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Friday, May 28, 2021

'Special' delivery

A conversation with Ryan O'Connell
about his Netflix series

By Chris Azzopardi, Page 10



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DALLAS COUNTY EARLY VOTING DATES/TIMES

May (mayo) 24 – 27	Monday-Thursday (lunes a jueves)	8a.m. to 5p.m.
May (mayo) 28	Friday (viernes)	7a.m. to 7p.m.
May (mayo) 29	Saturday (sábado)	8a.m. to 5p.m.
May (mayo) 30	Sunday (domingo)	1p.m. to 6p.m.
May (mayo) 31	Memorial Day	
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June (junio) 1	Tuesday (martes)	7a.m to 7p.m.

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- CARROLLTON SENIOR CENTER**
1720 KELLER SPRINGS RD CARROLLTON 75006
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255 E PARKWAY BLVD COPPELL 75019
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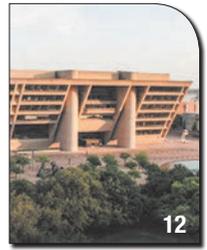
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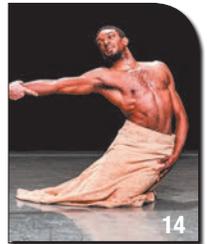
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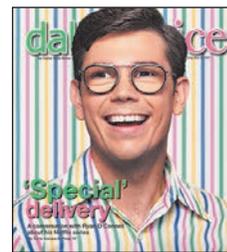
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Bites from our blog

WHAT'S THE TEA: DallasVoice.com



All anti-LGBTQ bills are officially dead for this legislative session

The last legislative assault on transgender youth went to Bill Hell Wednesday morning after failing to pass a key deadline in the Texas House requiring all Senate bills be heard on the floor. Senate Bill 29, which would have banned transgender youth from playing in sports based on their gender identity, was a priority of Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick's.

In a Tweet later Wednesday morning, Patrick was already calling on Gov. Greg Abbott to call a special session in June to address this and two others of his "priority bills" — one that would prohibit local governments from using taxpayer funds to pay for lobbyists and another that would punish social media companies for "censoring" Texans based on their political viewpoints. In a post on Twitter, Patrick claimed that "a majority of Texans in both parties support the bills," which is a blatant lie, at least in regards to SB 29.

Later on Wednesday morning, LGBTQ Texas state Rep. Jessica González of Dallas declared victory for this legislative session. She tweeted, "All anti-trans bills are dead this session."

— James Russell

Resource Center, UNT to hold name and gender clinic

University of North Texas College of Law partnering with Resource Center will hold an online name and gender clinic. The clinic will be

held virtually.

"We're looking to return to face-to-face," said Resource Center Advocacy Manager Rafael McDonnell. But for now, it will be held on Zoom on June 11.

McDonnell said he understood computer access might be a problem and he understood privacy concerns. He said UNT would be using a version of Zoom where you enter and then will be assigned a private room with a third-year law student or a volunteer attorney. The group, as you enter, would be like waiting in a doctor's waiting room. He assured the experience would be as private as possible.

Registration is required at Resource Center's Facebook events page.

— David Taffet

Dallas kicks off Pride on June 1

Join Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano and city



council members Omar Narvaez and Chad West as Dallas kicks off Pride on June 1.

The day begins at 10 a.m. as the trio raise the Dallas City Pride flag at Dallas Love Field. That event can be viewed on the Dallas Love Field Facebook page.

Then join in person as they raise the city's flag at Dallas Police Headquarters, 1400 Botham Jean Blvd. at noon and again at Dallas City Hall, 1500 Marilla St. at 4 p.m.

The city Pride flag was designed last year by Tracy Nanthavongsa and purchased through donations. The city council approved his design unanimously and voted to fly it each year outside city hall during June.

This year, the city council voted to also fly the flag at city-owned property around Dallas. That includes Dallas Police Headquarters and Dallas Love Field.

— David Taffet

Dallas Animal Services hits highest capacity since pandemic began

Dallas Animal Services is out of medium and large dog kennels and is in urgent need of adopters and fosters, as hundreds more pets are expected to arrive by the end of this week.

DAS Interim Director McLissa Webber said, "Our daily animal intake is increasing steadily, but our adoption and foster numbers are not keeping pace. As a result, our shelter is filling up faster than we can rehome pets, creating an unsustainable gap in lifesaving.

"If we do not get help from our community

now, we will be forced to make difficult space decisions in the coming days."

To prevent the euthanasia of healthy, friendly dogs, DAS is urging the community to adopt or foster a medium or large dog this week. All pets are currently free to adopt; are spayed/neutered, vaccinated and

microchipped, and come with a voucher for a free veterinary visit.

DAS offers online adoptions with curbside pet pick up through BeDallas90.org, onsite in-person pop-up adoption events, adoptions at its PetSmart Everyday Adoption Center on North Coit Road in North Dallas, and, on Wednesday, May 26, DAS will begin welcoming visitors inside its main shelter on Westmoreland Road to view pets and complete adoptions in person.

— Tammye Nash

Robert Emery wins three Telly Awards



Robert Emery won three Telly Awards for his video *The History of the Christmas Tree* that he made for the Dallas Woman's Club. He won silver in the non-broadcasting category for directing and bronze for history and low-budget (under \$700 per minute).

Emery said his award is for craft filmmaking that he produced on his computer, not professional filmmaking so he wasn't competing against cable or broadcast networks or film studios, but there were thousands of entries for the New York-based Telly Awards from around the country.

He said the Dallas Woman's Club hired him early last year to put on a stage show for Christmas, but when the pandemic hit, like everyone else, he had to pivot. The result was a 55-minute video about the history of the Christmas tree.

— David Taffet



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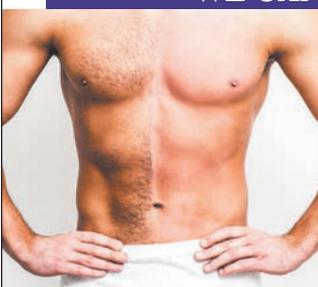
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Melissa Harris-Perry

PFLAG launching 'What Makes Pride' broadcasts on June 1

PFLAG National is launching a new broadcast called *What Makes Pride*, beginning June 1 and continuing each Tuesday in June. The new limited series is hosted by Melissa Harris-Perry, and episodes will premiere at 10:30 a.m. central every Tuesday in June on PFLAG National's YouTube and Facebook channels, and at PFLAG.org/WhatMakesPride, with additional content on PFLAG National's Instagram feed.

"In a year marked by social upheaval, growing white supremacist movements and a global pandemic, organizations led by and for people who are queer, transgender, Black, Indigenous, and people of color are creating transformational change in communities," according to a press release announcing the series. "*What Makes Pride* focuses the lens on their stories, their work and the QTBIPOC leaders who embody Pride in 2021.

— Tammye Nash

DIFFA Dallas is kicking Sunday Funday up a notch

After more than a year of gathering virtually, DIFFA/Dallas (the Design Industry Foundation Fighting AIDS) is bringing back in-person events, starting June 13 with their first-ever elevated Sunday Funday — A Picnic in The Park at Klyde Warren Park. DIFFA also just announced that the 12th annual Burgers & Burgandy is set for Oct. 8 at Peace Plaza.

Sunday Funday — A Picnic in the Park is set for 1-4 p.m., and guests are invited to show up in "true DIFFA style [in their] most fashionable picnic attire." Those attending will get a picnic blanket and socially-distanced spot for up to four guests per blanket, along with a DIFFA-curated picnic meal with wine.

Deep Eddy Vodka will be there with adult snow cones, and DJ Jen Miller will keep the music going with, surprise performances happening throughout the afternoon.

Spots are available for \$300 per blanket and can be purchased at DIFFADallas.org.

— Tammye Nash

ADOPTABLE: TATER

Meet **Tater**. This 2½-year-old Australian cattle dog mix has a huge personality and one of the best smiles. It's hard not



to adore his floppy ears and cute little black spots, but you'll love Tater's happy attitude the best. He loves toys and treats and spending lots of time outside. Being in the shelter is hard for Tater, and he really would love either a foster or adopter to take him in to a nice, quiet home where he can feel safe and comfortable. Tater has a lot of energy and will need a fenced-in yard to zoom around in as much as he likes. He would prefer a home without other dogs or kids. Adopters get to take Tater on a "test drive" with a trial adoption. The SPCA of Texas will provide all behavior and medical support to help ensure a successful transition into a new home. To fill out an application to meet Tater, please visit SPCA.org/DogAdopt.

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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Tennessee on a roll

The state legislature is slamming LGBTQ folks right and left, and the Tennessee LCR is cheering them on.

Tennessee is on an anti-LGBTQ roll, y'all. You may remember that I wrote about how gay country music star T.J. Osborne was supposed to get honored by the state legislature via a resolution — until a Republican, Rep. Jeremy Faison, stepped in and said, "Uh, no. Too gay."

This pissed a lot of people off because it seemed so, well, petty. Like, let Osborne have his day, you know? It'd be a cool thing for LGBTQ kids to see . . . Oh, wait. We can't let kids know LGBTQ people exist, let alone that happy and successful LGBTQ exist, or the kids will all want in on the LGBTQ action.

