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Dallas County hits herd immunity threshold, still lagging in vaccinations

As of July 4, Dallas County had “reached the 80 percent (COVID-19) herd immunity threshold,” Steve Miff, CEO of the Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation. But the county still has work to do in its ongoing battle against the pandemic, and vaccinations are key.

The threshold, Miff explained, was reached by 46.6 percent of the county’s population having been vaccinated and 48.7 percent having developed natural immunity by recovering from a COVID-19 infection. But he stressed, while this benchmark represents “good progress, it is important that we understand the work is not over. We must continue to push for vaccinations so COVID and its variants can’t again take hold and diminish the progress we’ve made.”

Miff also went on to note that while the community on average has reached the 80 percent mark, “there are only 49 ZIP codes above the 80 percent threshold, with 45 ZIP codes still below the 80 percent mark. There are still significant pockets in the community that remain vulnerable.”

Dallas County health department numbers show that about 62 percent of the residents of the Oak Lawn/Cedar Springs gayborhood have been vaccinated.

Miff warned that the Delta variant is predicted to make up about 25 percent of local COVID-19 cases, doubling about every two weeks. That means that within a month, Delta variant cases could be in the range that has caused a new wave of infections in the United Kingdom “though their estimated herd immunity was below the herd immunity threshold for Delta.”

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Guess who’s back! If you guessed Joe Exotic, then … DING! DING! DING! You win! There’s not a prize involved in guessing who I was talking about, but there could be a special prize waiting for one lucky guy …

Joe Exotic was convicted in 2019 of seven federal charges of animal abuse and two counts of attempted murder for hire for allegedly plotting to have Carol Baskin murdered. He is currently serving a 22-year sentence at a federal prison in Fort Worth. We all know that, right?

Well, here’s what you might not know: Joe Exotic plans to be out of jail soon, so he’s looking for a new sweetheart, and he’s holding a contest to find one!

According to a press release from JoeExoticUSA.com, Joe’s criminal attorney, John Phillips, and “his office of attorneys out of Jacksonville, Florida, is confident that, with all the new evidence that has been obtained proving conspiracy, obstruction of justice, perjury by federal agents and witnesses, in addition to prosecutor misconduct and the federal judge being a long-

Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer

Sky-Deer makes history as first woman, first LGBTQ2S elected grand chief of Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

Kahsennenhawe Sky-Deer, 41, has made history as the first woman and the first LGBTQ2S person to be elected grand chief of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke, according to CBC Radio Canada. Sky-Deer, who was elected with 573 votes, served as council chief for 12 years.

The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke is the organization that provides governmental, administrative, and operational services to the community of Kahnawà:ke, located in Quebec, Canada, just outside of Montreal.

Sky-Deer has said on her Facebook page that she wants to be a leader who would “restore trust in our institutions by decolonizing them and that electing not only a woman but a member of the LGBTQ community is a step in the right direction for the Kahnawà:ke community.

According to the Montreal Gazette, Sky-Deer has a BA in psychology from the University of Central Florida in Orlando and was a star quarterback for the Daytona Beach Barracudas of the Women’s Professional Football League in the early 2000s. She is married, with five step-children and two grandchildren, and she and her wife live in the Kahnawà:ke community.

Sky-Deer told the Gazette she hopes to light the path for other LGBTQ2S people in First Nations communities.

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Of course, what the Republicans “election integrity” — and what everybody else calls “voter suppression” efforts are also on the agenda.

As the final hours of the regular session ticked away in May, Democrats in the House of Representatives staged a walkout to break quorum to prevent a vote on a draconian voter suppression bill that now even Republicans admit was seriously flawed.

But you know what’s not on the agenda? Anything to do with fixing Texas’ busted-ass electric grid. Sources say at least 150 people died when the state’s independent electric grid failed during Winter Storm Uri in February this year.

And just last month, ERCOT — which supposedly “manages” the electric grid — asked everyone to set thermostats to at least 78 degrees and dial back on power usage. Power companies even took control of some people’s smart thermostats during the heat wavel remotely, raising the settings for a “three-hour energy savings event.”

— Tammye Nash

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Joe Exotic now taking applications for the new love of his life

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According to a press release from JoeExoticUSA.com, Joe’s criminal attorney, John Phillips, and “his office of attorneys out of Jacksonville, Florida, is confident that, with all the new evidence that has been obtained proving conspiracy, obstruction of justice, perjury by federal agents and witnesses, in addition to prosecutor misconduct and the federal judge being a long-
time friend of one of the main witnesses in Joe's case, that he will be freed by the end of the year, if not sooner.”

So, since he expects to be a free man soon, Joe is holding a contest called The Batchelor King, “where men over 18 years of age can fill out an application online to be possibly the next romance in Joe’s new life,” the press release notes. “The top 3 picks will receive a 3-night, 4-day all-exclusive paid romantic getaway with Joe Exotic once he has been released.” I am sure some of you are wondering, “But what about Joe’s current husband, Dillon?” Well, as the press release says, “that remains up in the air.”

So, if you are looking for love and are willing to wait a couple of months or so for Joe to get out of jail, head on over to “the only official Joe Exotic website,” JoeExoticUSA.com, and fill out your application now. Entries are being accepted through Sept. 25, and winners will be announced Oct. 6. Surely no one wants to miss out on this chance of a lifetime.

