

# dallasvoice

World AIDS Day  
coverage inside

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## ‘Single’-ing out Michael Urie

North Texas native stars in  
new Netflix holiday rom-com

By Gregg Shapiro, Page 8

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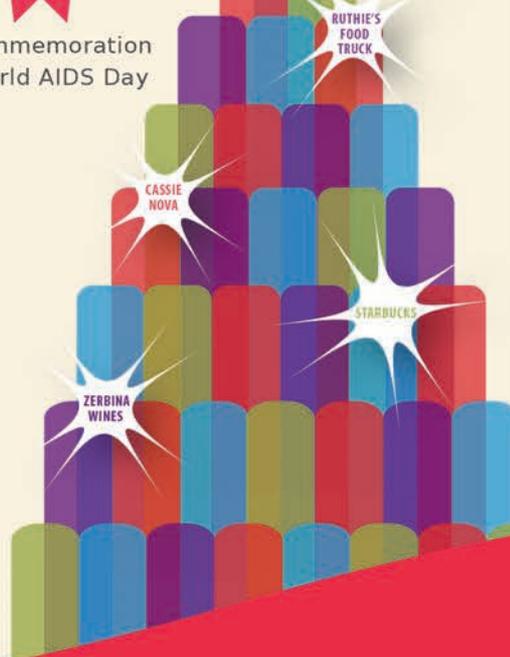
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Michael Urie and Philemon Chambers in the Netflix holiday move *Single All The Way*

Carole Anne Boyd, DDS, PC  
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# Bites from our blog

InstanTEA: DallasVoice.com

## Audra McDonald to headline Chorale's Rhapsody



The Turtle Creek Chorale announced its second Rhapsody gala featuring a performance by six-time Tony Award winner Audra McDonald. Tickets go on sale on Dec. 1 for Rhapsody, which will be held March 5 at the Meyerson Symphony Center. Tickets can be purchased online at RhapsodyGala.com.

In addition to McDonald, the gala will include open bar receptions, seated dinner, live auction and an after-party experience with live band and dessert.

McDonald is the winner of a record-breaking six Tony Awards, two Grammy Awards, and an Emmy. In 2015, she was named one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people and received a National Medal of Arts — America's highest honor for achievement in the field — from President Barack Obama.

She will perform her trademark mix of songs from Broadway, the Great American Songbook and beyond on the stage of the Eugene McDermott Concert Hall in the Meyerson.

— David Taffet

## Brad Pritchett named chief marketing, communications officer for DMA



The Dallas Museum of Art announced Nov. 19 that Brad Pritchett has been appointed the museum's chief marketing and communications officer. A museum press release said Pritchett will officially join the DMA on

Jan. 3, although he will begin work this month as a part-time independent contractor.

Pritchett has been vice president of marketing and communications, North Texas, for the American Heart Association, since 2017. From 2007 until 2017, he was senior director of marketing and communications at the Dallas Theater Center, where he developed strategies in tandem with senior leadership that led to their winning the Regional Tony Award.

He has spent the last two years as co-chair of Black Tie Dinner, which recently held its 40th anniversary celebration. In 2019, as junior co-chair, Pritchett helped Black Tie find new ways to continue raising funds for its beneficiaries during the COVID pandemic shutdown.

Pritchett has appeared as a contributor on WFAA Channel 8, as a Dallas Voice television host and on panels for the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, League of Resident Theatres, Theatre Communications Group and several national LGBTQ events. He was noted as the "marketing enthusiast" and a featured speaker with the Dallas Chamber of Commerce.

He graduated from the University of North Texas with a bachelor's degree in radio, television and film and communications.

— Tammye Nash

## Theatre Three to have a new look and address in 2022

Don't freak out from the headline — Theatre Three isn't going anywhere. As renovations occur at the theater (and the Quadrangle), T3's front

door will now face outward giving a new Laclede Street address. And with the renovations, the lobby remodel will provide more visibility to the theater and offer upgraded wheelchair accessibility to the Norma Young Arena Stage, the theater's primary performance space.

The lobby remodel was gifted to the theater by Stream Realty Partners.

With its added visibility, the theater will now have handicap parking at the front doors and additional restrooms on its main floor. The new lobby will have 2,000 square feet of space for the box office, seating, restrooms and even a small gallery space.

The theater's new address will be 2688 Laclede St., Suite 120, Dallas, Texas 75201.

— Rich Lopez

## Arlington among 110 cities to achieve 100 in new Municipal Equality Index

For the first time in its 10 year history, more than 100 cities rated a score of 100 on Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index — 110 to be exact. That includes five in Texas.

In the DFW area, Arlington joined Dallas and Fort Worth with a 100 score. Among Dallas suburbs, Garland received a score of 24, Grand Prairie 36, McKinney 36, Mesquite 39, Irving 47 and Plano 64.

"I want to thank the mayor, city council members and the administration for their work and dedication for the past eight years to ensure that Arlington is a safe and welcoming environment for everyone," HELP Center for LGBT Health & Wellness CEO DeeJay Johannesen said. "Arlington's perfect score is a reflection of who we are now as a city — open, supportive, and dedicated to Arlington's diverse community."

The categories cities are rated on include employment protection, housing and public accommodations. This year, 500 cities are included in the MEI including the 200 largest cities in the U.S., all 50 state capitals, the largest cities in each state, 25 mid-size cities that have the largest proportion of same-sex couples and 99 cities that are the home to each state's two largest public universities.

Houston stands out among large cities across the country for its poor performance because it has no nondiscrimination policies at all but somehow managed to score 76.

Austin and San Antonio were the other two Texas cities that scored 100.

— David Taffet

## Roberts, Kahrl inducted into LGBTQ Journalists Hall of Fame



TransGriot founder Monica Roberts, right, and Christina Kahrl

NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists announced this week that BaseballProspectus.com co-founder and San Francisco Chronicle sports editor Christina Kahrl and TransGriot founder Monica Roberts are the 2021 inductees into the LGBTQ Journalists Hall of Fame.

Roberts was a blogger, writer and transgender activist and the founding editor of TransGriot, a blog devoted to covering the experiences of trans women, particularly trans women of color. The Houston native was an award-winning advocate and voice on trans rights issues for more than 20 years until her death in October 2020.

