flooring yourself can be tricky, especially if you're a DIY newbie. There are a wide variety of flooring choices, but what's most important is how they are installed. Something like luxury vinyl plank flooring is very forgiving for a person new to DIY.

But anything that needs to be glued down — like some wood, linoleum or tile options — may be better left to a professional installation.

The last thing you want is to have uneven flooring or inadequate protection from elements like heat, cold, moisture and even insects. This also includes installing carpet, since there are special tools and techniques that keep carpets tight and secure.

Best: Paint Projects

No "best and worst projects for DIY list" would be complete without mentioning painting. Perhaps the most popular choice for DIYers, painting your space is a budget-friendly project, especially given how impactful it is.

Paint protects your space indoors and can shield your home's exterior from the elements. But, even though it's a simpler DIY project, doing it wrong could negatively affect your home's look and even its sale value.

Follow these tips for a smooth paint process:

- Make sure you know what sheen of paint works best for the area you're focusing on. For example, painting your bathroom will require a sheen and paint formulation meant for high moisture.
- Have the right supplies. Using the wrong kind of brush or roller can make or break your paint project.
- Don't hesitate to ask a professional or the person at the paint counter at your local home store for their advice.
- Grab a friend to help, but don't forget to wear your masks! It'll go by much faster with a trusted companion working alongside you.



Worst: Porches and decks

Lots of thought and planning are required for a successful porch or deck build. After all, the last thing that you want is for the structure to collapse and cause injury. Equally important is how it's attached to your home and making sure it's structurally sound so it won't damage your property. This is why a building permit is usually required to construct them.

To maintain this high level of integrity calls for at least a basic knowledge of construction skills and materials, plus access to the heavy-duty tools required to do the job. For those reasons and their major implications for safety, we definitely recommend a professional for porches and decks if you're newer to DIY.

Best: Backsplash Tile

Adding or changing backsplash tile is the perfect beginner DIY project because it's a simpler way to learn the ins and outs of tile work. Usually, areas with backsplash are smaller compared to shower walls or floors and can be a little more forgiving if you make a mistake.

To make DIY backsplash even easier, there are peel-and-stick tile options available that require no thin set or grout. Some don't even require a tile saw to cut the product. Easy peasy!

Worst: Electrical Work

Basic electrical work, like swapping out ceiling fans or lights, is doable for most new DIYers. On the other hand, rewiring your lights completely or adding new electrical systems to your home are complex tasks and are definitely something to leave in the hands of a licensed electrician.

Wiring fixtures can mean the difference between safety and peace of mind and an electrical fire that damages the home or worse, causes injury or death. If you've got your eyes on a more extensive electrical project, let the pros handle it.

Worst: Structural Changes

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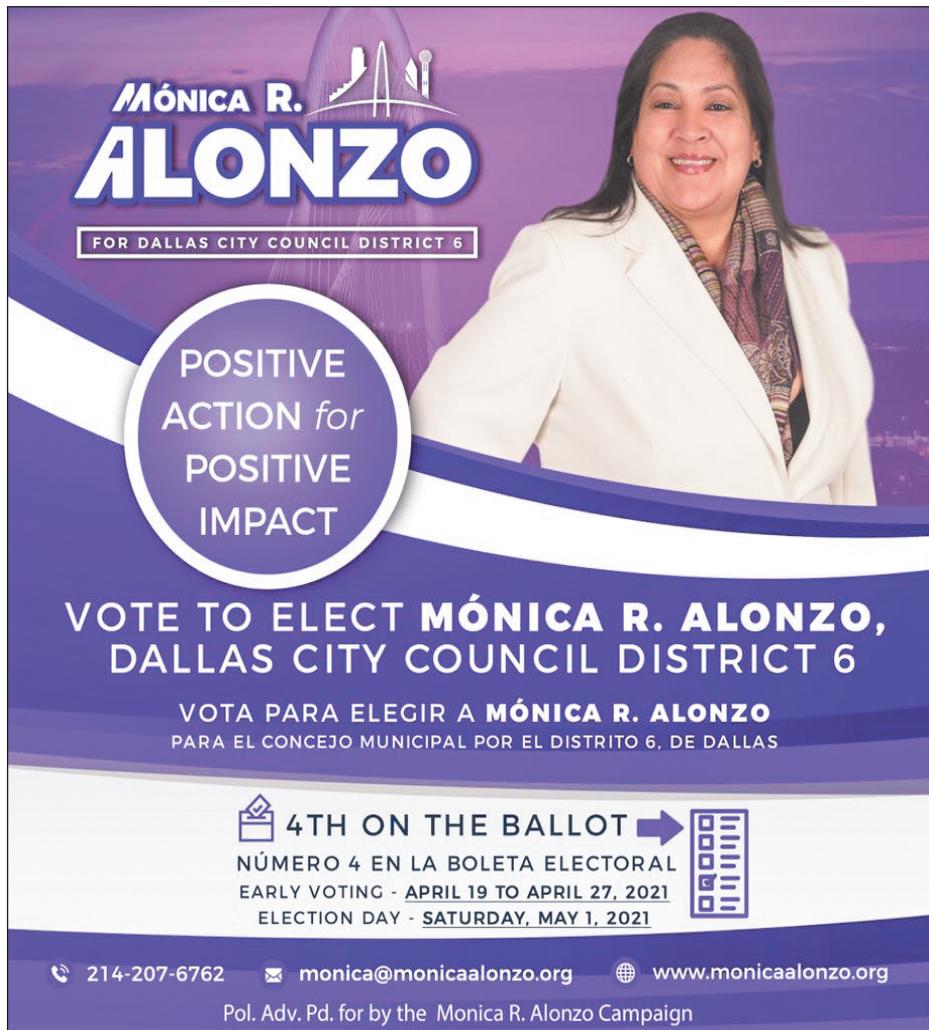
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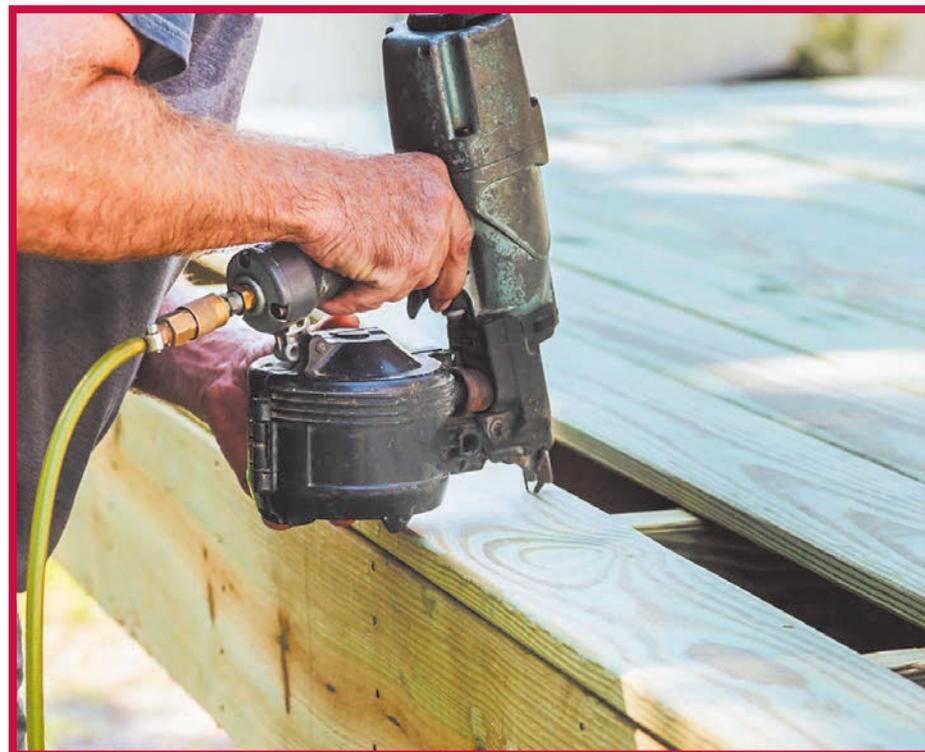
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BEST/WORSE, From Page 26