— Tammye Nash

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**Adoptable / ZIG**

Meet Zig. He’s a unique-looking pup who is shy with new people, but with a little time and a doggie friend by your side, his playful personality begins to shine. This 2-and-a-half-year-old mixed breed fellow has these intensely ice-blue eyes that are just stunning to look at. He originally came from a hoarding situation, so he will always have a little stress and fear at times. But he’s made so much progress in his time at the SPCA of Texas. Zig’s favorite thing in the world is playing outside with his doggie friends, and he has a lot of them. Zig is friendly and polite, so he’s very popular with other dog-friendly pups. Zig will need a home with a fenced-in yard and a doggie sibling for him to play with. Kids in the home need to be 12 and up, and he’d like to meet all members of the household before going home with you to make sure it’s a good fit. The SPCA of Texas is still celebrating Shelter Pet Summer, so you can adopt an adult dog or cat from the SPCA of Texas’ shelters for only $25! The special will be offered for pets located at the SPCA of Texas’ shelters and in their foster homes, and adoptions will be by appointment only. Zig is waiting to meet you at the SPCA of Texas’ Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas. To request an appointment to meet Zig, please fill out the application at 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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You can still color with broken crayons

Repurposing life’s challenges into something of beauty

When we were children, we learned all kinds of things. We learned things as vastly different as our languages and cultures. But one thing that was pretty much universal was coloring. Coloring was a way to teach us our lessons in a fun way.

We were given crayons and taught to color. It kept us quiet in church or at the doctor. It kept us occupied on long car rides. It taught us what color was in the first place. We chose a color and started to scribble — all over the page at first, then, eventually, gradually, we learn to color within the lines.

We’re encouraged to color within the lines.

It’s actually one of our first subtle lessons in conformity and striving for perfection, although we don’t know it.

We get better at it with practice. There are contests and prizes for the best picture. Whose picture looks the most like reality? Who stayed in the lines and had the neatest picture?

I can remember my first brand new box of 64 crayons — five or six shades of blue, pinks and greens! Enough shades so you could actually draw your friends in living color instead of everyone being just one shade of brown or white. I was very proudly a Burnt Sienna color.

The box even had a sharpener built right into the box. Sharp pointy edges were best for staying in the lines. Then, if you add a brand-new book no one had colored in? Best thing ever. I loved the ones with flowers or the ones with crossword puzzles in them.

I remember being in class in elementary school and kids jostling to get the unbroken crayons. There was a definite sense of let down if you got stuck with the leftover, mismatched, broken crayons. You remember? The ones the teacher had kept from the year or two before? Those were the naked crayons that the paper had been taken off of and that some of the color from the other pieces of crayon had transferred on to.

They had dents in them from being held too tightly, or being nicked by fingernails. They weren’t fresh from a box of eight or 32, let alone 64.

Plus, everyone wanted the newest coloring book with all fresh new things to color. If you got an old book, you turned past all the half unfinished pictures, even the pages that just had a few marks on them, to get to the new, clean page. After all, the last person didn’t want to finish that picture, so why should you? They had colored outside the lines, used the wrong color for the ball, had the nerve to put wings on an elephant. And you can’t change one thing into something else, can you?

When I became HIV positive, I started to become more of an affirmations person — daily things I could say and read to remind myself I could and would survive day to day. Quotes and affirmations to encourage me to get up and function, and to take my medication, at a time when I wasn’t sure if I even wanted to live. Basically, they started out as a way to give myself something to do, until I could figure out what to do.

One that resonated within me was “Broken Crayons Still Color.” I had been broken (or so I thought), and I was trying to figure out how to turn the page for a fresh picture.

When you break something, you start to look at it differently when you try to put it back together. Can it be outright fixed, or can it be repurposed into something else?

Broken crayons are a perfect example. If you put tape around two pieces of a broken crayon, you still know it’s broken, and it’s weak where the tape is covering it up. Glue doesn’t stick well to wax, and as it heats up in your hand, it breaks again.

Actually, using the “broken” pieces is what works best here. The curves of broken crayons could still stay in the lines of a drawing and, in some cases, fit better along the edges and corners. The flat space created by a break? Perfect for shading and covering more surface area more quickly.

And if you take the only shade of Burnt Sienna in the bunch and break it in half, you can share, and two people can enjoy the color at the same time.

If I am like a coloring book, the pages of my book have marks on them — marks that make people turn past them without seeing the potential underneath. The stupid yellow someone used to color my ocean could become a beautiful sea foam green with the right color blue layered over it. Could they see that the black lines drawn across the middle of the page over the green grass could be connected and, instead of being misplaced lines, could actually be a stairway to the sky?

My HIV doesn’t make me damaged or hazardous goods. It makes me a survivor, with more compassion for people and life. I could have chosen to let my early fears, anxiety and shame color me bitter and broken. I didn’t. It’s a choice I have to make at intervals when dealing with stigma and ignorance.

People are like crayons. We really shouldn’t pick over and through the broken ones to find only the traits we like. People don’t start out broken. Life situations, disease and addictions break them, leaving them naked with pieces of life rubbed off and transferred onto them. Doesn’t mean they can’t be repurposed into something pretty.

Broken crayons, after all, still color. Bridgette Picou is a licensed vocational nurse in Palm Springs, Calif. She is also an active HIV blogger and contributor to the CDC’s “Treatment Works” public service campaign. This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ wire service. Visit their websites — TheBody.com, HIVPlusMag.com, PositivelyAware.com and POZ.com — for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.
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Despite the challenges of the pandemic, SPCA of Texas continued to serve.

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The SPCA of Texas’ Fur Ball returns this year, with the black-tie gala set for Saturday, Oct. 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Dallas. The event will include dinner, dancing and live and silent auctions for more than 600 guests.

