Dallas Police Chief Eddie Garcia wants his LGBTQ officers to feel safe on the job

By David Taffet, Page 10

Loud, Proud, Ally

Dallas Police Chief Eddie Garcia wants his LGBTQ officers to feel safe on the job

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**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®**
This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

### MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** Your healthcare provider will test you for HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking BIKTARVY. Do not stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months, and may give you HBV medicine.

### ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults and children who weigh at least 55 pounds. It can either be used in people who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements.

**BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:

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### BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Have any other health problems.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that may have been hidden in your body. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY.
- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- **The most common side effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%). These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY. Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with BIKTARVY.

**HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY**
Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

**GET MORE INFORMATION**

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Biden administration adds gender marker X to passports

The U.S. State Department will add an “X” gender marker to the ID document and eliminate the medical requirement for a person to change the gender marker on their passport and consular forms.

According to National Center for Transgender Equality’s U.S. Trans Survey, only 11 percent of respondents reported that all of their IDs had the name and gender they preferred, while more than two-thirds (68 percent) reported that none of their IDs had the name and gender they preferred.

Nearly one-third (32 percent) of respondents who have shown an ID with a name or gender that did not match their gender presentation were verbally harassed, denied benefits or service, asked to leave, or assaulted.

— from staff reports

HRC files suit challenging Florida’s new anti-trans sports ban

Officials with the Human Rights Campaign Foundation announced on Wednesday, June 30, that the organization, joined by the law firm of Arnold and Porter, has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in the District Court for the Southern District of Florida, challenging a Florida law banning transgender girls from participating in sports.

The case in Florida was filed on behalf of a 13-year-old trans girl named Daisy and her parent, Jessica and Gary. Daisy is set to start 8th grade in the fall, and has participated in team sports since she was 8 years old. “She finds joy, friendship and acceptance in basketball, softball and, currently, as a goalie on three different soccer teams,” the press release notes. But the new law would force her to either play on boys’ teams — which she will not do — or quit playing sports completely, “which would be detrimental to her academic and social development, while also potentially risking her personal privacy and safety.”

— Tammye Nash

‘Football is gay’

So. It’s been, what? About a week since Las Vegas Raiders defensive lineman Carl Nassib came out publicly as a gay man. And now, as Pride Month draws to a close, the NFL is coming out as gay, too!

On Monday, June 28, on the official NFL Twitter page, the league tweeted: “If you love this game, you are welcome here. Football is for all. Football is for everyone. For more information on how you can help the @TrevorProject, visit TheTrevorProject.org.”

— Tammye Nash

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:
Queen Latifah, Lil Nas X and Miss Nevada

Queen Latifah confirmed what a lot of us already thought Sunday night when, in accepting the BET Lifetime Achievement Award, the rapper/actress/superstar officially came out by thanking her longtime partner, Eboni Nichols, and their son, Rebel, and wishing everyone a happy Pride.

At that same awards show, out singer Lil Nas X (aka Montero Lamar Hill) turned heads with his performance of his hit song “Montero (Call Me By Your Name),” ending the performance by sharing a steamy kiss with a male backup dancer.

Also on Sunday night, Kataluna Enriquez made some history when she won the Miss Nevada USA Pageant, making her the first openly transgender woman to become a contestant in the Miss USA Pageant.

— Tammye Nash
Hello again, beautiful people! As usual, here we are to share some thoughts that will hopefully help your fur babies in one way or another. This weekend is a special weekend! Not only we will be celebrating a very important holiday for our country — July 4th — we will also be able to share it with our loved ones in person, as many of us have already been vaccinated against COVID-19, and many others continue to get the vaccine. But we may have forgotten what some of these festivities look like, so hopefully I can remind everyone of some important things to remember to keep our fur kids safe and sound.

If you are like me, good food has to be readily available at all times during a holiday. This also means that our dogs and cats are ready to snatch up any food that is dropped or that may be offered to them (unless they steal it before someone offers them anything!). So make sure you put your babies away when guests are at your home and even when you are prepping food, as this can avoid many issues.

Some animals can eat a thing or two and be OK. But some may develop diarrhea and/or vomiting, and some can even end up needing to go to an emergency hospital with major issues caused by eating people food. It is vital that our fur babies stay away from all of these goodies at all times.

Speaking of goodies, for those of you who enjoy what the plant world has to offer, it is even more vital to keep our babies away. They can get easily intoxicated, and, trust me, it will not be fun for them.

There often is a pool or lake involved in our 4th of July gatherings. While this sounds really fun, please be careful with the fur kids. They can get really hot outside and can even suffer from heat stroke. This is more of a concern with the pups that have a thicker hair coat or have flat faces (brachycephalic breeds).

