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Myers, Abounding Prosperity invite DaBaby for a tour

Kirk Myers, CEO of Abounding Prosperity Inc., this week invited hip-hop artist DaBaby to tour the South Dallas-based HIV/AIDS services organization in the wake of homophobic and AIDS/HIV-phobic comments the rapper made on stage during his performance last month at the Rolling Loud music festival in Miami. After first standing by his comments, as backlash began to grow and he began being dropped from events and brands, DaBaby earlier this week issued a statement apologizing.

He apologized for his “hurtful and triggering comments” about LGBTQ people and his “misinformed comments about HIV/AIDS,” and while criticizing those who immediately attacked him over the remarks, he thanked those who reached out “privately to offer wisdom, education and resources. That’s what I needed, and it was received.”

Education and guidance are exactly what Myers and the staff at Abounding Prosperity Inc. are offering. “DaBaby’s offensive comments further highlight the enormous task ahead for those of us on the front lines of this life-or-death fight,” Myers said.

— Tammye Nash

Texas man’s family sues over sting operation

The parents of a Texas gay man caught in a sting operation supposedly targeting pedophiles said this week they are suing the city of Conroe, Montgomery County and others “for false arrest and malicious prosecution” after their son committed suicide.

Dallas Voice has reached out to Montgomery County and the city of Conroe for comment and will update when they respond.

Attorney Randall Kallinen said that Petersen, a 39-year-old high school teacher, “who had never been charged with a crime in his life, was falsely accused by Conroe police Detective Darrick Dunn of on-line solicitation of a minor after the adult Dunn left Brian a voice message in an adult-sounding voice on the legal gay dating site Grindr before Brian agreed to meet Dunn.”

Kallinen said Petersen was not “treated appropriately for potential suicide,” and that he killed himself soon after being released.

Petersen left a note for his family saying he would not “spend the rest of my life barely surviving after losing everything. So, I choose oblivion,” and that while he wished he had more time to spend with his loved ones, “Montgomery County law enforcement had different ideas.”

— Tammye Nash

Cathedral of Hope distributes almost 1,500 meals

About 90 volunteers got together at Cathedral of Hope on July 31 to put together meals to feed the homeless and food insecure. In addition to serving breakfast to about 176 people, organizer Scot MacRae said they would distribute more than 1,400 meals.

The volunteers packaged meals that included chicken, vegetables, rolls, fruit, cookies and water, plus each recipient received a blessing bag with a variety of toiletries and canned meat.

MacRae said the cost to the church was just 44 cents per meal because of generous donations. Costco donated food, caterer Doug Boster donated his kitchen facilities and Maple Lawn Elementary School, across the street from Cathedral of Hope, offered its freezers.

— David Taffet

Adoptable / BLONDIE

Meet Blondie. This lovely 11-year-old American blue heeler mix is ready to find a home to retire to for her golden years. She is the sweetest old lady you will ever meet, and her kind, gentle soul brings joy to all of those around her. Blondie enjoys cuddling up on the couch, spending time with her humans and lots of belly rubs. She does great with new people and is always happy to make a new friend when people come to visit. Blondie also does well on outings and often accompanies her foster mom to the local coffee shop to lounge on the patio in the mornings. On her walks, she warmly greets other dogs and people alike — she never meets a stranger! Blondie is wise in her years and is already leash trained, house trained and crate trained. This sweet senior is sure to be a wonderful companion to anyone looking for a kind-hearted pup to spend their days with. To celebrate Shelter Pet Summer, you can adopt an adult dog or cat from the SPCA of Texas shelters for only $25. The special is offered for pets located at the SPCA of Texas’ shelters and in their foster homes, and adoptions will be by appointment only. Blondie is waiting to meet you in an SPCA of Texas foster home. To request an appointment to meet Blondie, please fill out the application at SPCA.org/DogAdopt.

Adoptions are 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.
Allergies and how to fight them

WOOF! DR. JOSH TALKS TO THE ANIMALS

Hola! Here we meet again! I hope everyone is well and staying healthy. Last year we discussed allergies at one point, but this year Texas decided to love on us and shower us with allergens most of this year! I have seen so many dogs and cats with allergies at my hospital over the last few months, and their parents are having very valid questions and concerns.

Allergies are far more complex than the common “chicken allergy” issues we often hear about. And speaking of “chicken allergies,” these are not as common as you may think.

Itchiness refers to how much a dog or a cat is chewing, licking and/or scratching. Even though these actions can also be associated with stress/anxiety or discomfort, they are typically associated with itchiness.

Please keep in mind that itching once in a while is considered normal for dogs and cats, but monitoring for trends or changes is important. Allergies range from mild to severe and can be seasonal, nonseasonal or even year-round.

Needless to say, there are other types of allergies, but we will focus on these three in this column.

In Texas, fleas are one of the most common causes of itchiness with dogs and cats. These critters can also transmit diseases and parasites like tapeworms. It is important to keep our babies on flea prevention year-round, even with strictly indoor fur babies. There are over-the-counter products that may work for some pets, but some of them may not be effective enough. You can get prescribed, medical-grade flea prevention products through your veterinarian, and these can be used year round.

Even though fleas are common around here in Texas, the most common type of allergies seen with our babies are environmental allergies, including with the strictly indoor babies! Cats are not commonly known for suffering from environmental allergies like dogs are, but they can still have them. In order to diagnose environmental allergies, your veterinarian may recommend testing. While this is an ideal approach, most vets rarely test for allergies because we have amazing medical options that can be used instead.

Over-the-counter medications can sometimes help pets with mild environmental allergies (at the correct dose for their weight, of course), but most need prescribed anti-allergy medications. These days we have prescription medications that are safer than steroids, and we even have safe and novel injections that help dogs fight environmental allergies. If your dog or cat is itchy, I recommend you have a thorough conversation with your doctor to see what options may be available for your baby.

Now moving on to the infamous food allergies. Food allergies are actually fairly rare. While they do exist, they are typically not the first thing that come to mind when veterinarians take care of your baby. Even the most expensive of diets can cause food allergies, which means that changing diets may not necessarily help every dog or cat. While chicken is a common protein found in diets, it is once again not usually associated with allergies, because — contrary to popular belief — food allergies are not that common at all. There is also a myth that if a pet has had the same diet long term, there is no way that there can be food allergies developed. Sadly, these can develop after years, even while on the same diet.