Now, if a teacher wanted to give a lesson including the legislature's snub of Osborne, however, that teacher would have to wait 30 days to give parents sufficient warning that LGBTQ stuff was going to be discussed.

According to The Advocate, Gov. Bill Lee, a Republican, "signed a bill into law requiring schools to give parents a 30-day notice about any lessons that deal with sexual orientation or gender identity and allow the parents to opt their children out of that instruction."

This'll solve the problem of kids "turning" LGBTQ, because no doubt the reason LGBTQ people that are, say, my age exist is because of the rampant pro-LGBTQ curriculum of the 1980s and '90s in public schools, not to mention all of the clubs and supportive teachers and the Pride parade down every hallway.

I'm kidding, of course. There was less than none of that back then. But that did not stop me from going full lesbian. I



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

even drive a Subaru. Of course, I realize that Gov. Lee and the members of the legislature who hurled this bill onto his desk don't be-

lieve that it will be an end to a new generation of queer kids. Not literally, anyway.

Pete Buttigieg, or teaching that Ronald Reagan was a trash president who refused to even say "AIDS" while scores of gay men died.

Not to mention the complete absence of LGBTQ people from sexual education classes, whatever that means in Tennessee. It's not like there's any kind of national standard for sex ed, and it tends to vary from school to school, with some schools being like, "Hey, here's an inclusive and comprehensive education that will teach you to respect yourself and keep yourself safe," while other schools are like, "Chew up this piece of gum and look at it, that's what girls become if they have sex before marriage."

Oh, wait (touches earpiece): I'm being told that COVID-19 is still a thing. Also something about all hell breaking out in the Middle East. Global warming. Bridges and roads turning to dust. Racism. Police brutality.

So, like, nothing big.

The Log Cabin Republicans of Tennessee are definitely not helping. I've long been disgusted with LCR — they endorsed Trump, remember? And the Tennessee group's response to the whole T.J. Osborne resolution is, well, downright bizarre. They posted a statement on Twitter that is the definition of "cringe."

Written as if by Gay Sass Bot 2000, it reads in part, "None of us got resolutions when we came out — and we were a lot younger than Osborne. Don't expect rainbow confetti and a ticker-tape parade just for liking boys, hunty. Shut up and sing."

You'll remember that "Shut up and sing" was directed at the all-female country music group The Chicks back when they had the

Their goal is to send a signal that LGBTQ people are damaged and deserving of the hatred and oppression coming their way.

The cruelty is the point.

It reminds me of when then-GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney said he was in favor of "self-deportation," which meant making life in the U.S. so unbearably miserable for immigrants that they'd just choose to leave themselves. (Keep in mind that he's now considered the World's Most Reasonable and Decent Republican, so, you know, yikes.)

Representation matters. This law precludes history classes from including the Stonewall Riots, *Obergefell v. Hodges* and

Human Rights Campaign Associate Regional Campaign Director Melodía Gutiérrez said in a statement: "LGBTQ people are integral to the fabric of American society. Gov. Lee and the Tennessee state legislature's disgraceful attempts to erase LGBTQ individuals from coursework is discrimination in its clearest form."

Disgraceful is the right word, but, sadly, this kind of shit isn't uncommon.

According to HRC, "Tennessee is one of 30 states that has introduced a slate of discriminatory, anti-LGBTQ legislation this session." And who can blame them, really? It's not like there are a lot of pressing national concerns right now.

nerve to oppose the war in Iraq and criticize George W. Bush. So, you know, classic move.

LCR also included statements that could've been written by the Family Research Council, like, "This is America, not gender studies class," and "Legislative sessions are NOT coming out parties."

All this statement does is reinforce my belief that conservative comedy is an oxymoron, and Log Cabin Republicans are sad and pathetic people. ■

D'Anne Witkowski is a writer living in Michigan with her wife and son. She has been writing about LGBTQ politics for over a decade. Follow her on Twitter @MamaD-Witkowski.

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Ryan O'Connell talks 'Special'

ENTERTAINMENT PROFILE

The actor discusses why his groundbreaking show has felt like a 'bad boyfriend' and gay sex on TV

CHRIS AZZOPARDI | Q Syndicate

A gay man with cerebral palsy: You won't find that kind of important representation just any time you flick on the TV, which is why Ryan O'Connell's Netflix show *Special* has been uniquely refreshing and profoundly revolutionary.

It began as his memoir, entitled *I'm Special: And Other Lies We Tell Ourselves* — and then evolved into a full-fledged, semi-autobiographical dramedy in 2019 on Netflix. He created it; he stars in it; he writes it. And he does so once again with the second and final season, which expands episodes from short bits to sitcom-length servings, with openly gay actor Jim Parsons still producing.

Here, O'Connell talks about his honest approach to gay sex and how it's important for him to still, after *Special*, create stories about people living with disabilities.

Dallas Voice: How're you feeling now that the show has come to an end? Ryan O'Connell: Honestly, it sounds weird to say, but I feel pretty good about it. I mean, obviously, the decision to end the show was not mine, but here's the deal: I'm gonna give you a little blurry timeline of the show. We pitched it in 2015; it took four years to get made. Then it came out April 2019 and took us five months to get renewed and then COVID shut us down. [It took] us two years for Season 2.

So, as amazing as the show has been, and incredible, it's also kinda been like a bad boyfriend. This has been a part of my life for six years, so because we knew from the jump that this was going to be the last season, we were able to really craft, I think, a really complete and final season.



So, from the storyline perspective, it feels totally right. *Special* has been really incredible, but it's been a really, really difficult show to make, and it feels like it's always hanging on by a thread and, yeah, I think I'm ready for a new anxiety moment.

With this season, where do you end and where does the other Ryan begin?

As the show's gone on, the character of Ryan has become less and less like me, especially in Season 2. Season 1, honestly, wasn't really like me either. I mean, I was never like this character; I was never this arrested development. I moved out of my parents' house at 18 — right on schedule! Lost my virginity at 17 — right on schedule! What I do relate to with this character of Ryan in Seasons 1 and 2 are the emotional themes, like what he's struggling with, this feeling of, "Is he enough?" This struggle with self-worth and independence. That really resonates with me deeply. But in terms of the situations this little goof troop finds himself in, I don't relate to that. ... But emotionally I get it. I've been through what he's been through.

I'm calling this season "Ryan's journey to being a dom top." Oh my. Well, at least emotionally, yeah. And actually, you're right, he does top! ... I think it works both ways, baby. I think Ryan has been emotionally and physically bottoming for a lot of people, and this season is all about him coming into his own and asserting what

he wants and not apologizing for it. He's not apologizing for taking up space; that's something I really, really relate to.

A couple years ago, I really experienced a shift in terms of realizing how much I was contorting myself to make everyone else around me comfortable while never asking, "Am I comfortable? Do I want to do this?" ... But I really have learned to let go of that completely, and I just try to walk around with the confidence of a New York straight, white male. I cosplay as one every day.

As for the gay sex on *Special* — It's not the kind of gay sex that's watered the fuck down to make straight people more comfortable, which is why I love it so much. Yes, it's definitely ... you can tell it's written and performed by a gay person. And also, I've been very vocal about how I only hire gay actors to play gay roles, and people are like, "Um, it's called acting, ever heard of it? That's their literal job." And I'm like, "Honey, sweetie, darling, baby, that's not what this is about. I understand, I'm very aware of what acting means, but we don't live in a world where there's an equal playing field, and that's why I wanna give people opportunities to get parts, because not a lot of people are giving them those opportunities."

And also, from a selfish point of view, it's much easier to shoot a gay sex scene with a gay actor than it is a straight actor. I don't wanna fucking explain the mechan-

ics of gay sex to a straight actor. Life is too short, honey. ... We definitely pushed the envelope. ... I just don't understand why the representation of gay sex has been so dire. It's either hypersexualized and very porny and erotic, or it's done in a tent, off-camera, and you just hear lots of grunting and moaning. So it was really nice to not do any of that and also not have sex that's cloaked in shame or secrecy.

From what I know, this season was shot entirely during the pandemic, which means the sex scenes were also shot during the pandemic. Is that right? The first four episodes were ... done pre-COVID. It's so funny watching the first four episodes 'cause I feel like I have a literal record of the last month of the world before it changed aerobically forever. It's so eerie. But again, with me and Max Jenkins, Max is a friend of mine and I've known him for a long time and there's just a level of comfort between the two of us that, again, is another benefit of just shooting with gay friends. There's this ease that I feel I wouldn't have with some rando straight stranger. So I don't feel like the pandemic actually made the sex scenes suffer.

The guy who you meet who fetishizes disability. Were you faced with a situation like that in your own life? I've never been fetishized, but I've heard about it, and I know that it's a thing. I think they're called "devotees," and I thought it was an interesting way to explore Ryan grappling with his self-worth. So it was really important to me that it was very clear that this is a consensual experience. Ryan's not being sexually assaulted. The guy says, "Is this OK?" and Ryan says yes, because that's a very real thing that we don't talk about, which is basically sex that you're not comfortable having, but you don't necessarily have the self-esteem to Mac-Gyver yourself out of it.