open up a room, this is definitely something to hand over to a professional. Depending on your project, you'll need proper permitting and inspections to ensure the space is up to code.

Even if you want to remove a wall from within your home (they make it look so simple on HGTV, don't they?), you need to know if it's load-bearing (meaning, the weight of the floor above it or the weight of the roof line is literally resting on that wall). Remove a load bearing wall and your home could potentially collapse. So this is something best left for a professional.

Best AND Worst: Roof repairs

It's helpful to know how to fix minor roof damage and to know proper safety protocols for working on your roof. That's because not fixing your roof correctly could not only compromise its integrity but also put the inside of your home in danger of extensive damage.

Issues like a loose shingle are relatively simple fixes that you can typically DIY; plus, this type of proactive maintenance can extend the life of the roof. But for issues like extensive leaks, major storm damage or structural sagging, a roofing expert should be your go-to. They can diagnose the issue, give

options for safe and sturdy repair and provide you with a ballpark cost estimate so you aren't caught off guard (something we can't promise if you try to DIY it).

The Bottom Line

Even though a professional might be a better option for your home project, it doesn't mean the project is impossible for you to DIY. It just means that you need to take extra caution and care to understand the project scope and what the implications are if something goes wrong.

If you're not sure about something, it's always better to invest the money to have projects done correctly, so mistakes or overlooked issues don't end up costing you even more later.

While DIY is meant to be rewarding, protecting your investment should always be your number one priority.

For more DIY tips, be sure to subscribe to Homes.com's bi-monthly newsletter and check Homes.com for all things DIY-related.

Brooke Cribbs has a lifestyle blog called Cribbs Style (CribbsStyle.com), and she currently lives in Charleston, S.C. A wife, mom of two human children and three fur children, she enjoys all things DIY and organizing, and she loves helping others tackle the chaos of life.



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The new LGBTQ Real Estate Alliance is holding its first fundraiser. DFW Chapter President Bob McCranie said his group is partnering with Dallas Hope Charities and its LGBTQ homeless youth center and transitional living program.

The LGBTQ Real Estate Alliance has about 7 chapters around the country. The newly formed DFW chapter just held its second meeting.

According to McCranie, addressing LGBTQ homelessness is a core mission of the organization and who better to fight homelessness than real estate professionals who deal with housing all the time.

The fundraising event for Dallas Hope Charities is called UNITY and will be hosted by Marsha Dimes and her cast of performers on May 19 at 7 p.m. The stream will be broadcast on YouTube and at MarshaDimes.com/unity. You can make a donation at that link at anytime.



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Saving the next George Floyd



By the time Chauvin's knee was on Floyd's neck, it was too late. We must stop the knee from reaching the neck

There was no saving George Floyd. We all saw the look on Derek Chauvin's face. It was the face I've seen way too much of: the face of childhood bullies that terrorize smaller kids before beating them up, just for kicks.

I wonder if, after growing up and getting out of school, some of those bullies who didn't end up in jail (or worse) maybe decided to join a police department somewhere.

Watching the video, it is clear Chauvin wasn't going to take his knee off of George Floyd's neck. He seems like one of the types who would keep it there longer just because people are begging him not to.

I took a class sometime back in "By-stander Intervention Techniques." I learned a lot. For instance, there are the five "Ds":

- Distract — Start a conversation with the victim, get them away from the oppressor.

- Delegate — Ask for help; maybe have someone grab a store manager or ask someone to call police while you monitor the situation.

- Document — Cell phone video, as we've seen, can be very helpful.

- Delay — Check in with the victim after the fact; make sure they are OK.

- Direct — Intervene directly, which is the riskiest tactic.

These are all great techniques; some or all are useful most of the time. But what



Leslie McMurray
Accidental Activist

about this time? The only available choice in the George Floyd murder was to "Document" — which bystanders did.

What they documented was a murder. There was no saving George Floyd.

There was no "distracting" or talking to George Floyd; he was busy being murdered.

Delegate? That's a joke. The people you are supposed to be able to call for help were already there. They were there committing the murder.

