

# dallasvoice

The Premier Media Source for LGBTQ Texas | Established 1984 | DallasVoice.com | Volume 32 | Friday, April 2, 2021

## HATE on the homefront

Shoncy Raspberry had to fight  
homophobia, racism to open a bar  
in the Dallas Design District

by David Taffet, Page 6



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Monica Roberts

## Dallas Pride returning with outdoor, in-person celebration

Dallas Pride organizers announced Tuesday, March 30, that the Dallas Pride celebration is returning with a two-day, outdoor and in-person celebration “to raise awareness and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community.”

Events for Dallas Pride 2021 are set for Friday and Saturday, June 4-5, and those events “will be the best version of what is possible at this time, prioritizing public health while providing numerous opportunities for LGBTQ+ people and allies to experience visibility, solidarity and joy,” organizers said. In addition to the outside, in-person experiences, the event will be streamed online for those who feel more comfortable watching from home.

Events on both days will be held in the outdoor amphitheater in Dallas’ Fair Park, and gates will open at 7 p.m. Friday night’s celebration will feature musical entertainment. On Saturday night, Marsha Dimes will host a variety show featuring local and regional performers, including Kennedy Davenport, The Fly Queens, The Sisters-in-Action, the Rose Room cast, Sister Helen Holy and Anton Shaw.

More entertainers will be added to the lineup in the days to come.

Follow @DallasPride on Facebook and via the organization’s website, DallasPride.org, for more information on ticket sales and performers, and watch DallasVoice.com for updates.

— Tammye Nash

## NABJ creates new scholarship honoring Monica Roberts

The National Association of Black Journalists’ LGBTQ+ Task Force on Wednesday,

March 31, announced a new scholarship named after transgender journalist and advocate Monica Roberts of Houston, who passed away unexpectedly last year at the age of 58. The announcement came on Transgender Day of Visibility.

The Monica Roberts LGBTQ+ Task Force Scholarship is a newly established fund to support Black LGBTQ+ students studying journalism, mass communications, or otherwise interested in reporting and storytelling, according to a statement from the NABJ. It was conceived by the Task Force’s co-chairs, Tre’veil Anderson and Femi Redwood, and recently unanimously approved by NABJ’s board of directors.

“When our industry finally stops misgendering trans folks and hyperfocusing on our traumas, we’ll be able to trace such a Promised Land to the efforts of Monica Roberts,” Anderson said.

Those who want to donate to the scholarships can go to <https://tinyurl.com/ksbdszub>. Choose your donation amount and frequency — one-time or recurring — and under “Where would you like to direct your support?” select “Scholarships.” Then select “LGBTQ+ Task Force Scholarship,” complete the form and hit submit.

— Tammye Nash

## Uptown Players updates season lineup

Uptown Players this week announced that the musical *When Pigs Fly* will be replacing *Head Over Heels* from the theater company’s postponed 2020 season. Co-producer Jeff Rane explained that *Head Over Heels* is too large a production to meet “pandemic safety

protocols that remain in place for professional theaters.”

While Uptown is disappointed to have to cancel *Head Over Heels*, “We are excited to replace it with an updated version of our inaugural 2001 show, *When Pigs Fly*,” he said. “We plan to present *Head Over Heels* in a future season.”

The production team includes B.J. Cleveland as director and Kevin Gunter as musical director.

Specific performance information will be announced in May. Season ticket holders will be able to use their existing season tickets for *When Pigs Fly* and will be notified when they can call the box office to reserve seats for any of the scheduled performances.

— Tammye Nash

## 5th Circuit reverses dismissal of trans woman’s lawsuit

A three-judge panel of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday, March 29, issued a ruling reversing a lower-court ruling dismissing Dallas trans woman Valerie Jackson’s civil lawsuit against former Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Dallas County Sheriff Marian Anderson and Dallas County, claiming that DCSO deputies and employees violated her constitutional rights related to her gender identity. But the three-judge panel refused again to reverse Judge Brantley Starr’s refusal to recuse himself from the trial.

Jackson’s lawsuit stems from a November 2016 incident in which Jackson was arrested for having a gun in her purse when she tried to go through security at Dallas Love Field airport. When she was transferred to the Dallas County Jail, she said she was repeatedly misgendered despite legal identification bearing her appropriate gender and was repeatedly humiliated when she was forced to undergo strip searches, forced to show her genitals to male deputies, housed with male inmates and forced to shower with male inmates.

Jackson filed a formal complaint after the arrest. She filed suit in November 2018 after being similarly mistreated after unrelated arrests in April 2017 and again in June 2018.

The case was transferred to Judge Starr’s court in September 2019, at which time Jackson’s attorney, Scott Palmer, moved for Starr to recuse himself, based on his anti-LGBTQ history. Starr, however, refused, then dismissed the case for lack of standing.

— Tammye Nash



Valerie Jackson

## pet of the week / HARRIET



Meet **Harriet**, a 5½-year-old, Akita/Chow-Chow mix weighing 63 pounds. She has a lovely red coat, perky ears and big brown eyes. She’s a happy, curious gal who loves snacks. She can be a bit shy when meeting new people, but after a few sniffs, she’ll warm up to you. Since coming to the SPCA of Texas, Harriet has blossomed

from a reserved, timid dog to a spunky, fun and outgoing princess. She loves to run and play outside with the staff, and she will bounce around in delight for her spectators. Harriet would do best as the star of the show (the only dog in a home). The staff who care for her think she would do well with older children who can give her time to warm up before becoming best buddies. This unique dog will make a wonderful addition to a family looking for a playful but well-mannered companion. She has been spayed and microchipped and has received all age-appropriate vaccinations. Now until April 25, you can adopt Harriet or any other adult cat or dog from the SPCA of Texas at 50 percent off regular adoption fees. Harriet is waiting to meet you at the SPCA of Texas’ Russell H. Perry Animal Care Center in McKinney.

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](http://spca.org/findapet) and visit [spca.org/dogadopt](http://spca.org/dogadopt) to inquire about a dog or [spca.org/catadopt](http://spca.org/catadopt) to inquire about a cat.

# Addressing heartworm disease in dogs, cats

**W**e have made it to April, my dear Dallas Voice readers! We are finally enjoying better weather, which means many good things. But it also means we will be seeing some dog and cat parasites out there more often. Some of you may know that April is Heartworm Awareness Month. My goal with this specific column is to do that: raise awareness of this important and common parasite.

Heartworm is a parasite that affects dogs and cats, and it is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that is carrying the microscopic worm. Heartworm disease is not transmitted from dog to dog or cat to cat.

This parasite is only found in the animal's blood, not in the stools. Once the mosquito carrying this parasite bites a dog or a cat, it takes about six months for the microscopic worm to travel through the bloodstream to the heart. In that time, the heartworm can grow to be up to about a foot long.

When the heartworm baby becomes an adult and reproduces, it starts causing multiple symptoms; one of the most common symptoms is coughing. If heartworm



**WOOF**

Dr. Josh Talks Animals

disease becomes severe, it can cause permanent damage to the heart and the arteries around the heart, and it can even lead to life-threatening complications if left untreated.

Heartworm disease is far more common with dogs than with cats.

Heartworm infections can be higher in some regions of the country than in others. Here in the South, since we never see a long, deep freeze, heartworm infection can be found pretty much year round. Some people think that there is no way for strictly indoor dogs and cats to catch this parasite, but mosquitoes do not need to ask for permission to come inside our homes, right?