Allergies are not the only causes of skin issues, which is why it is important to discuss your concerns with your veterinarian. It is also important to know that ear infections are very commonly seen with some allergies, so it may be vital to have an ear care routine at home, as well as long-term medical management of allergies. Like with us humans, if we are not taking our anti-allergy medication, the allergies will likely come back. This means that constant communication with your doctor will be vital to prevent major complications seen with allergies.

Your veterinarian may also recommend bathing with certain medicated shampoos, administering certain supplements, or feeding certain diets that are engineered to help with environmental allergies and/or food allergies.

If you are seeing any signs of itchiness or skin/ear issues, please contact your veterinarian right away, before they get worse. Remember that acting sooner rather than later will help both your baby and you. Big abrazos and “see” you next time!

Dr. Josh owns Isla Veterinary Boutique Hospital, 14380 Marsh Ln. Ste. 110 in Addison, next to Tom Thumb. Reach him by phone at 972-738-1111 or visit his website at IslaVet.com.
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:

- dofetilide
- rifampin
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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 light-headed, 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. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking BIKTARVY.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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

- This is only a brief summary of important information about BIKTARVY. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- Go to BIKTARVY.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
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See Chad’s story at BIKTARVY.com.

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Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and visit BIKTARVY.com.
Time to do the right thing at last

U.S. senators on all sides must act against anti-LGBTQ discrimination

G eorgia has had the eyes of the nation on it for some time now. It’s just more than five years now since people across Georgia braced themselves as lawmakers sent sweeping anti-LGBTQ legislation to the desk of then-Gov. Nathan Deal.

The LGBTQ community feared the potential harms that the broad “license to discriminate” bill could bring. Business leaders feared billions of dollars being drained from the state’s economy as major players from Hollywood, the business sector and even the NFL threatened to pull investments.

But after thousands of calls, meetings and letters, Gov. Deal — a Republican and devout Evangelical Christian — ultimately did the right thing. He vetoed the bill, saying, “We do not have a belief in my way of looking at religion that says we have to discriminate against anybody.”

At the time, Gov. Deal’s veto was heralded as a radical move for a Republican leader. But the truth is that Republican lawmakers faced with bills targeting LGBTQ people frequently take action against these measures.

We saw it earlier this year in Arkansas as Gov. Asa Hutchinson vetoed a draconian anti-transgender healthcare bill. Also earlier this year, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox teared up while condemning an anti-trans bill, saying, “These kids are just trying to stay alive.”

Prominent Republican leaders in South Dakota, Texas, South Carolina and Arizona have vetoed or moved to block anti-LGBTQ bills. Stalwart Republican senators from Alabama and Iowa have passionately supported open military service for transgender people.

There are plenty of examples of Republicans supporting LGBTQ people. But they’ve often been lost in the headlines stoking the so-called left-versus-right “culture wars.”

In my home state of Georgia, Gov. Deal’s action inspired further evolution on LGBTQ issues. In the five legislative sessions since that veto, Georgia’s legislature has not passed a single anti-LGBTQ bill.

Republicans and Democrats alike have defended LGBTQ Georgians from discriminatory measures. And so many Georgians across the political spectrum — within families, friend groups and workforces — have had conversations about what dignity for LGBTQ people looks like.

Now it’s time for the members of the United States Senate to build on that consensus by taking the most important and critical step yet for LGBTQ Americans.

It’s time for senators on both sides of the aisle to come together and enact legislation, such as the Equality Act, that would establish concrete, enduring nondiscrimination protections for all LGBTQ people in areas like housing and public spaces, including restaurants, stores, and hospitals.

LGBTQ people in too many states — 29 nationwide — remain vulnerable because of a lack of explicit nondiscrimination laws at the state and federal levels.

Polling consistently shows that a wide majority of Americans in both major political parties strongly supports protecting LGBTQ people from discrimination. More than 8 in 10 Americans support LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination laws, including 62 percent of Republicans.

We cannot let the loudest voices of a fringe minority hold our country back from delivering the promise of liberty, security and equality for all people, no matter where they live. Because, really, we are so close to passing federal LGBTQ protections — closer than ever before.

Nearly 50 years after its first introduction in Congress, the Equality Act has passed with bipartisan support in the House, and it received its first-ever Senate hearing. Republican senators in the Senate Judiciary Committee voiced empathy for the harms that discrimination has caused LGBTQ people. They also expressed a willingness to finding a path to protect us.

And there is more than one bill proposed to address the inequity that LGBTQ people are subjected to. The Senate Judiciary committee opened a door to the long overdue conversation.

Now it’s on us to hold that door open and guide all of our senators through. Democratic senators must reach out to their Republican colleagues and address concerns. Republicans must draw on the many recent examples of conservative leaders working to protect LGBTQ people.

We can’t afford another 50 years of federal inaction on this bill. We can’t afford the two parties to keep butting heads in a bitter stalemate. For the first time in history, we have a real opportunity to secure protections for LGBTQ Americans, and we must seize this opportunity and find a solution that works for everyone.

It’s essential that right, left and center come together, reach consensus and, at last, do the right thing.

Jeff Graham is the executive director of Georgia Equality.

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VENUES

It’s all about the sunset that makes this a perfect wedding facility

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

If a dramatic sunset as you take your vows is what you’re looking for in a wedding venue, there may be no setting in the DFW area more perfect that The Yacht Club in Rockwall.

The Yacht Club is located on the east bank of Lake Ray Hubbard. From the decks of the clubhouse, the Dallas skyline can barely be seen in the distance. Positioned at one of the wider expanses of the lake, the club is front row for gorgeous sunsets.

But what about that haze that hangs over the city? That just makes sunsets more colorful, while the air over Rockwall is clear.

While there’s no shortage of places in the city of Dallas that welcome same-sex couples; outside the city limits, though, it’s another matter. A welcome for gay or lesbian couples is in short supply in surrounding areas. In fact, for some facilities, it’s been a badge of honor to deny same-sex couples access.

The Yacht Club, though, not only wants our community to feel welcome, they’ve already hosted some same-sex weddings, which Sales and Marketing Manager Danielle Wright has described as some of the most joyous events her venue has hosted.