How do you hope *Special* has enlightened people within the LGBTQ+ community, and beyond, who haven't really considered the experiences of someone who is a queer person with a disability? I hate the word "normal," 'cause what is normal? But so little is discussed in terms of disability. I feel like the disabled people often exist on the fringes of our society, because they are quite literally shut out, based on this world not being accessible on a very basic level. So, I think that



Max Jenkins plays Ryan's new love interest, Tanner, in the second and final season of *Special*.

the dialogue around disability is happening, but I still think it's not happening to the level that it should, and I think people feel uncomfortable when talking about disability. I feel like they're worried about saying the wrong thing.

I think with *Special*, you know, comedy is the best superpower that I have, that I've used throughout my life to get through it. And I think that when you give people permission to laugh, it creates this general ease and comfort.



Jessica Hecht, pictured here with Ryan O'Connell, stars as Ryan's mother on *Special*.

Ryan is disabled, but you don't have to be disabled to be feeling the things that he's feeling. So I think it's really just important to show a gay character who doesn't fit the physical ideals. I hope that it normalizes disability and I hope that it adds more texture to the queer experience, because in a lot of ways TV is gayer than ever. I feel like you can't sell a pilot without including a gay guy in there. But I still think that gay men are rarely allowed to be the complicated main course of the show. I think they're often relegated to being the appetizer. So I think it's really important that we show gay men and [their] rich interior life, not just in the context of them, like, shopping or being comedic relief.

Looking ahead, what kind of stories do you want to tell next or be a part of? And in what form: film or television?

Picasso had his Blue Period, and I'm still in my Gay Disabled Period. So, I wrote a novel called *Just By Looking At Him* that is about a gay guy with cerebral palsy who writes for TV. What?! She didn't stray too far for this one! That's being adapted

into a movie with Greg Berlanti producing, so I'm gonna be writing that and starring in it, which will be really great. Then I sold a show to HBO Max called *Accessible*, which is a teen disabled comedy, which I hope gets picked up to series.

Sometimes I feel like, "Should I really kind of dive into disability again?" Or, "I've already done that." But the fact is that there's so much that has not been explored, and that's what really gets me excited as a storyteller: When you can say things like, "Wow, I've never seen that on TV before."

It's crazy that we're still saying that in 2021. Even though there are approximately 40 million shows on the air, there are things that still have stigma and still have taboo. So I'm only going to be playing in the world of disability for a little bit longer! And we'll see what happens.

This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity.

Chris Azzopardi is the editorial director of Pride Source Media Group and Q Syndicate, the national LGBTQ wire service. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.

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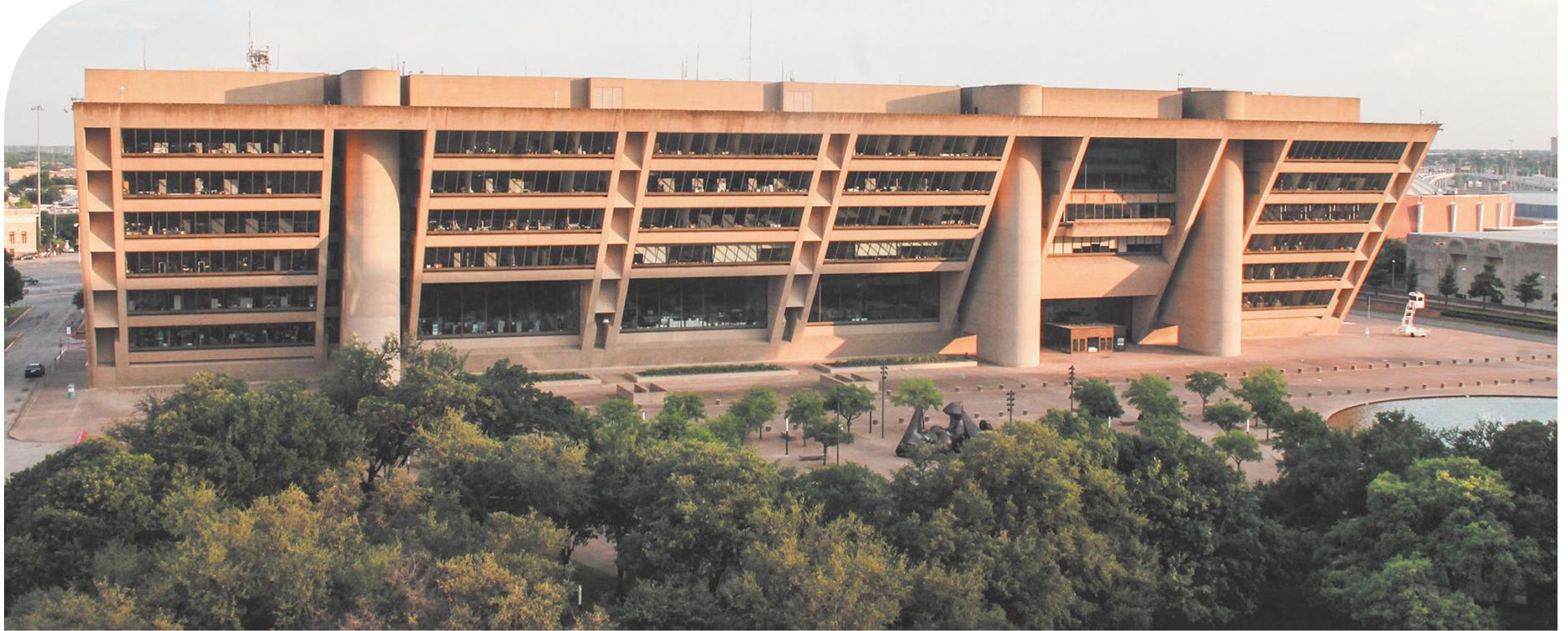
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District 13 race turns *nasty*

ELECTION NEWS



Six council districts have runoffs that will be decided on June 5

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Six Dallas City Council districts have runoff elections that will be decided on June 5, but the District 13 Dallas City Council race between Gay Donnell Willis and Leland Burk has taken a nasty turn.

Burk recently revealed that Willis owes back taxes and called for her to withdraw from the race. Willis said her ex-husband owes the taxes and asked Burk to apologize. She also pointed out that he has a number of upcoming zoning cases that will come before the council from which he'll have to abstain.

District 13 covers much of Preston Hollow, but it also includes a small part of Oak Lawn along Inwood Road. But the connection to the LGBTQ community runs deeper than that: The race to replace Jennifer Staubach Gates, who is term-limited, is between a gay man and the CEO

of the Turtle Creek Conservancy.

On the issues, there aren't big differences between the two candidates. The district includes some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in Dallas as well as Victory Meadow, one of the poorest.

The LGBTQ community is split on this race. Stonewall Democrats has endorsed Willis. Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance has endorsed Burk. Both candidates' lists of individual endorsements have quite a few names from the LGBTQ community.

The controversy began when Burk discovered Willis and her husband owed unpaid taxes dating back to 2007. The amount was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Burk called for her to withdraw from the race. However, according to Willis, she and her husband were divorced in 2014, and, under the divorce agreement, her husband was assigned all of the tax debt.

More recently, when the debt wasn't fully paid, the IRS filed liens against both Willis and her ex-husband. She hired an attorney and filed an "innocent spouse" claim. Her maximum debt would be \$15,000 over four years, and she's waiting for a court ruling of what she actually owes, including whether she owes anything at all.

Willis called for Burk to apologize and pointed out that one of the issues in District 13 is development around Preston Road and Northwest Highway. Burk has several properties in the area that would be affected by any zoning decisions. As city councilman, he'd have to recuse himself.

While she didn't call for him to with-

draw, she did point out that any influence he had on zoning that affected building height and density would affect traffic in the area and might not be in the best interest of people living in the area.

Burk answered a Dallas Morning News editorial that claimed he selectively released material as a political smear: "The fact is, we released every public



Leland Burk

document available about the liens from 2007 through 2011, including a Release of Liens for 2011," Burk wrote on his website. "These public documents are all available online for anyone to see. Conversely, the Morning News stated that the unpaid taxes are not my opponent's responsibility based on a divorce decree that is sealed and not available to the public."

Five candidates competed in the original election. Burk and Willis each received a little more than 4,000 votes in the district that normally has the highest voter turnout in the city. Even fewer voters turn out for runoffs. This race may be decided by which candidate gets out their supporters.

Five other Dallas City Council races are in runoffs including the two Oak Lawn seats.

OAK LAWN

The race to replace Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano in District 2 is between Jesse Moreno and Sana Syed. Both Stonewall and DGLA as well as third-

place finisher Raha Assadi have endorsed Moreno, who got 39 percent of the vote in a five-way race.

Moreno has served on boards and commissions for the past 20 years, most recently on the park board. He said he worked to make rec centers "safe and inclusive for everyone" by requiring diversity training for all staff.

His wife, Monica, is Medrano's chief of staff and has been active with the city's LGBT Task Force.