Delay? There was no checking in afterward. There was no getting Mr. Floyd to safety. There was no saving George Floyd.

But what about that last "D"? What about "Direct"? Let's talk about that.

My first impulse would have been to physically shove Chauvin off of Mr. Floyd to get that knee off his neck. Except that the knee belonged to a police officer ... with a gun ... surrounded by other police officers ... with guns.

History tells us that physically laying hands on an officer trying to subdue a suspect could very well get you shot, tased or, if you're really lucky, arrested and charged with assaulting a peace officer, which is a third-degree felony, and interference with public duties, a Class B Misdemeanor. And in this case, you like-

ly still would not have changed George Floyd's fate.

There was no saving George Floyd.

It should be clear by now that the way we are policed needs to change. Do not misunderstand: I am not anti-police. I have immense respect for law enforcement officers and the difficult job they do. Officers want to come home to their families at the end of their shift, just like anyone else.

But I am anti-bully. I am anti-civil rights violations. I am anti-racist.

Patrol officers have a really hard job, and some people are not cut out for that hard job. And people who aren't cut out for it shouldn't be doing it. A badge isn't a hunting license.

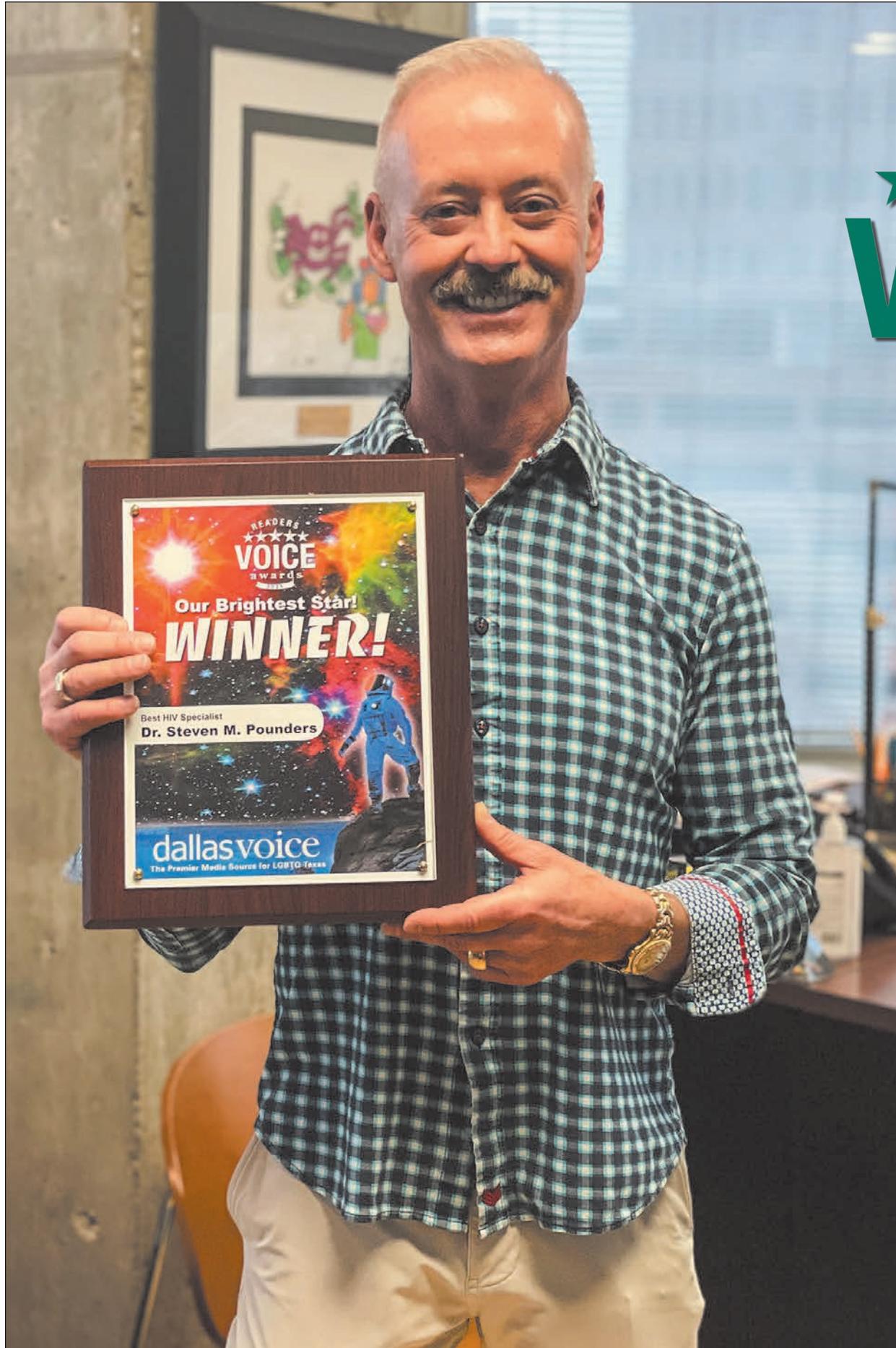
Change can come from a lot of places. But we most often look to the Justice Department or the president or the police chief. How about looking in the mirror?

Our society is made possible through a social contract; the authority of the government depends upon the consent of the governed. Are we OK with how policing is done? If not, then we need to have a voice in what kinds of changes we want to see.

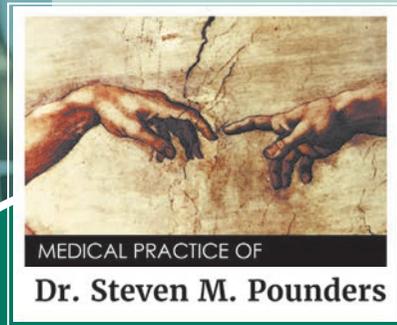
It's a delicate balance though. Training for new recruits here is six months. In Germany it's three years. Are we willing to spend more tax dollars for better trained police?

I don't have all the answers. I just have questions. And the No. 1 question on my list is, "How can we save the next George Floyd?"