The venue has five areas that can hold a wedding. One is a newly-fenced grassy area shaded by several mature trees. The area overlooks the lake and marina, which remains active, with boat owners sailing in and out of the dock, adding to the ambiance.

Sliding glass doors open to a catering hall with bar on this lower level that can accommodate a band, dancing and tables.

Upstairs is the ballroom that can seat 250, as well as a restaurant for smaller events. Want to see if the venue is right for you without a sales pitch? Go incognito and try out the restaurant for lunch or dinner Wednesdays through Sundays. Actually, go for dinner; you really won’t believe you’re in Dallas — well, Rockwall, but the lake is actually within the city of Dallas — when you see that magnificent sunset.

The building is equipped with bride and groom rooms. The bride room is large enough for two brides to get ready for their big day — or you could use both rooms.

Wedding packages start at $3,500, but The Yacht Club is offering a 10 percent discount if you tell them you saw this article in Dallas Voice. Food and beverage are catered in house in addition to the package.

They also offer an “elopement package” for fewer than 20 people for a four-hour experience plus an opportunity to
come ahead of time for photos.

For landlocked Dallas, The Yacht Club offers a very different setting than most other venues in the area — secluded, but easy to reach; just a half hour from downtown Dallas, yet far away from the urban hubbub.

For a place that’s outside the city welcoming you “literally with open arms,” Wright said, The Yacht Club is a wonderful choice.

Getting there: Take I-30 east. After crossing Lake Ray Hubbard, exit Ridge Road. Make a right and travel about a mile and a half to Henry M. Chandler Dr. Make a right. Go just a few hundred feet and make a right at the guard house marked Chandler’s Landing. Tell the guard you’re there to go to The Yacht Club. Make a left and go three very long blocks. Make another left on Yacht Club Drive and pull into the parking lot. The Yacht Club is along the lake.

More information: Call Danielle for more information on prices and what’s included at 847-946-5023.
Those looking for the perfect venue for their wedding should consider Dallas’ parks

Looking for an interesting location for a wedding? Dallas parks offer a variety of experiences that can be surprisingly secluded, with a variety of catering options.

For smaller groups, a Dallas park wedding may be nothing more than a few friends or family gathering in some of the prettiest locations in the city. And because these are all city-owned facilities, same-sex weddings are handled equally with opposite-sex weddings.

After all, it’s in the city charter.

Here are some venue ideas.

— David Taffet

VENUES

LOCATION, Page 32

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weddings@dallasarboretum.org
DallasArboretum.org
Choose from 18 ceremony locations and four reception options at the Dallas Arboretum during Dallas Blooms or anytime during the year. Daytime and evening options are available. Some locations offer a view of the Dallas skyline and White Rock Lake. Others surround you with the Arboretum’s lush plantings. The Arboretum offers a number of wedding packages including ceremony and reception. Martha Stewart called it one of the 25 most beautiful garden wedding venues.

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Take the time to think about the couple before buying a wedding present

TAMMIE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

GIFT GIVING

TAMMIE NASH I Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

Get a wedding coming up and need to get a gift for the couple? You can always find their registry at some big-box chain and buy them another place setting in their chosen china pattern. Or maybe the ever-so-personal gift card.

But with just a little time and effort, says gift-buying expert Scott Pierson, you can probably find a gift that will be a heart-warming reminder of a beautiful day for years to come.

“When we are trying to choose the right wedding gift for someone, we don’t want to get them something they will never use or won’t like, said Pierson, who said he loves shopping and loves getting people things they like. “Couples getting married get a lot of gifts, and I know from personal experience that a lot of those gifts will probably end up on a shelf in the garage or the attic.”

But your gift doesn’t have to be one relegated to the attic or garage, he insists. “Just listen to people when they talk about things that they like, things that mean something to them. And then keep that in mind for when gift-buying time rolls around.”

Even if your tasked with buying a gift for a distant relative or a coworker you aren’t that close to, a little effort goes a long way. “Even then, you know something about at least one person in the couple if you are being invited to the wedding,” he said. “And it’s not that hard to find out more. I know that I am a Facebook ‘stalker.’ I pay attention to the things they post about, the things they say they like and they want.” That’s one way to get something they will really like.”

One sure-fire way to get just the right gift is to focus on something that has a beautiful meaning and a personal touch, Pierson suggested.

“One of the most beautiful things we got for our wedding was a photo [of me and my husband] together, mounted on canvas,” he said. “That photo hangs above the bed in our bedroom, and every day I see it, and every day it is a reminder of what was one of the best and most beautiful days in our lives.”

“See, we actually eloped. We got married before it was legal everywhere. We lived in Florida at the time, and we went to Connecticut to get married. It was just the two of us, and we had a photographer,” he explained. “My sister got one of those photos from our wedding and had it made into a canvas print. It was super thoughtful. She even had part of our wedding vows included on the canvas, and that was something that added that special, personal touch that made it mean even more.”

Obviously, when you are buying a wedding gift for a same-sex couple, you want to make sure that you are spend-
The perfect gift

When you’re considering spending your money with a company that supports equality, right? I mean, what same-sex couple wants a gift from Hobby Lobby or a Chick-fil-A gift card?

“It’s all about the research,” Pierson says. “You can get on companies’ websites and see what they stand for before spending money with them. Some people are very vocal about where they stand on certain issues, and that is something we as consumers should be aware of, especially when we are buying for an LGBTQ couple.”

There are certain websites that let a couple create a registry featuring gifts from companies that align with their personal beliefs and values. Pierson recommends Zola.com which, he says, is super-inclusive and “allows you to link the exact product that you want to buy for the couple.”

Remember, Pierson says, the act of buying a wedding gift in itself is a celebration of the love the couple shares. So buy something that you feel will commemorate that love and be meaningful to them.

“You want to find something that will be meaningful to them, but remember also that the ‘meaningful’ gift is not always what costs the most. It is what means the most, the gift that shows them you took the time to think about who they are and what would mean the most to them.

“A wedding is a celebration of the love between two people. You want to give them a gift that reflects that,” Pierson concluded. “The perfect gift is that thing that people will back on and say, ‘Wow. I never realized that is something that would be so special to us as the year go by.’”