Syed is currently executive vice president of community outreach and development for Nicholas Residential. She has been a local TV news reporter and served as director of the city's Public Information Office.

"I have built my career as an inclusive bridge builder," Syed wrote in an email. "Giving a voice to the less fortunate and standing up for those who have experienced trauma. To move Dallas forward, we must bring people together to solve our toughest issues. I'd be honored to be that person for District 2."

The council district line runs down



Gay Donnell Willis

Cedar Springs Road. The Round-Up Saloon side of the street is District 14 where incumbent David Blewett is defending his seat against challenger Paul Ridley.

Both DGLA and Stonewall endorsed Ridley. Ridley is a long-time member of

the Oak Lawn Committee that works to keep development in the area more pedestrian-friendly and enhance the ambiance while developing an urban environment.

District 14 resident David Faulkner

NASTY, Page 24

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Toying with normality

DANCE

Queer choreographer will take audiences into a dream world

RICH LOPEZ | Contributing Writer
richlopezwrites@gmail.com

Bruce Wood Dance is doing something bold and brave for its new show UNITE; the company will present the show live to its patrons. For the past year, the arts have been in limbo if not simply on a screen. So a live performance these days almost seems revolutionary.

"There is a tremendous feeling of excitement as we prepare for UNITE at Moody Performance Hall," Artistic Director Joy Bollinger said in a press release. "To return to our home stage, to feel the presence of a live audience, to share our passion with others in real time — these things feel like quite an accomplishment after the year we have had.

"We have no doubt that the return to an in-person performance inside this theater will remind us all of the power of dance: to spark laughter, to inspire awe, to invite empathy, to unite," she said.

The show will feature two Bruce Wood signature pieces ("Requiem" and "Hide Me Angel") and two world premieres, including Bollinger's "Blue" and "Sombrieristas" by New York-based choreographer Omar Román De Jesús. The company reached out to Román De Jesús specifically for this new show.

"Joy sent me an email a couple of months before COVID, so this was supposed to happen a while back," he said. "But when they reached out to me, it was such a surprise and honor. This is my art and, finally, we can do it this time."

Having said that, when the pieces fell into place, he had three weeks to create his piece. Román De Jesús was in Fort Worth working with the company finalizing the choreography.

"Yes, I had three weeks to come up with a well-crafted piece," he said. "I had been working with my own company, Boca Tuya, in New York and so,



in preparation, we did some of the work before coming here.

"But a piece needs to find its home and true identity, and, at three weeks, that timing is like right there," he added.

At the time of the interview, Román De

"Sombrieristas" by Omar Román De Jesús, above, and "Requiem" by Bruce Wood, right. (photo by Sharen Bradford)

Jesús hadn't yet landed on the title of his piece. In a way, he was waiting for it to arrive.

"Sombrieristas" awakens a long-forgotten code of rules solidified by secret handshakes, foottraces, and subtle nods," Román De Jesús explained in the press release. "Set on a cast of one dozen dancers and an equal cohort of lively hats, this work invites us to shed the skin of adult propriety and experience an alternate timeline governed by the shamelessly volatile logic of pavement games."

The themes for "Sombrieristas" began when Román De Jesús was inspired by a piece he saw from one of his choreographer friends that focused on dreams. He said it pushed his buttons, but he had to create his own version of a dream.

"I don't see this as a portrayal of a dream, but that vessel to create one — a world full of mystery and adventure," he said. "I think the main thing about this piece is that it's toying with normality."

As an artist, Román De Jesús infuses his own Puerto Rican heritage and queer identity into his work, but it's often a source of conflict for the 29-year-old.

"My movement vocabulary is influenced by that, but it's also influenced by others, like Chinese or African-American choreographers," he said. "Plus, I work with who I have. One dancer is so comfortable with himself, and he's flamboyant and sassy, so I work that into his character. But I'm not about making this queer or that Puerto Rican, because I'd rather work with their personalities."

Perhaps this is where his personal background intersects with the dreamlike choreography in "Sombrieristas."

"How can I tell a story that can feel like an experience that started somewhere and went somewhere else," he said. "The piece is really theatrical and it is full of intention and meaning."

UNITE by Bruce Wood Dance, 8 p.m. June 4 and 5, 2 p.m. June 6, Moody Performance Hall. Tickets are \$35-\$100 and available at ticketdfw.com.

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Life after death in Salt Lake City

BEYOND THE PAGE

Gay Utah native pens supernatural thriller 'The Last Handful of Clover'

MICHAEL AARON | Q Salt Lake

Reprinted with permission from Q Salt Lake Magazine

“**T**hree days after he was murdered, Richard began to feel much better ...”

Park City-born Wess Mongo Jolley spent the last five years writing his most ambitious project — a sprawling three-book supernatural thriller, set in Salt Lake City, titled *The Last Handful of Clover*. Saying it is the most challenging thing he’s written, Jolley describes it as an “epic meditation on aging, loss, and regret.”

The story centers on a University of Utah professor named Richard Pratt who is killed three days before the book begins in a seemingly random act of violence. As Pratt is propelled into the netherworld called the Hereafter, he is forced to witness the loss and suffering of the husband he left behind as Salt Lake City tumbles rapidly toward fiery demise. As other denizens of his ghostly realm begin to enact a brutal revenge on the world of the living, only Pratt can save the man he loves.

With the help of a barefoot 15-year-old boy from the Old West and an ancient Goshute wise woman, Pratt sets out to save his husband, Salt Lake City and his own wounded soul. Together they must face a ferocious enemy with his fingers deep in Richard’s shameful past.

Jolley calls his story “a sweeping supernatural thriller about love, loss, regret, and redemption. ... a novel of terror, in which one man is called upon to face the sins of his past in order to save the future for the man he loves and a city of over a million innocent



Wes Mongo Jolley

souls.” *The Last Handful of Clover* takes the reader from the remote Montana wilderness of 1810 to a secret chemical weapons laboratory under the Utah desert — and beyond.

Jolley said he made his main character gay because he thinks that writers “need to write what they know.”

He explained, “I’m a gay man from

Utah, so it felt like a good place to start. But the more thoughtful answer is that I believe representation is important. I wanted to write a story where the lead characters were gay, yet the story was also about truly universal experiences. The fact that the lead character is gay is crucial to the story, and it would not be the same story if the characters

were straight. And yet, there is much in [Pratt’s husband] Keith and Richard’s experience that everyone can relate to, no matter their orientation.

“I think Richard and Keith’s relationship is one that gay men, especially bear-identified gay men of my generation, will recognize and find familiar,” he added.

It took Jolley nearly five years to finish his novel; in fact, he noted, it was released on the five-year anniversary of the day he wrote down his first notes on the story, including “the line that I still use when talking about the book: ‘Three days after he was murdered, Richard Pratt began to feel much better,’” he said. “That line didn’t make it into the book, but it captured the spirit — no pun intended — of what I wanted to write.”

Jolley said that Utah, where he grew up, “is an amazing place, and it’s always captivated my heart. Even though, as a young gay man, I felt a need to flee from the rigid culture of the state, I still think of it as my home. And Salt Lake City is an especially interesting town.

“Besides the conservative Mormon culture, Salt Lake boasts an artistic and bohemian underground that is fueled by the otherwise conservative world around it. The contrast makes for a vibrant, interesting, and diverse environment.”

And the story, he said, is set in Salt Lake City because, “Right from the start, this story tied in heavily with a lot of Mormon history and culture.

“You’ll read references in the novel to several crucial incidents from Utah history. The massacre of the Goshute Tribe in the novel is based on a real historical incident, and the Fancher Train that passes through the state in 1847 is the actual wagon train that was later massacred in Southern Utah at Mountain Meadows,” he explained.

“I suppose this novel embodies my mixed feelings about Salt Lake City,” he continued. “It’s my chance to pen a love letter to the place where I grew up and where I came out and where I learned to love myself and other men. But it

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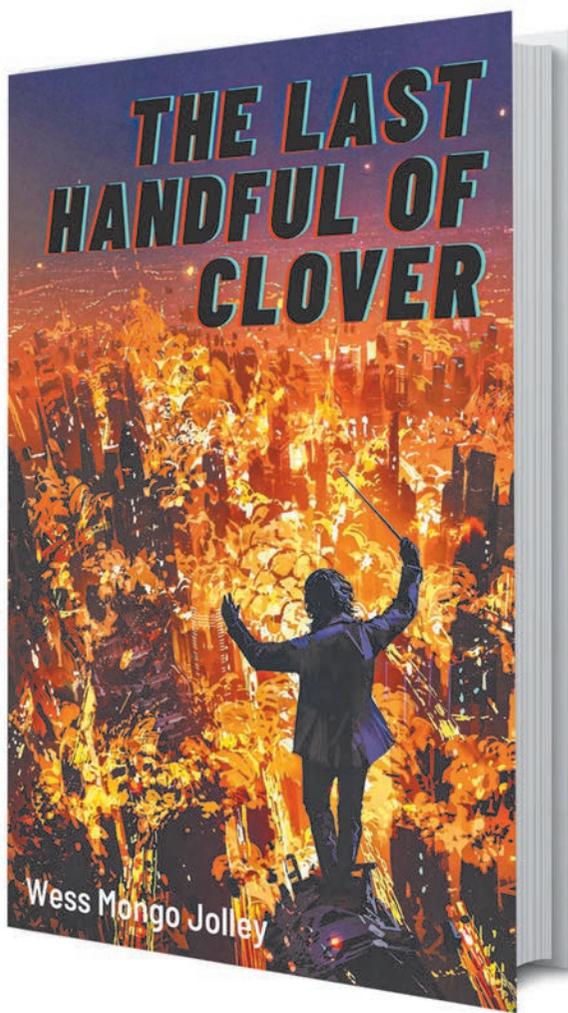


also gives me a chance to vent my frustration at the place by burning a lot of it to the ground — metaphorically, of course.”