This year’s Fur Ball will be a one-of-a-kind hybrid virtual-and-in-person experience set to feature “mission-focused stories, entertainment and gratitude, all with a focus of raising important funds for the SPCA of Texas in support of our critical work in our community through live and silent auctions packed with fabulous items, the always-exciting Pony Up for Paws and more,” according to a statement from SPCA of Texas.

Individual tickets are $300, and table sponsorships start at $3,000. Tickets are available online at FurBallDallas.com.

This year’s Fur Ball is chaired by Hiren and Dhruva Patel. Auction chairs are Amber and Anthony Sims, and host committee chair is Rebecca Marabito. The emcee for the evening is NBC News 5 Anchor Brian Curtis, and the auctioneer is Grant Snyder.

Fur Ball is “a salute to the bond between people and their pets and a celebration of the SPCA of Texas’ important mission to provide every animal with exceptional care and a loving home,” according to an SPCA of Texas press release. All money raised through Fur Ball 2021 will go directly to the SPCA of Texas to “help rescue, heal and find homes for thousands of animals and help keep pets in homes, out of shelters and off the streets.”

SPCA of Texas President and CEO Karen Froelich, in the organization’s annual report for 2020, noted that, just as with every other business and nonprofit, the last 12-plus months of the COVID pandemic have been a challenging time for SPCA of Texas. “Like all of you we were forced to adapt to the changing world around us overnight,” she said. And yet, thanks to its loyal supporters, donors and volunteers, the organization managed to continue with its life-saving work.

Despite the pandemic, in 2020 SPCA of Texas found homes for more than 3,300 pets via adoptions by appointment. And The Pet Resource Center helped more than 1,600 individual pets of families affected by illness and/or business closures, primarily through food and urgent medical assistance via outside veterinary partners.

Also in 2020, SPCA of Texas’ medical teams provided

Each item also includes the blue-and-yellow HRC equality logo, and if you want to stress your pet’s activist tendencies, consider the yellow-and-blue “Woof” dog bandana with the equal sign logo ($12) or the blue, doggie-bone-shaped dog waste bag carrier with a yellow equal sign logo ($8).

Find your pet's new favorite accessory — and maybe a few for you, too, since they have human goodies as well — at HRC.org/accessories. And remember that your purchase helps fund the work of HRC.
One of the less-recognized consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the drastic decrease in the number of feral cats that rescuers have been able to catch and spay or neuter over the last 12-plus months. As a result, note the folks at Operation Kindness, it has been an especially hectic “kitten season” this year.

“With cats giving birth to more kittens during the spring and summer months, many kittens are still without loving homes,” noted a press release from Operation Kindness, a leading...
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PROFILE

After COVID destroyed her retirement dreams, Jen Mullin set out on a new adventure. Then a hug with a stranger changed that adventure in ways she never expected.

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

I started with a post on Facebook: “OK, so I did not make it to Maine today. Instead, I drove, endlessly lost, in the mountains of Vermont. Internet connectivity is not the greatest, so when I lost navigation, I tried to wing it on my own. This was not a good idea, as I have no sense of direction.”

That was on July 2, and it was posted by an old friend of mine, Jen Mullin, who had recently sold her house in New Jersey and started a new adventure, traveling the country in her minivan-decked-out-for-camping. I had been following her story through her Facebook posts, a little bit anxious for her as she has turned her life upside-down, and a little bit envious of the adventures she would have.

On July 3, Jen followed up with another post: “Ok, so — I did make it to Maine, but I feel like I am doing this Van Life thing all wrong. All I do is hotel and motel hop, all across the U.S., I hardly feel proud. I drove five hours in torrential rain, complete with thunder and lightning, and ended up in some small beach town here in south Maine … good enough. I don’t care where I am anymore. … The storm wore me out, so I am in another epic yet freaky hotel, off exit 5, that had no more creativity than to name this hotel, the Exit 5 Hotel. I am going to get some lobster before I head west though! I have not come this far for nothing, but I am totally over the East Coast. Heading West in the morning.”

As I read that post, just kind of as a joke, I replied in the comment thread. “Wait!” I told Jen. “I have a friend, a guy I used to work with named Glenn Shelton, who lives in Portland. Before you leave Maine, go to Portland and find Glenn. Give him a hug, and tell him it is from me.”

Like I said, I was joking. But Jen was up for the challenge, telling me OK, sure! She’d do it. All I had to do was give her an idea of how to find Glenn and what to say to him so he would know that she was there on my behalf.

So, I told Jen where Glenn works — he is the sales and relationship manager for Maine Foodie Tours in Portland — and I posted on Glenn’s Facebook page, telling him that if a woman named Jen driving a minivan showed up telling him she was there to give him a hug for me, then yeah, she was legit. But I didn’t really expect her to find him.

And yet, she did.

“I’m on it!” she told me via Facebook. Then, as we messaged back and forth, “Perfect! I suddenly have purpose!” And she found Glenn, and she gave him a hug from me.

She posted about the encounter on Facebook: “He runs a tour company in downtown Portland, and I caught up with him as he was giving a tour of a special food store. He broke away from his tourists for a minute, and we bear hugged. He set me up with a couple great local beers too! His crowd of tourists smiled when I said, ‘Don’t mind me; I just travel the U.S. and hug total strangers for friends!’

“This really felt wonderful,” Jen continued. “I said, ‘This hug really is from Tammye,’ and he knew she had been thinking of him. Simple, perfect. Any one need a friend hugged in Maine? I am on it!”