If you are at a lake, also be aware that they have potential access to wildlife, which can be dangerous by itself, and our pets can have contact with feces or urine from wildlife, which can transmit many parasites and diseases. I recommend you have a consultation with your veterinarian to determine what your baby may need prior to any planned trips to make sure they are fully protected and as healthy as possible.

Try to imagine a 4th of July without fireworks. It didn’t work, right? As much as we love fireworks, most of our pets despise them. If you were a dog or a cat and you heard “explosions,” how would you feel? It would be terrifying!

Even though we cannot stop everyone from using fireworks, we can at least do our best to accommodate our pets by trying some basic things. For example, I recommend putting pets in a room where, hopefully, they won’t hear the outside noise as much, and consider having some white noise in that room as well. You can also give them their favorite treat or toy to distract them from the outside world.

I would also recommend considering some calming supplements, which you can discuss with your veterinarian to see what he/she/they may recommend. Sometimes these may not be enough, and you may have to consider prescribed “chill pills.” If your baby gets extremely stressed out, I would strongly recommend discussing this option with your veterinarian.

If your dog or cat is in a safe and enclosed environment, you may also be able to prevent the sad but not so rare occurrence of a pet escaping home when all these loud noises are happening. Still, it is important to be as prepared as possible. Consider having your dog or cat microchipped and also putting a collar with an ID tag around their necks. There are some tags that have GPS, so these may be an option for some parents.

In the end though, I strongly believe that keeping your beloved fur kids in a quiet, calm room will potentially save you many headaches. I hope everyone has a safe, AMAZING and joyful time celebrating our independence. Please be safe, and always try to be nice to those around you. Happy Birthday, USA!!

Abrazos para todos!

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

We’ve made gains in the U.S., but we have so far to go

Congratulations to Gavin Grimm. If you don’t know that name, you should, especially if you give a damn about transgender rights and the attack on trans kids in this country. Grimm sued his Virginia school district because he wasn’t allowed to use the boys’ restroom. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit ruled in Grimm’s favor. The Supreme Court declined to hear the case, which means that the 4th Circuit court’s ruling stands.

According to The Washington Post, both Justice Clarence Thomas and Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. said they would have taken the case. Seeing as they are two of the most conservative justices on the bench, and considering that the Supreme Court has a conservative majority, it is likely that things would not have gone Grimm’s way had the court taken up the case.

So, while this turn of events is a relief in many ways, it’s only a partial victory. The 4th Circuit doesn’t cover the whole country, so there are plenty of places insisting that kids can only use the restroom that matches their assigned sex at birth.

And then there’s the fact that Gavin Grimm was a high school student when his case began. A kid. A kid who never should have had to fight this fight. A kid who became a very public face of transgender rights during a particularly hostile time in this country. The intimate details of Grimm’s life and body have been the subject of a national debate. That is insane. And it’s wrong.

Elsewhere in the world, police in Turkey are violently shutting down a Pride march in Istanbul. The event had been banned and the reason given was COVID-19, according to the BBC. That’s a good reason to ban a large gathering.

But the BBC also reports that Pride has been banned in Istanbul since 2015. So this year’s ban was probably not a simple public health measure.

Homosexuality isn’t illegal in Turkey. But according to the Al-Monitor, Pride events have been banned “amid an escalating campaign to criminalize Turkey’s remarkably resilient gay community.”

Meanwhile, the Hungarian parliament banned any discussion of LGBTQ issues in schools.

Al Jazeera reports that those under the age of 18 “cannot be shown any content that encourages gender change or homosexuality. This also applies to advertisements.”

According to ABC News, “The law is ostensibly designed to crack down on pedophilia, but critics argue amendments to it make a dangerous link between homosexuality and the abuse of minors.”

Hmm, where have I heard that before? Oh, I know: Right here in the United States, from U.S. lawmakers who say we need to dehumanize trans people in order to protect women and children from sexual predators. As if all trans people fall into this category.

It’s likely no surprise to hear that Hungary is not a great place when it comes to LGBTQ rights. Long before Hungary banned LGBTQ discussions in school, the country had outlawed marriage equality and limited adoptions only to heterosexuals.

So, it’s tempting for many to point to places like Turkey and Hungary and say, “See? Things in the U.S. aren’t so bad. Quit yer complaining.” In fact, this was the reasoning the Log Cabin Republicans used to endorse Donald Trump.