Jolley has chosen to release the book through membership platform Patreon, and he hopes people will choose to become a patron there. “For the cost of a cup of coffee each month, you’ll get two chapters a week. And for just a few dollars more, you can listen to me narrate each of those chapters as well,” he said. “I’ll be releasing the audiobook chapters on Patreon simultaneously with the text chapters.”

“My dream is that we’ll build a community around the book on Patreon. I’d like it to feel like a book club, where we can all chat about the chapters as I release them,” Jolley said. “The feedback will help me immensely as I move it toward publication, and anybody that sticks with me for this entire journey will get a print copy of the book, if and when it is published.”

For those who may not have the resources to purchase a Patreon membership, Jol-



ley will be releasing the book later on the Wattpad platform and through his podcast. And he hopes that *The Last Handful of Clover* will be the first in a series. In fact, he said, “I’ve already begun planning the sequel, in which many of the same characters appear. The next book will follow the survivors from Salt Lake City as they move on to rebuild their lives, and we’ll follow the Fancher Train in 1847, as they move inexorably toward their fate in Mountain Meadows. The connection between the two will be shocking to readers.”

Jolley acknowledged that “a half-million-word supernatural thriller with a gay protagonist won’t be everyone’s cup of tea.” But, he said, he believes that fans of Stephen King’s *The Stand* will surely enjoy *The Last Handful of Clover*, as well as those who like movies such as *The Others* and *The Sixth Sense* that are “ghost stories told largely from the perspective of the ghosts.”

He continued, “I think it will appeal to a lot of readers. It’s a gay story, but it’s also a universal book about aging, loss, regret and redemption. And who among us hasn’t struggled with those existential questions and experiences?” ■

Information on *The Last Handful of Clover* can be found at wessmongojolley.com/fiction. The Patreon link is patreon.com/wessmongojolley.

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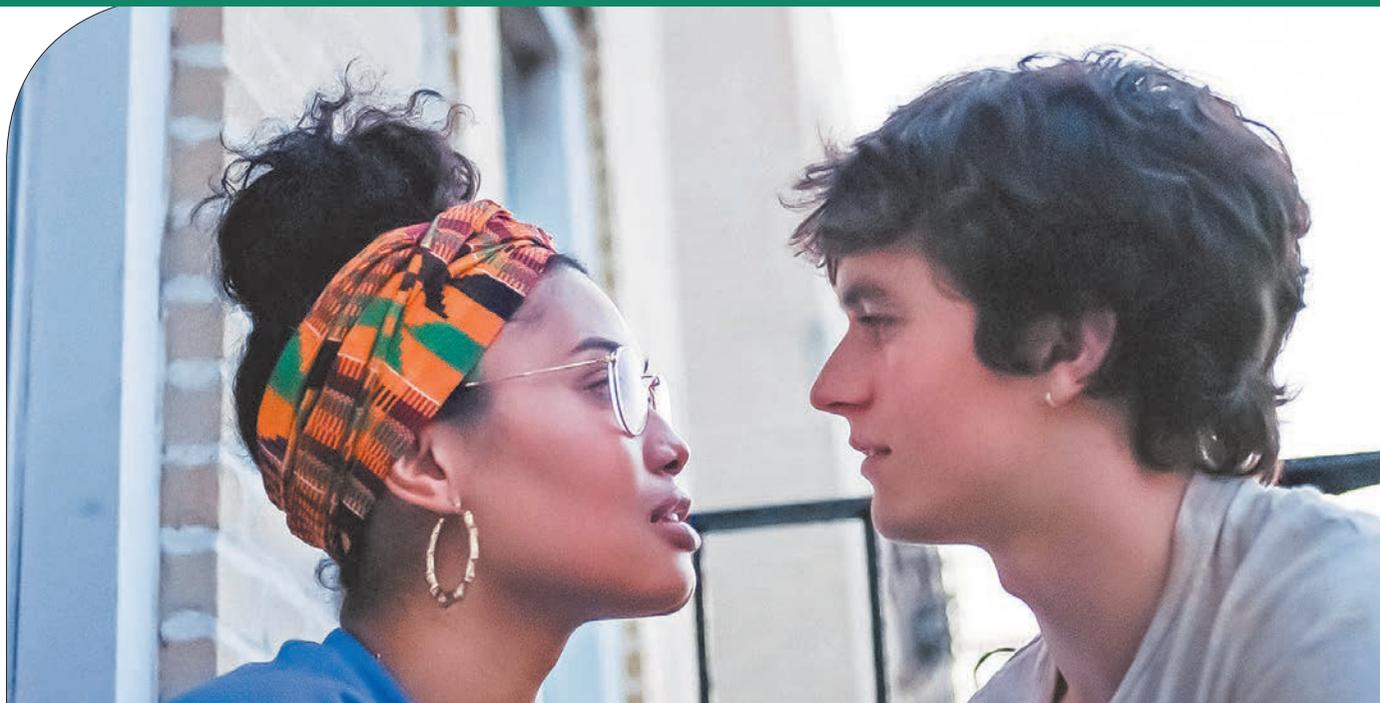
On good 'Authority'

MOVIE REVIEW

Fionn Whitehead, newcomer Leyna Bloom have the chops to make 'Port Authority' work

GREGG SHAPIRO | Screen Savor
GreggShapiro@aol.com

Practically every queer person worth their weight in gold lame, sequins and bugle beads has watched *Pose* since it premiered on FX in 2018. With its third — and final — season currently airing, many of us feel a sense of sadness about having to say goodbye to these characters that we have grown to care about and love, like family. As



Leyna Bloom and Fionn Whitehead, as Wye and Paul, have the chops to carry the action in *Port Authority*, a Momentum Pictures release. (Photo courtesy of Momentum Pictures)

AUTHORITY, Next Page



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AUTHORITY From Previous Page

we bid farewell, there is hope that the popularity of the award-winning series means that there could be more movies and TV shows exploring the ballroom scene and its habits.

One such movie has arrived in the form of writer/director Danielle Lessovitz's *Port Authority* (Momentum/eOne). Where *Pose* presented a portrait of balls and voguing in the early years, *Port Authority* takes a present-day approach.

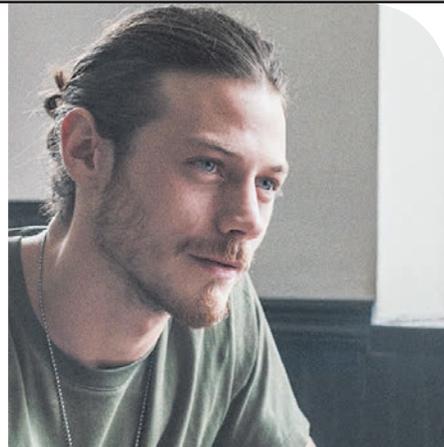
The alliterative Paul (Fionn Whitehead) from Pittsburgh on probation, steps off a bus at the titular station and is utterly unprepared for what New York City has in store for his 20-year-old self.

To begin with, his half-sister Sara (Louisa Krause), who was supposed to meet him there and provide a place for him to stay, never shows up. When he finally connects with her, she expresses no interest in giving him a place to stay, although she does give him some cash.

While being mugged on a subway train, Paul is saved by Lee (McCaul Lombardi), who not only secures him a place to stay at a Lower East Side homeless shelter but also offers him a job working on his repo/rent collection gang. Despite his kindness to Paul, Lee has an unpleasant side, illustrated by his undisguised homophobia.

At the shelter, Paul sees Tekay (Devon Carpenter) voguing in the stairwell, and one night, Paul follows Tekay to a ballroom rehearsal for the House of McQueen. While there he sees Wye (trans actress Leyna Bloom, in her film debut) and recognizes her from having seen her outside of Port Authority. After he is asked to leave (Paul kind of sticks out like a sore thumb), Wye comes after him. They talk and the spark between them is palatable.

Before you can say Romeo and Juliet, these potentially star-crossed lovers embark on an unlikely romantic relationship. However, where Wye is always her authentic self (even if Paul



McCaul Lombardi costars as Lee in *Port Authority* from Momentum Pictures. (Photo courtesy Momentum Pictures)

is clueless), Paul struggles to keep his stories straight while also trying to figure out who he is.