Hearing her tell about finding Glenn and giving him a hug and how good it felt to connect that way with a complete stranger and, at the same time, help old friends reconnect — it really did feel like getting to hug my friend myself.

I started out thinking, ‘Oh, this will be a cute story to laugh at.’ But it turned out to be so much more. It turned out to be human connection in a time when we all need that very much.

Glenn commented on the Facebook thread after he met Jen: “Tammye Nash, I have to say Jen Mullin gives the best hugs ever! We laughed so hard in the short time I was able to break away from work. She’s a sweetheart!”

I told him that this whole encounter made me happy, and I told him I missed him. “I miss you too,” he answered. “And it made me so grateful and happy that you would think of me, and that Jen would stop on her journey to give me a hug. It’s very, very much appreciated.”

Human connection — it’s something we all need, and something we’ve all been missing so much this last year-plus, maybe for some much longer than that. And now, Jen Mullin feels like she has found a mission to help some people rediscover what they have been missing while at the same time rediscovering herself.

How she got to here

Jen was raised here in Texas, and, she said, “Dallas was my romping ground” for several years until, in 1996, she moved to New Jersey for work. For about 23 years, she worked as operations manager for a company that does Santa Claus photos. “I ran camera operations...
for more than 600 malls,” she explained. “It paid very well.”

So well, in fact, that Jen had already purchased land in Belize and was having a home built there. She intended to retire and live out her retirement years in her own slice of paradise. Then came COVID.

The Santa photo business, Jen said, was “another industry that silently disappeared.” She lost her job to the pandemic, and “I am too old to ever earn that much again.” Because she lost her job and her income, she saw her plans for the future fade, too.

“I lost the land in Belize,” she said, “my dream retirement with a half-finished home on almost an acre of jungle. With no job to fund it and no way to even enter the country, it became impossible to continue. I sold it in June 2020.”

“And I got very depressed.”

And it wasn’t just her future home she saw slip away; her current home was in danger, too. “My farmhouse in New Jersey was over 100 years old and in con-

stant disrepair. And with no job, I felt compelled to sell it.”

But then what? What, she wondered, would she do with herself then?

“I had always wanted to live in a Winnebago when I was a kid, and I had followed the van life trend for years before losing my job,” Jen said. “So, I replaced my sadness with the idea that everything happens for a reason, and I decided that now might be my time to hit the road, to travel the U.S.A. a bit.”

“So, I woke up one random Thursday morning, and I took my car to a dealer and traded it for a used minivan. I named him [the minivan] ‘Thursday,’ because it only takes one impulsive day to change your life,” Jen said. “Then I got rid of everything that I could not fit in the van and sold the house. And then I realized, ‘Oh shit! I am really doing this!’”

Jen has been on the road for about a month now, and she admits that “it has been a challenge in some ways, but not the ways I expected.”

She continued, “I love sleeping in my cozy van. I intended to see friends and family, but instead, in these first weeks, I have felt determined to get myself together first and be good at this van thing before I pull up in someone’s driveway that I know.

“What I didn’t expect was that always being among strangers is odd. Campgrounds can ruin camping; weather changes everything, and it can be lonely,” Jen said. “So, when my friend asked me to hug her friend, I thought, I will! I’ll do it!”

From here on

Now, Jen feels like she is traveling with a purpose. She knows that wherever she is headed, there’s probably going to be someone there who knows someone she knows. And maybe that someone needs a hug, delivered by a friend of a friend. Or maybe they aren’t going to be comfortable hugging a stranger. So maybe they’ll share a fist bump, or a cup of coffee at a sidewalk café. Maybe they’ll just wave and shout greetings from a distance.

But however it happens, they will be making a connection, and Jen knows she can be the spark that can make connections come alive.

You can follow Jen Mullins either by finding her on Facebook, or by following her still-under-construction blog, Mullin & Van, at MullinVan.WordPress.com. Watch to see where she is headed next, and if she is going somewhere that you have friends or family that you miss, maybe she can hug them for you, the same way she hugged Glenn for me. Like Glenn said, Jen gives the best hugs ever — strong enough for you to feel them, miles away.

Glenn Shelton and Jen Mullin

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no-kill shelter in North Texas, “Operation Kindness is excited to announce a Kitten Palooza Adoption Event on National Kitten Day,” Saturday, July 10.

Guests will have the chance to meet kittens in person and find their perfect pet through the by-appointment event.

Operation Kindness CEO Ed Jamison said, “Unfortunately, the pandemic shuttered TNSR — trap, neuter, spay, return — opportunities for many shelters across the country last year, and we’re seeing an influx of kittens in need of loving homes. For this reason, Operation Kindness is doing its part to support these pets by dedicating an entire day to finding them families.

“Our goal is to connect them with a loving family,” Jamison added. “We’re excited to see everyone that comes out for the Kitten Palooza Adoption Event.”

National Kitten Day, the Operation Kindness press release explained, “is a day celebrating these tiny balls of fluff and encouraging animal wellness and the importance of adoption.” In conjunction with that effort, Operation Kindness is allowing visitors an opportunity to greet all available kittens in need of a home. By making an adoption appointment online, guests will be able to browse in-person for available pets, or they can view the website to learn more about the animals before their scheduled appointment at the shelter.

Operation Kindness is partnering with Dallas pet store Pet Supplies Plus to increase adoption opportunities during Kitten Palooza. Pet Supplies Plus is covering adoption fees for up to 24 kittens adopted the day of the event. And Operation Kindness is giving away a free cat toy to every kitten adopted by a family.