But what is more evident than ever in the U.S. is that we aren’t actually much different from places where homosexuality is criminalized and punished. One of our two major parties is extremely hostile toward LGBTQ people and has only become more hostile as the country as a whole has become more accepting. Republicans see what’s happening in Turkey and Hungary as progress.

This, of course, should surprise no one. Republicans are an extremist party, not a governing party. They haven’t been interested in governing for a long time, but they lost all credibility after the Jan. 6 insurrection, which they encouraged and now act like was no big deal.

And they still worship at the altar of Trump. Not in my lifetime have we ever had a president so utterly incompetent, corrupt and anti-democracy. But there are people still claiming that Trump, the most unpopular president in ages, actually won the election and will somehow be magically re-instated.

It’s lunatic thinking. But these are the same people who see Gavin Grimm, Black Lives Matter and people being allowed to vote as the real threats to the United States.

So, no. I don’t look at other countries where LGBTQ people have it worse and think the U.S. is doing great by comparison.

A lot has happened in my lifetime in the realm of LGBTQ rights. We’ve made some truly amazing gains. The fact that I have a legal marriage certificate is one of them.

But we have so much further to go. And not only am I not dead yet, but there are also many more young people like Gavin Grimm who will keep pressing forward.

D’Anne Witkowski is a writer living in Michigan with her wife and son. She has been writing about LGBTQ politics for nearly two decades. Follow her on Twitter @ MamaDWitkowski.
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New DPD Chief Eddie Garcia wants his officers and the LGBTQ community to be safe

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

When more than 100 police officers joined Chief Eddie Garcia to raise the official Dallas city Pride flag, none of the officers were told to attend; they were told they were welcome to attend. That’s the atmosphere Garcia wants his department to have, and officers and the public are responding to it.

Many more officers said they would have attended but were unable to because they were out around the city patrolling.

“We’re going to be loud about being allies,” Garcia told Dallas Voice this week. “Raising the Pride flag in front of headquarters was important.”

While other Dallas police chiefs have been more reserved in their support, Garcia describes himself as a “meet in person, laughing, gotta show you care” kind of guy, and our conversation proved that to be very true.

And care he does, even though coming from California, he said he finds some things about Texas, well, interesting. “There are things that are astonishing to me,” he said, without criticizing — or even specifically mentioning — statewide officials or this last, exasperating legislative session.

Originally from Puerto Rico, Garcia spent his entire police career with the San Jose police department in California before being hired by DPD earlier this year as Dallas’ 30th police chief and first Hispanic police chief.

Garcia began his police career in 1992, the same year the Mica England case against the Dallas Police Department was settled. He finds it astounding that new recruits were asked on a polygraph exam whether they were LGBTQ and that they were refused a position for answering yes. In fact, he was so surprised by DPD’s bizarre history around hiring gays and lesbians that he looked over at LGBT Liaison Megan Thomas to confirm whether DPD really used to ask the question to new recruits.

“They asked that on a polygraph?” Garcia asked in amazement. Thomas nodded.

Garcia laughed and said in his department, honesty and openness were reasons to hire someone, not to exclude them. He went on to explain the work environment he wants to create in his department: “I want people to feel safe at work.”

After all, he said, how can officers be expected to make people feel on the streets, if they don’t feel safe themselves among their own colleagues.

Garcia also said he’d love to expand the liaison’s office to more than one person, but there’s a personnel shortage right now. That’s why recruiting the best people from all communities is a priority for him. At Dallas Southern Pride’s recent Juneteenth Unity Festival, DPD had a recruiting booth, and the chief hopes to recruit at other upcoming LGBTQ events as well.

And does that include recruiting in the transgender community? Sure, he said, since the department already has several successful trans officers. And, Garcia said, Dallas would benefit from more like them.

Garcia said people need to know they’ll be safe being themselves in the department and turned to Thomas to share her experience. Thomas said her move to Dallas just a few years ago, “a scary thing.” But, she added, “You need to know it’s OK to come and be out in the academy. It’s safe to be an officer here.”

The chief said he wants to make Dallas and the DPD a safe place for everyone. “There are lots of reasons not to come out,” he said, but being safe in the department shouldn’t be one of them.

Garcia knows he and his officers can’t do it alone. He needs the community’s support to make Dallas a safer place. To that end, the chief introduced the new Safe Place program to the LGBTQ community earlier this week.

Businesses displaying a Safe Place decal on the door welcome someone who’s been the victim of a hate crime to find a safe place to report the incident and wait for police to respond.

“It’s a program I got into in my old department in San Jose,” Garcia said. “It originated in Seattle.”

He added that it’s a program that works for all groups who’ve felt marginalized, not just the LGBTQ community where the program began.