Heartworm disease is a very common disease in Texas. In fact, according to a 2019 survey by the American Heartworm Society, Texas is one of the top 10 states with the highest heartworm incidence. If you look

up poor babies through shelters and rescue groups that are not ready for adoption yet, you will find out that a common reason for that is because they are heartworm-positive.

There is a very simple blood test that can be performed by your veterinarian to find out if your fur baby has heartworm disease; it usually takes only about 10 minutes for results to be available.

Thankfully, this disease is easily prevented. We have options of oral, topical and injectable forms of preventative medications. All of these options have pros and cons, of course, so based on a conversation with your veterinarian, you can find out which product may work best for your baby and for you.

It is extremely important that prevention is used year round here in Texas. Unlike some products for flea and tick prevention, heartworm prevention can only be obtained through your veterinarian or with approval of your veterinarian. Since most medications are not 100 percent effective with every patient, it is important to have annual follow-up exams which include a physical exam and a heartworm blood test. We also recommend using a prevention product that repels mosquitoes, creating another barrier against heartworm disease.

If, after testing, you find out that your dog is positive for heartworms, your vet will recommend several different tests that include complete blood work and chest radiographs.

The good news is that there is a treatment for it. It does take some time for that treatment to be completed, but you can visit the American Heartworm Society's website ([HeartwormSociety.org](http://HeartwormSociety.org)) for more details and an outline of what the treatment entails.

You may hear or read about a "slow kill" treatment, but this is not recommended, as it can take years before the heartworm disease is controlled, and not only is this treatment not guaranteed, it also gives more time for the parasites to cause further permanent damage.

Sadly, there is no treatment for heartworm disease with cats, which makes prevention even more important.

If you have never heard of heartworm disease before now, or if you have questions, it is vital that you have a good conversation with your veterinarian. I think it is important to assess your lifestyle and any concerns you may have to find the best approach for heartworm prevention for your fur baby.

Help us spread the word about this important parasite, and, hopefully we can do our best to reduce the high rate of infections that we see in Texas.

As always, thank you for taking your time with me and abrazos para todos!

*Dr. Josh owns Isla Veterinary Boutique-Hospital at 14380 Marsh Lane, Ste. 110 in Addison (next to Tom Thumb). Call him at 972-738-1111 or visit [IslaVet.com](http://IslaVet.com).*



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# RACISM in the Design District

After two years of obstacles, Shoncy Raspberry's Area 111 has finally opened

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

**S**honcy Raspberry knew that the bar he owned in northwest Dallas wasn't going to draw the crowds and see the success he wanted. So he started looking for a space closer to the traditional gayborhood. That's when he found the building at 111 Oak Lawn, less than a block from the Trinity River levee in the Design District.

The street was mostly lined with run-down old warehouses, but Raspberry saw potential. So he rented the building and set out to turn it into an LGBTQ hot spot.

But when some neighbors heard that a gay club — no, a Black-owned gay club — was coming to the neighborhood, they formed the Design District Defenders, and set out to, among other things, rezone the street. They also called code enforcement on Raspberry 128 times while he was getting his club ready to go.

Raspberry said he had to endure having racial and anti-gay epithets spewed at him. And he was handed petitions aimed at keeping him out of the neighborhood. Some of those petitions came from people living in the warehouses on the street — a street not zoned residential — and some from “concerned” business owners in the area.

The Design District Defenders set up a website that included a fundraising effort that warned, “Over the past several months, a handful of our neighbors have taken it upon themselves to combat the intrusion of negative elements seeking to lay their stake in our community.”

Raspberry isn't named specifically on the website. But the timing of the state-

ment and the threats he'd already had directed at him made it crystal clear that he and his club were the so-called “negative elements” the Defenders were talking about.

“The monies collected will go toward paying attorney fees, marketing fees, filing fees or promotions necessary to combat unwanted or negative influences in the District,” the Defenders begged. “While we welcome diversity and strive to be inclusive, we will also fight vigorously to protect our investments and our image.”

What did they mean by protecting their investments and image? Raspberry said he was told point blank, by people representing themselves as the Design District Defenders, that they didn't want Black people or gay people on their block — only they used words other than “Black” and “gay.”

And for awhile, the people defending the rundown warehouses were successful in their efforts to keep Raspberry from opening his club. His interim certificate of occupancy was revoked, delaying the opening he had planned. Although he first rented the space in April 2019 and had hoped to open later that year, Raspberry's Area 111 didn't actually open until December 2020.

Still, Raspberry continued to work on the building. He built out most of the interior — including booths and tables, stage and bars — himself. Not only did he build a dazzling interior, he improved the exterior of the building so that it became the one and only shining star on an otherwise drab and deteriorating street.

And each time the Defenders threw something at him, he more than compensated.

Parking would certainly be an issue, the Defenders thought; after all, the city required Raspberry to provide 105 parking spaces. But when his neighbors next door and directly across the street saw how the exterior of his building had improved, they were happy to lease him parking spaces. Those leased spaces,



Shemar Dupree, left, and Ra'Maya Lord. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

combined with those on his own property, totaled 108, exceeding the city requirement.

The Defenders claimed they didn't want the noise of an entertainment venue in their neighborhood. But they welcomed Mark Cuban and Live Nation's much louder music venue into the Design District.

Some businesses in the Design District didn't feel they needed to be “defended,” and they signed on to support Area 111. The new Virgin Hotel, at 1445 Turtle Creek Blvd., was among them.

And yet the barrage of racism and homophobia kept coming. So finally, after enduring more than a year of constant attacks, Raspberry decided to see if his city councilman could help. And it was Councilman Omar Narvaez to the rescue.

Area 111, Narvaez said, is an amazing venue, adding that Raspberry “followed all the rules of the planned development district,” Narvaez said. “He employs 50 people every night he's open, and he's creating tax revenue for the city.”

The councilman downplayed his role in getting the venue open, saying that what he did was direct Raspberry to the right city staff for permitting and getting his certificate of occupancy. “I just made sure he got the same shot as anyone else,” Narvaez explained.

Narvaez said there was nothing for the

council to vote on in relation to Area 111 because Raspberry's business was within all the rules and zoning requirements. As for the neighbors — the ones living on the block in some of the warehouse buildings who made a point of spewing homophobic and racist hate at Raspberry — it's questionable whether they should be living in those buildings. The street is not zoned as residential.

Narvaez said he heard from the Design District Defenders before the venue opened, but since its opening, his office has gotten no complaints about it.

## The Area 111 Cast

Drag shows are a staple at Area 111, and show director Shemar Dupree said he works to make sure the entertainment is top notch. He said he is proud of his cast but admits, “The first rehearsals weren't good.”

Still, each time the bar hit another roadblock, Dupree just worked harder to make the show better. He changed the costumes and the music, worked on the dancing and movements. He wants, he said, to offer the best possible show — from the first entrance to last exit — on opening night.

Ra'Maya Lord, who has been doing drag for 17 years and has performed at the Round-Up and S4, is one of the cast members. She said she started in Tyler

as a male stripper, and then one night donned drag to perform in a turnabout show. After that, she said, "I put away my boxer briefs and gained a pair of breasts."

Lord participated in the Wanda Show, was a box boy at S4 and performed in "I Can't Believe I'm in Drag" at the Metro downtown. In 2017, she competed in Miss Gay USofA at Large and won the interview portion.

Outside of her club life, Lord has a career as a human resources manager in retail that began 18 years ago at JC Penney. It takes a healthy dose of responsibility and real dedication to balance both lives, she said.