The Kitten Palooza Adoption Event happens Saturday, July 10, at Operation Kindness in Carrollton, 3201 Earhart Drive. Potential adopters can meet and greet available kittens, and staff will be on-hand to guide the process and answer any questions about the kittens.

For those who can’t make it out to the shelter on Saturday, Operation Kindness is also open weekdays by appointment. Anyone who can’t adopt a pet right now but would still like to support animal welfare can foster animals from the shelter until the animals are ready for adoption. Find information on fostering a pet at OperationKindness.org/Foster.

For more information about Operation Kindness, visit OperationKindness.org. To browse pets currently available for adoption, visit OperationKindness.org/Adopt.

The Kitten Palooza Adoption Event on National Kitten Day, the Operation Kindness press release explained, “is a day celebrating these tiny balls of fluff and encouraging animal wellness and the importance of adoption.” In conjunction with that effort, Operation Kindness is allowing visitors an opportunity to greet all available kittens in need of a home. By making an adoption appointment online, guests will be able to browse in-person for available pets, or they can view the website to learn more about the animals before their scheduled appointment at the shelter.

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For more information about Operation Kindness, visit OperationKindness.org. To browse pets currently available for adoption, visit OperationKindness.org/Adopt.
A spicy champ

Pekingese named Wasabi is tops at Westminster

JENNIFER PELTZ | Associated Press

ARRYTOWN, N.Y. — The flavor of the year at the Westminster Kennel Club dog show: Wasabi. A Pekingese named Wasabi won best in show in June, notching a fifth-ever win for the unmistakable toy breed.

A whippet named Bourbon repeated as runner-up.

Waddling through a small-but-mighty turn in the ring, Wasabi nabbed U.S. dogdom’s most prestigious prize after winning the big American Kennel Club National Championship in 2019.

Most pampered pooches

Dobermanns top the list of most spoiled dog breeds; Dallasites love their corgis

FROM STAFF REPORTS

According to personalized pet gift shop Yap-py.com, do-

bermanns top the list of the U.S.’s most spoiled dog breeds. Dobermann dogs are celebrated for their loyalty, intelligence and protectiveness, and Yappy.com’s data indicates they are also the most likely to be lavished with treats and gifts by their owners.

The dobermann also came out as the top dog in the states of Wisconsin, Louisiana and West Virginia.

The whippet came in second overall, followed by the Great Dane in third. Surprisingly, chihuahuas are not on the list.

Yappy.com studied more than 300 popular breeds and more than 5,000 individual pet profiles to identify the most opulent pups from every area of the US.

The Japanese Shiba Inu, bred to hunt and work, are the most likely to be spoiled with treats, toys and accessories by their adoring Texan owners. Only a handful of Shiba puppies are born each year, so the wait list to get one is long.

To get more specific: In Dallas, the most spoiled breed is the Pembroke Welsh Corgi, while in Fort Worth, Cairn terriers top the list. In Houston, boxers are most likely to be spoiled, and in San Antonio, it’s the Maltese.

Other popular breeds such as poodles, springer spaniels and American bulldogs make the list of the top 10 most pampered pooches, with the study showing that owners of these breeds spent the most on toys, accessories and treats for their pets.

The data from Yappy.com also found that the names of pups also have an influence on their spoiled nature, suggesting that dogs named Charlie are the most spoiled in the country. Pooches named Lucy and Bella come in close second and third place, and pups called Magnus, Neko and Emmitt being the least likely to be living a life of luxury.

John Smith, founder of Yappy.com said, “Every dog deserves to be spoiled and enjoy the ‘ulti-mutt’ best life possible, and our findings show which regions, states and cities are treating their dogs the most and the breeds that are the most likely to be indulged by dog lovers. We’ve delved into our data to discover who the most pampered pooches are according to their owner’s average spend per breed, name and where they live across the U.S.”

The full list of the most spoiled dogs in the U.S., including every region’s particularly pampered pups, can be found at Yappy.com/us/content.
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Dallas and Austin celebrate the 30th anniversary of the inauguration of Ann Richards

David Taffet | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

We remember 45 with fondness: Those memorable quotes. That biting sense of humor. Yes, we miss Ann Richards, the 45th governor of the state of Texas.

Dallas and Austin are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the inauguration of Richards as governor of Texas with banners near Dallas City Hall and on Congress Street in Austin bearing her likeness and a variety of her quotes.

Missing from those quotes is the one that propelled her to national fame: “Poor George. He can’t help it. He was born with a silver foot in his mouth.”

“George” was gaff-prone then-Vice President George H.W. Bush and the quote is from Richards’ keynote speech to the 1988 Democratic National Convention. Of course, Bush’s son went on to succeed Richards as governor and later became president.

She then earned a teaching certificate from the University of Texas and began a teaching career in Austin. She was married for 31 years and had four children, including Cecile Richards, who became CEO of Planned Parenthood.

Richards became the first woman elected Travis County Commissioner in 1976, and, six years later, she became the first woman elected Texas State treasurer and the first woman elected to statewide office in 50 years.

She was inaugurated the 45th governor of Texas on Jan. 15, 1991. She served just one term.

Among the reasons for her defeat when she ran for re-election was a whisper campaign started by the Bush election committee that the reason for Richards’ divorce and the reason why she appointed so many gays and lesbians was that she was a lesbian herself.

After her term as governor, Richards twice served as keynote speaker at Dallas’ Black Tie Dinner, where she referred to the silent auction, which has raised millions, as “y’all’s little garage sale.”