Trouble arises when Tekay (Devon Carpenter) recognizes Paul from being with Wye. He confronts him, asks him how long he's been a "chaser," and makes it clear that he will protect the vulnerable Wye.

To complicate matters, Nix (William Dufault), a member of Lee's crew, witnesses the interaction.

Nevertheless, Paul and Wye's relationship intensifies. They share personal family stories. They become increasingly intimate. They have a serious disagreement and make-up sex.

But Paul's crumbling façade can only be maintained for so long. An altercation between Lee, Nix and Tekay puts Paul in an awkward situation. Paul arranges to introduce Wye to Lee, and as you might expect, it backfires on him. Wye cuts Paul off.

Even with a conclusion that you could see from a mile away through oversized false eyelashes, as Paul's two worlds collide during eviction proceedings at the House of McQueen, there is enough dramatic tension to make it work. As for the final scene, taken directly from the tearjerker handbook, it works solely because Bloom and Whitehead have the chops to pull it off. Rating: B ■

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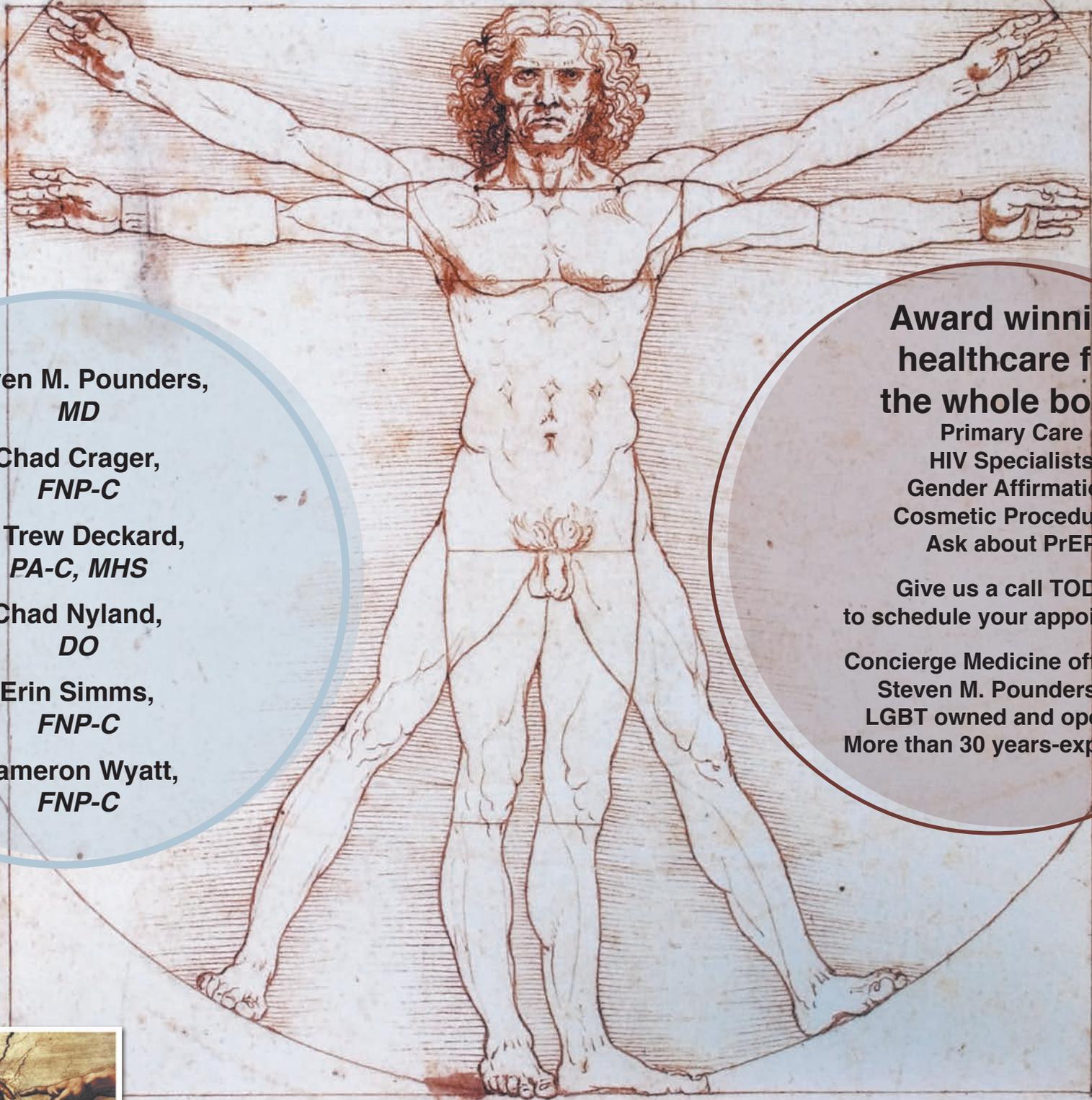
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Too soon? Not if you're Alaska Thunderfuck.

ENTERTAINMENT PROFILE

'Drag Race' queen has dirty jokes for days in her first-ever comedy special

CHRIS AZZOPARDI | Q Syndicate
qsyndicate@pridesource.com

Are Alaska Thunderfuck's filthy jokes about Jeffrey Epstein, "genderfluids," labia and poop too much for our world on fire? Even though she has a song called "Anus," Alaska thought maybe they were. She wasn't sure if an assault joke in 2021 would fly.

So the winner of *RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars Season 2* consulted comedy queens Jackie Beat, Sherry Vine and Margaret Cho to see if she was out of her damn mind. They didn't exactly say she wasn't, but they also did give Alaska just enough confidence to release *The Alaska Thunderfuck Extra Special Comedy Special*, her premiere standup gig. The special is airing now on OUTtv, the first LGBTQ+ Apple TV channel now available on the Apple TV app.

Dallas Voice: I feel like with this comedy special, you keep just checking boxes. Drag queen, comedy queen. What can't Alaska do? Alaska Thunderfuck: I can't do math really good, so I have an amazing accountant. And I also don't know how to use TikTok. I cannot figure it out. My 10-year-old niece is really good at. I know I've always been just a look queen and a glamour girl. So this is a huge step for me to try and tell jokes.

Has a career in drag prepared you for a career in comedy? I don't know. It was hard, and I was really trepidatious about doing it because I was like, "Yes, I'm funny, but I'm not a comedian." Like, I have so much respect for comedians who go out there and pound the fucking circuit of comedy clubs and [are] having bottles thrown at them and learning their craft. I'm like, "I am a visual artist who does drag, who can tell jokes. Sometimes with an OK success rate."



Was it harder than you thought it would be then? The jokes part, that was great. That was fun. It was learning how to do dance moves. That was harder. I couldn't just do a comedy special where I tell jokes. I had to be Team Too Much. I had to, like, put in musical numbers and dance numbers and a drag contest.

Going back, were you a funny kid? I mean, my family has a fucking amazing sense of humor, and they're so funny. ... But I was never a funny kid, because I was too shy and too scared of people. I was like, "I'm gay, and I'm weird, and I just wanna hide in my room."

Was comedy a defense mechanism for you like it is for a lot of gay kids? See, for me, it never got to that point. My defense mechanism was not being seen. I just tried to disappear. I tried to be a gecko and change to the color of the wall. That was my defense mechanism.

How are you feeling now that this special has been released into the world? I feel great about it now. It's been 87 years since we filmed this. It's been so long, and it's not an understatement to say the entire world has changed so much. We filmed this in pre-COVID Hollywood, ... [then] COVID happened. The quarantine happened. All these things happened. I was like, "Is this appropriate? Why the fuck do I need to be like, 'Look at me telling jokes, toots!' Should I even be doing this? What the fuck is going on?"

So luckily, we made it a part of the thing, a part of the movie. We have interviews with my comedy guru mentors, and they help assure me that the world needs laughter and comedy now more than, I think, ever.

When you're up there, and jokes are not hitting like you had hoped they would, what are you feeling? I was feeling like, "This is gonna be good footage." It's like the moment before a nuclear bomb drops. It's just perfect pin-drop silence.

Aside from Margaret Cho, what other comedians did you look up to growing up? Well, I always loved TV. I was really obsessed with TV. I was always getting told I watched too much TV as a child. So sitcom jokes, that sort of rhythm of the setup and the knockdown and the punchline is sort of ingrained in me. ... Just wacky, goofy — that type of humor is my shit. It's my jam.

How has being a drag queen been good

training for being a comedian? Well, to me, they're not that different. I think drag inherently is rooted in humor, because it's poking fun at the idea of conventions of gender: What is it that makes a man in this society and makes a woman in this society, and those rules are ultimately so arbitrary and so out of nowhere, so just absurd. So drag clowns all of those conventions and calls them into question and makes fun of them and "winks, winks" at you while it's doing it. I think inherently there is humor in the absurdity of just like, What the fuck is gender? What is society? What is clothing?