Cast member Giselle started doing drag seven years ago in Alexandria, La. "A queen approached me and said, 'You need to put on a wig,'" she recalled. "Ever since, I can be whoever I want to be."

Giselle called drag fantasy, but stressed that doing good drag takes imagination. She's performed in bars on Cedar Springs, in Arlington, Fort Worth and Houston, but hasn't been back to Louisiana since moving to Dallas. "Texas is keeping me busy," she said.

Giselle said that for her, it is the energy and the atmosphere of Area 111 that sets the club apart. "I'm the girl no one knows," she said, noting that she holds the title of Miss Dallas USofA Newcomer.

Ariel O'hara Munro has been doing drag 10 years and is the founder and owner of Amazing Designs. She has designed dresses for Tamia, Tyra Banks, Ts Madison and a number of the RuPaul

girls, she said, "And I create and design my own looks."

In addition to performing on Cedar Springs, Munro has done drag brunch at Hooters.

Ashante de Fox calls herself the group's auntie. She's been doing drag since 1983 and "worked with Tasha Kohl and Naomi Sims at the Old Plantation," she said. "I've been doing drag for more than 37 years."

Ashante is from Wichita Falls, and that is where she first became infatuated with drag. Over the years, she's won 31 pageants, including Miss Gay U.S. Icon, Miss Black Continental and Miss Utopia.

### Gaining attention

The crowds at Area 111 have been growing steadily, and the bar is attracting a diverse crowd, Dupree said. "Customers come in and are surprised," said. "This is what LGBTQ+ is supposed to look like."

Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson and Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano have both been to the bar and loved it.

Raspberry said although Area 111 is in an industrial district, several of the buildings on the block have residents. Out of respect to those living in a few of the warehouses, he tries to stagger customers leaving, having them wait for the valet inside at closing time with only small groups going to their cars at one time.

Although some neighbors still don't want him there, Raspberry said, he's determined to be a good neighbor. ■



Ashante Fox, left, and Ariel O'hara Munro. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

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# Innocence Project now assisting in Brandon Woodruff case

Convicted of a murder he says he didn't commit, gay man continues to fight for his freedom

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
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Although Brandon Woodruff's appeals so far have failed, the Innocence Project of Texas has begun to look into the case of the gay man convicted in March 2009, in the October 2005 murder of his parents, Dennis and Norma Woodruff. A jury in Rockwall County convicted Woodruff, even though there was no evidence pointing to the then-college student as the culprit.

Woodruff has maintained his innocence all along, saying he believes that anti-gay bias played a major role in his conviction.

The Innocence Project of Texas was founded in 2006 by two criminal defense attorneys — Jeff Blackburn of Amarillo and Mike Ware of Fort Worth. According to former Fox4 reporter and anchor Richard Ray, who connected Woodruff to the Innocence Project, the organization brings several tools to the ongoing effort.

One of those tools is finances. Woodruff's previous appeals were funded by his grandmother, but she's out of money. The Innocence Project, however, has the resources to help fund further investigation and appeals.

Because the organization's exoneration rate is very high, when the Innocence Project takes a case, that case gets publicity, and its cases tend to be taken very seriously. Innocence Project also comes with a team of pro bono attorneys with expertise in writing writs of habe-



Brandon Woodruff's high school graduation photo

as corpus or writs of actual innocence. Backing them up is a network of experts who can testify about the evidence.

But, in this case, the Innocence Project is just at the beginning stage of looking at the case and offering assistance to Woodruff's attorney.

Ray said he saw Scott Poggensee's documentary *Texas Justice: Brandon Woodruff* and spoke to Poggensee about the case.

"The further I got into the case, the more convinced I became that Brandon Woodruff's story needs to be told to a wide audience and that he is, in fact, innocent," Ray said. "I felt my contacts in the industry and my experience in writing and producing documentaries could help move the project forward."

So Ray contacted Dallas district Attorney John Creuzot, who put him in touch with Ware.

## The case against Woodruff

The case against Woodruff is a complicated one, with no actual evidence pointing at Woodruff as the person who killed his parents. It seems obvious to Woodruff's supporters, though, that what prosecutors lacked in evidence they made up for in anti-gay bias.

Poggensee said a phrase repeated over and over at Woodruff's trial was, "If he could lie about being gay, he could lie about killing his parents." But that ignores the fact that Woodruff was out to his father, who accepted him. And it's not clear if he was out to his mother yet.

Woodruff has said he would be able to prove he was not at his parents house at the time of the murder if phone records for the time of the murder had been entered into evidence. But those records are missing for the several hours of the day Woodruff's parents were killed.

Another fact weighing against the idea of Woodruff having killed his parents is that both his mother and his father were shot and stabbed. Research, Poggensee said, revealed that when there are two weapons used in a murder, more than 90 percent of the time there is more than one killer involved. And in most of the rest of the cases, when one killer uses two weapons, those weapons are two knives or two guns, not one of each.

Prosecutors alleged Woodruff killed his parents with a gun in one hand and a knife in the other. Such a scenario would

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# Ad 2 Dallas honors Dallas Voice's Mobley

From Staff Reports

**S**tephen Mobley, ad sales rep and social media manager for Dallas Voice, has been recognized as one of Ad 2 Dallas' 2020 "32 Under 32" award recipients.

Each year, Ad 2 Dallas honors the top 32 advertising professionals under the age of 32 in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, as nominated and voted on by their peers; 2020 marked the organization's fourth annual awards cycle.

To be recognized, nominees must be under the age of 32 on or before Dec. 31 of the year in which they are nominated, and they must be a member of the DFW advertising community in any capacity. Nominees are considered for how they have pushed the boundaries within their field, how active they are within the DFW advertising community through educational initiatives, diversity and inclusion and giving back, among other things.

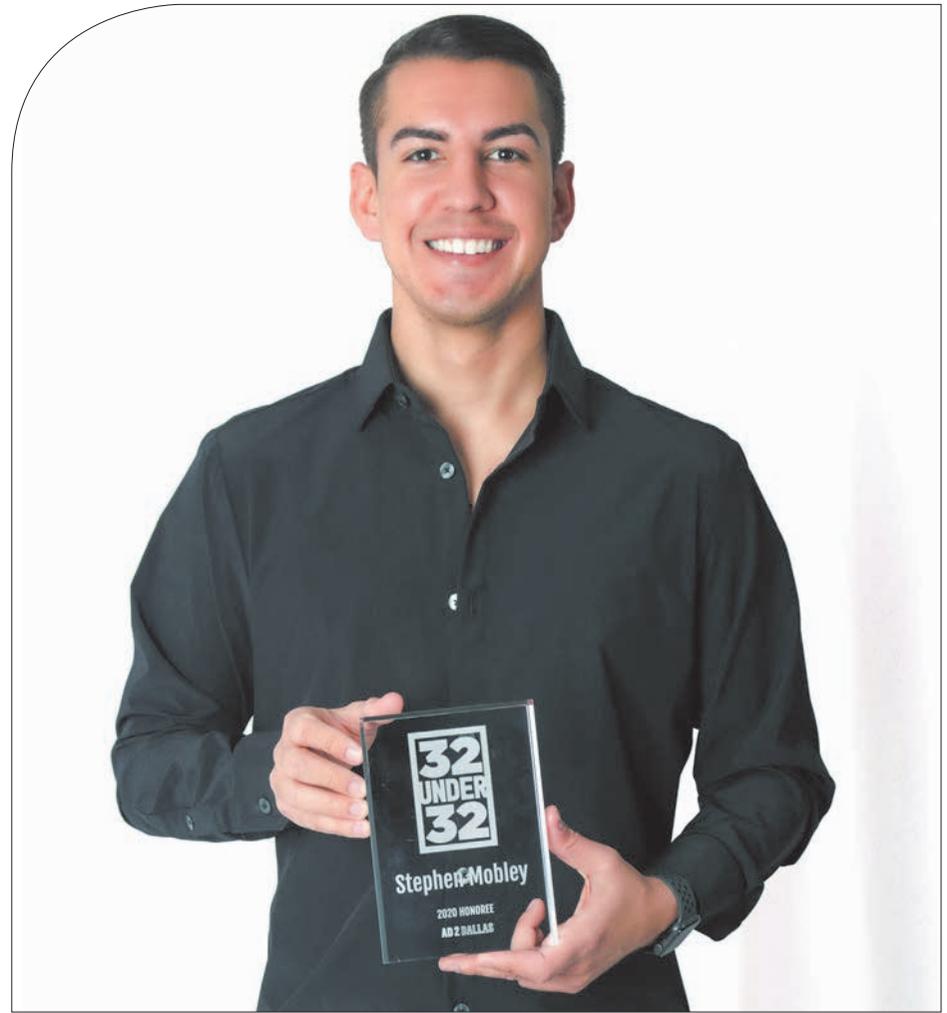
Mobley was born and raised in Greenville and attended the University of Tex-