Her first appearance at Black Tie began with a five-minute standing ovation. When the crowd calmed down, Richards slyly looked over her glasses at her prepared remarks, then back out at the audience and said, “Oh, y’all are gonna love this one.” And she received another ovation.

In 1997, Richards was the keynote
speaker at the biennial meeting of the Union for Reform Judaism that took place at the Anatole Hotel in Dallas. At the time, she was serving as a board member of the Shimon Peres Center for Peace & Innovation. She spoke about LGBT equality, and, later that weekend, the organization overwhelmingly voted that Reform Synagogues would perform same-sex marriages.

Richards announced publicly in March 2006 that she has been diagnosed with esophageal cancer. She died about six months later, on Sept. 13, 2006, at her home in Austin.

The display of banners was put together by the Ann Richards Legacy Project, a new non-profit organization. Because of the pandemic, people who served in her administration were unable to get together to celebrate, so they put this memorial project together instead.

In Dallas, the banners hang on Akard and Young streets near Dallas City Hall and will fly through September. In Austin, they line Congress Avenue from the state Capitol to the Ann Richards Bridge and will remain up through the year. ARLP hopes to display the banners in downtown Houston this fall.
Bravo’s ‘Zola’ is original, fresh and sure to inspire imitation

GREGG SHAPIRO | Screen Savor
greggshapiro@aol.com

Every few years, a movie comes along that completely flips the script, so to speak. Sean Baker’s 2015 masterpiece Tangerine, shot on an iPhone, is one example. Janicza Bravo’s Zola (A24) is another. Based on the tweets of Aziah “Zola” King and the article Zola Tells All: The Real Story Behind the Greatest Stripper Saga Ever Tweeted by David Kushner, Zola is original, immediate, fresh, futuristic and certain to inspire countless imitations.

Beginning with what may be the greatest opening lines ever — “You wanna hear a story about how me and this bitch fell out? It’s kind of long, but it’s full of suspense” — uttered by the titular character, played with guts and gusto by Taylour Paige, Zola unfurls over the course of nearly 150 tweets.

It all started when waitress Zola “met this white bitch at my job.” The white bitch in question is Stefani (Riley Keough, Elvis Presley’s granddaughter), who speaks with an affected street accent.

Stefani is pure shade and sleaze, the kind of person who compliments a waitress’ breasts because she sees the potential to make a profit from them. Stefani invites Zola to join her that night at the strip club where she dances to make some extra cash. Zola, who has a stripper pole in her living room, and is growing bored with fiancee Sean (Ari’el Stachel), takes Stefani up on her offer.

The next invitation from Stefani involves traveling 20 hours from home in a Mercedes G550, driven by X (Colman...
Domingo), to strip in Tampa. Also along for the ride is Stefani’s unbalanced boyfriend Derek (Nicholas Braun).

Zola soon realizes that nothing is as it seems. The motel they check into, supposedly until their hotel room is ready, is a cesspool.

At the “pasties and panties” strip club where they are to perform, Hollywood (trans actress Ts Madison) leads the girls in a hilarious pre-show prayer. Stefani takes a series of dressing room selfies with Zola, which prompts the retort, “from here on out, watch every move this bitch makes.” It’s as much a warning to the audience as a lesson learned by Zola, because, before long, everything is going to unravel.

Derek, left behind at the scuzzy motel and increasingly frustrated by his inability to reach Stefani by phone, buddies up with Dion (Jason Mitchell), not realizing that his new friend has designs on the girls. Meanwhile, utilizing Stefani’s selfies, X sets up Zola and Stefani on the Backpage app (for buying and selling sex). When Zola tries to leave, X’s other personality emerges, complete with a Caribbean accent and threats of violence.

Relocated to a much nicer hotel, Stefani and Zola will spend the next few hours under X’s watchful pimp eye. However, Zola makes it clear to Stefani, in her “this is messy, you are mess, your brain is broke” rant, that she’s not for sale. On the other hand, she does increase Stefani’s online rate from $150 to $500 a pop for 15 minutes.

But things are about to go from bad to worse, including a Facebook faux pas by Derek, a deadly hostage situation and an attempted suicide. Nevertheless, Bravo keeps things moving at a mostly breakneck pace and the laughs are plentiful, as is the aforementioned “suspense.”

Rating: B+
“He has showmanship. He fits the breed standard. He has that little extra something, that sparkle, that sets a dog apart,” said Wasabi’s handler and breeder, David Fitzpatrick of East Berlin, Penn., who guided the Peke’s grandfather Malachy to the Westminster title in 2012.

Wasabi came out on top of a final-pack that also included Mathew the French bulldog, Connor the old English sheepdog, Jade the German shorthaired pointer, Striker the Samoyed, and a West Highland white terrier named Boy.

Altogether, 2,500 champion dogs entered the show.

Westminster Dog Show underwent big changes this year because of the coronavirus pandemic, moving out of New York City for the first time since the show’s 1877 founding. This year’s show was held outdoors at an estate in suburban Tarrytown, about 25 miles north of where the top ribbon is usually presented at Madison Square Garden, and it happened in June instead of February.

In a sign of the pandemic times, some handlers wore masks — though vaccinated people were allowed to go without — and the show was closed to the public.

Striker went into the show as the top-ranked U.S. dog, with more than 40 best in show wins since January 2020. And Bourbon had also won the AKC National Championship.

The show was bittersweet for Jade’s handler and co-owner, Valerie Nunes-Atkinson. She guided Jade’s father, CJ, to a 2016 Westminster best in show win — and lost him last September, when the 7-year-old died unexpectedly of a fungal infection.