In addition to being honored with the 2018 GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Blog, Roberts was the first trans person to receive the Robert Coles Call of Service Award in 2016. She also received the Barbara Jordan Breaking Barriers Award from the Harris County Democratic Party and the Susan Hyde Award for Longevity in the Movement from the National LGBTQ Task Force.

Roberts began TransGriot in 2004 as a column in The Letter, a Louisville-based LGBTQ newspaper. Roberts stated that her mission was to "chronicle the history of Black transpeople."

Kahrl is the sports editor for The San Francisco Chronicle and the first out transgender editor at a major metropolitan media outlet. Prior to joining the Chronicle, Kahrl served as a senior writer and editor at ESPN for 10 years. She is also one of the co-founders of Baseball Prospectus, a think tank and website devoted to the statistical analysis of baseball. The organization has pioneered a number of statistical tools that have become hallmarks of modern baseball analysis.

— Tammye Nash



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# VOICES

OPINIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY

## Trying to rewrite history

Those who forget history — or who willfully ignore it — are doomed to repeat it, which is why it should worry you that the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol has been dismissed by Republicans as a routine visit by some rowdy but well-meaning tourists.

Reshaping this history to fit a political narrative serves Republican interests, since they are really into authoritarianism; a destabilized country is really a win for them.

It's in that spirit that Dennis Prager, conservative talk radio host and co-founder of the propaganda machine PragerU, has conveniently forgotten the history of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s.

Appearing on Newsmax, a propaganda program claiming to be news, Prager says that "non-vaccinated are the pariahs of America, as I have not seen in my lifetime."

According to Wikipedia, Prager was born in 1948. And he's never seen a group of people treated worse than today's unvaccinated? Really?

What about Black Americans? This man was very much alive during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. He surely saw Black people treated like pariahs. Even if he didn't see it with his own eyes, it was all over the news! Did this man never see or read a paper?

Of course he did.

When he says that he hasn't seen any other group as mistreated and margin-



**D'Anne Witkowski**  
Creep of the Week

alized as unvaccinated people, what he really means is he hasn't seen any other group treated this way that he didn't believe deserved it.

Then he says this gaslighting bullshit: "During the AIDS crisis, can you imagine if gay men and intravenous drug users, who were the vast majority of people with AIDS, had they been pariahs the way the non-vaccinated are?"

Excuse me, what?

First of all, intravenous drug users were and still are treated like pariahs in a country that considers addiction a personal moral failing rather than as a disease.

Secondly, gay men were treated like absolute garbage during the AIDS crisis. Gay men were dying and nobody cared! President Reagan wouldn't even utter the word "AIDS," and his administration's inaction made the epidemic even worse.

Read *And the Band Played On* by Randy Shilts. This was NOT A GOOD TIME FOR GAYS.

Not only were many people getting sick and dying, but there were little to no legal protections at all, which means that men who lost a partner could — and did — lose the home they had shared. Many were also barred from attending their partner's funeral by their partner's family.

But Prager says that this "would've been inconceivable. And it SHOULD have been inconceivable. They should not have been made pariahs."

But, as Kevin Kruse pointed out on Twitter, Prager himself wanted AIDS to be stigmatized as a "gay man's disease."

In a 2008 Town Hall piece about AIDS in the '80s, Prager writes, "Even the natural sciences are increasingly subject to being rendered a means to a 'progressive end.' There was the pseudo-threat of heterosexual AIDS in America — science manipulated in order to de-stigmatize AIDS as primarily a gay man's disease and to increase funding for AIDS research."

In other words, if it had been up to Prager, AIDS would have stayed a pariah-making disease of gay men, and there certainly wouldn't have been funding to support them.

And he was still preaching this garbage in 2016, as the New Civil Rights Movement points out, when Prager was speaking about leftist "hysteria" on James Dobson's show: "I will just give you a few examples of the hysterias of your lifetime," Prager says. "One was

heterosexual AIDS in America. Do you remember that? When we were told by Time and Newsweek and The New York Times, remember when they said AIDS doesn't discriminate? Well, that was a lie. AIDS does discriminate. It happens to attack in America — and I emphasize in America — overwhelmingly, gay men and intravenous drug users and his partners. You know the group least likely to get AIDS? Gay women. So it can't be homophobic to say the truth."

And who could possibly consider that stunning example of homophobia homophobic? Beats me.

In case you were wondering, "But is Prager terrible in other ways?" The answer is yes. For example, he calls global warming an "idiotic, irrational, sick fear."

"It's a different America," he tells the Newsmax host. Indeed, it is. It's an America that is emerging from a pandemic that has already killed more than 750,000 people in this country and kept millions of people from seeing the people they love or doing the things they love for more than a year.

So, when someone refuses to get vaccinated based on lies and conspiracy theories? Go ahead, make them pariahs. They've earned it. ■

*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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# 'Single' sensation

## BEYOND THE SCREEN

An interview with actor Michael Urie

GREGG SHAPIRO | Contributing Writer  
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Some of us first fell in love with Plano native Michael Urie when he played the lead character in Brian Sloan's movie adaptation of his play *WTC View*, about a gay man's search for a roommate in the wake of 9/11. Many others first laid eyes on him in the popular ABC sitcom *Ugly Betty*, in which he played Marc, the put-upon assistant to fashion magazine creative director Wilhelmina (Vanessa Williams). More recently, Urie could be seen on Broadway in the *Torch Song Trilogy* revival as well as alongside Udo Kier in gay filmmaker Todd Stephens' acclaimed 2021 movie *Swan Song*.

Now in December, Urie stars as Peter, the romantic lead in Netflix's entry in the LGBTQ+ holiday movie scene, *Single All the Way*.

Michael was gracious enough to answer a few questions recently about movie before its premiere.

**Dallas Voice: I'd like to begin by apologizing for asking the most obvious question first, but what was it about Peter that made you want to play him in *Single All the Way*?** Michael Urie: As soon as I read the script, I was completely charmed and delighted by it. I'm a big fan of Christmas movies, and I actually knew the writer, Chad Hodge, a little bit. I'd seen his TV shows and we knew each other socially.

So, I was excited to read it, and then I found it so charming, really funny and also very romantic. Every time I read it, I would get choked up and laugh out loud.

But I think specifically the role of Peter was really enticing to me because his problem was not being gay. It wasn't about coming out. It wasn't about any kind of shame or any kind of trauma or any kind of homophobia.