McMurray is transgender education and advocacy associate at Resource Center in Dallas. She is also a regular columnist for Dallas Voice. Read more of her blogs at leslie-michelle44.wordpress.com.



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A trans teen vies for the female lead in the short film 'Juliet'

BY RICH LOPEZ

richlopezwrites@gmail.com

Director Ira Storozhenko creates tension and tenderness in her short film *Juliet* all within the span of 15 minutes. The film follows Serena, a trans teen, backstage at auditions for the lead female role in a high school production of *Romeo and Juliet*. Surrounding her are girls who judge and boys who are curious.

Storozhenko and producer Katherine D. May are seeing now what impact their twist on a classic story can make as *Juliet* is making the rounds in the film festival circuit.

The key players behind the camera were an all women team:

The director began her career as a documentarian before moving into narrative pieces like *Masterpiece*, which screened at 13 festivals internationally. May, a producer at the American Film Institute Conservatory, has a passion for spearheading female-driven stories. The screenplay was written by Wilandrea Blair, a graduate of AFI, with cinematography by Sarah Anne Pierpont.

In the midst of the film festival circuit for *Juliet*, Storozhenko took some time to talk about the film and why this story was important to tell now and how gender discrimination has hit close to home.

Dallas Voice: What specifically inspired this particular story?

Ira Storozhenko: This story came out as a mix of different people's life experiences. It started from the idea about the girl in theater, and then it got layered up with the gender discrimination issues. It was always very important for me and my producer, Katherine D. May, to support the community and inspire everyone to believe in themselves.

How did you come to cast *Juliet*?

We were working with Russell Boast, who is an amazing casting director. He brought so many people for our consideration. Katherine and I had a variety of talents whom we were considering for the lead role — until we got *Reise's* self-tape.

How did you land on *Riese Alexander* as the title character?

I was blown away by *Reise's* performance and almost immediately knew she was the one. I called Katherine right after watching her tape, and we rewatched together. I think even back then we already knew we were going to cast her. Despite the fact that it was very complicated for the student production to bring talent (especially one who is younger than 18) from a different state, Katherine

did an amazing job accommodating all the needs.

I think *Reise* is a very unique actress, and she brought so much of her own experience once she joined the team. We'd had a few Zoom conversations before I was able to see her on set, and I was always surprised how talented she is and how mature her thoughts are.

Why the juxtaposition from first person to third person throughout the film?

Working on the visual language, Sarah Anne Pierpont, our director of photography, and I were trying to create a very subjective experience. The visual narrative was developed dictated by *Serena's* feelings and internal challenges. It was always the plan to move from a very subjective, personal camera to an objective space in the end. I wanted to emphasize the moment when *Serena's* conversation with the audience begins. Also, it was important for the visual narrative to ruin the fourth wall and make the conversation not only between *Serena* and other school kids and teachers, but between *Serena* and the audience who will be watching the movie.

Where was this filmed? The movie was filmed in Los Angeles. We were lucky to make production right before pandemic began. Finishing the movie during COVID-19 has been challenging, especially because, back then, when the virus just hit the planet, nobody really knew what

to do and how to navigate the process in the new circumstances. We've faced many different obstacles, but it always felt positive and hopeful because everyone was working hard as a team to get the movie done.

We could not bring *Reise* back for a post-sync automated dialogue replacement session, and Melody Gun Sound Studios made it possible to have a distant session, where it almost felt to me like we were all in the same room.

I do really want to credit Katherine, the principal team and all our post-production houses for an amazing job during stressful times.

Why was this story important for you to tell?

I've been trying to tell this story for a very long time. It has come through different versions, people, even countries — never was possible to make it in Russia. I was always keeping it as my dream project until it was possible to make.

I was a lot less confident before the AFI Conservatory program. AFI Conservatory helped me to grow. When the time came to my thesis project, there was so much encouragement and self-belief in me. I think that, subconsciously, I felt like it was the right time. I was finally able to look back at my past traumatic experience and analyze it. And I just had a feeling that I must share it with people to encourage everyone who ever felt the same way.

What is some gender discrimination that perhaps you've experienced that helped navigate this film? I grew up in Russia during the 2000s. It was dangerous even to think that you may be different from others by your feelings and beliefs. Since my teenage years, I did not feel like I would be defining myself by specific gender. I did have issues with my peers

and older fellows. At some point I became a joke, and I had to live with a cliché that "Ira is a weirdo." It was very painful back then, and I am not sure if I have been still able to fully recover.

What helped during the process of creating the movie is a good understanding of fear and how it reflects your internal world. The idea of Serena being silent came from

the life experience when you wish you could stand out for yourself but you can't respond back because of how deeply scared and emotionally unsafe you are.

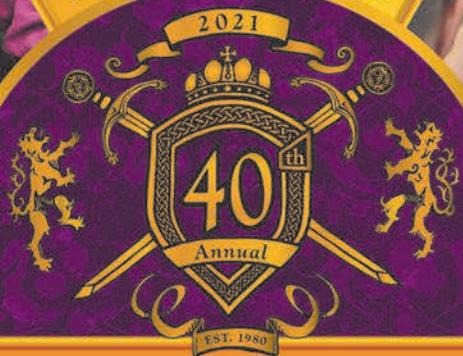
After the festival circuit, how/when will general audiences be able to see the film? After the festival circuit the movie will be available on Vimeo. It is our goal to make it easy to access for the audi-

ence so everyone can watch it and get some inspiration. Since the film is getting accepted into more and more festivals every week, it is a bit hard to tell when it will be released online. I would say in the next half a year we will probably make it available for everyone to watch.

View the trailer at [YouTube.com/watch?v=ySrdjoHjx9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySrdjoHjx9w)



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Playing for laughs and love

Gay writer Paul Rudnick talks about his latest novel 'Playing the Palace'

GREGG SHAPIRO | Contributing Writer
GreggShapiro@AOL.com

Let's be honest, there are not many writers — gay or straight, of books, plays or screenplays — who are as hysterically funny as Paul Rudnick. In plays including *Jeffrey* and *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, movies such as *Sister Act*, *Addams Family Values* and *In & Out*, as well as the novels *Social Disease* and *I'll Take It* (my personal favorite), Rudnick has kept us in stitches from start to finish.