“The good part about it is: He’s left an incredible legacy,” said Nunes-Atkinson, of Temecula, Calif. She said Jade “had my heart” from birth.

Boy had come a long way to Westminster — all the way from Thailand, where one of his owners was watching from Bangkok, according to handler Rebecca Cross.

For many dog owners, just making it to Westminster is a thrill — even for baseball’s all-time home run leader, Barry Bonds, who was cheering on a miniature schnauzer he owns with sister Cheryl Dugan.

The dog, Rocky, didn’t win his breed, but the slugger said he was proud of Rocky simply for qualifying for the champions-only show.

“We won because we got here. That’s all that matters,” Bonds told Fox Sports. “I’ve been to a lot of play-offs, and I’ve been to the World Series, and I’ve never won. But for 22 years, I kept trying.”

While semifinal and final rounds were held in a climate-controlled tent, earlier parts of the competition unfolded on the grass at an estate called Lyndhurst.

Douglas Tighe, who handled a Brittany named Pennie that won second place in the sporting group, says he just goes with it if his dogs get distracted by birds and other attractions in the great outdoors. “Let them have fun,” said Tighe. “That’s what it’s all about.”

That’s what it’s about to Kole Brown, too. At age 9, he showed a bull terrier named Riley on Sunday alongside his parents, Kurtis Brown and U.S. Air Force Capt. Samantha Brown, and some of the family’s other bull terriers.

“I have a lot of fun with this sport," said Kole, of San Antonio. “Every single time I go into the ring, I have a smile on my face.”

Associated Press writer Ben Walker contributed to this report from New York.
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.

- July 9-11: July 15-18 and July 22-24: The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged) Shakespeare Dallas presents parodies of the plays of William Shakespeare performed in comically shortened form by three actors at Samuell-Grand Amphitheatre, 6000 E. Grand Ave. at 8:15 p.m.

- July 9-25: When Pigs Fly Uptown Players presents a revival of the company’s first show. Thursday-Saturday at 8 p.m. Sunday at 2 p.m. at Kalita Humphreys, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. UptownPlayers.org.

- July 9-15: Lucky Leaf Cannabis Hemp CBD Expo Educational sessions and live demos. More than 100 CBD and hemp exhibitors. Irving Convention Center, 500 W. Las Colinas Blvd., Irving. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.


- July 10: Queer Reads Queer Reads is an online book club that meets the second Saturday of every month from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Register at dallaslibrary.librarymarket.com/events/queer-reads-book-club-0.

- July 10-Aug. 28: Juried exhibition Contemporary 2D and 3D works selected by juror Caleb Bell, curator at the Tyler Museum of Art, will be included in the Texas Juried Exhibition at Artspace111, 111 Hampton St., Fort Worth. By appointment. Artspace111.com.

- Through July 10: Lonesome Dove: Photos by Bill Wittliff Lonesome Dove — Larry McMurtry’s epic novel of two aging Texas Rangers who drive a herd of stolen cattle 2,500 miles from the Rio Grande to Montana to find the first ranch there — truly captured public imagination. The Lonesome Dove miniseries, which first aired on CBS in 1989, lassoed an even wider audience. Capturing the sweeping visual imagery of the original miniseries, the Lonesome Dove exhibition presents classic images taken during filming by Bill Wittliff, renowned photographer, writer and executive producer of Lonesome Dove. The images, however, are worlds apart from ordinary production stills, depicting an extraordinary union of art, literature and history. Dupree Lobby, Irving Arts Center, 3333 North MacArthur Blvd., Irving.

- July 15: LCR Dallas monthly meeting Log Cabin Republicans of Dallas hold their monthly meeting Thursday, June 15, from 6-8:30 p.m., at Mattito’s, 3102 Oak Lawn Ave. Guest speaker will be Ann Drumm discussing “money in politics.” Happy hour begins at 6 p.m., followed by the presentation and fajita dinner at 7 p.m. Cost for dinner is $23 per person. For information visit LCRDallas.org.

- July 15: Working: A Musical Gay and Lesbian Fund for Dallas attends the Dallas Theater Center production of Working: A Musical at 8:30 p.m. at Annette Strauss Square, 2403 Flora St. GLFD.org.

- July 15-24: Lucha Teotl The Elevator Project presents Lucha Teotl, an immersive experience with the audience ringside watching luchadores wearing the masks of Aztec gods playing out a sincere and exciting wrestling storyline. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. ATTPAC.org.

- July 16: Federal Club The history of LGBTQ in North Texas, Part 2. Dr. Stephen Pounds discusses the history of the AIDS crisis in North Texas. For information, visit DFWFederalClub.org.

Look for extended listings online at DallasVoice.com

GAY AGENDA

DRAG THIS
The United Court of the Lone Star Empire present “Christmas in July: Tis the Season,” a special show benefiting AIN (Access and Information Network), Sunday, July 11, at TMC: The Mining Company, 3903 Cedar Springs Road. Doors open at 4 p.m., and the show, with Wayne Davis and Danielle Starr hosting, begins at 4:30 p.m. You can donate in person of course with cash or credit, and you can donate digitally via CashApp at $DallasCourt or Venmo @Dallas-Court. For information visit DallasCourt.org.

WATCH THIS
Dallas Heritage Village, 1515 S. Harwood St., offers a series of outdoor films July 9-15, beginning with Raya and the Last Dragon and including A Nightmare on Elm Street, 10 Things I Hate About You, Step Brothers, Jurassic Park, a Grease sing-along, Godzilla Vs. Kong, Beetlejuice and Judas and the Black Messiah. Adult tickets start at $15.50 ($14.50 for the Grease sing-along), and kids’ tickets start at $12; tickets are available online at RooftopCinemaClub.com/heritagevillage.