Michael Urie is Peter, a gay man's whose family isn't upset because he is gay, but because he is single in the Netflix holiday movie *Single All the Way*.

His problem was the same kind of problem that straight people have in Christmas movies. And I really liked that, I really appreciated that, because it's still extremely gay and [laughs] as somebody who plays a lot of gay characters and is in a lot of gay projects, it was really meaningful to me to be in a project where the joy and the love and the comedy came not out of overcoming anything or hiding from anything, but from other normal ways. His conflicts are not unlike the conflicts of any old straight person.

**As far as his family was concerned, their issue with him was that he was single, not that he was gay.** Exactly! He's not single because he's gay, he's single because he's single. He's lousy at dating, and that is a completely normal thing for a gay person to be. I was really charmed by the fact that this was going to be the first time Netflix went out with a story like this.

**As winter holidays go, where does Christmas fall on your list of favorites?** Oh, I love Christmas! I would much rather make

a to-do for Christmas than, say, Thanksgiving or even Valentine's Day. I mean I love Valentine's Day and Thanksgiving, but Christmas is also very romantic.

I loved Christmas when I was a kid. I loved the presents; I loved not having to go to school. Then when I left home and was single, I lost interest in Christmas. It seemed like a chore to me to have to get presents and tell people what I wanted. Then I met my partner, Ryan, and he comes from a family that loves Christmas. My family does, too, but his family really loves Christmas. And he loves Christmas. So, suddenly experiencing Christmas through his eyes and the eyes of his family was so delightful.

I fell in love with it again as a grown-up, and I think that's partially because of how romantic it is. It's so much nicer to do the Christmas stuff with someone to cuddle up with.

**Speaking of romance, in *Single All the Way* you are playing a romantic leading man. What are the rewards, aside from**

**having Philemon Chambers and Luke Macfarlane as your love interests, and challenges of such a part?** Playing the romantic leading man is great because you have most of the lines [laughs], and you're the guy with the problem. I've done a few movies that I was a lead of, and I had lots of scenes. But you don't shoot in order, and if you're a supporting character you only come in and out. But when you're the lead, when it's your story, as you're preparing it, you can really get a sense of the whole thing.

So, I read the whole script. I wouldn't just jump around to my scenes, because I was in almost every scene. So, I got a real sense of the arc, and it made shooting it so much easier, actually. Because I was able to really know my lines from reading it so many times all the way through, and studying, but also because I always knew where he was. We could jump around in the schedule, and I would know where Peter was in the story because I was so familiar with the whole thing. It really helped, as an actor, to know where I was.

Peter has a demanding career and active social life in LA but is willing to chuck it all for small-town living. Could you ever imagine doing something like that? I don't think so. At the beginning of the pandemic, I tried to convince my partner to move to Palm Springs [laughs]. I don't know that that's necessarily a small town, and I don't know that I thought we would go there forever. I thought, "Let's go move there and when the pandemic is over, we'll move back."

I don't know. I mean I really love the city. I had a great childhood, and I did enjoy living in the suburbs in Texas, but the moment I stepped foot in New York, when I was 17 years old, in Midtown, outside Port Authority with garbage and July heat, I was like, "I love it here!" It really is sort of my town and it's hard to imagine that it would ever not be, but never say never.



Philemon Chambers is Peter's best friend Nick in *Single All the Way*

**Single All the Way is the second 2021 movie, along with *Swan Song*, in which both you and Jennifer Coolidge appear. In *Single All the Way* you get to have considerable screen time with Jennifer. What was that experience like for you?**

It was a lot more fun than my experience with her on *Swan Song* since [in *Swan Song*] we never crossed paths. I will say working with her is as fun as you would imagine, as surprising as you would imagine. On the one hand, everybody knows

her thing, everybody sort of knows what she does. In fact, Chad Hodge, our writer, wrote the role in hopes that she would play it.

In the script, when it says, "Enter Aunt Sandy," in parentheses it says, "Think Jennifer Coolidge." That was always the hope and the plan. And yet still, knowing that it was written for her, knowing her body of work, she still surprises me. I still don't know how she's going to spin a line. And when she goes off-script, you have no idea what she's going to say, and it's always something amazing.

**You mentioned the fact that Netflix is joining the fray of gay-themed holiday movies. What do you think of this trend of streaming networks creating queer holiday movies such as *Single All the Way* and 2020's *Happiest Season*? I think it's good, and it's important. I think romance is not isolated to heterosexual relationships and neither is Christmas. The gays love Christmas, and the gays love Christmas movies. So, throwing them some, I think, is going to be really good. Because they're so popular, I think providing a movie like this or *Happiest Season* to the cross-section of people who will**

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- ▶ **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%).

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 **GILEAD**

# Bad news, good news



WORLD AIDS DAY

Advocates warn that after 40 years, HIV/AIDS remains a top health concern

**TAMMY NASH** | Managing Editor  
nash@dallasvoice.com

**A**s of 2019, the most recent year for which the Centers for Disease Control has statistics, an estimated 1,189,700 people were living with HIV/AIDS. And while 36,801 individuals in the U.S. and dependent areas were newly diagnosed with HIV that year, CDC statistics indicated that the number of new diagnoses at the national level decreased by 9 percent from 2015 to 2019.

That trend, unfortunately, is not mirrored here in North Texas. In Dallas County, service providers and advocates continue to be alarmed by the number of new infections each year.

According to Texas Department of State Health Services, as of 2018, Dallas County has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the state, at 30.7 cases for 100,000 residents.

While so much of the public health focus has switched over the last two years to the COVID pandemic, J.P. Cano, Resource Center's director of prevention services, warned that "we are forgetting the larger pandemic that we have been dealing with since 1981."

This year, Cano said, at Resource Center's Nelson-Tebedo Clinic, "we have diagnosed more than 55 people with HIV this year, and that is not counting the new diagnoses made by our primary care physicians."

Dr. John Carlo, CEO of Prism Health North Texas, also noted the difference between the national trend of diminishing numbers of new infections and the trend in Dallas County. "New York and San Francisco are lowering the numbers of new infections each year. We have not reached that stage yet in Dallas," Carlo said.