Businesses interested in participating can contact Thomas at DPD headquarters.

To let the LGBTQ community know how serious he is about being an ally concerned for our safety, Garcia walked Cedar Springs Road with former Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano. He said the reception from some members of the community was warm and welcoming, but he wished he could say that the welcome was universal. Despite being introduced by a very popular member of the LGBTQ community, he said he knew not everyone was happy to meet him.

But Garcia is realistic: He understands that many people in the LGBTQ community have had bad experiences with police, and that means he and his officers will have to work that much harder to gain the community’s trust.

Garcia said the first time someone encounters a police officer shouldn’t be during a crisis. He likened it to an emotional bank account: Make some good deposits so that the withdrawals aren’t as painful.

But, Garcia said, he’s not looking to be popular, though, just effective.

“We will bring down crime,” he said in a way that you understand he sees that there’s simply no choice; it’s something he will accomplish. His goal is to make Dallas one of the safest big cities in the U.S. And he knows some things he’ll have to do to make that happen won’t be popular.

He has a list of ideas, starting with the fact that “We’ve got to do a better job hiring.” He thinks officers need to be tracked, so that bad officers don’t go from one department to another.

De-escalation training is important to Garcia, and “the first time an officer goes into a community of color can’t be after training,” he said.

Garcia said he believes defunding the police “is a terrible idea.” But he does believe money should be spent differently, and he is proud of expanding the department’s Right Care program around the city. Through that program, instead of an officer with little mental health training leading a mental health check, a team of consisting of a clinician, a medic and an officer takes those calls. That program needs to continue to be expanded, he said.

Garcia’s list of ideas of how to improve policing goes on. But he knows that change is difficult, and he knows that not all of his ideas will be popular.

“If you want to be liked,” he said. “Don’t be a leader.”

But with his infectious charm and big smile, you just gotta like Eddie Garcia and be glad he’s our new chief.
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Rachel Hudson and Kamyon Conner first met at a Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance meeting at University of North Texas. “Then we kept bumping into each other,” Conner said, like the time they did The Vagina Monologues together.

Conner was out, but Hudson, who is bi, was not out to her family.

They had one night together where they kissed. But when summer came, Hudson moved back home from Denton to Mansfield. So they kept in touch by phone, and Conner visited Hudson at home.

But Hudson was also seeing a guy. And she got pregnant. She knew she was pregnant the next morning, Hudson said, explaining that body just felt different.

“I wasn’t surprised she got pregnant,” Conner said. “She was having too much fun that summer.”

But before Hudson was able to confirm her pregnancy, she said, she was done with her boyfriend. She was working three jobs to pay for school and biking to work, so she knew that she was not in a position to have a baby. But when she contacted the father to let him know about the pregnancy and ask for help with the abortion, he told her she should “just reach out to your lesbian friends.”

That’s when she contacted Conner. And Conner drove down from Denton, picked up Hudson and took her to Planned Parenthood in Fort Worth.

“I waited for her in the waiting room all day,” Conner said.

Hudson described the day: Intake took awhile. Then the procedure and a D-and-C, followed by very attentive aftercare. When Hudson was released, Conner took her to the store to pick up supplies she’d need.

The couple were married last December in the Chickasaw National Recreation Area in Sulphur, Okla. They described it as “a small COVID wedding” limited to 20 people — including the couple, officiant, family and a few friends — and held outdoors. The pastoral setting was by a beautiful waterfall.

Conner and Hudson said they have a message for the LGBTQ community: Queer people have abortions. The rate of teen pregnancy is high among queer teens. The reasons are varied: Some are trying to prove they’re not lesbian; others are looking for affection, wherever it comes from, after being rejected by their families. And others who have been thrown out of their homes sell themselves to earn some money to live.

On top of everything else, Texas law prevents sex education that includes any information relevant to LGBTQ teens, so many teens simply tune out sex ed classes. Birth control information, when offered, is often ignored.

Whatever the reasons, Conner, said, the state’s new abortion law will particularly hurt young queer people.

In addition, the law allows anyone to sue someone who is involved in the abortion. “I could have been sued,” Conner said, for simply driving Hudson to Planned Parenthood. She said the law is designed to stigmatize and shame people who are accessing their right to have an abortion.

Years after having had the abortion, Hudson said she would make the same decision again, and Conner supports her in that.

Conner said in Texas, not only can abortions not be funded by Medicaid, but private insurance is not allowed to include abortion as a benefit. That inspired her to first volunteer with the Texas Equal Access Fund, a non-profit organization that helps women pay for abortions.