I loved seeing that a drag king, Tenederoni, won your very own drag competition, The Drag of the Year Pageant Competition Awards Contest Competition. ... What forms of drag would you like to see elevated, and how would you like to see the art form diversify moving forward? The reason Lola [LeCroix] and I started doing the Drag

Queen of the Year Pageant is [that] drag has always been crazy diverse. ... So, we found it really strange that there wasn't a competition that was open to all these different avenues of drag; it was always very compartmentalized. I mean, *Drag Race* is the sort of gold standard of drag competitions in the current landscape of the world. And the good thing that's hopeful is *Drag Race* is always changing it up and always evolving with the times. So, I could see a drag king getting thrown into the mix. I think it's possible.

What's next for you? Might you record another album at some point? Um, maybe.

Okay. You're in the studio. I don't know! Stay tuned.

This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity.

Chris Azzopardi is editorial director of Pride Source Media Group and Q Syndicate, the national LGBTQ wire service. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.



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NASTY

From Page 13



Jesse Moreno

said he's supporting Blewett because "David and his staff do an excellent job of constituent services. I live and work in D14. Anytime I've needed help with anything (city services, concerns about street racing or other crime issues) they have been there to resolve things quickly."

AND THE REST

Carol King Arnold is defending her District 4 seat against challenger Maxie Johnson. Stonewall endorsed Arnold. DGLA made no endorsement.

In District 7, Adam Bazaldua, who beat then-incumbent Kevin Felder in 2019, faces him again in the runoff. Both Stonewall and DGLA endorsed Bazaldua.

In the race to replace Lee Kleinman in Far North Dallas' District 11, Jaynie Schultz faces Barry Wernick. DGLA endorsed Schultz. Stonewall didn't endorse.

Early voting runs through Tuesday, June 1. Polls are closed on May 31, Memorial Day. Election Day is Saturday, June 5.



Sana Syed.



Pulp Fiction, starring John Travolta and Samuel L. Jackson, screens Sunday, May 30, at Dallas Heritage Village as part of the Rooftop Cinema series. See listings for details.

PLAN YOUR WEEK

Have an event coming up? Email your information to Managing Editor Tammye Nash at nash@dallasvoice.com or Senior Staff Writer David Taffet at taffet@dallasvoice.com by Monday at 5 p.m. for that week's issue.

The Gay Agenda is now color-coded: Red for community events; blue for arts and entertainment; purple for sports; green for nightlife and orange for civic events and holidays.

MAY

• May 28: Thrive Spring Fling

Garden party. Mingling, relaxing, lawn games, food, wine, music, raffles and more from 4-8 p.m. Register by 11 p.m. on My 26 at [ThriveSpringFling2021.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/My26/ThriveSpringFling2021).

• May 28: "Anything Goes"

The United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents "Anything Goes." Members perform a number they don't usually do. Benefits Legacy Founders Cottage. 8 p.m. at [Facebook.com/unitedcourtdallas](https://www.facebook.com/unitedcourtdallas).

• May 28-30: The Firebird Suite

Dallas Symphony Orchestra presents Stravinsky's The Firebird Suite conducted by Peter Ondjian plus Glinka's Overture to Russlan and Ludmilla and Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Minor. Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. ATPAC.org.

• May 28-June 3: Rooftop Cinema

Summer series of outdoor films at Dallas

Heritage Village, 1515 S. Harwood St. May 28: *The Greatest Showman*. May 29: *The Sandlot*. May 30: *Pulp Fiction*. May 31: *Love & Basketball*. June 1: *Bridesmaids*. June 2: *One Night in Miami*. June 3: *Jurassic Park*. Tickets at [RooftopCinemaClub.com/heritagevillage](https://www.RooftopCinemaClub.com/heritagevillage).

• May 29: Mr. Misster drag brunch

Jenni P hosts a champagne drag brunch. 2-4 p.m. at Mr. Misster, 3900 Cedar Springs Road. \$25-350. [MrMissterDTX.com](https://www.MrMissterDTX.com).

• May 29: Ram Party Dallas

Gear dance party with international DJ Tom Stephan. 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Viva's, 1350 Manufacturing St. Unit 120. [Facebook.com/events/1200587890370276](https://www.facebook.com/events/1200587890370276).

• Through May 29: Tenants/Tenets

TENANTS/TENETS is a futurist dance theatre performance that spontaneously generates a fully functioning society in which its community must determine their responsibility to each other, based on their individual identities, presented by Very Good Dance Theatre at the Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. at 8 p.m. Tickets at tickets.attpac.org/production/55208.

• May 29: Musical Moments

Coalition for Aging LGBT presents a virtual concert series featuring LGBTQ artists and allies the last Saturday of the month at 3 p.m. To register, visit cfa.lgbt/musicalmoments.

• May 29: Our Odyssey

Utilizing artistic expression to stimulate

increased awareness about Pan-African experiences with racial injustice, Bandan Koro and special guests will explore and engage with audiences of all ages and backgrounds about the ongoing plight for justice and equality while reinforcing our collective power to change the future experience. Strauss Square, 2389 Flora St. at 8 p.m. Tickets at tickets.attpac.org/booking/production/bestavailable/55865.

• May 29: OperaTruck

The Dallas Opera presents Jack and the Beanstalk at 1 p.m. at Klyde Warren Park. Free.

• May 30: DIRTea Dance Party DIRTea Tea Dance Party with international DJ GSP. Summer Attire — shorts, shades, sneakers and don't forget the tanning lotion. 2-8 p.m. at 1950 Market Center Blvd. [Facebook.com/events/1200587890370276](https://www.facebook.com/events/1200587890370276).

• Through May 31: A Celebration of Friendship

Artist Melanie Brannan is raising funds for the AIM at Melanoma Foundation with an exhibit that explores the meaning of friendship and the potential loss of that relationship with 20 paintings that chronicle her friendship with someone struggling with a diagnosis of nodular melanoma. From noon-5 p.m. on Monday-Friday and at all public events at Messanine Gallery at the Eisemann Center for the Performing Arts, 2351 Performance Drive, Richardson.



READ THIS

Gay author **Wes Mongo Jolley** has released his first novel, an epic three-part supernatural thriller called *The Last Handful of Clover*, on

Patreon. Read about the author and his story about a recently-deceased man trying to save his husband — and Salt Lake City — from the ire of the angry dead on page 16 of this issue of Dallas Voice.



WATCH THIS

The **Netflix** comedy series *Special* tells the story of Ryan, a gay man with cerebral palsy, and his quest to "rewrite his identity and go after the life

he wants." The second and final season of the series, starring Ryan O'Connell and based on his memoir, *I'm Special: And Other Lies We Tell Ourselves*, is available now, and you can read an interview with O'Connell on page 10 of this issue of Dallas Voice.



LISTEN TO THIS

The **Coalition for Aging LGBT** presents a virtual concert series featuring LGBTQ artists and allies the last Saturday of the month at 3 p.m.

To register, visit cfa.lgbt/musicalmoments.



DANCE TO THIS

The **DIRTea Tea Dance Party**

featuring international DJ GSP, begins at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 30, at 1950 Market Center Blvd. Break out your best summer attire, from shorts and sneakers to shades, and don't forget the tanning lotion!

JUNE

• June 3: Name and gender change workshop

Lambda Legal discusses what the process looks like in Texas to secure state and federal identity documents. Lawyers can receive CLE credit. Meeting via Zoom. [LambdaLegal.org](https://www.LambdaLegal.org).

• June 3: Rob Ruhlin Law Scholarship Fundraiser

Happy hour fundraiser benefiting Rob Ruhlin Law Scholarships for LGBTQ law students. \$30 members, \$50 non-members of the Dallas LGBT Bar Association. 6-9 p.m. at JR.'s Bar & Grill, 3923 Cedar Springs Road.

• June 3-6 and 10-13: Hamlet Project

Shakespeare Dallas presents Hamlet Project, a world premiere performance event where actors perform a one-person interpretation of Hamlet with 16 actors given only 24 hours to prepare prior to curtain at Samuell-Grand Amphitheatre, 6000 E. Grand Ave. at 8:15 p.m.

Look for extended listings online at

[DallasVoice.com](https://www.DallasVoice.com)

Cassie Nova

ASK A DRAG QUEEN

What makes someone hot?

Hello everyone. Today I have a story for you. It is a true story; for some, it will not be an easy story. First, I want to say if you are a member of my family, stop reading this right now. If you offend easily, stop reading this right now. This story involves sex, both straight and gay. If that bothers you, stop reading this right now.

Seriously.

I will try not to be too graphic in my description of said acts, but, for comedic and factual purposes, I will have to share some of the vulgar details. Choose wisely before you read on; you have been warned.

The year was 1980-something, and I was in the 7th grade. My younger sister and I were at our dad's place for the weekend. Many of you have experienced the divorced parents drama, so you understand. It was Dad's turn to take care of us heathens, but he also had plans to go out that night. So he told us there was stuff in the kitchen for sandwiches, and he was outta there. (By the way, "stuff in the kitchen" meant potted meat and white bread. He kept that stuff stocked. He also always seemed to have those canned shoestring potato chips, so we were set.

It was a Friday night; I know that because I remember watching Friday Night Videos. It was the only time you could watch music videos if you didn't have MTV. We stayed up late watching that and whatever crap movies they played on late night television.