While there has been some good news

on the HIV/AIDS front over the last couple of years, Carlo said that there is still plenty of bad news to contend with. "The first bad news, I think, is that we still don't have a vaccine [against HIV]. Here we have COVID, which is a brand new disease, and they developed vaccines against it within six months. Yet here we are, 40 years into the AIDS pandemic, and we still don't have a vaccine against HIV," he said. "There are some potential vaccine candidates, but we are still not where we need to be."

Carlo said the continuing increase in new infections in Dallas County is the result of a combination of "social situations," including the fact that there are still too many people not receiving the proper health care. "There are too many people living with HIV who remain out of health care," he said. "That is due to a combination of social situations, including lack of insurance and some behavioral health issues" such as drug use.

While new medications to treat and prevent HIV infection are being developed, Carlo said, those medications remain "very expensive," and the programs that have helped many afford those medications, such as grants and prescription rebate programs, are threatened now as pharmaceutical companies look for ways to lower cost and increase profit.

"There have been some big moves



Dr. John Carlo



Carl Schmid



J.P. Cano

## World AIDS Day events

### HELP Center for LGBT Health & Wellness Open House

The HELP Center for LGBT Health & Wellness is holding an open house from 3-5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 1, at the center's new facility, 602 E. South St. in Arlington. The new space will help remove barriers to healthcare and provide a safe and supportive environment for the LGBTQ community with a clinic providing PrEP, testing for HIV and syphilis, counseling and more, along with a 2,500-square-foot community space for meetings and events. Arlington Mayor Jim Ross will speak at the event.

### Resource Center's Red Ribbon

Resource Center hosts "Red Ribbon," a free outdoor event for the community from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 2, at the Community Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. Hosted by Cassie Nova, the event includes a candlelight vigil led by the Rev. Neil G. Thomas, a performance by The Women's Chorus of Dallas ensemble Viva-cious, Ruthie's Food Truck offering food for sale, Prosecco by the glass available for purchase from Zerbina Wines, hot chocolate provided by Starbucks, free HIV testing provided by Resource Center's SexyHealth mobile unit and photo opps for the family.

### Queer Prom

Fevermatic Studios, 1515 S. Ewing St. in Dallas, hosts Queer Prom: A World AIDS Day Event, beginning at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 1. This is a free event for LGBTQIA community, age 21 and older, "to embrace their queerness and join us for a night of advocacy for a World AIDS Day celebration." It will include small bites and alcohol, served free of charge. Impulse Group Dallas will also have free HIV testing on-site all night. Capacity is limited, so register now online at Eventbrite.com.

### 25th annual U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS

NMAC presents the 25th annual U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS online Dec. 2-3, with the opening plenary on Dec. 2 at 3 p.m. Central time.

The event will feature Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of NIAID; Assistant Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine; Director of Office of National AIDS Policy Harold Phillips; NMAC Executive Director Paul Kawata, and thousands of HIV advocates, caregivers, educators and activists.

For information and to register, visit [USCHA.life](http://USCHA.life).

from Gilead and other drug companies to shore up their own financials under the threat of drug pricing negotiations," Carlo said. "These companies are really tightening their belts. For example, drug rebates create much of the funding for HIV research, and organizations like Prism have been able to participate in drug rebate programs and so offer drugs at discounted rates. But companies are working now to minimize those rebate purchases. ... They are limiting which pharmacies you can use, limiting patient assistance plans, even excluding some medications from the programs altogether. There are lots of little things they are doing to help their own bottom lines."

## The good news

Still, there is plenty of good news, too, in the battle against HIV/AIDS, including some "clear front lines innovations that will impact HIV treatment within 12 to 18 months," Carlo said. These innovations include advances in long-lasting injectable PrEP medications that will increase the period between dosages from one month to two months, he noted, adding that these new, longer-lasting dosages could become available as early as next March or April.

There are also studies underway around time-release PrEP implants, similar to implants used for birth control, that would "negate the need for either pills or injections," Carlo said. He noted that Prism is participating in those studies and in studies on PrEP for women.

He said there also may be additional research coming soon into a cure for HIV revolving around new gene technologies that can eliminate HIV from the body, "thereby providing a functional cure," as well as new mRNA technology being developed in the fight against COVID that could be developed for use against HIV, too.

Carl Schmid, executive director of the HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute, also pointed to advances in treatments, including the "long-acting treatment [that] was approved by the FDA earlier this year and long-acting PrEP [that] is ex-

pected to be approved in January 2022.

"There is research underway for once a week or once a month oral treatment, and even twice a year injections," Schmid said. "This is all very exciting. And, yes, there is research being conducted on a cure and vaccines. It will take some time, but there is hope. In the meantime, the treatments are very effective, and we are just in the beginning stages of PrEP. Daily pills maybe a thing of the past.

"All of this, should help with adherence and get us closer to ending HIV," he said.

Brian King, vice president of clinical research and business development for North Texas Infectious Disease Consultants, offered information on specific medications in the research process.

"I would say the most exciting news for someone living with AIDS and probably having limited therapy options is Gilead's new Capsid inhibitor," King said. "Lenacapavir is not only a new class of antiretroviral but it's long acting and only dosed once every six months by [subcutaneous] injection. This is a ground-breaking new therapy option for our patients with very few [antiretroviral] therapy options.

"Over the next five years, we will see therapies moving in the new direction of long-acting antiretrovirals, including ViiV's newly approved injectable Cabenuva, which is dosed once a month now. But ViiV is seeking FDA approval for every two month dosing," King continued. He also mentioned "Merck's new NRTTI Islatravir with potential long-acting dosing in collaboration with Gilead's capsid inhibitor Lenacapavir, and infusions therapies with bNAB's — Broadly neutralizing antibodies — with even longer acting potential."

Schmid said that while the "current national HIV/AIDS strategy has very sound goals and objectives," it was "missing some key elements and needed some fine tuning to fully address the needs of people living with HIV, along with those who are at risk of HIV." Schmid continued, "The current strategy ignored the coverage benefits of the Affordable Care Act, and I would envision the revised strategy under the Biden administration to fully embrace the ACA including Medicaid expansion. Having access to affordable health care is critical to provide HIV care, treatment and, now, prevention through PrEP."

The amended strategy will put more emphasis on "the social determinants of

health, including housing and racism, homophobia and transphobia," Schmid said. "There will be a greater focus on people aging with HIV and the quality of life for people living with HIV. Finally, in order to make it more of a whole of society approach there will be a private sector component. With their addition, just imagine the additional resources that can be brought to the table and also help address the stigma that is still often associated with HIV."