Scott Pierson, pictured with his husband, says one of his favorite wedding gifts was a photo of their special day mounted on canvas.

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How queer millennials and zillennials are changing the future of marriage

MAXWELL POYSER | Contributing writer
maxwellpoyser@fernconnections.com

As the nation finally begins to open back up again and friends and family members become more comfortable gathering in large crowds, this is the best time since the end of 2019 to have a wedding. In fact, Knot Worldwide estimates that there will be an almost 25 percent increase in weddings happening between 2021 and 2022.

However, while many millennial and zillennial individuals have found themselves ready to embark on this harmonious tradition, their take on married life is estimated to be far from traditional.

Over the past decade, the landscape of the United States has seen a progressive shift towards implementing more queer-inclusive policies, and the younger generations have very much been a mirror of that change.

In that same time there has been a 60 percent rise in the LGBTQIA population across the United States — the majority of which is composed of millennial and...
Not your grandma’s gay wedding

there will be an almost 25 percent increase in weddings happening between 2021 and 2022. However, while many millennial and zillennial individuals have found themselves ready to embark on this harmonious tradition, their take on married life is estimated to be far from traditional.

Over the past decade, the landscape of the United States has seen a progressive shift towards implementing more queer-inclusive policies, and the younger generations have very much been a mirror of that change. In that same time there has been a 60 percent rise in the LGBTQIA population across the United States — the majority of which is composed of millennial and Gen-Z individuals. There has yet to be a demographic that is more publicly and resoundingly open about their sexuality and gender orientations, and it seems as if the same principles surrounding non-conformity have carried over into this sub-population’s marriages.

Across the country, polyamory — the act of being in a consensual partnership with more than one person — and consensual non-monogamy are gaining in popularity, especially among younger demographics. Nearly 39 percent of married Gen-Z and millennial individuals have acknowledged being partially or completely non-monogamous.

This new relationship trend comes at an interesting time in queer history, as more and more young adults begin to come out as bi or pansexual — more so than we’ve seen in any prior generations combined.

More than half of the openly LGBTQ population of the United States is composed of the millennial and Gen-Z population; of that sub-population nearly three-fourths identify as bisexual, pansexual or queer. However, for a number of individuals, the fact that their sexual attraction wasn’t fixed to one specific gender or another, wasn’t always clear to them.

Although it is changing now, there is a long history of stigma against bisexual and pansexual individuals within the queer community. In years prior, many individuals would have faced shame or disregard for having more fluid sexualities.

But as the narrative around more fluid forms of sexual attraction becomes more accepting and prolific in the public eye, the concept of being attracted to people of various genders has become less stigmatized. As a result, a number of millennial and zillennial individuals have felt more compelled to explore other avenues of their sexuality, regardless of their relationship status.

And that leads us back towards the rising popularity of non-monogamous marriages.

The millennial and Gen-Z generations are defined by their ability to redefine not only themselves but the rules of living that we were once taught to follow. And that can be easily seen in their marriages.

As young adults we are often expected to follow the same blueprint towards mature adulthood that our parents and our parent’s parents once followed. We are taught how to show up and how to settle down. But we are not always taught how to pursue our best selves. The younger generations are changing that dynamic.

As the next wave of adults and change-makers, we are redefining what it means to live a life worth living. We alone are granting ourselves the right to love who we love, and to engage in our personal relationships in the ways we see fit.

While we may engage in some traditional forms of living — getting married, buying a home, having kids — the grounds upon which we do so are fixed entirely on our own terms — as are the people we let lie in our marriage beds.

Maxwell Poyser (she, they) is head of marketing and media at Fern Connections, a dating program specializing in same-sex matchmaking. They are also the voice behind Fern Connections’ blog, The Dating Dispatch.

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BEHIND THE MUSIC

From Allen to New York, singer Allison Ponthier comes out big

RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
lopez@dallasvoice.com

With just a few songs under her belt, Allison Ponthier is already making quite the splash in music. NPR has conferred on her “It Girl” status, and the music magazine Dork described her as an “icon in waiting.”

Today (Friday, Aug. 6), the Texas-reared singer-songwriter adds to her cool factor by dropping her debut EP, Faking My Own Death, that includes one song that Fader considered a “bright slice of queer country-pop.”

But the thing is, Ponthier has never felt like she was all that.

“I always felt like an underdog or an outsider, but not in a cool way,” she said by phone from New York. “It’s funny and unexpected. It makes me feel like I was spending time trying to be cool. and the coolest thing I could’ve done was what I’ve been doing all along.”

Growing up on country and gospel music mixed with campy horror and Technicolor musical movies, her “thing” has been a fusion of all those inspirations.

Evident in her videos and website, Ponthier’s mix of sentimental songs against kitschy visuals is a beautiful creation.

“In the mid-2000s, I grew up watching a lot of music videos that were over the top,” she said. “In coming up with mine, I love singer-songwriter music because it comes from a personal place, but I was inspired by that over-the-top aspect and campy visuals.”

At first, she admitted, she was conflicted about how to present herself. But her passion won out. “I tried to keep it small at first, but once I gave myself permission to, I was so glad. And I love that juxtaposition of the music to the video.”

For the “Harshest Critic” video, Ponthier takes on multiple personas, including a ‘50s-style television host and a Taylor Swiftly entertainer character amidst a colorful dream palette. In “Cowboy,” she walks the desert with her guitar and face shield while UFOs fly over her, only to morph into a blue alien ascending into space.

“You get the picture.

But it’s the latter song that’s caught the attention of the music media. Because in that song, Ponthier basically comes out of the closet:

“I didn’t know I could come out / I wasn’t ready, I wasn’t ready / I had a foot in my mouth, oh, no. I know her everything by memory / I’m just a girl from the south.”

Growing up in Allen, Texas, Ponthier said she didn’t realize who she was until her early teens. And despite the growing LGBTQ media presence at the time — with Will and Grace and RuPaul’s Drag Race” and out artists like Melissa Etheridge and Ellen Degeneres — Ponthier felt isolated about her queerness.

“I think with my upbringing, I knew that I was different, but it wasn’t just about being gay. I wasn’t great at making friends. I had strong interests my peers didn’t relate to, so I became really self-sufficient and learned how to entertain myself,” she said.