as at Tyler. He has worked in advertising for Dallas Voice for more than six years and, in his spare time, enjoys volunteering with a variety of nonprofit organizations in the LGBTQ community.

Ad 2 Dallas is an affiliate of the American Advertising Federation of Dallas that is specifically for advertising professionals age 32 and younger. It is the largest Ad 2 chapter in the country and has won numerous awards.

Ad 2 Dallas' goal is to help up-and-coming advertising professionals gain skills and contacts necessary to become industry leaders through networking and educational events, public service opportunities and social gatherings. The organization aims to diversify Dallas' advertising industry, increase AAF-Dallas membership and participation, give members opportunities to diversify their skill sets, spotlight Dallas as a major national advertising market and foster networking, mentorship and the free exchange of ideas between those who are established professionals and those who are new to the industry. ■

For more information, visit [Ad2Dallas.org](http://Ad2Dallas.org).





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## WOODRUFF

From Page 8

have put the young man in the middle of a very bloody and gruesome crime scene. But no blood evidence was ever found in his car or on any of his clothes.

And the timeline devised by investigators gave Woodruff about 14 minutes inside his parents' home. That's 14 minutes to overpower both his mother and father, then clean all the blood off of himself, leaving none in the bathroom. And Woodruff would have to have cleaned himself up so well that no DNA evidence was found in the bathroom, nor was any found in the car or on his clothes. No DNA evidence was found on the knife they allege Woodruff used in the attack, either.

The fact that Woodruff could prove that he had been dancing at a gay bar in Dallas that night, instead of showing jurors how unlikely the prosecution's timeline and accusations were, served to help convince them he was a heartless killer; eight jurors acknowledged that they believed that being homosexual or gay is morally wrong.

On top of the lack of evidence and the

evidence of bias, detectives investigating the murder had a suspect they never even looked at closely: Mike Etherington, a former friend of Woodruff's, was questioned by police after the murder. During his interview, he mentioned something that should have been of more interest to investigators but was instead passed over.

During the interrogation, Etherington told police a computer was missing from the Woodruff's house — something police didn't even know themselves. So how would Etherington know unless he was at the murder scene? And if he was there but not the killer, why didn't he call police when he found two bodies in the living room?

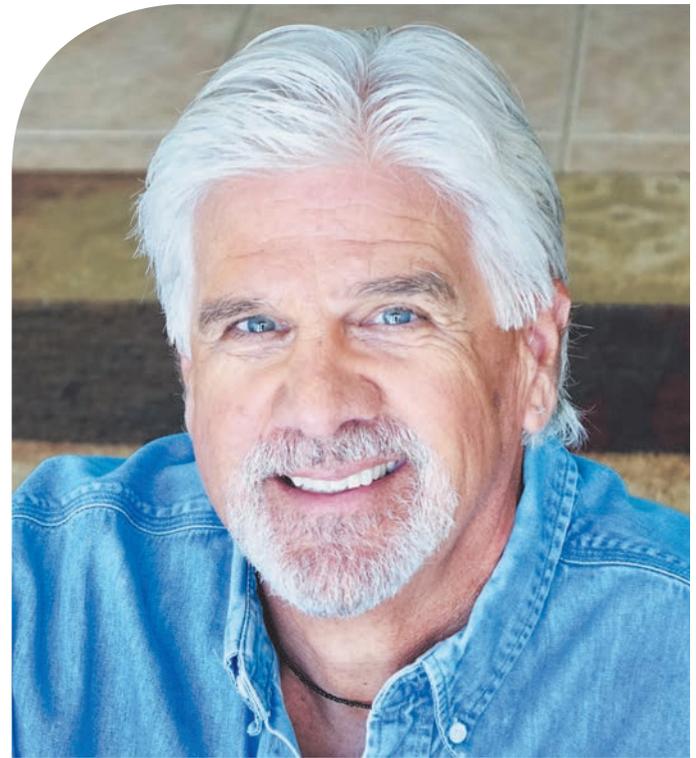
Instead of asking those questions though, police issued an arrest warrant for Woodruff.

Poggensee released his documentary about the case in 2019. Ray, who has become a documentary filmmaker since retiring from Channel 4, where he won two Emmys for his documentaries, began looking at all of the footage and the

hours of podcasts that Poggensee had relating to the case.

"I was looking for a project that I could pour my energies into and this is it," Ray said "The deeper I get into the evidence in the case, the more I become convinced of Brandon Woodruff's innocence. I cannot tell you with certainty who killed Norma and Dennis Woodruff. I can say with certainty it was not their son Brandon."

Ray is hoping to turn the story into an eight-to-10-part series about the murder. But, he said, there's one piece missing from what he has: No one from the prosecution is willing to talk, and he's having trouble finding anyone else who thinks Woodruff is



Richard Ray

guilty to add some balance to the work. Ray is hopeful that now that the Innocence Project of Texas is helping, Brandon Woodruff will be exonerated. "The snowball's starting to roll," he said. ■

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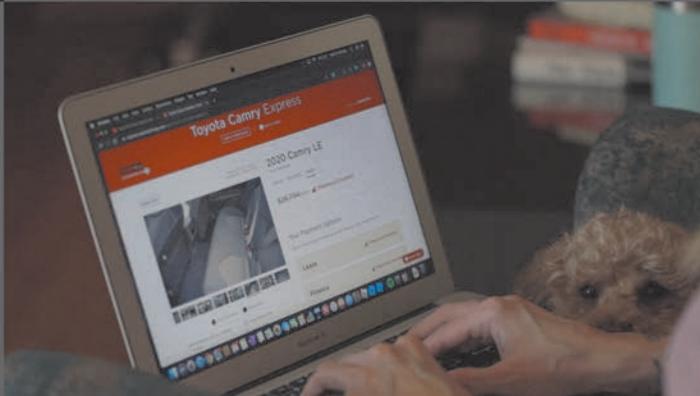