Around 1 a.m., my dad comes home, but he is not alone. He has a woman with him. Now this is where the story gets a little controversial: She was — how can I put this nicely? She was, ummm, somewhat unattractive. Okay, real talk: She was ugly. She had really bad skin, curly brown hair and exceptionally small teeth that looked like chicklets. On the upside, she had a nice body with big boobs.

Look: I know I sound like a complete asshole, but this is the only way I can tell the story.

She introduced herself as "Pieface." Then they basically ran to Dad's bedroom. I looked at my sister Brandy and asked, "Did she say Pieface?" She just kind of nodded in disgust as we both busted out laughing.

The next morning, we were up early to watch cartoons, so we saw when they came out of his bedroom. She kissed him bye, and Brandy and I both stuck our fingers down our throats in the universal sign for "gag me." The woman left and the two of us were immediately on Dad with questions like, "What the actual fuck, Dad?" And "Why do they call her Pieface?" And, "How could you? She was soooo gross!"



He kind of snickered to himself, then pointed at me and said, "You will understand one day, son." Brandy and I just kept acting like we were gonna throw up and shaking our heads. I said, "Not me, I will never have a Pieface. She was grody to the max!" (It was the '80s, after all.)

(Oh, and the name "Pieface" had something to do with her acne sometimes looking like meringue. I didn't get it at the time, but now it's just sad to me that she would allow herself to be called that.)

Luckily, soon after that, Dad met the love of his life and is still happily married to my stepmom, Lynn.

Okay, now fast-forward about 13 years. I am in my mid-20s, single and always ready to mingle. There is a guy that I see out at the clubs all the time who supposedly has a huge penis. For the purposes of this story,

I will call him LG, for "long and girthy." I was not attracted to him — at all. I actually thought of him as being ugly. I had heard from a few of my sluttier friends that he was a good time and that he was kind of into me. He was always offering to "give me a massage." I thought it was kind of creepy — but cool or whatever. I was living my best life and just enjoying being young and dumb.

Then one night I was out dancing at the Village Station, and LG was there. I had been drinking Betty Fords all night, so I was having a great time. This was back when they had dollar drinks, and I had dollars. Then something clicked in me, and — many of you gay boys will know exactly what I am talking about — I suddenly went from dancing with friends to prowling for dick.

It was getting closer and closer to closing time, and I was not going to leave the club

empty "handed." I probably looked like a great white shark stalking prey through the water, but, in reality, I was just a horny little gay boy cruisin' for some action.

That's when I saw LG, and our eyes locked. Well, of course, I did the eye-to-crotch-and-back-again move a few times, and it was there, in all its glory. I could make out the entire shape of his dick through his jeans, and suddenly, I was very into him. He volunteered to give me a massage, and I was like, "Okay, I guess." I played it cool, but inside I was doing backflips, thinking of playing with that big ol' D! I was giddy as a schoolgirl!

We got back to my apartment, and I unwrapped him from his jeans like he was a Christmas present. Well Merry freakin' Christmas to me! It was huge! It was one of the most beautiful penises I had ever seen. Even with both hands on it, there was still a lot to see. I was amazed.

Then I looked up slowly. Yes, yes nice abs ... a nice chest ... then his face. And for some reason, he wasn't ugly to me anymore. His big dick had magically made him kinda cute. It was like magic from a fairy tale.

Then it hit me, LG was my Pieface. And in that moment, I understood what my Dad had been trying to tell me all those years before. I had never felt as close to my Dad as did in that moment.

Don't forget that Father's Day is June 20. So Happy Father's Day to all the daddies out there!

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

this week's solution

C	L	A	W	F	R	I	D	A	S	H	O	T	
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Scarborough Renaissance Festival 2021



On Stage At The Rose Room. Photos by Kat Haygood





Amy Muah, Sapphire Tailor, BeyonShade Starr, Zimora Lee Evans at Varsity Tavern Brunchin' @ Roy G's



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Ladies on the patio at Cedar Springs Taphouse

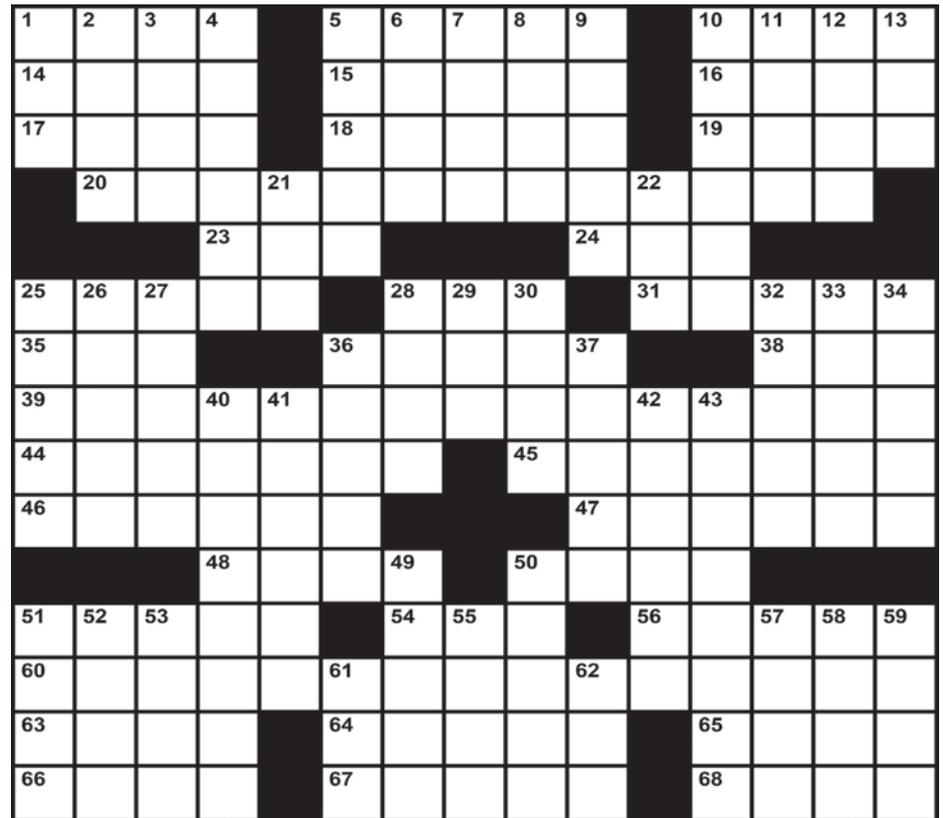


Hi Daddy



Ivana wraps up a 25 year entertainment career with Ms. Tina Turner at Round Up Saloon.

PUZZLE | Nomadland



Solution on Page 26

Across

- 1 Leave marks on a lover's back
- 5 Bi role for Salma
- 10 "I ___ Andy Warhol"
- 14 Top of the world or bottom
- 15 Subjects of autoerotic fantasy?
- 16 Fruit homophone of a couple
- 17 "That's right!"
- 18 Digs for pigs
- 19 Art Deco name
- 20 Start of a quote from *Nomadland*
- 23 ___ *De-Lovely*
- 24 Baudelaire's bag
- 25 It's a good thing
- 28 Facial application
- 31 Fingerprint feature
- 35 Caesar's way
- 36 "Same here!"
- 38 Room opening?
- 39 More of the quote
- 44 Repair shop amenities
- 45 Sui ___ (unique)
- 46 Turkish bathhouse locale
- 47 Weather whipping boy
- 48 Expressed, as farewell
- 50 Alexander who was under Nixon
- 51 Loads

Down

- 54 Dame E. Sitwell's heat measure
- 56 Deviate
- 60 End of the quote
- 63 *Six Feet Under* lead character
- 64 Fruit in a Vegas slot
- 65 Prefix meaning "outer"
- 66 Gave a pink slip to
- 67 Mortimer, with a wooden head
- 68 Not even once, to Dickinson
- 25 St. Teresa's town
- 26 Former *American Idol* judge
- 27 He's a wheel man
- 28 Hardness scale name
- 29 Cult actor Kier of Warhol films
- 30 Skater Mattis
- 32 *Scary Movie* Cheri
- 33 Woody secretion
- 34 Gay rodeo accessory
- 36 Fine fiddle, for short
- 37 "___ little silhouette of a man ..."
- 40 With sustained force
- 41 Angel with six wings
- 42 Join the service
- 43 Take male enhancement pills
- 49 *The Wizard of Oz* dropout Buddy
- 50 Specialty of Wanda Sykes
- 51 Jodie Foster's role with the King
- 52 Trump's election fraud narrative, e.g.
- 53 Cigar butt?
- 55 Crack the whip at, e.g.
- 57 *Evita* lyricist Tim
- 58 Upfront amount
- 59 Role for Bela
- 61 Above-ground trains
- 62 *The Living* ___

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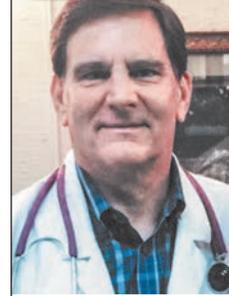


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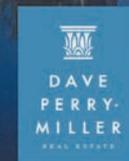
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