She added that she didn’t have a full picture of what being gay looked like, and, looking back, she wishes for better representation. She was even upset thinking that a queer world was kept secret from her.

“I felt separated from everyone. I thought I invented being gay. When I moved to New York [at 21], I was surrounded by people who were very out. I couldn’t relate to that either,” she said.

That’s displayed in her “Cowboy” video, which Ponthier called a cowboy-and-aliens story.

“I am from Texas, but I also felt different from everyone there,” she said.

Now that she’s an “It Girl icon” with her first release out, Ponthier wants to change how she felt as a young queer girl for other gaybies who may feel lost and alone.

“My dream would be to go back home, maybe to my high school, and talk about songwriting and identity and hope people can take something from my experience,” she said. “I’d love to give them that info I didn’t have growing up. That would come full circle for me.”

But first, she’s got her music to share: “I’m nervous and excited. The title is all about how I kept wanting to start over and run from who I was. But I feel I’m living authentically right now and not just as a queer person,” she said. “I’m very proud of every song and if something happened tomorrow to me, I’d be very happy this is out in the world.”

Faking My Own Death is out today. Follow Allison Ponthier on social media at @allisonponthier or visit allisonponthier.com for more on her music.
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General Motors casts hands aside to take us Super Cruisin’

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
AutoCasey@aol.com

General Motors envisions an automotive future filled with autonomous electric vehicles. A certain California-based automaker has shown that can be a perilous road, but the big automaker from Detroit is taking a more pragmatic approach with its hands-off Super Cruise system that will be deployed widely in the near future.

Super Cruise enlists Google Maps, LIDAR mapping and adaptive cruise control for hands-off driving on pre-cleared divided highways. The system debuted in 2017 on the Cadillac CT6 sedan, but six 2022 model year vehicles will feature it: Cadillac Escalade, Cadillac CT4, Cadillac CT5, Chevrolet Silverado, GMC Hummer EV Pickup and GMC Sierra.

By 2023, availability will be extended to 22 vehicles including the Chevy Bolt EUV, Cadillac LYRIC EV and Cadillac XT6 crossover.

New capabilities arrive with the new model year, as driving hands-free extends to those trailering boats, campers and classic cars behind their enabled pickups and SUVs. Automatic lane change commands the vehicle to move over automatically. Navigation screens will more clearly indicate on which of 200,000 miles of roads the system can be activated.

All in, these are much-appreciated upgrades.

“We’re excited to expand Super Cruise to even more new models with additional capabilities to provide our customers with even more opportunities to go hands-free,” said Mario Maiorana, Super Cruise chief engineer. “The additional Super Cruise-enabled vehicles and new features are an important step toward our goal of enabling hands-free driving 95 percent of the time and getting people more comfortable with letting go of the wheel.”

On a recent get-away with my family, I had the chance to test the latest system on a 2021 Escalade. Given all of Super Cruise’s technical sophistication, it’s disarmingly easy to use: Turn on the adaptive cruise, set a safe speed and press the steering wheel button on the steering wheel.

Green lights illuminate the top of the steering wheel to let you know it’s active. Lift your hands off the wheel and relax … but not too much.

We rode 60 miles on an Indiana Interstate without touching the steering wheel. A camera on the steering column employs facial recognition to ensure drivers are looking ahead and not reading a novel, but it’s unobtrusive.

Want to change lanes? Just click the turn signal. The system will wait until it is safe, then move over and center itself.

I worried I’d be unnerved by the experience, but it all felt surprisingly natural. Like the pilot of a jetliner, I let the big Caddy drive itself while I kept a watchful eye on it all, ready to take command should the green lights turn red.

Even without Super Cruise, the Escalade is an impressive luxury ride, with its 38 inches of OLED infotainment screens, cherubic 36-speaker AKG audio system that includes speakers in...
The roof and headrests, large heads-up display and rear captain’s chairs with their own infotainment screens. A 420 horsepower 6.2-liter V8 works with a 10-speed automatic transmission and air suspension that can be raised for off-road ing and still provide smooth cruising, no matter the road. With or without Super Cruise, it’s impressive — as it darned well should be for nearly $109 grand.

The progression from regular cruise control to adaptive cruise control and lane-centering steering has taken 20 years. But it will not take that long for drivers to get comfortable riding with their hands off the wheel. Super Cruise is an impressive system that I’d readily welcome if offered on my next ride.

Storm Forward!

Send comments to Casey at AutoCasey@aol.com; follow him on YouTube @AutoCasey.

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The Fair Housing Ordinance makes it illegal to discriminate against a person in regards to:

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- Religion
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- National Origin
- Handicap (Mental or Physical)
- Familial Status (Children Under 18)
- Source of Income (social security, spousal support, child support or veterans with housing assistance vouchers)

The actions that are covered by the City Ordinance are:

- RENTAL, including leasing, using and keeping a unit, and property management;
- SALES, including brokers, sales agents, lenders, mortgage brokers, insurance agents and sellers;
- ADVERTISEMENT, including brokers, sales agents, lenders, mortgage brokers, insurance agents and sellers;
- For complaints regarding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity;
- HOUSING, including the rental and sale of housing and all other business practices related to a person’s housing activities;
- EMPLOYMENT, including brokers, sales agents, lenders, mortgage brokers, insurance agents and sellers;
- PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION, service in restaurants, theaters, retail store, and non-governmental public services (relative to sexual orientation only).

If you suspect discrimination in these areas and wish to file a complaint call: 214-670-FAIR (3247)
Carlo to chair TMA Council on Legislation

Prism Health CEO to help develop public policy and legislative advocacy for patients, health care professionals

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Dr. John Carlo, CEO of Prism Health North Texas, has been named chair of the Texas Medical Association Council on Legislation, the council that develops and implements TMA legislative policies at state and national levels.

As part of his nearly two decades of service in different health care leadership roles, Dr. Carlo served as a council member since 2018. He also has served as chair of the TMA Council on Socio-economics and as chair of the TMA Council on Science and Public Health.

Since March 2020, Dr. Carlo has served as a member of the TMA COVID-19 Task Force, offering guidance for Texans on how to make safe and informed decisions about their health throughout the pandemic.