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A Juneteenth to remember

Dallas Southern Pride’s Juneteenth celebration garners record attendance, adds $2 million-plus to local economy

FROM STAFF REPORTS

A record number of visitors converged on Dallas the weekend of June 19 to celebrate Gay Pride Month and the Juneteenth holiday, according to a spokesman for Dallas Southern Pride, one of the primary sponsors for Juneteenth Unity Weekend. And those visitors, the spokesman said, pumped millions of dollars into the local economy.

Early estimates indicate at least 20,000 people visited DFW for the celebration, filling local hotels, restaurants and shops. They were treated to three days of events, a block party and a pool party as well as health screenings.

Event organizers vaccinated nearly 100 attendees against COVID-19, the spokesman added.

Kirk Myers, lead organizer, said Dallas Southern Pride is “beyond pleased with this year’s unprecedented turnout.”

He continued, “I want to thank everyone who traveled to our beloved Dallas to participate in this year’s Juneteenth celebration just days after the historic vote to make it a federal holiday. I also want to thank Dallas city leaders and the Dallas Police Department for partnering with us to make this record-breaking event safe and enjoyable.”

This year’s Juneteenth party marked a number of firsts, notably that, for the first time, the HIV positivity rate was below 10 percent among the more than 200 attendees who were tested. There were also 50 attendees who signed up for the HIV prevention treatment PrEP.

Pointing again to DPD’s cooperation in staging the event, the DSP spokesman noted that the city of Dallas’ official Pride flag flew over the Dallas police headquarters for the first time during the Juneteenth weekend, and DPD held a recruitment drive targeting LGBTQ applicants.

The Dallas skyline was lighted in the Juneteenth and Black Pride colors for the first time this year, and the Dallas Southern Pride Official Pride flag made its debut, being flown for the first time at the Sheraton Market Center.

Myers and the DSP spokesman said the three-day Juneteenth party provided a much-needed “shot in the arm to the area economy.” The weekend’s festivities generated an estimated $2.2 million in revenue for local businesses that were hit hard by the nearly year-long pandemic shut down. The Juneteenth celebration also employed hundreds of “gig workers” who had been sidelined by the COVID-19 pandemic, and more than two dozen vendors — the most in the history of DSP’s Juneteenth celebrations — participated in the block party.

In addition, they noted, the Sheraton Suites Market Center Dallas host hotel and two overflow hotels were sold out for the weekend.

“Year’s massive success is a testament to the enormous trust our supporters have given us,” the DSP spokesman said. “That’s why planning is already underway for the 2022 Dallas Southern Pride/Juneteenth celebration, when we hope to welcome even more visitors to our great city.”

Dallas Southern Pride dates back to 1997 when a small group of Black LGBTQ friends gathered to celebrate and uplift each other. In 2016, Juneteenth was included in the celebration to honor the essence and spirit of Black culture.
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Can’t stop Pride

Even though ‘official’ organizers for México City Pride cancelled in-person events because of COVID, trans activists and their supporters marched anyway.

MÉXICO CITY — México City hosted its 43rd annual Pride March/Pride Parade on Saturday, June 26, with a little more than 30,000 people participating. This year’s event was much smaller than the 1,000,000-plus participants usually seen in years past, and this parade almost didn’t even happen at all.

The committee that has organized México City’s Pride parade for years — the Marcha del Orgullo LGBT de la Ciudad de México (Mexico City LGBT Pride March committee), referred to as the “committee” — had cancelled its event again this year due to lingering concerns over COVID-19 and was instead again having a virtual Pride event, with prominent talent streaming on Facebook and YouTube.

But prominent México City transsexual Lola Dejavu Delgadillo Vargas, secretary at Agenda Nacional Política Trans de México, and others in the trans community and in various LGBTQ organizations were not satisfied with the committee’s plan. So they joined together to hold an actual Pride parade titled “La marcha de quien la marcha,” which translates to, “The march belongs to whomever marches.”

On social media, here in México, it was like dueling LGBTQ Pride parade groups vying for attention, a battle between the “official” Pride Parade Committee and the trans community and their supporting organizations. Some in the Dallas/Fort Worth LGBTQ community were confused about what was happening. Several contacted me, asking if there was really going to be a parade, and if all Pride events had been cancelled. I told them there would be a parade, although it might be smaller than usual, and that most of the bars and circuit parties would be open for business.

LGBTQ community leaders and members took to social media to make it known that the “official committee” does not represent the real LGBTQ community and that the committee was just a group of self-appointed “careerists” who only have their own personal and political interests in mind. Committee members admiringly chose not to respond to personal attacks, though they represented themselves as the “official” voice of Pride.