Combining wit and wisdom, Rudnick also gives us much to think about while we are laughing. His new novel, *Playing The Palace* (Berkley/Jove, 2021), is no exception, and it couldn't be more timely: Nice, gay, Jewish, New Jersey guy Carter has an unexpected encounter with nice, gay, British royal Prince Edgar, and a regal love affair is launched, presented in true rom-com fashion.

Rudnick was kind enough to answer a few questions shortly before the May 2021 publication of the book.

Dallas Voice: The publication of your new novel *Playing The Palace* is especially timely with all the recent increased interest in the royals due to Harry and Meghan's departure. What do you think the royals would think of *Playing The Palace*? Paul Rudnick: I'd hope that Meghan and Harry would enjoy *Playing The Palace*, especially because the book celebrates a romance between an American and a royal. No one knows for sure if the royals

watch *The Crown*, but I'd like to picture copies of *Playing The Palace* on a few royal nightstands and tucked into royal tote bags!

There is an abundance of "royalty jokes," as they are called on page 75. Are these the kinds of things you've been curating over the years or were they written specifically for the book? Here's something I've always wondered, which inspired *Playing The Palace*: If a commoner falls in love with a royal, what are the rules? Wearing a crown and waving from a balcony can be both glorious and bizarre; are royals allowed to talk about this? A sense of humor is essential for romance, so in *Playing The Palace*, NYC event planner Carter Ogden and Prince Edgar love to exchange wisecracks, some of which I've hoarded over the years, but most of which popped up as I wrote the book.

I've always wanted to know: If someone's involved with a prince, is it okay to say, "It's your turn to unload the dishwasher, Your Highness"?

IHOP figures prominently in the book. Are you a pancake patron? I'm a HUGE fan of IHOP. I grew up in New Jersey, where a trip to a local IHOP was always a treat. One of the reasons I fell in love with my partner was our mutual addiction to IHOP; one of our first dates was at a Philadelphia IHOP. IHOPs represent a great American innovation: breakfast all day.

What's your favorite syrup in the IHOP syrup tray? I'm partial to the maple-flavored syrup, but I enjoy looking at all the varieties in the syrup caddy. My partner and I recently visited a socially distanced IHOP and it felt wonderful.

Another recurring theme in the book is the presence of Carter's spirit guide, the late SCOTUS Justice Ruth

Bader Ginsberg. How do you think she would feel about being a character in *Playing the Palace*?

I'd hope that Justice Ginsberg would have a great time with *Playing The Palace*, in which she appears as an icon of justice, hard work and equality.

She had a great sense of humor and was a passionate fan of

the arts — especially opera and the theater. Carter Ogden reveres Ruth as a down-to-earth hero, and he confides in a treasured photograph of her. I picture Justice Ginsberg in heaven, laughing and passing around her copy of *Playing The Palace*!

Everyone is funny, especially James and Queen Catherine. How do you decide who gets the funniest lines when you are writing? As a comic writer, I like all of my characters to be funny. James and Queen Catherine are both fiendishly smart, and use humor for joy and balance, while other characters, who take themselves a bit too seriously, become funny in their own ways.



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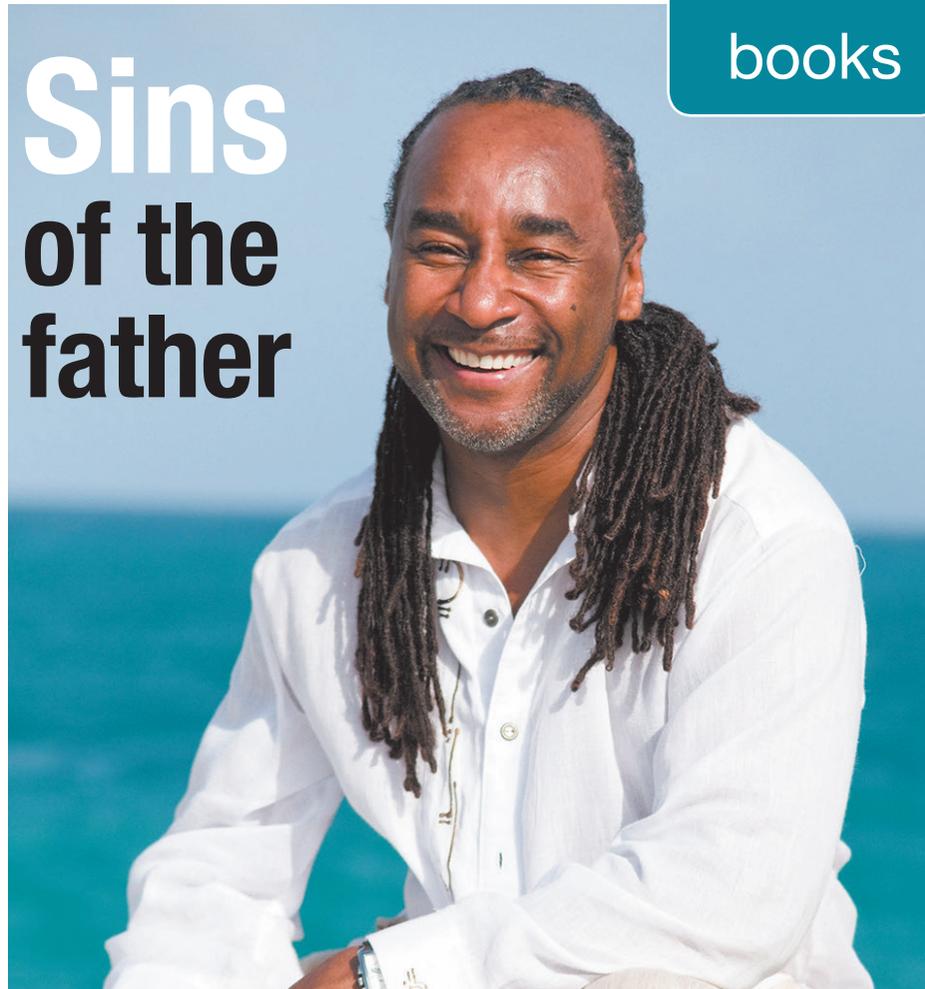
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***The Son of Mr. Suleman*, by Eric
Jerome Dickey; c.2021, Dutton, \$27;
560 pages**

The sins of the father shall be visit-
ed upon the son.