“The Texas Medical Association unifies the voice of more than 50,000 physicians across the state to advocate on behalf of our patients,” Dr. Carlo said. “I look forward to working with the great TMA staff and physician members in this new role.”

Dr. Carlo’s appointment to the TMA Council on Legislation is due in part to his work as chair of the Texas Public Health Coalition, which was instrumental in the passage of legislation that raised the minimum age to 21 for buying tobacco in Texas. The legislative chair position is a one-year appointment, and Dr. Carlo said he looks forward to facilitating the many different legislative priorities of the TMA.

“We have a lot of work to do,” says Dr. Carlo in regard to upcoming goals for the session. “Far too many Texans lack access to affordable healthcare, resulting in far too many treatable conditions left untreated.”
Dr. Mark Casanova, director of clinical ethics and supportive and palliative care at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas, applauded Dr Carlo’s appointment as council chair. “The adage of ‘the right person for the right position at the right time,’ has never rung more true, than the appointment of John Carlo to chair the TMA Council on Legislation,” Dr. Casanova said.

“John brings the breadth of experience and real-world public health knowledge, coupled with an innate equanimity that positions him to be an effective leader of the COL, but more importantly, an effective advocate for the House of Medicine and the myriad of necessary legislative interfaces, at local, state, and even national levels.”

Prism Health North Texas, which opened in 1986 as AIDS Arms Network out of the Communities Foundation of Texas, was created the middle of the worst years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in North Texas. For the past 35 years, the organization has served the critical role of connecting people living with HIV to care and services in the area.

PHNTX evolved to be a nationally recognized leader in delivering high-quality HIV and sexual health services, most recently expanding services to address the alarming rise in sexually transmitted infections in Dallas County and North Texas. Roughly 30 percent of people living with HIV in North Texas receive medical care and support at one of the four PHNTX health centers.

PHNTX is committed to providing healthcare for all North Texans in a non-judgmental and affirming environment, striving to remove the barriers that prevent any individual from accessing quality healthcare, officials said.

PHNTX stands for health equity, especially for marginalized populations including people living with HIV, LGBTQ and ethnic minorities.
**FILM REVIEW**

**A Wake** tells the story of a family dealing with death

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

It’s been a long time since I felt like I needed to stay closeted, to keep my sexual orientation hidden from others. It’s been even longer since I had to struggle with all of the usual teenage angst coupled with the added weight of knowing I was “different,” and struggling to keep my difference hidden.

And yet, despite all the years that have passed since then, *A Wake* took me right back to those days, to that angst and that fear. And that’s what it meant to do.

*A Wake*, a new LGBTQ family drama from Scott Boswell, is a quiet but intense story of how one teenager’s death impacts the rest of his family and the boyfriend most of his family never knew about. And all of what happens in the movie takes place in one day — the day that, eight months after his death, Mitch’s family is gathering for a wake, organized by his sister, to remember and honor him.

The film opens with a dream sequence, narrated by Mason. At first, I thought he was dreaming of a dead lover; then I realized the other guy in the dream was his twin brother, Mitch. Mason believes that Mitch is trying, through his dreams and in other ways, to connect and communicate with Mitch — always just out of Mason’s reach.

And yet, despite all the years that have passed since then, *A Wake* took me right back to those days, to that angst and that fear. And that’s what it meant to do.

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

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loss even harder to bear and his efforts to connect to his dead brother even more wrenching and painful to watch.

After Mason, you are introduced to Molly, the younger sister who obviously adored her brothers and who, in the eight months since Mitch’s death, has undergone the most outwardly obvious changes. Molly is the one who has insisted on organizing the wake, and aggressively OCD tendencies are sad and almost frightening, especially when you see her in flashbacks as a joyful, loving child. Along with Molly you meet Vanessa, the kids’ stepmother, and their grandmother Loretta, mother of the twins actual mother, who died when the twins were 4 years old.

Only Molly calls Vanessa “Mother;” the others, including older sister Megan, who comes in from Los Angeles for the wake, call her Vanessa. (Maybe that’s because Vanessa is Molly’s actual mother? I was never sure about that part.) Vanessa, it turns out, refuses to let the family members talk about anything sad — that includes their late mother and Mitch’s death by “accidental overdose.”

There is the father of the family of course, and then there is Jameson, Mitch’s boyfriend, who nobody in the family but Mason and Molly knew about, and who kept it secret from his grandfather, with whom he lives, that his friend had died and that he was going to the wake.

More secrets. They all have their secrets. And the secrets are tearing apart both the family as a whole and individual family members.

To top it all off, this is a “religious family,” with the adults and Molly all relying on “Pastor Rob” to provide them with spiritual guidance and healing. But it’s obvious that Pastor Rob, who attends the wake with his too-perfect wife Sheila, has secrets of his own, too. That adds another level of secrets, of course, not to mention anxiety and frustration.

Everything comes to a head at the wake, and all those secrets that have been festering in the dark finally spill over into the light. It isn’t pretty; but lancing a boil to let the healing begin rarely is.

The only character who won my full sympathy throughout the film was Jameson (Kolton Stewart) who lost the guy he loved and never had a chance to openly grieve.

Grandmother Loretta (Bettina Devin) came close but then ruined it toward the end. I wanted to feel some sympathy for Vanessa (Emilie Talbot), but maybe I’ve seen too many self-centered and self-absorbed people who have no problem making others uncomfortable as they focus on being comfortable themselves.

Dad Richard (Kevin Karrick) and sister Megan (Megan Trout) pull at your heartstrings, and you understand why they behave the way they do. But at the same time, they are adults. They have the ability to take control of things and make a difference, but they don’t. Molly (Sofia Rosinsky) is just a kid manipulated by adults and her brothers toward their own ends, so yeah, she deserves sympathy and gets it. But at the same time, that OCD Molly is kinda scary and irritating.

And then there are Mason and Mitch (both very ably portrayed by Noah Urrea). Your heart breaks for them both for different reasons. But as the story unfolds, it becomes obvious they both could have changed their circumstances and themselves for the better.

Like I said, A Wake is a very quiet film. But it has a significant weight that stays with you after the credits roll.