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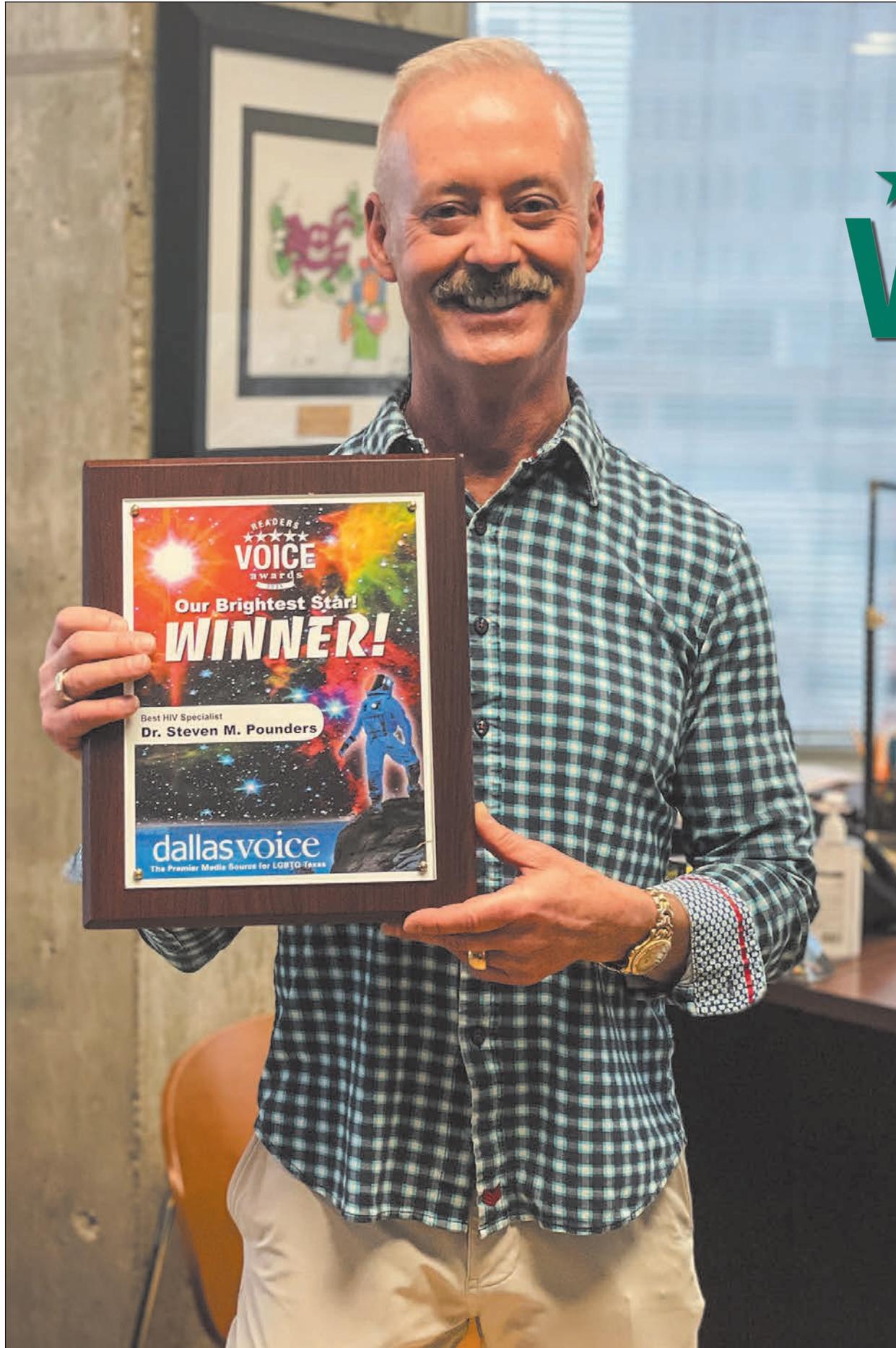
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# Not the *only* choice

Caven/Ablon redevelopment plan is not the best or the only choice to save the gayborhood

The Caven/Ablon redevelopment and rezoning proposal has created unnecessary controversy and division among the Dallas LGBTQ+ community. As LGBTQ+ homeowners who chose to live in Oak Lawn and anchor this neighborhood with our lives and livelihoods, we feel a responsibility to steward the gayborhood's future, preserve its character and respect its history. For many years the bars have represented the LGBTQ+ community, but their decisions consistently represent their profit interests as businesses and not the interests of the larger Oak Lawn residents or LGBTQ+ community.

Between 2011 and 2015 the city of Dallas allocated bond funds to slow Cedar Springs traffic, reduce the lanes and widen the sidewalks. Like other street improvements throughout Dallas — like Bishop Arts, Lower Greenville, Downtown Dallas, Knox Henderson, McKinney Avenue and Deep Ellum — these improvements would have made Cedar Springs safer, calmer and more pedestrian friendly.

The bars unanimously opposed these street improvements despite multiple pedestrians' deaths over the years. In November 2011 alone there were two hit-and-run pedestrian deaths on Cedar Springs — 61-year-old Edward Lee King and 55-year-old Wayne Priest — which resulted in the largely-symbolic right-turn-only sign at Reagan and Cedar Springs, with no other changes to improve pedestrian safety.

The proposed street changes made it inconvenient for some of the bars to easily unload beer trucks, and they feared the roadway reconstruction might temporarily lower alcohol revenues. They ensured that these street improvements, designed to make the community safer for their own customers, never occurred,

A message  
from the founders  
of The Gayborhood  
Neighbors  
Association

Contributing Columnist

despite broad community support and approved bond funding.

## Caven/Ablon Redevelopment and Rezoning Project

The proposed Caven/Ablon redevelopment and rezoning project repeats these patterns of self-interest at the expense of others while completely ignoring the input and needs of the surrounding community. Due to rising property taxes in Oak Lawn, Ed Oakley and Mike Ablon have communicated the need to monetize the Caven parking lots to pre-



serve the bars and remain profitable. Their proposed redevelopment effort was recklessly fast-tracked with the intention of pushing through the most profitable and undesirable configuration without community compromise while failing to comply with basic Oak Lawn redevelopment standards that uniformly apply to similar situations throughout Oak Lawn where high-rise redevelopment is adjacent to schools and homeowners.

Ed Oakley and Mike Ablon met with the Oak Lawn Committee, that acts as a respected mediator between developers, Oak Lawn residents and city planning. After careful review of the project, the Oak Lawn Committee gathered a reasonable list of requests for alterations based on standards intended to preserve and enhance the vibrant character and walkable fabric of Oak Lawn. The tireless efforts by Oak Lawn residents on The Oak Lawn Committee over many decades working through endless details with developers have created the most walkable, desirable, and expensive land in Dallas. This process works here just like it works in other world-class cities.

In an unprecedented manner, Ed Oakley and Mike Ablon ignored this valuable mediation step, bypassing concerned homeowners and stakeholders in the community as well as the Oak Lawn Committee. Believing they had the votes to ignore the community, they presented their project to the Dallas City Plan Commission largely unchanged.

There were hours of discussion, debate, frustration, and several split votes by the commissioners, some of whom begged for alternatives. This “fly-by-zoning,” as one zoning commissioner described it, was an absurd display of reckless power disregarding the concerns of many city plan commissioners and The Oak Lawn Committee, as well as Oak Lawn residents and homeowners.