That's what's said, that a son
pay for his father's misdeeds. But may-
be the old man didn't intend to leave a
negative legacy. Maybe he tried his best,
but something went wrong. Maybe, as
in the new novel *The Son of Mr. Suleman*
by Eric Jerome Dickey, Pops meant well.

Adjunct Professor Pi Suleman didn't
want to be at his employer's event. He
had better things to do, better places to
be than a room at UAN. But his boss —
the white woman who hired him, the
wife of a powerful judge — demanded
that he be there or else.

Like a fool, he'd taken gifts from her,
things given in what he understood
was an effort to make his job easier. She
was helpful to him, but it came with a
price: Whenever she wanted to sexually
assault him, she did. And when she
threatened to say that he was to blame,

there was little
a Black man
from Memphis
could do.

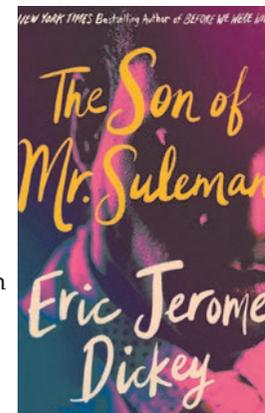
Meeting
Gemma Buck-
ingham was
the only good
thing to happen
at that UAN

event. She was
one of the most
beautiful wom-
en Pi had ever
seen, this child of London and Africa,
and he wanted to know her better. Even
when she mentioned that she was a fan
of his father — a man who impregnated
Pi's mother and then disappeared, a
famous man, a writer Pi had never met
but hated — Pi still wanted to know
Gemma Buckingham.

She was coy with him, teasing him
with information and curves. She was
apparently well-off, and she didn't care
that Pi wasn't yet tenured, didn't have
the salary he needed, drove an old car.

Yes, she had secrets, but then, so did
he. And the white woman who was
blowing up his phone with demands
and traps and tricks was the secret who
was going to pay.

There is an old rule for writers that



■ LOVE From Page 34

Carter and Edgar share a sense of humor, which is a great basis for their love; Carter's more extravagantly funny, while Edgar's stealthy, so they make an ideal team.

In chapters 13 and 16 you demonstrate an admirably tasteful way of writing scenes of sexual intimacy. What are the challenges and rewards of writing sex scenes? Writing sex scenes can be tricky and can easily turn clunky. I wanted the sex in *Playing The Palace* to be passionate and lighthearted, as an extension of Carter's and Edgar's feelings for each other. While leaving certain aspects to the reader's imagination, I wanted to make sure that Carter and Edgar had a great time, whether in Carter's tsiny NYC apartment bedroom or onboard the royal jet.

Late in the book, there is a chapter — Chapter 28 — that turns serious and provides a kind of historical perspective. Please say something about your decision to include that. There have been many wonderful books about coming out, but I wanted *Playing The Palace* to be a celebration of exuberantly open and empowered gay lives. On the other hand, I needed an awareness of how recently such lives have become possible.

Throughout history, there have always been LGBTQ people, who've often faced overwhelming prejudice. There have also been valiant LGBTQ heroes, who've fought tirelessly for equality. Carter and Edgar recognize their privilege, and they honor their forebears.

On the whole, the tone of the novel is such that it could appeal to younger readers. What would it mean to you to reach that prized YA readership? I welcome any and all readers. I especially love presenting the possibility of joyous queer romance to younger readers; I've written YA and found these readers to

says, "Kill your darlings," meaning that a good writer should eliminate unneeded passages and overused phrases.

If you've ever read anything by the late author Eric Jerome Dickey (he died of cancer on Jan. 3, just over three months before this, his last novel will be published on April 20), you know that he generally ignored that advice; *The Son of Mr. Suleman*, filled as this brick-sized novel is with "darlings," is no exception.

And yet, it's hard to even *slightly* dislike a story that makes its characters tackle DWB, racism, classism, white supremacy, ill-placed power, and a dozen

be open, curious and wildly smart, so I'd be thrilled if they shared *Playing The Palace* with every possible generation.

Given your history in cinema, who would you like to see portray Carter and Edgar in a movie version of *Playing the Palace*? If *Playing The Palace* ever became a movie, there are so many wonderful actors — including more and more out actors — who could play the leads. I'm too superstitious to make predictions, but I will say that the fantastically-talented Michael Urie has just done an amazing job of recording the audio version of *Playing The Palace*.

I keep picturing Dame Judi Dench as Queen Catherine. Is she the actress you would choose for that role? Like every writer alive, I'd be delighted to have Judi Dench play any role she'd like. Dame Judi is regal, a little scary and hilarious, all qualities which she shares with Queen Catherine.

Do you foresee more books with Carter and Edgar? In *Playing The Palace* Carter and Edgar are at the beginning of their life together, which promises to be an epic adventure. I'd love to chart their progress, so who knows?

Have you started thinking about your next book, movie or stage project? I'm in the middle of writing a new novel, and I've got a play that will premiere at the LaJolla Playhouse in California next year. There are TV and movie projects in the works as well, but as I've said, I'm too superstitious to go into details just yet. I did write a monologue which was just performed by the superb Nathan Lane at a Broadway theater, before a socially distanced audience of health-care and theater workers, as part of the NY PopsUp Festival, a series of events devoted to welcoming people back to live performances. Onwards!

other societal issues between bodice-ripping erotica and page-ripping thrills. It's hard to let go of a book that makes you absolutely, one-hundred-percent *need* to know what happens next.

The surprise is that Dickey does all this as he pushes readers to accept a degree of discomfort: Unlike with his past novels, the sex isn't always sexy here, and the thrills are more threatening than thrilling.