Schmid said that legislation is another key component in the fight on HIV/AIDS, noting that the Biden administration has proposed "funding increases to all domestic HIV programs, including the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and new focused efforts to end HIV in those jurisdictions with the highest cases."

He added, "Fortunately, both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have gone along in supporting his requests. In fact, in many instances, Congress is proposing more funding than what was proposed by the president. However, Congress must still come up with a final funding package for next year, and we realize some compromises will have to be made."

Among recently introduced legislation are bills to establish a national grant program to provide PrEP for people at risk of HIV.

"While we have several programs that provide care and treatment for people living with HIV, there isn't one to provide PrEP for uninsured and underinsured people at risk of HIV," Schmid said. "A bill authored by Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman — the PrEP Assistance Program Act, HR 5605 — would establish a \$400 million annual grant program to provide grants to community based organizations and others to support PrEP, along with community and provider education.

"Additional PrEP coverage and access bills will soon be introduced in the House and Senate. Getting these bills passed and funded will be a high priority for the HIV community in the term," Schmid said.

Despite recent advances and the prospects for a vaccine and even a cure, Cano urged the community not to be lulled into thinking the threat has passed. As North Texans prepare to mark World AIDS Day on Wednesday, Dec. 2, he said, "we continue to commemorate those lost to HIV/AIDS and those living with HIV/AIDS because it is still relevant." ■

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Dr. Allen B. Safir

# For the children

## VOLUNTEERING



Keaton Johnson created the All Children All Families program for Dallas CASA. (Photo courtesy of Roseanne Lewis)

CASA program open to LGBTQ volunteers

**DAVID TAFFET** | Senior Staff Writer  
[taffet@dallasvoice.com](mailto:taffet@dallasvoice.com)

The Human Rights Campaign has recognized Dallas CASA for LGBTQ inclusion. Keaton Johnson wrote the action and implementation plan and helped coordinate the changes for the All Children All Families Benchmarks of Inclusion program that HRC honored.

CASAs, or Court Appointed Special

Advocates, work with children who have been removed from their families. They're appointed at the initial court appearance and stick with their children until they have found a safe and permanent home, Johnson said.

While all sides in a court battle have attorneys and overburdened caseworkers, the CASA is there to make sure the best interests of the children are represented. And each CASA is assigned to just one case at a time. So judges often rely on the CASA for information on how the children are doing — educationally, medically and legally.

Johnson said through the course of any court battle involving children, caseworkers can change, and each one covers a huge number of cases. And attorneys for the parents are mostly fo-



cused on restoring custody for their client.

But the CASA is the one person consistently there for the specifically child.

All Children All Families is a project to make sure all families who participate in the foster program are prepared to accept and love all children, including LGBTQ kids. And, of course, LGBTQ CASA volunteers are very welcome.

Since any child might come out while in foster care, Johnson said All Children All Families prepares foster parents for that possibility. While it would be nice to match LGBTQ foster parents with LGBTQ children, that's not always possible, especially with younger children. So, Johnson said, the goal is to make sure every foster family is culturally competent on LGBTQ issues.

He explained the process to become a CASA: First there's a one-hour information session that anyone interested may

attend. That session begins with a series of questions and answers, and sometimes one quick question is all it takes to rule someone out as a CASA volunteer.

For example, potential volunteers often as if they would need to be available during the day for court hearings. The answer is yes. And for a few months, it may entail one hearing per month. What if you're available for most hearings but need to miss one? That's when a CASA supervisor, like Johnson, would step in and present the judge with any information you have.

Once someone decides they're interested, they have to go through a screening process and interviews. After being accepted, they go through a month of training.

Can a couple become CASAs together and be assigned to the same case? Yes. Can same-sex couples become CASAs together and be assigned to the same case? Absolutely.

Can parents object to their child or children having an LGBTQ CASA? It would be in the parents' best interests not to object to a whole lot after they've already had their children removed from their home.

How do CASAs develop a relationship with the child?

"By just showing up," Johnson said.

The CASA and children talk outside the courtroom. Sometimes they'll go get something to eat together. Johnson said he's even seen some CASAs take their children to the State Fair or a movie, but that needs to be arranged with the foster parents.

Being a CASA, Johnson explained, is all about building relationships to make sure the child has a voice in the courtroom.

"CASAs learn to tap into all the resources out there," Johnson said, such as medical information. The CASA is appointed by the court and therefore has access to the child's medical records. Johnson said many of the infants in the system were born testing positive for drugs. The CASA has the right to see those test results and the responsibility to monitor the baby's progress.

In cases of physical abuse, the CASA has the ability to follow the child's medical treatment as well as any counseling or other therapy needed.

**CHILDREN**, Next Page

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## CHILDREN From Previous Page

The CASA writes a report to the judge, who may have a few additional questions.

Dallas CASA was founded in 1979 as one of three pilot programs around the county. Texas now has 72 CASA programs around the state with hundreds more across the U.S.

Johnson has been with CASA three years. He said his office encouraged him to write the All Children All Families proposal because of his experience in LGBTQ advocacy and empowerment.

As a graduate student, he did a needs assessment study for Texas Pride Impact Funds to help that organization get off the ground. After graduation, he worked with Resource Center's Nelson Tebedo Clinic in its HIV prevention program.

Johnson said he always loves working with LGBTQ volun-



teers because they prioritize inclusion and are good for kids.

The goal is for all children removed from their homes to have a CASA. Currently, Johnson said, there's a placement crisis. And laws in Texas allow money for placement agencies be allocated to religious organizations that may discriminate against LGBTQ children and potential foster and adoptive parents.

Johnson said he worries about those LGBTQ youth who face stigma, hostility and aggression.

He called the system, "a little bit of a mess." And with current Texas laws that prioritize unborn fetuses over the needs of already born children, it's likely to get worse. ■

*Find more information on becoming an advocate for foster children through the CASA program at DallasCASA.org.*

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## SENSATION From Page 8

watch any Christmas movie is only going to broaden people's ideas and give people a real sense of how we're ultimately the same.

The movie is not about how we're different. It's about the ways in which we are alike.