But this is México. Here, we can have disagreements without filing lawsuits, and we end up with something positive. And that is what happened on Saturday morning, June 16, beginning at 11 a.m. when people from all around México City and surrounding municipalities started gathering at the Angel of Independence. The Angel is located in La Zona Rosa, which is considered the heart of México City’s LGBTQ Mexico City community and is well known in the Republic of Mexico as “the gayborhood.”

Those arriving at the Angel couldn’t help but notice there was no stage for speeches and no loud music blaring, like there had always been in previous years. This year’s parade lacked any official sponsors, so there were no big parade floats, no big flatbed trucks representing various bars with dancing studs and parade floats by political organizations either.

But no one at the Angel seem to care, because this was an LGBTQ people’s march, similar to the first Pride Parade held in México City 43 years ago. In fact, a few of the original march participants were in the crowd. It was a superb beginning, with hundreds of people gathering, with a party atmosphere like at a Mexican family cookout on a Saturday afternoon.

The Marcha (Parade) started at 11:45 a.m., with Lola Dejavu Delgadillo Vargas and the Nacional Política Trans de México leading the way. The parade was to end at the Zocalo, México City’s main plaza located in front of the Presidential Palace, where the government offices where already decorated with four-story-tall gay and trans flags. As people began to arrive at the Zocalo, many proud and emotional faces could be seen in the crowd. There were plenty of decorative outfits, with some people showing more skin than clothing. Drinking alcoholic beverages of any kind is illegal on the streets of México — except for Pride Parade day.

It was a festive march, so much so that one might not even notice there was still a COVID-19 pandemic going on. The committee that canceled its parade had done so over serious concerns regarding COVID-19. The trans community members and supporters that organized Saturday’s parade were also concerned about COVID-19, but they encouraged people to wear face masks and to use sanitary hand gel.

Still, in a city of more than 20 million people, it is hard to keep one’s distance. But even though the streets were full of people, it was better than being in a crowded subway car with no ventilation, because there was a slight breeze throughout the day of the parade.

The Pride parade is always held the last Saturday in June during the rainy season in México City. Though it had rained most of the prior, the day of the parade was sunny, helping bring out a larger than expected crowd, especially compared to last year when the trans community organized a Parade that was...
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also supposedly canceled but happened anyway, but with fewer than 100 attending.

There was a good variety of LGBTQ people who gathered at the Zocalo — lots of teenagers, along with people in their twenties and thirties. There were some older people in the crowd, as well, and many people brought their children and dogs.

There were no stages set up for entertainers as there have been in years past. But no one seemed to mind; they just hung out and danced to their own music playing their smart phones. The organizers did give a couple of speeches at the small wooden platform that had been installed although the speeches were hard to hear. Still, no one seemed to mind such minor inconveniences.

The parade stepped off a little before noon, and at 4 p.m., there were still people marching into the Zocalo — a line of LGBTQ people stretching over ten blocks.

Fort Worth residents Martin Rivas, his husband Russ May and their friend Eduardo Villanueva were among those attending. Rivas described the parade as being “just amazing, even if it was smaller than normal, proving that Pride keeps people’s spirits up even during a global pandemic, and that there really is a rainbow at the end of the road.”

And, he added, “You can’t take our Pride away.”

Freelance writer Jesus Chairez is from Dallas but now lives in México City. He was the producer and host of North Texas’ first bilingual LGBT Latino radio show, Sin Fronteras, on KNON 89.3 FM from July 1993 to July 2005. Chairez is a published author in the book Queer Brown Voices, a Collection of Personal Narratives of Latina/o Activism. Contact him at Facebook.com/JesusChairez.
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ON THE PAGE

John Paul Brammer’s new book offers advice based on his own experiences as a gay man

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER | Bookworm Sez
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Hola Papi! How to Come Out in a Walmart Parking Lot and Other Life Lessons by John Paul Brammer; c.2021, Simon & Schuster; $26; 224 pages.

Your best friend definitely has an opinion. You need advice, and she offers an answer, though it might not be the one you seek. You may get sound counsel, but at the wrong time, with sentiments directly opposing what you were thinking.

And yet, you have to be grateful. As in the new book ¡Hola Papi! by John Paul Brammer, the words come from the heart.

Growing up in a small Oklahoma town of Cache, John Paul Brammer knew nothing about being gay. He had little relationship experience, in fact, and he didn’t learn about hook-up apps until he was a junior in college.

Once he found those apps, though, he was “instantly hooked.”