Be prepared to be turned every which way with this book. Be set to let *The Son of Mr. Suleman* eat up your weekend. Just be ready, because missing it would be a sin. ■



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Watch on facebook.com/BlackTieDinner or BlackTie.org

APRIL 29, 2021 | 6PM CST

Black Tie Dinner is thrilled to embark on another trailblazing year of fundraising initiatives to support the North Texas LGBTQ non-profit community. After 39 years and nearly \$26 million dollars raised for the North Texas LGBTQ community and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, Black Tie Dinner will celebrate its historic 40th Black Tie Experience presented by BBVA in 2021.

Join Black Tie Dinner as they digitally kick off the 2021 fundraising year on Thursday, April 29th at 6PM CST, live on Black Tie Dinner's Facebook page and BlackTie.org. Co-Chairs, Brad Pritchett & Terry Loftis, will be bringing you exciting Black Tie Dinner news, the announcement of the 2021 beneficiaries and other surprises highlighting Black Tie Dinner's mission to educate, empower & entertain.

Find out more by going to BlackTie.org!

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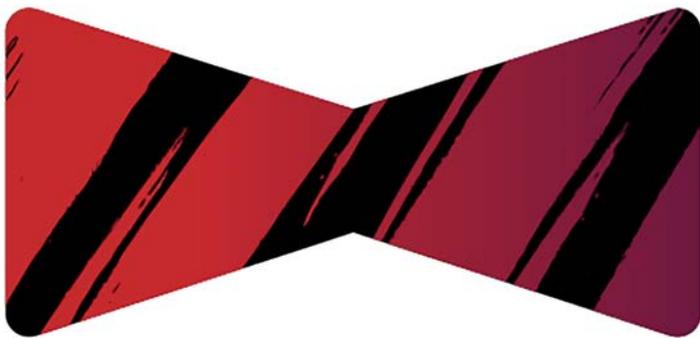
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SAT 04.24

Mikey Abrams of Texas Pride Reality and **Madeline Collins** host “Let’s Go Fly a Kite,” a free, outdoor family-friendly and socially-distanced event, with four-legged family members also welcome. Registration for the event is free, and those who register are entered in a drawing for a \$50 gift card. Visit facebook.com/events/822691918456914/ for more information and for the link to register. 1-4 p.m., at Hoblitzelle Park, 7500 Red River Drive in Plano.



BLACK TIE DINNER

April 29

Black Tie Dinner kicks off its 2021 fundraising year — leading up to the 40th annual BTM — with a digital event announcing this year’s theme, beneficiaries and more. 6 p.m.; watch online at facebook.com/BlackTieDinner or at BlackTie.org.



SUN 04.25

Help North Texas Pride Foundation crown the new King and Queen of Drag at the King and Queen Pageant Brunch at El Noa Noa Tex-Mex restaurant. Seating is limited, and reservations are required. There will be entertainment, live and silent auctions, door prizes and great Tex-Mex food. In honor of the 2020 Queen, Sable Alexander, who died earlier this year of COVID-19, everyone attending will be required to wear a mask when not eating or drinking; temperatures will be taken at the door, and hand sanitizer will be available. Contestants and entertainers will be wearing masks, and all safety standards will be enforced. Tickets are \$30. Visit facebook.com/events/488661758819960/ for information and reservations. El Noa Noa Tex-Mex Restaurant, 1915 N. Central Expressway; doors open at 1 p.m., show begins 2 p.m.

Cassie Nova

Considering the gender spectrum

Hello my friends. I hope this day finds you fabulous. I woke up in a good mood, ready to take on the world. I didn't even let a little random dog vomit ruin it for me; I cleaned it up with only one dry heave. Add coffee and a random funny meme, and my day is off and going with a smile.

The weather today is too chilled to take my coffee on the veranda — the chill and the fact that we don't have a veranda. So today I will try to educate an old queen by listening to a young one. I love that some of you still come to me for advice. I received the following this week: Miss Cassie Nova,

I just wanted to tell you that I really enjoy your column in *The Voice*. It is well written, insightful and very funny. I can't remember reading a bad one. My favorite is the column on shots/Tire Fire! You should have a collection of short stories published. That is not flattery; it is true. I have thought about telling you this in person at the Rose Room, but I always lose my nerve. I'm not shy; it just sounds odd coming out of nowhere during a show when you are multitasking.

My question is this: Gender designations today — fluid, non-binary, pansexual, cisgender, they, them, etc. (Should ETC be considered as a gender designation as well???)

I fully understand, and I agree that each person should have the right, the personal insight and the spine to declare themselves to be what they want to be and what they are. The eyes of the world are on us no matter what, and my little light does shine! It is, however, becoming increasingly difficult to sift through ALL of them. Do you have any clarifying wisdom?

Remember in the "days of yore" (the 1980s) when everyone was desperately trying to figure out the handkerchief "mystery" to advertise their preference, proclivities and inclinations? Then it became a Flag; everyone/every group has a flag. The rainbow flag wasn't enough — inclusive, BUT not inclusive enough. I still haven't gotten a clear picture for either of those as of yet.

Me? I am just gay — always have been and always will be. I remember when that was enough of a controversial designation, one that could free you as well as place a target on you. And I don't feel particularly connected to these new formats. I am just an old queen. Maybe I am to just be a face in the crowd at the parade, marveling at the colors of the flags, the rainbow of people's faces and the vivid memories of my youth.

My little light a'shining! Maudlin, I know. So help me, Cassie Nova! Bring me up to date. Place me firmly in 2021!

— Befuddled Fossil Queen



Dearest BFQ,

I appreciate the compliments, and thank you for asking a question that I think a lot of people struggle with. I also think it is important to get it right, so I reached out to one of my younger, more intelligent friends to help me with my response. Her name is Kylee O'Hara Fatale, and I want to thank her for continually educating me and helping me understand my own community better.

I showed her your letter, and this is her response:

"Gender expressions and identities have always been here. To many of us, they may seem like something new the younger generation decided on, but really we are just more educated and know what to call how a

person is expressing themselves.