Christmas, romance — we can meet on a lot of things, queer people and straight people. I think it's exciting and inspiring to be part of that.

**Finally, Michael, are there any upcoming projects you'd like to mention?** I'm in



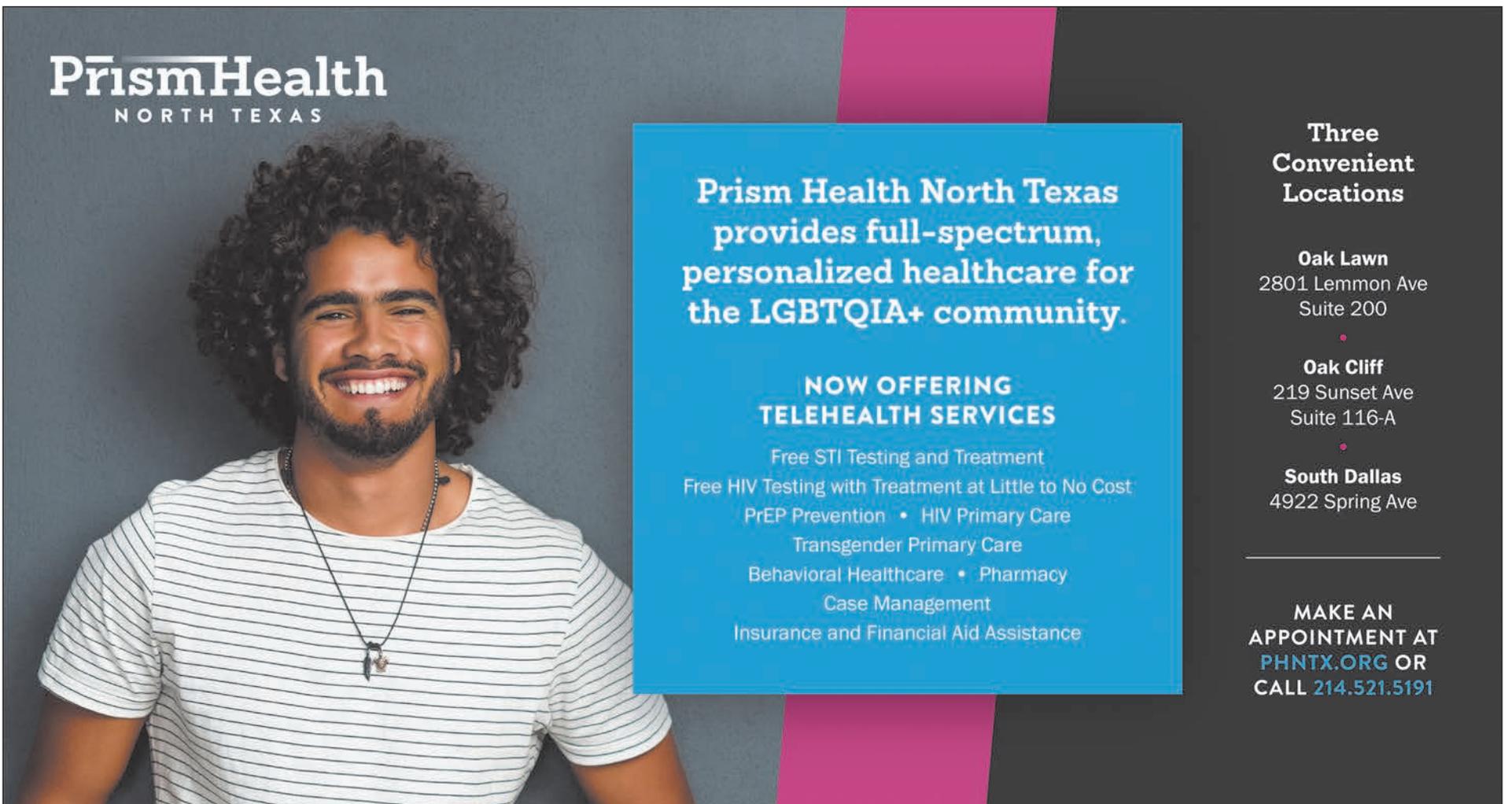
Michael Urie says working with Jennifer Coolidge is as fun as you can imagine it is.



Kathy Najimy plays Carole, mother of Michael Urie's character Peter, who sets Peter up with a handsome trainer James, played by Luke McFarlane, in Netflix's holiday movie *Single All The Way*

the movie of *Jersey Boys*, the musical about Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons which played Broadway forever. We put the show up this summer and filmed it

for a streaming service. Nick Jonas played Frankie Valli, and he was so good. It was a lot of fun. That's going to be out some-time; but I don't know when.



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# Holiday Drag

BEYOND THE STAGE



Trampolina of the Kinsey Sicks readies Dallas for holiday special

**RICH LOPEZ** | Staff Writer  
rich@dallasvoice.com

**S**pencer Brown isn't one for the holiday season, with all its shopping and crowds, and yet, as a member of America's favorite dragapella beautyshop quartet, the

Kinsey Sicks, the group's annual holiday show is his favorite.

The perennial *Oy Vey in a Manger* brings holiday cheer to the Uptown Players stage on Dec. 10 with a big side of irreverence. And Brown — or rather his alter ego Trampolina — is here for it.

"This is one of my favorites. You know, we've ruined a lot of Christmas classics," Brown said recently by phone. "People often say, 'I can never hear Silent Night the same way.'"

Whether they are ruined or merely

## Holiday Preview

Thanksgiving is done. Black Friday and Mariah Carey now mark the holiday season to get you in a festive mood. Also, we're still in COVID comeback mode, so venues are not holding back on stage shows and concerts. Here is a preview of some upcoming performances that can alleviate holiday stress and bring Christmas cheer.

### Through Dec. 26: *A Christmas Carol*

The classic holiday tale and theater tradition has been adapted by Kevin Moriarty and will be directed by Christie Vela and choreographed by Joel Ferrell. Raphael Parry will play the role of Ebenezer Scrooge. At the Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

### Opening today: *The Nutcracker*

The Texas Ballet Theater presents this annual ballet of sugar plums, dancing nutcrackers and a villainous Rat King. Through Dec. 5 at the Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. and Dec. 10-26 at Bass Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. TexasBalletTheater.org.