### Frank Caven's vision

Frank Caven himself implemented the existing height zoning restrictions when he acquired the former single-family homes to create the current parking lots in order to protect the surrounding neighborhood. Ed Oakley and Mike Ablon want to throw out this protective zoning, repeatedly stating that their current redevelopment plan is the only way forward, with no further discussion. No alternate plans have been presented that preserve some of these bars. “Take it all

or lose them all” is their only position.

This sad situation forcing everyone to choose sides between two bad options is entirely their creation.

Ed Oakley and Mike Ablon also deliberately created intense division within the Dallas LGBTQ+, community claiming these four bars are “the gayborhood” and that anyone not accepting their only redevelopment plan is “anti-LGBTQ+.” We need to come together and listen to each other to do what’s best for all of us and not deliberately divide and create hostility.

### The future of our gayborhood

We can’t stop change, but we can stop reckless redevelopment that lasts generations. Projects like this set precedents that will domino across Oak Lawn and surrounding neighborhoods, putting the future of Oak Lawn at risk from other poorly-planned redevelopment.

We need to ask ourselves: Is the gayborhood the buildings and bars? Or is the gayborhood the high concentration of LGBTQ+ homeowners, residents and allies who live and play here?

The choice is clear to people living in Oak Lawn who call our gayborhood home. The buildings and bars have always changed, but the people and character remain largely unchanged.

Dallas has a choice to act like a world-class city and set the destiny and trajectory for our future. World-class cities have development standards. World-class cities require carefully considered redevelopment that compromises between developer profits and community interests.

Are we a city without development standards where developers and our elected officials abuse their power to build anything they want, anywhere they want, any way they want?

We think Dallas is better than that! Oak Lawn is definitely better than that! When people think of world-class cities with great urban redevelopment that encourages pedestrianism and walkability, we want them to think of Dallas ... and Oak Lawn ... and our gayborhood. Please support us by joining our Facebook Group at Facebook.com/Gayborhood-NeighborsAssociation. All residents and homeowners between Turtle Creek Neighborhood Association and Perry Heights Neighborhood Association who are south of SoHIP and Lemmon Avenue are invited to join. ■

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# Muscle with style

auto



2021 Mercedes-AMG GLE 63 puts the personal back in 'luxury coupe'

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer  
crwauto@aol.com

After the muscle car era, auto-makers turned their attention to over-fluffed personal luxury coupes. Mercedes-Benz took an understated approach by putting E- and S-Class coupes against Continentals and Eldorados — until tastes and regulations killed them, too.

Now, proportions are changing again as personal luxury coupes, stoked with performance that would make 1960s icons blush, are more likely derived from crossovers and sport four-doors — just like the 2021 Mercedes-AMG GLE 63S.

Fortunately for us, the National Studebaker Museum in South Bend, Indiana was hosting a "Disco Era" autos display that included a Lincoln Mark IV, a Bricklin, a Firebird, a Mustang II and a Pontiac Grand Ville Convertible. The GLE 63 proved the perfect conveyance for my family and me to make a quick visit.

When slowpokes spot the AMG grille with vertical slats, angry lower fascia with giant snorkels, and twin hood bumps from the classic 300SL gullwing, they tend to move in your favor. This car looks like it could chew up a Smart car and spit out its carcass. Check the quad headlamps with LED eyebrows, too. Moving from

## 2021 Mercedes-AMG GLE 63S

5 passengers, AWD Crossover  
**Powertrain:** 4.0-L TTV8, 9-spd trans  
**Output:** 603 hp/627 lb.-ft.  
**Suspension f/r:** Elect Ind/Ind  
**Wheels f/r:** 22-inch/22-inch alloy  
**Brakes f/r:** disc/disc  
**Must-have features:** Style, Performance  
**Fuel economy:** 15/19-MPG city/hwy  
0-60 mph: 3.7s  
**Assembly:** Vance, Ala.  
**Base price/As-tested:** \$116,000/134,00

front to side, you see the muscular fenders swallowing 22-inch wheels and supporting a fastback roofline that looks more E-Class coupe than mid-size cross-



over. Quad exhausts and carbon fiber trim reaffirm this is an AMG.

Just because there isn't a full-length roof doesn't mean you have to scrimp on space. Though cozier, it's still a mid-size crossover with a very deep luggage compartment under that power rear hatch. Flip down the rear seats and toss in a bicycle — there's plenty of space. It makes the gigantic Continental feel cramped. Four passengers travel in divine luxury.

Glossy carbon fiber and stitched leather grace the dash, doors and steering wheel. Leather and suede seats are heated/ventilated up front and heated in back and feature an array of massage functions that include hot stone for those in the penthouse. Front armrests are even heated.

Crank the Bermester High End Surround Sound system before settling beneath the power-opening panoramic sunroof. We're way beyond the 8-track players and bench seats of past eras.

Devices connect via Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and wireless charging in the console. Control infotainment via twin screens in the dash, via touch-sensitive pads on the steering wheel or via mouse-style touchpad in the console. I wish our vehicle had a head-up display like the last GLE 63 I drove, but we stayed safe with adaptive cruise, lane centering steering, active lane change assist and blind spot warning. Rear cross path detection and automatic emergency braking do their parts, too.

Unlike the malaise-era luxury coupes, this one can move out of its own way as the 4.0-liter biturbo V8 lays down 603 horsepower and 627 lb.-ft. of torque through a nine-speed automatic transmission. Mercedes' 4MATIC all-wheel-drive and EQ Boost light hybrid system get you off the line smartly. Keep your courage to dispatch 0-60 mph in just 3.7 seconds.

Most owners won't care, but fuel economy is rated an abysmal 15/19-MPG city/highway.

Buttons in the console and dials on the steering wheel transform the GLE's behavior. Steering, throttle response, exhaust tone and air suspension can be configured for touring or track assaults. We cruised in Comfort mode most of the time for a surprisingly compliant ride but clicked into Sport mode when the road turned curvy. How this big heavy crossover transforms from a luxury sedan to an Autobahn maestro is impressive. You can even raise it up for off-roading if that's your idea of luxury.

I used to think crossover coupes were ridiculous, but after driving many hours to see luxury coupes of another era, I get it. It looks menacing, cossets four passengers in absolute luxury and lays waste to very serious performance cars.

It is today's personal luxury car, but it comes at a price. The GLE 63S Coupe starts at \$116,000, but came to an even loftier \$134,000 as tested. If you can afford it, enjoy a blast through the current era.

Storm Forward! ■

Send comments to Casey at [AutoCasey@aol.com](mailto:AutoCasey@aol.com); follow him on YouTube @ [AutoCasey](#).

## music

A new life in Austin recharged singer Adam Noreen's inspiration

**RICH LOPEZ** | Contributing Writer  
richlopezwrites@gmail.com

**P**ain can be a strong motivator for an artist, but Adam Noreen has been there, done that. A toxic, abusive relationship resulted in his 2017 release *Futureland* while he was based in Chicago. After a life overhaul which brought him to Texas, his upcoming EP *Futureland II* stems from the exact opposite kind of relationship.

Noreen got the buzz going on his new release, which drops April 9, by debuting the first single, "Crystal Mirror," at the end of February. And he followed up with the March release of the second single, "9/18." The night before the official release of *Futureland II*, Noreen will host a virtual listening party via Facebook on Thursday (see link below).

The 29-year-old talked by phone from

■ **MUSIC** Next Page



# Music therapy

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Austin about the path that led him here to Texas and to this album and how, after a long break in music, the desire to create was far too long ignored.