"I wouldn't think 'ETC' would be the nicest way to label someone. It's almost passive, like when you see 'Other' as a selection.

"People can express themselves in a certain way or a combination of ways. What's more important is that we create the norm of respecting and accepting and not live in the past, thinking there are just 'man' and 'woman.' It's also important that we are all continuing to educate ourselves.

"Here's a little trick: When you meet someone, say your name and give your pronouns, then ask them theirs. I promise you no one will get offended, and many people might thank you. It's better than just assuming someone is this or that."

Kylee is well spoken, and she is correct in her response. Now, let me say it in "from one old queen to another" style: Don't be a dick ... simple. The "ETC" comment sounds dismissive and kinda dickish. Once you know someone's pronouns, use them. It is such a simple act, but it is one that can seriously save a life.

Once you know better, do better. Let them "shine" in their way.

Being comfortable in one's skin is a struggle for so many of us, but once you can put a name to it, once you know who you are and how you identify, you feel more seen. It makes it easier for you to connect with others, especially when you find out you are not alone.

I think back to my younger self, and I realize that I never felt fully male, but I never felt fully female either. I, like so many of us, fell somewhere in the middle. If I knew then what I know now, I would have understood myself better, and my pronouns might have been different.

I think we are hearing more and more about gender identities now because we have the language to describe them, and we are finding out more ways to express the way we feel on the inside. I don't claim to know everything there is to know about sexuality and gender identities, but I think we all should be more willing to learn and to ask questions. The truth is, it can be confusing, and there are no blanket answers that apply to everyone.

The way I see it, there are more than 7 billion people on this planet, and thinking everyone will fall into the same few boxes is ridiculous. We need more boxes to check, but until then, be respectful and know it is okay not to understand everything. Their journey is different than yours, but it is just as important.

I hope this helped. Remember to always love more, bitch less and be fabulous!
XOXO, Cassie Nova

this week's solution



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scene



The Men of TMC



The elven maids are out in force at Scarborough Renaissance Festival



Mitch takes his new baby for a tour of the strip



The Birthday Girl at JR's



Whats up AI?



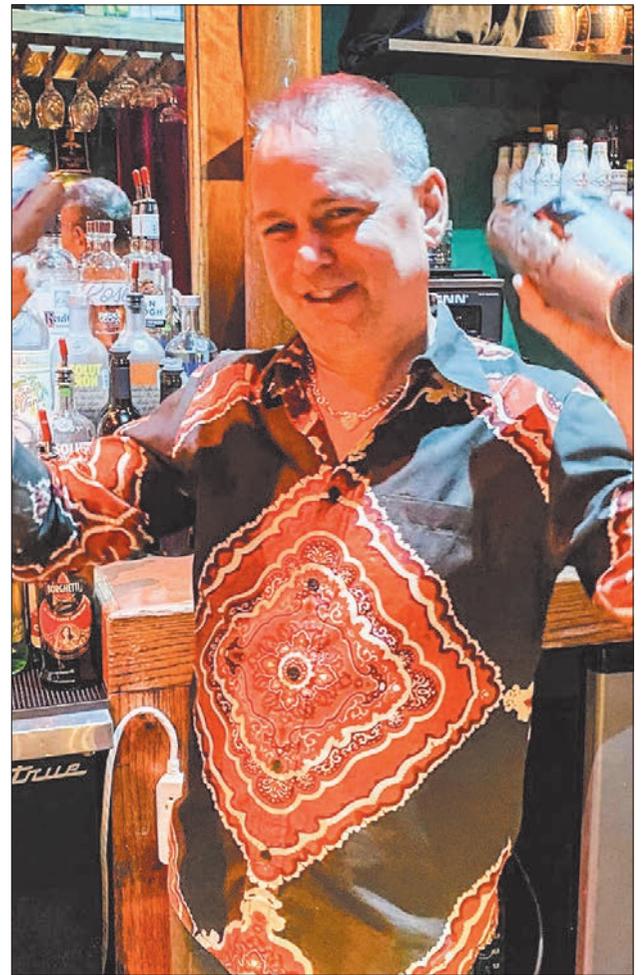
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Rocky showin' off his body-ody-ody at Round Up Saloon



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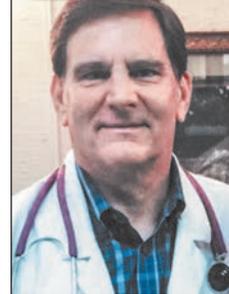


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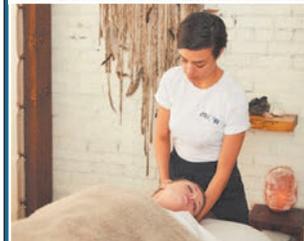


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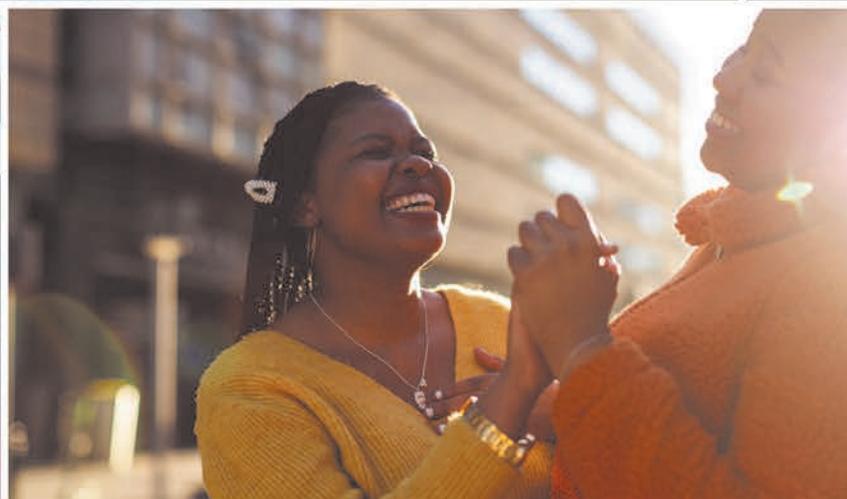
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