### Opening today: *Ebenezer Scrooge*

Now in its 39th production, this has become a holiday tradition at the Pocket since 1982. Based on the age-old holiday favorite about the miserly Scrooge visited by three ghosts on Christmas Eve intent on helping him change his jerky ways. Through Dec. 23 at Pocket Sandwich Theatre, 5400 Mockingbird Lane. PocketSandwich.com.

### Opening today: *Enchant*

This holiday experience will feature gliding down the Ice Skating Trail, sampling gourmet holiday treats from around the world, visiting the artisan Christmas market and meeting the Big Man himself — all before stepping into a magical Christmas light maze. Through Jan. 2 at Fair Park. EnchantChristmas.com.

### Opening Dec. 2: *A Bur-Less-Q Nutcracker*

The women of the Beulaville Baptist Book Club decide to do a fundraiser and hire the Beaumont Ballet to perform *The Nutcracker*. Madge's piña colada casserole unfortunately sickens the cast with food poisoning. Luckily, there is another dance troop in town — the Velvet Kittens Burlesque Dancers. Talk about your nutcracker. Presented by Mark-Brian Sonna. Through Dec. 26 at the Studio Theatre, 15650 Addison Road. MBSProductions.info.

### Dec. 3: *Dallas Symphony Christmas Pops*

The concert tradition continues with the Dallas Symphony Chorus performing transcendent anthems, classical holiday favorites and sing-along carols featuring vocalists and the Dallas Symphony Chorus bringing Christmas magic to town. Through Dec. 12 at the Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. DallasSymphony.org.

### Opening Dec. 4: *Scrooge in Rouge, An English Music Hall Carol*

It's 1899, and The Royal Music Hall Variety Players are set to open a production of *A Christmas Carol*. Most of the company has been stricken with food poisoning. Can the three remaining members — Charlie Schmaltz, Lottie Obligato (a female impersonator), and Vesta Virile (a male impersonator) — soldier on alone for this musical performance of the Dickens classic? Preview performances Dec. 2 and 3. Through Dec. 24 at Stage West, 821 W Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. StageWest.org.

### Dec. 10-12: *Oy Vey in a Manger*

Uptown Players presents America's favorite dragapella beautyshop quartet, The Kinsey Sicks, in this holiday show where the four queens try to sell of their manger to avoid foreclosure — all in glorious four-part harmonies. With such reinterpretations of holiday classics, such as "God Bless Ye Femmy Lesbians," "Lusty the Snowman" and the new Christmas cuisine standard, "Soylent Night." To insure equity and inclusivity, The Kinsey Sicks delivers irreverent Jewish satiric fare such as "Don't Be Happy, Worry," the Chanukah spa classic "I Had a Little Facial." 8 p.m. at the Kalita Humphreys Theatre, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. UptownPlayers.com.

### Dec. 17: *LeAnn Rimes: Home for the Holidays*

The Grammy-winning singer from Garland performs an intimate evening of holiday classics and signature hits in this homecoming. 8 p.m. at the Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St.

### Dec. 17: *The Nutty Nutcracker*

The Texas Ballet Theater presents this humorous take on the classic holiday story. 8 p.m. at Bass Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. TexasBalletTheater.org.

### Dec. 17: *Sarah Brightman: A Christmas Symphony*

The Phantom singer will breathe new life into a bevy of holiday staples and festive fan favorites for the season. 7:30 p.m. at the Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St.

### Dec. 21: *A Very Swingin' Basie Christmas: The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra | Jazz Series*

From favorite hits to selections from the orchestra's critically acclaimed album, *A Very Swingin' Basie Christmas!* This concert will bring the zing to the season. 7:30 p.m. at the Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. DallasSymphony.org.

— Rich Lopez



Scrooge in Rouge, An English Music Hall Carol

re-interpreted, *Manger* will feature such Kinsey Sicks classics as “God Bless Ye Femmy Lesbians,” “Anchor Baby” and “Lusty the Snowman.”

And with two Jewish members of the group, Chanukah isn’t spared either with such songs as “Don’t Be Happy, Worry” and “I Had a Little Facial.”

“There’s just enough to delight and offend,” Brown noted.

Personally, Brown said, he doesn’t need the hullabaloo of the holidays. But this show, he said, has become his non-traditional tradition.

He and his fellow singers Jeff Manabat, Nathan Marken and J.B. McLendon bring their four-part harmonies and humor to their roles as Trampolina, Trixie, Winnie and Angel respectively, not only as entertainment but as commentary and satire. *Manger*, and other KS shows, has evolved throughout the years to not only bring some laughs but also get in a few jabs.

“They are ever-changing. We don’t shy away from hot topics or sensitive issues, but you know, we do it with a wink and a nod,” Brown said. “How do

we talk about these things — especially during the holidays? This way, we have fun with it, and it’s in four-part harmony.”

It is this approach that perhaps explains the longevity of the Kinsey Sicks, which has been performing for almost a quarter-century now.

“The Kinsey Sicks has always been entertainment with a political voice, advocating for what’s right,” Brown said. “When the group started in the ‘90s, two of the original members were lawyers and activists. The group has been addressing issues such as AIDS, don’t ask, don’t tell [and] same-sex marriage since then.”

During the Trump administration, he said, there was no shortage of material. “I think that’s why we’ve been around so long. As long as there are social injustices, we’ll be here,” he added.

But then all of the sudden they weren’t “here,” thanks to a certain pandemic.

When the singers are together, they are usually creating content. However,

**DRAG**, Next Page



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Voted 2020 Readers Voice Awards BEST Medical Group Practice, BEST HIV Specialists and Dr. David Lee, BEST General Practitioner



**DRAG**, From Previous Page



Enchant. the Christmas light maze and village, at Fair Park through Jan. 2

personal hell," Brown said. "We certainly all learned new tricks to our trade."

But the Kinsey Sicks are back on stage with the upcoming Uptown Players show and have a full schedule just ahead of them.

"After Dallas, we're off to D.C. for two weeks and then head down to Puerto Vallarta with this show, and we'll open a new show there," he said.

Brown also assures that *Oy Vey in a Manger* is a family show with something for everyone: "Yeah, maybe if you're the Addams family...or the Mansons,"

*Oy Vey in a Manger opens Dec. 10 for a limited engagement through Dec. 12 at Uptown Players in the Kalita Humphreys Theater. Visit UptownPlayers.org for more information.*

all four of them live in different parts of the country, so lockdown wasn't quite an ideal time.