**Dallas Voice: Congrats on the new EP. At just five songs, you pack a lot in sound-wise.** Adam Noreen: It is much shorter in length; this follow-up has quite a bit of variety in sounds. We have acoustic, pop, piano, rock, and there's even a ukulele tune that I think adds unique color. I am still very much carrying an emo tinge lyrically. The closing track "9/18" explores my current relationship and how it has positively impacted my life. In my opinion, this has my highest highs and lowest lows, and I am excited about that.

**Do you mind us rewinding to the details about your first album which are important to this release?** Not at all. I'm an open book.

**You've mentioned before that the first album pointed to your previous relationship which turned out to be a less than happy time for you. Part 1 was written surrounding the events of an abusive relationship that I was lost inside of a few years back. That album was definitely a low note.**

I could see his manipulation from the beginning. I thought we had a connection on the same things, but realized too late we didn't. My ex was belligerent, often drunk and abusive. He had such anger, and he'd hit me, which, of course, was traumatizing.

**After recording songs about all that, is it fair to say releasing Futureland Part 1 a catharsis for you then?** It was therapeutic to explain some of the meanings and finally tell my truth.

**Do you feel past that now — especially since songs kind of live forever?** Absolutely. I feel like when I write a song, press record and finish it that I can bookmark that as a memory. It's a cool thing.

**Fast forward to today — what is life like now?** Well, I moved from Chicago to Austin in 2017 after the album came out in January. I had to physically remove myself from there. I took a chance moving here because I didn't really know anyone.

**Was it a rough start?** Yeah. I worked for Google but then was let go. I was much more social, but I was kind of living the *Mean Girls* version of my life and was ok being around drugs and purely physical relationships.

**Where were you, music-wise?** I hadn't

written at all. There is a big gap from then to March 2020. Then the pandemic hit, but I realized I was past all my previous emotions, and I felt distanced from it and recharged. I got a new job but worked from home, and I needed to figure out how to keep sane while in quarantine, and I began discovering things I wanted to write about. Plus, my current relationship really saved me from any spirals.

**Describe Part II. I think it's interesting as a follow-up but not the same length.** When I finished the songs, I didn't feel I needed to add more. And there are songs from Part I I wanted to reclaim with a changed perspective.

But I'm feeling really excited about these songs. There's a new energy level here.

**You decided to gain some traction early by releasing singles ahead of the album. On Facebook, you've stated that you wrote "9/18" for your partner which you released last week. But your first single, from February, "Crystal Mirror," was altogether different. Can you talk about that song?** The song is about me finding myself before I entered that abusive relationship. Before then, I felt



like I was who I naturally was, and then I began a path of questioning. Writing these songs, I feel I've gotten back to who I truly am.

**You pulled yourself out of a toxic and dangerous situation. What do you want to tell others who may find themselves in a similar relationship?** I have seen my own friends in abusive relationships. You have to be keen to see those signs. When folks reach out to me, I think what I've come to realize is that people aren't going to make the change unless they are ready. If I had to talk to anyone, I'd say trust your head and not your heart. Believe me, that is easier said than done.

*Find more about Noreen and his upcoming virtual listening party on [linktr.ee/adamnoreenusic](https://linktr.ee/adamnoreenusic).*

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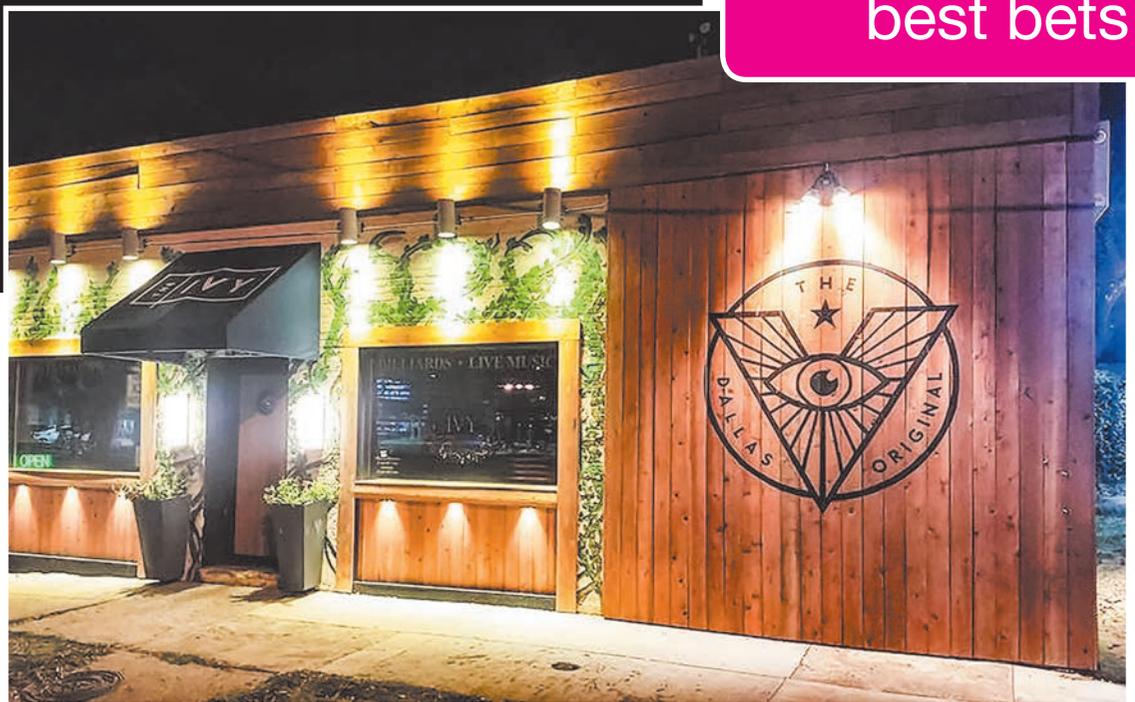
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04.03

**Firedancers Texas** are holding a drive-thru food and clothing drive to gather non-perishable food items and clothing donations for those in need. Just put your donations in the trunk of your vehicle, drive up and pop open the trunk and Firedancer volunteers will do the rest. *For a list of needed items, visit [MyResourceCenter.org](http://MyResourceCenter.org) or [AustinStreet.org](http://AustinStreet.org). 1-3 p.m. in the parking lot of The Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser.*



04.02

The **Ivy Tavern** introduces a new 8-drink menu from Greenbar Distilleries at its Inclusive Happy Hour, with \$2 of every drink purchased donated to Black Tie Dinner. The Ivy Tavern has 5,000 square feet of outdoor patio — plenty of room for safe social distancing. 5-7:30 p.m. at *The Ivy Tavern, 5334 Lemmon Ave.* For information email [PR@BlackTie.org](mailto:PR@BlackTie.org).



04.03

**Echo Theater** celebrates its 23rd anniversary with a fundraiser and a screening of *The Other Felix* by Reina Hardy, a play on film produced in partnership with Shakespeare Dallas. Watch in person — outdoors and with all COVID-19 safety precautions observed — or watch at home with on demand streaming. 7:30 p.m. at *Bath House Cultural Center Outdoor Lakeshore Patio.* Tickets are \$25; for information visit [EchoTheatre.org](http://EchoTheatre.org).

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# Jenny Block

Girl on girl

## Family — with benefits

I'm one of those people lucky enough to have a marriage with benefits. No, I'm not talking about THOSE benefits. I'm talking about the benefit of gaining new family members. The thing is, suddenly having new family members is a lot like the benefits you get when you open a new account or stay at a hotel: The benefits are there; it's up to you if you choose to take advantage of them.