You don’t have to be a surviving family member of someone who killed themselves, and you don’t have to be LGBTQ — closeted or otherwise — to see yourself in at least of the characters attending this wake. Because all of us have lost someone or something. And all of us have secrets that we keep.
DISCOVERY GARDENS
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Fair Park is Dallas largest and most under-used park facility. Many of the buildings at the park are available
to rent for weddings and during the year will provide
a private and expansive wedding experience. Reserve
space during the State Fair of Texas, however, and the
costs soar and privacy and easy parking eliminated.
The Discovery Gardens at Fair Park are large enough
to accommodate multiple simultaneous weddings. The
indoor greenhouse is a large butterfly sanctuary, but
the surrounding gardens offer secluded outdoor space.
Bride and groom rooms are available as part of the wed-
ding package and reception space is also available.
PROUD TO BE PROUD.
Think of Reverchon Park and you think of a dilapidated softball field and an overused recreation center. But between the ball field and the Katy Trail are some areas that were carved out into trails, stone stairways and sitting areas sometime in the 1930s. The area is secluded with beautiful views of the gorge that Turtle Creek formed as it winds its way through this park.

That area, accessible by staircase from the main park or from the Katy Trail, is worth exploring whether you’re looking for a place in nature for a small wedding party in the middle of the city or just looking to explore a hidden part of Oak Lawn.

No catering here, but a great place for a small group of friends to celebrate your special day.

REVERCHON PARK
3505 Maple Ave.

Sure, Turtle Creek Park is one of the city’s most popular parks and no one is stopping you from holding a small stealth wedding and picnic on the lawn, but for a formal wedding, rent out Arlington Hall or plan an outdoor event in a tent.

The park is operated by the Turtle Creek Park Conservancy, which can help with all of your catering needs.

WINFREY POINT
950 E. Lawther Road
214-670-8740
DallasParks.org/Facilities/Facility/Details/Winfrey-Point-48

Winfrey Point is a historic facility that sits atop a hill overlooking White Rock Lake. The 2,500 square foot house has plenty of parking for up to 270 guests, is a perfect place for weddings and has a bride’s room. In addition to the breathtaking view of the lake and, in the distance, the Dallas skyline, the house has a fully equipped kitchen, fireplace and screened wraparound porch. A perfect place for a wedding with a homey touch.
**GAY AGENDA**

**LEARN HERE**

One Lambda Legal Texas presents an online gathering Friday, Aug. 6, at 6:30 p.m., focused on how the organization is fighting anti-LGBTQ discrimination across the state and across the country. Lambda Legal attorney Shelly Skeen will talk with Trevor Wilkinson, the Clyde ISD high school student who fought back after the school suspended him for wearing nail polish, about how Shelly helped Trevor and his family win the fight to get the school district to change its policies. Register for the Zoom event at https://tinyurl.com/4c6p78nw.

**DRAG THIS**

The Miss Leo Pageant returns Saturday night, Aug. 7, at The Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser Ave., to raise money for AIN. This event never fails to entertain, and it helps out a more-than-worthy cause. Plus, you get to hang out with the folks at The Hidden Door. What more could you ask for?

**GET ARTSY HERE**

Turtle Creek Conservancy presents Second Sunday at Turtle Creek Park, featuring a live performance by the Turtle Creek Chorale, from 6-8 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 8, at Turtle Creek Park, 3333 Turtle Creek Blvd. The event will include multi-cultural artists such as jewelers, illustrators, painters and woodworkers, and visitors can purchase original works of art, with 10 percent of all art sales going to the care of Turtle Creek Park and Arlington Hall. Find more information online at Facebook.com/Events/253347469596700/.

**FIND SUPPORT HERE**

PFLAG Dallas holds a virtual support meeting for parents, families and friends of LGBTQ people at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 12. PFLAG Dallas was founded in 1972 by Jeanne Manford after she marched with her gay son that year in New York’s Christopher Street Liberation Day March — the precursor to the modern-day Pride parade — and realized how many LGBTQ people were estranged from their families. The Dallas Chapter was founded 20 years later on Aug. 7, 1992. Visit PFLAGDallas.org for information on how to register for the meeting.

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**PLAN YOUR WEEK**

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.

- **Biweekly: Hope Cottage Foster Parent Information Meeting**
  Hope Cottage holds information meetings for those interested in becoming foster parents. The meetings are held alternately on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and Thursdays at 6 p.m. For information email Clyde Hemminger at chemminger@hopecottage.org.

**AUGUST**

- **Aug. 6: Lambda Legal Texas**
  Join Lambda Legal’s Texas community of supporters for a special online gathering to hear how Lambda Legal is addressing widespread anti-LGBTQ discrimination across the country with special guest Trevor Wilkinson, student advocate, who took on Clyde ISD’s the fight to get the school district to change its policies.

- **Aug. 6-8: Dinosaur Invasion**

- **Aug. 7: Miss Leo Pageant**
  The annual Miss Leo Pageant is back at 7 p.m. at the Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser Ave. The annual pageant benefits AIN.

- **Aug. 7-9: Dinosaur Invasion**

- **Aug. 12-14: The Great 30**
  Bombshell Dance Project presented as part of the ongoing Elevator Project. The Great 30 is an interactive, site-specific dance performance using the entirety of the AT&TPAC campus as a stage. Visit ATTPAC.org for information or to purchase tickets.

- **Aug. 13: 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.

- **Aug. 13-14: The Great 30**
  Bombshell Dance Project presented as part of the Elevator Project at Sammons Park, 2403 Flora St. ATTPAC.org.

- **Aug. 14: 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.

- **Aug. 15: Drag Brunch benefitting LifeWalk**
  DFW drag legend Ivana Tramp is coming out of retirement to host Drag Brunch, presented by Cheer Dallas, beginning at 11 a.m. at Cedar Springs Tap House, 413 Cedar Springs Road. Show is at noon and features Lucia Cavalleri, Kandy Kayne and Beyondshade Lee Starr.

- **Aug. 19: Back to School Talent Show**
  This year’s annual Youth First Talent Show has been combined with Resource Center’s Back-to-School fundraiser for an all-new virtual show at 6 p.m. MyResourceCenter.org.

- **Aug. 20: New Media Artworks**
  New media artworks by Refik Anadol and New media artworks by phone at 214-219-2718. $55, available online at UptownPlayers.org or ATTPAC.org for information or to purchase tickets.