LEARN HERE
CBD products are big business these days, and the Lucky Leaf Cannabis Hemp CBD Expo gives you the chance to find what you need to know, whether you are considering venturing into the CBD/Cannabis/Hemp business world or are just looking for information for personal use. The expo runs July 9-10 at the Irving Convention Center, 500 W. Las Colinas Blvd. in Irving. There will be more than 100 CBD and hemp exhibitors, live cooking demos, a networking happy hour, the Hemp Museum, and more. Tickets start at $50, and are available at LuckyLeafExpo.com/Dallas.

BUY HERE
Dan and Valerie, dowager monarchs of the United Court of the Lone Star Empire, host the UCLSE Auction Bonanza online from 8 a.m. Friday, July 9, through midnight Friday, July 25. The auction will include “a little bit of everything,” and proceeds benefit the court and its chosen beneficiary organizations. Visit Facebook.com/events/1063492017451337 for details.
Storms and homophobia

What’s up everybody? I think I will need to classify this week’s edition of my column as another round of brain vomit. Some weeks I have such a clear vision of what I want to write about and other weeks, I write with no rhyme or reason as to why the subjects are in the same column. Thus, brain vomit. If nothing else, it gives you an idea of the inner workings of my mind and how completely messed up I am.

Enjoy.

Last night while trying to watch Alone, one of my favorite shows, we had a hardcore, fast-moving storm come through.

The rain was coming sideways and under the front door, leaving a huge puddle. The wind was coming hard as well, so strong against the front door that we couldn’t even open it.

We put a towel against the door and waited for it to stop. Then we started to hear loud pops and cracks, then a whoosh: A huge branch from one of the giant trees near the house had broken off and smashed down, breaking another tree in half as it fell.

Even though it was just a branch, it was literally bigger than most full-size trees.

Luckily, it didn’t hit the house and only grazed my husband’s work van. (He works for the postal service and drives one of those weird vehicles that lets him feel British. You know, he drives from the passenger seat.)

About six or seven years ago we were hit by a jumping tornado and lost a bunch of huge trees on our property. I call it a jumping tornado because it hit us hard, bounced over four houses and sucked up another property on the next street over, then it jumped over a few more streets and hit the Wal-Mart a few blocks from there.

Last night’s storm was nowhere near that bad, but it is still annoying. Then, this morning I go in the backyard and notice one of our other trees, a medium-sized hackberry tree, has decided to lean over. In other words, we are losing another freaking tree.

I am thankful that the damage is minimal. It could have been so much worse. Hopefully, since the tree that the big branch fell from is technically not on our property, the city will have to take care of it ...

... fingers crossed.

In other news, remember the interview I did for WFAA? It aired on channel 8 last week and was all over social media. If you want to watch it, Google: “Cassie Nova WFAA.” It’s on YouTube.

I am proud of how it turned out, even though I look like a human thumb. I have got to lose some weight.

I want to thank everyone for their kind words and the overwhelming outpouring of love that I have received since it aired. The people and the community that matter to me have made me feel seen and heard. I honestly feel that segment was seen by some young person that truly needed to see it, and I hope it made a difference.

Unfortunately, I did do what I said I would never do: I read the comments section on the Facebook post when WFAA shared it. The amount of ignorance and hate that the gay community still gets in 2021 is shocking but not surprising.

To be honest I didn’t hate seeing it. Yes, I hated what was being said — lots of vomit emojis, Bible quotes and being called an “IT” but I say I didn’t hate seeing because it keeps me on my toes. It keeps me vigilant knowing that there are still so many people against me and my “lifestyle” — evil people that would beat the shit out of us or kill us if given the chance.

I tend to live in a bubble of my own creation. I only associate with people that are either gay or love and support us. When I venture out into the “straight” world, I stay slightly on guard, because I know that to let my guard down is to put myself at risk.

As much as the world has changed, and as much as so many people support us as gay people, it only takes being called “faggot” once when you think you are safe to put things back into perspective. This is still Texas, and small-minded, bigoted folks are everywhere.

I don’t live in the Gayborhood. I love where I live — out here in the “country,” as my friends call it — but I’m also very aware of my surroundings and of the people around me at all times.

We were at Campuzano’s here in Midlothian the other day, and I overheard one guy yell to another guy. “Hey there ya big ol’ homo!” Now, my gaydar ain’t what it used to be, but I’m quite sure the “big ol’ homo” was not a homo.

Big and old — yes. Homo — no.

And no, I didn’t make a scene and call out his ignorance. Some days it is just too exhausting being the homo police, and I just wanted to eat my chimichanga in peace.

I guess my brain vomit wasn’t as bad as I thought it was this time. Although I would love to see a documentary about the little pink geckos that live around my house or the snails that only come out when it rains. I feel so much guilt when I accidently step on those little fuckers, making my sidewalk a graveyard of slime and shell.

There you are brain vomit; I knew you would be back.

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

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**ASK A DRAG QUEEN**

Storms and homophobia

What’s up everybody? I think I will need to classify this week’s edition of my column as another round of brain vomit. Some weeks I have such a clear vision of what I want to write about and other weeks, I write with no rhyme or reason as to why the subjects are in the same column. Thus, brain vomit. If nothing else, it gives you an idea of the inner workings of my mind and how completely messed up I am.

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