Much to his amusement, “some white guy” said, “Hola, papi,” in greeting on an app one day, and Brammer, “a mixed-race Mexican American with noodle arms,” never forgot it — because hey, wouldn’t that be a great name for an advice column?

He pitched it, landed a gig in conjunction with Grindr, and it was a landslide hit with users, even though Brammer felt like an imposter sometimes. Was he really qualified to do this, he wondered. Then he remembered what he’d want if he needed advice ….

When asked what one can do to let go of past hurts, Brammer answers with a tale of his middle-school years, of bullying, inadequacies and teen angst, and of coming out, growing up and not letting someone be defined by the worst of the past.

He writes of puppy-love with a girl when he was kinda sure he was attracted to boys and how the experience wasn’t a waste. He remembers co-workers at a nearby taco stand who taught him to speak Spanish, to belong and that “Lo siento” isn’t always necessary.

He tells readers about releasing the love he thought was “the one,” about the oh-so-awkward night a childhood bully approached him on a dating app; and how to let go of a dream and a nightmare situation.

You know this: Dear Emmy and Dear Posey can always be relied upon to present some poor schlub with drama worse than yours. You know they’ll offer snappy, sometimes snarky maybe dismissive advice — but that might not be as applicable as what’s in ¡Hola Papi!

Agony Aunties don’t normally insert themselves into their answers quite like author John Paul Brammer does; nope, he makes his advice into a memoir that resonates.

Each mini-chapter here begins with a question followed by what feels like a personal answer written specifically to the forlorn rather than to the world — in a story, really, but one that’s relatable. It’s fun to read, but, more importantly, it wraps advice-seekers (and not just the writer!) in a comfortable tale that might make them laugh but definitely makes them feel un-alone.

Another nice thing: This book is by a gay man, but the advice he offers is for anyone, of any age. If you can remember that there are some eyebrow-raisers snuggled amidst laughs and sighs, of ¡Hola Papi!, you’ll have a high opinion.
The Music Man
Theatre Three presents a 10-person, boutique production of The Music Man outdoors at Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 MLK Blvd. through June 30– July 4. Tickets are $75 for a 2-person socially distant square. Theatre3Dallas.com.

July 4: Independence Day
Through July 4: The Music Man
Theatre Three presents a 10-person, boutique production of The Music Man outdoors at Texas Discovery Gardens, 3601 MLK Blvd. through June 30– July 4. Tickets are $75 for a 2-person socially distant square. Theatre3Dallas.com.

July 6: Summer Survivor Speaker Series
The Summer Survivor Speaker Series continues with Mark Jacobs, son of Holocaust survivor Mike Jacobs, who lost most of his family at the Treblinka death camp before being liberated himself from Mathausen-Gusen II by U.S. troops in 1945. 1-2 p.m. at the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, 300 N. Houston St. Visit Facebook.com/dhhrm for information.

July 8: PFLAG Dallas
Virtual support meeting for parents, family and friends of LGBTQ people meets the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. Register for link at PFLAGDallas.org.

July 9-10: 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. LuckyLeafExpo.com.

July 10: Queer Reads
Queer Reads is an online book club that meets the second Saturday of every month from 8:30-7:30 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.

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

July 16: 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.

July 16: Cheers to Summer
Virtual beer tasting benefiting LifeWalk hosted by Texas Ale Project. $40 ticket includes a six pack of Texas Ale Project beers, souvenir glass and more. Eventbrite.com/e/lifewalk-virtual-beer-tasting-tickets-154605580453.

Look for extended listings online at DallasVoice.com/plan-your-week
I kept seeing these ads for all kinds of date boxes and kits. Some seemed pricey for what they actually offered; others seemed kind of pointless. And I found myself thinking, “Well, we could just do a craft together. I have a whole craft closet. We don’t need a kit to tell us what to do.” Or, “We can bake something together. I have a whole baking cabinet. We don’t need anyone to orchestrate or direct us.”

But here’s the thing. We don’t. We could; but we don’t.

And here’s the other thing, my wife and I have been together all but non-stop for the last year-and-a-half. So why would we even need something to “bring us closer” or “help us to find things to connect” or “give us something to do”?

The answer might seem counter-intuitive, but it’s because we are together all the time that we need that little nudge.

We do nearly everything together. But we also don’t always do things together, if you know what I mean.

I mean, we hang out and eat and host friends. But we don’t necessarily do a focused activity the sole intention of which is to spend quality time together and connect with one another. And no matter how much physical space and/or time we have together, I will be the first to admit that there is nothing like a focused activity done with intention to bring a couple closer.

So, I signed up for the date boxes at Happily, and I filled out all of the forms about us and what we do and do not like to do. The first box arrived — and it sat. And sat. And sat.