- **Aug. 20-21: New Media Artworks**
  New media artworks by phone at 214-219-2718. $55, available online at UptownPlayers.org or ATTPAC.org for information or to purchase tickets.

- **Aug. 20-29: Uptown Players present Fun Home**
  Uptown Players present the 2015 Tony Award winner for Best Musical based on Alison Bechdel’s 2006 graphic memoir, Fun Home, at the Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. The play stars Duke Anderson, Leslie Collins, Michael Diego Alonzo, Hunter Hall, Jennifer Kuenzer, Max Rudelman, Summer Stern, Emily Truelove and Ashlie Whitworth, and is directed by Cheryl Denson with music direction by Isaac Leaverton. Tickets are $30-$55, available online at UptownPlayers.org or by phone at 214-219-2718.

- **Aug. 20-21: New Media Artworks**
  New media artworks by phone at 214-219-2718. $55, available online at UptownPlayers.org or ATTPAC.org for information or to purchase tickets.

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**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 Wednesday at 5 p.m. for that week’s issue.**

**Look for extended listings online at DallasVoice.com**
On being cherished

JENNY BLOCK

As I stood in the shower, and my wife washed my back gently in small circles, my eyes welled up with tears. This is love, I thought.

She has slowed danced with me in the kitchen.

She has tucked me in dressing rooms with champagne, sending in gowns for glamorous galas.

She has taken me on European cruises.

She has started eating more Asian food

She has blessed the adoption of a puppy when the pandemic threatened to crush me.

But never before had I felt so loved as when she recently took care of me after I had some elective surgery — “elective” being the key word in this conversation.

It wasn’t just that she cared for me when I needed it after surgery. It was the way she supported me fully in having the surgery in the first place and then took such good care of me after, despite it being anything but life or death.

When I was pregnant with my now 22-year-old daughter, I gained an inordinate amount of weight. That gain and the subsequent weight loss took a massive toll on my body. So, I had a “mommy makeover” a year or so after she was born, which included breast implants and a lift. They were bigger than what I wanted right from the get go. But I had some elective surgery — "elective" surgery? She could have said, “Call your dad.” And I would have, and he would have come.

But she didn’t. Instead, she just said, “I’ve got it, baby.” And she did.

She made plans for us to stay in Houston with friends since we live 90 miles outside of the city. She drove me to the hospital. She picked me up. She helped me to bed. She gave me my meds. She brought me my favorite blanket and pillows and even stuffed animals to prop me up in bed.

She had pho delivered and brought it to me to stay in the hospital. She picked me up. She helped me to bed. She gave me my meds. She brought me my favorite blanket and pillows and even stuffed animals to prop me up in bed.

She had pho delivered and brought it to me on a tray day after day when it was the only thing I wanted. She stripped my drains and emptied them. She lowered me into and lifted me out of bed. She dressed me.

And she gently put me in the shower and carefully washed my body in what felt like something sacred. It was having her do that for me that made me feel perhaps more humbled than I have ever felt in my life. I was bloody and bruised and swollen and teary and hunched over. I was naked in front of her like I am all of the time, and yet, I felt exposed and vulnerable and a little bit broken.

It’s been two weeks now since the surgery. I’m not allowed to raise my arms or lift anything for another two weeks. So, she is still lifting and opening and fetching and reaching at my request. And she’s having to do her share and my share of the cooking and cleaning and straightening and shopping and laundring. And she’s done it happily 98 percent of the time.

She is only human after all, and it can’t be easy when I can’t even use the microwave or get ice by myself.

She is overly protective and likes to do things her way. She is independent and expects me to be as well. She likes to be taken care of as much as she likes taking care of others. And yet, all I had to do was say, “I’m not comfortable. I need to do something about it. And I sure could use your help.” And just like that, she was all in.

Dr. Roth is an incredibly kind and talented man as is his ridiculously attractive staff. (It is a plastic surgery practice after all.) He did an incredible job. He made me feel safe and heard, and I am over the moon with the results already.

He was at the helm of the art and the science of my journey.

But my wife was the heart, and I will never doubt to whom hers belongs.

It’s easy to be there when it’s easy. Your person will be there even when it’s hard. And they’ll be there without question and for no reason other than that you need them there.
Hey, It’s a Good Time to Check Your Status!

Free HIV/Syphilis Tests & Low-Cost STD Tests

817-479-1200

CheckYourStatus.org
Fun at Roy G’s

Raquel Blake at Round-Up Saloon

Shakin it at Cedar Springs Tap House

Mr Misster Mister is mixing music

Shots shots shots!

Torrey serves up the pie

Tatt’s Hot!

Texas Puppy Club at TMC
Albert at Cedar Springs Tap House
Kylee O’Hara Fatale at JR.’s
Hi Zaddy!
Check out those pearly whites at TMC

Harmony ready to serve you in The Rose Room
Eddie serves it up at Woody’s
Gabi and her friend at Sue’s
Daphne and Raquel in The Red Room at Round-Up Saloon

Vitale family
Frida Monet at Round-Up Saloon
Feelin blue at S4
Bleach, Cassie and Layla backstage at The Rose Room
Across
1 Statue’s modesty protector
5 Has sex on a carpet?
10 Benefit
14 He shot a fruit on his son’s head
15 One fit for paddling
16 Alice’s Restaurant patron
17 Like sex for one
18 Over one’s head
19 Narrow opening
20 Start of a quote from Ms. Smith
23 Hydrocarbon ending
24 Stephen of Breakfast on Pluto
25 Playful bite
26 Nut from Oak Lawn
29 Elroy Jetson stroked him
31 Org. for narcs
32 More of the quote
33 Kramer, to Yale
34 Film maker Frank
36 Gin flavor
37 Home st. of Harper Lee
39 “All’s Well That Well”
41 More of the quote
46 AARP concern
48 Emulate Dr. Kildare

Down
1 Some O.C.S. grads
2 Antidiscrimination letters
3 Weight loss product
4 Ventriloquist Wayland
5 Alfred Kinsey’s tool
6 Well of Loneliness author
7 At once, to Byron
8 Come out, perhaps
9 One who does it doggie style?
10 Home, to Dave Pallone
11 Virginia Woolf novel
12 Oscar winner for Hamlet
13 Place for a shorthand job
14 He shot a fruit on his son’s head
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