It can be easy to feel the strain of loyalty when you get married. "Why should I commit any time and energy to these new people? I already don't have enough bandwidth to attend to my own family," you might say to yourself.

But it isn't really a matter of whether or not you "should." It's a matter of whether or not doing so is good for you and your relationship with your wife (or husband).

I don't think it's ever beneficial to "should" all over people. It's not helpful. No one can really know what anyone "should" or "shouldn't" do in any given situation without really knowing the situation.

The question you want to ask is, "Will opening yourself up to having relationships with your new family be good for you and your marriage?" If not, let it go.

Seriously, let it go.

Keep in mind that it doesn't have to be an all or nothing thing. Just like you have family members you love and family members you could do without. Just like you have family members with whom you feel a kinship and with whom you do not. Just like you have family members who are healthy and who are toxic. So too will it be with your new family by marriage.

Here's my rule to live by: What you do owe everyone is kindness and respect. What you do not owe everyone is you — your time, your presence, your help, your guidance, etc.

Granting those things is based on the relationships that you choose mutually to build. And that, honestly, is based on whether you have a connection. In other words, you don't have to invite them all to your house for a week. You do have to send them all a holiday card.

I say I'm lucky because I love my new family so much that I visit them even without my wife when I'm traveling for work or my volunteer gig. I text with my second cousin Emily about 10 times more than I text with my own sister.

I am glad that it makes my wife happy that I have that relationship. But I have that relationship not for her, but because I want that relationship. The former is just gravy.



Emily came with her mom, Sean, for a visit last spring, and it was a blast. This year, Emily and her kids came for Spring Break, which was WAY more work because of the kids of course. But also a blast.

Here's the secret I've learned: It's fun to take advantage of the benefit of having new family when it comes out of desire and not out of obligation. Sure, if my wife had an Uncle Hank who I didn't much care for but needed a place to stay for one night on his way to Oklahoma, I would happily make up the guest room and cook up my best pasta dish.

But I would not invite him for the week. I wouldn't. I'd be a grump, and I'd feel resentful, and I don't have my own Uncle Hank over for a week. And if my wife adores him? Well, I can visit my own family, and she can host hers. Problem solved.

There are lots of solutions. But you feeling like you have to bend over backwards for people just because they are "relatives" will only lead to bad feelings. Trust me.

Like I said, I feel lucky. I have a really good relationship with so much of my

wife's family. I genuinely love them. I invite them and take care of them because I want to. And that makes all the difference when you have two kids bickering over the remote in your living room and five people who all eat different things and you are desperate for a hour of quiet with your new second cousin but would have to get up at the crack of dawn to get a word in edgewise.

To have family you love and who loves you is a really, really lucky thing. Enjoy it. Treasure it.

But don't let having family members who are not your cup of tea ruin it for you.

Just like with everything else in life, limit your time with people who don't fill you up. Don't let vampires suck you dry — even if they are now "family." We live in a time of self-care and self-respect — thank goodness. So remember, because you love your spouse, you owe her family kindness and respect but never to your own detriment.

And that includes knowing when to open your heart — and your front door — and when to guard it.

## this week's solution

DEAD	ACTI	JODIE			
ERTE	NORA	APRON			
NOON	TRIM	BRENT			
IDLI	KETO	BE	YSER		
SELMA	SIDE	SSE			
EDS	PIC	CANDICE			
	SUDAN	STENOS			
DAKOTA	FANNING				
OMNI	HERBERT				
EMILIO	CARE	LEA			
SOT	BAD		THORN		
	WHEN	IGET	YOUNG		
SNEER	ERIE	BIEL			
TRACI	GARS	OSSO			
PARKA	ODES	SETS			

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Best Local Performer, Best Karaoke - Wayne Smith



Best Collectibles & Comics - Zeus Comics

# Fostering Age Reversal

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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63							64				65			
66							67				68			



Ashby at Roy G's



Fantasha feelin blue at JR.'s



Pretty in Pink



Corey at Roy G's

Solution on Page 20

**Across**

- 1 Six feet under
- 5 Beginning of *Wicked*
- 9 Foster
- 14 Art Deco name
- 15 *Brothers & Sisters* matriarch
- 16 Ketchup catcher
- 17 Palindromic time
- 18 Like a muscle
- 19 George of *The Gay Sisters*
- 20 Start of a quote from 9-Across
- 23 River of Flanders
- 24 Blair, who kissed Gellar
- 25 *West \_\_\_ Story*
- 27 Away from NNW
- 28 Wood and more
- 29 It's a snap
- 32 Bergen of *Murphy Brown*
- 34 Khartoum's country
- 36 They serve dictators
- 37 More of the quote
- 41 Potent opening
- 42 *Fortune and Men's Eyes* writer John
- 43 Fashion designer Pucci
- 45 Hospital work
- 46 *Brokeback Mountain* grazing area

- 49 Karen Walker, perhaps
- 50 Michael Jackson hit
- 52 Richard Chamberlain's *The \_\_\_ Birds*
- 54 End of the quote
- 59 Look from Snidely Whiplash
- 61 Iroquoian language
- 62 Jessica of *The Illusionist*
- 63 Chef Des Jardins
- 64 Long-jawed swimmers
- 65 Pasolini's bone
- 66 Hooded jacket
- 67 Sapphic poems
- 68 Where movies are made

- 22 He played Lou Grant for MTM
- 26 Whole shebang
- 30 *My own private* state resident?
- 31 Colette's coffee
- 33 Result of getting rear-ended
- 34 The good earth
- 35 Undercover crack investigator
- 37 Lesbian couple in *Bambi*?
- 38 Some biathlon gear
- 39 Sweaters and such
- 40 Org. for rim jobs?
- 44 Peninsula where the rain falls mainly on the plain
- 46 Thelma's lady friend
- 47 *The Importance of Being \_\_\_*
- 48 The Jets, to the Sharks
- 51 Frida's husband
- 53 Penniless persons
- 55 "Doggone!"
- 56 NG: New alum
- 57 Emerald isle
- 58 Madonna in *Dick Tracy*
- 59 Motor fuel additive
- 60 Org. that likes to shoot off

**Down**

- 1 Poet Levertov
- 2 Ate away at
- 3 Pacific formations
- 4 Blue material, but not porn
- 5 Pay your share, with *up*
- 6 Bud of *Harold and Maude*
- 7 Threesomes
- 8 Like Shakespeare's feet
- 9 Short punch
- 10 *Aida*, to Gomer?
- 11 Salad topper
- 12 Dramatist Eugene
- 13 Feniger's main dishes
- 21 On the fritz

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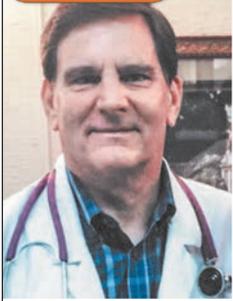
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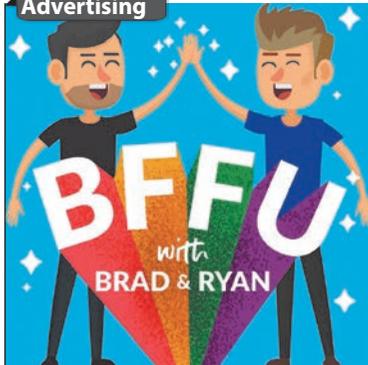
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