Seeing it sit there in the basket under the window was starting to make me really anxious. I was trying not to make it a symbol of how we were either too busy or too distracted to open it. So instead, I booked a date with my wife, and we opened it.

We put on some music. We made sure neither of us was hangry or tired or stressed, and we put our phones on silent.

Inside the box were some watercolors and some baking supplies. The date was to learn a few simple painting techniques and to make cake pops. Now let me start by saying that both of us are terrible at painting and drawing. We’ve taken painting classes together before, and we love it. But we’re enthusiastically awful at it.

And I bake — a lot — and I am relatively proficient at it.

So we went at the painting first. The colors they sent were random and poorly-marked, and three of them were the same. The directions took several times reading out loud to decipher. But we had so much fun giggling about how what they called blue and purple were identical and how the directions appeared as if they must have been translated in and out of English so many times as to be impossible to understand or maybe written by someone so in-the-know they couldn’t even imagine how out-of-the-know most of us are.

We complimented one another’s techniques, and we painted and played and laughed and didn’t think or talk about anything else but the activity at hand. We were gentle with one another, teasing each other about our valiant efforts and terrible results.

It felt really freeing, and I felt really close to my wife while doing it. And I wondered if I was afraid we wouldn’t feel that way and that was why I had put off opening that box for so long.

Meanwhile, I clearly had no need to worry. We’re as good at goofing off together, despite whatever might be going on in our little world or in the bigger one, as we are at working together.

Then we started in on the cake pops part of the date. It was an unmitigated disaster. The instructions given could never have resulted in any semblance of cake pops. That is to say, cake crumbs alone do not a cake pop make.

There was nowhere near enough chocolate or sprinkles, and the batter tasted, well, kind of gross. But I had extra chocolate and sprinkles in the pantry. And I knew to add a little frosting — which I had in the fridge — to the cake crumbs. And our house has more sprinkles in it than any house should.

We slow danced when our favorite songs came on. We laughed and smiled and had the best time that night. We tucked our “paintings” away in the craft closet, and we gave the cake pops to a neighbor who said she thought they were great. Who knows — maybe there is something to that “made with love” theory.

So, would I recommend Happily or something similar? Absolutely. Did I think the price was “worth” it? Well, if you mean was what actually comes in the box worth the price, the answer is no. But if you mean was what we got from it worth the price, the answer is a thousand times over.

Couples need to jump out of the current they’re in. It’s great to roll along. But it’s equally important to stop and see the sights. The thing is, every time we do, I’m reminded that she’s the only one in the world I want to do that sightseeing with. And you cannot put a price on that.
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Temporal War

Solution on Page 24

Across
1 Start of a quote referencing temporal warp
9 Gives out some queens, maybe
14 Saint of Hitchcock movies
15 Star’s sidekick
16 Wide open
17 Cultural critic Edmund
18 Singer Fure
19 More of the quote
21 Buck it, with “the”
24 Lose oomph
25 Keanu’s role in The Matrix
26 Lyricist Gershwin and others
28 Money back from Intl. Male
30 End of the quote
31 Half of Mork’s good-bye
32 Conclusion by Alex Landi
34 Eat it
35 Bus Stop playwright
40 Latina writer Castillo
41 Gay and Lesbian Victory ___
43 Oklahoma native
44 Playing taps, for example
46 Become a tenant’s tenant
47 Nobel prize winner John
48 Start to climax
49 Game of Thrones star and source of the quote
50 Ending with switch
51 Tony-winning musical

Down
1 Big tops, for example
2 Merchant’s partner
3 Cock and bull
4 Putting out
5 “___ Spartacus!”
6 Bombay title
7 Trivia
8 Checks for STDs
9 Violet of Downton Abbey, e.g.
10 K-12
11 Adjust, as car wheels
12 Like a ballerina
13 Take care of
20 Pinker, to meat-eaters
22 It may come before long
23 Spring month for Vivien
27 Wounded by a wasp
29 Querelle director
30 Moby Dick chaser
31 Half of Mork’s good-bye
32 Conclusion by Alex Landi
33 Was in bed with
34 Eat it
35 Bus Stop playwright
36 Nyx in Hades
37 Egypt and Syr., once
38 Tickle pink
39 Portable PC
40 LGBT
41 Porgy and bass
42 Disconnect, as a trailer
43 Really queer, to heteros
45 Portable PC
46 How skinny jeans fit
48 The least bit
49 Room for Frida
50 Ending with switch
51 Land of Sinead O’Connor
52 Strap on a stallion
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55 Go down

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