"It was awful," Brown said. "We spent a lot of last year making timely music videos and parodies. Our 'Sound of Sirens' was a more serious parody

that went a bit viral."

They found their approach had to be different, and, thanks to technology, the Kinsey Sicks was still in business.

"I spent a good chunk of last year video editing, that's for sure. I did a few livestreams, and that was definitely my

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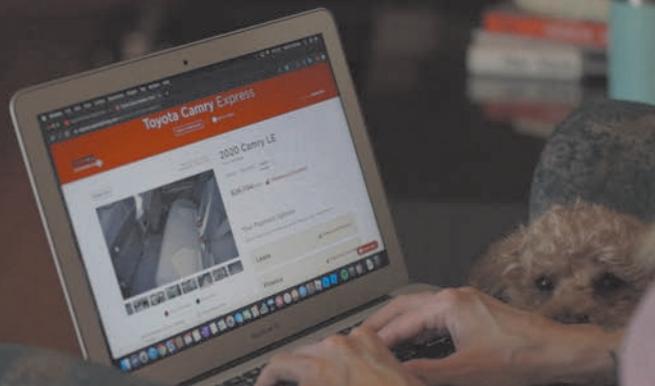
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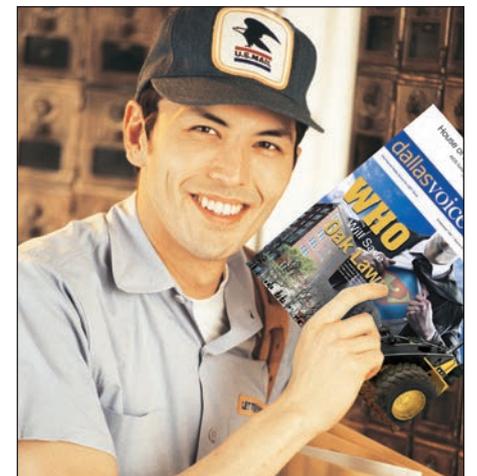
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# WORLD AIDS DAY

DECEMBER 1



For 27 years, the HELP Center has provided health and education services aimed at preventing AIDS/HIV to the North Texas community at no charge.

This World's AIDS Day, we will commemorate our new HELP Center Arlington location to the three visionary women who founded our organization.

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# “I will step down”

## POLITICS

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson announces she will not seek another term in office after her current term ends

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

**R**ep. Eddie Bernice Johnson has announced that she will complete her term in office but will not run for re-election in 2022. She made the announcement in front of hundreds of supporters at Kirkwood Temple in Oak Cliff on Saturday, Nov. 20, as she stood surrounded by her family.

“Nothing has been more overwhelming than the heartwarming support for me to run one more time,” Johnson said, adding that she went back and forth on the decision many times. But, she said, when she announced she would run for her current term, she had said it would be her last. And she was determined stick to that promise.

Johnson caps her 30 years in Congress as the first woman and the first African-American to chair the Science, Space and Technology Committee.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said in a written statement, “Chairwoman Johnson has made progress, as a lawmaker with a track record of success for America’s children and future, including to promote STEM education, ensure diversity and inclusion in science and combat the climate crisis with a firm focus on innovation.”

Pelosi, on a trip to Dallas several years ago, told Dallas Voice that when it came to science, colleagues trusted what Johnson had to say.

According to Rep. Collin Allred, “Nearly every Texan has benefited in some way from the work of Congresswoman Johnson. Her legacy is remarkable, and I can tell you firsthand from our shared work on the Transportation Committee that no one works harder for



Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson greets supporters at Kirkwood Temple in Oak Cliff. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

their constituents.”

Stonewall Democrats of Dallas President Todd Hill-Jones called her “legendary,” and he thanked her for her friendship and support of Stonewall and the LGBTQ community.

Johnson first moved to Dallas to become the first Black nurse at the Dallas V.A. Despite facing discrimination at the hospital, she rose to become its chief psychiatric nurse, a position she held for 16 years.

She switched from nursing to politics when she ran for a seat in the Texas Legislature in 1972. When she won her race in a landslide, she became the first African-American woman ever elected to any office in Dallas County.

During her terms in office in the Texas House, Johnson became the first woman to chair a Texas House committee — the Labor Committee.

In 1977, Johnson left the Texas Legislature for a position in the Carter administration when President Jimmy Carter appointed her regional director of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Again, she was the first African-American woman to hold the position.

She returned to the state Legislature in 1986 when she was elected state senator. Recalling her Legislative career, Johnson said that when she was appointed to chair the redistricting committee, it was “the worst job I ever had.” Her years in the U.S. House of Representatives have been “challenging times,” she said, “but that comes with the territory.”

Among her many accomplishments, Johnson listed DART as her number one priority, something she began working on from “the day I got there.” She said she’s directed millions to Dallas area

transit but has lost count how much. Union Station in downtown Dallas has been renamed for her in recognition of her work on behalf of public transportation.

Johnson became a friend and ally of the LGBTQ community during her years in the state Senate, early in the AIDS crisis. While legislators in both houses were introducing bills to put all gay men under quarantine or in internment camps, Johnson met with leaders of the LGBTQ community to ask what the community needed.

Her nursing background helped her craft legislation that helped people living with HIV and gave her credibility among other senators. Her legislation helping people with AIDS receive care was the first AIDS legislation to pass in Texas. And as a member of the Finance Committee, Johnson directed money to

research as well as improving access to health care.

In 1992, exactly 20 years after first being elected to the Legislature, Johnson was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. She was the first registered nurse ever elected to Congress. When she leaves office in January 2023, she will have served 30 of her 50 years of public service in the U.S. House.

In announcing her retirement, Johnson thanked her colleagues — including her Republican friends: “There are sane ones who helped me be successful,” she assured a skeptical audience. “I respected my colleagues because they respected me.”

And then came her bombshell: “I am pleased to announce my retirement,” she said.

As the audience began shouting, “We love you,” Johnson said she still has almost a year and a half left in office and that “I will do my best during that time.”

At the end of her term, though, she said, “I will step down.”

Jane Hamilton switched from exploratory committee to campaign mode the night Johnson made her announcement. She has served as campaign manager for County Judge Clay Jenkins and Rep. Marc Veasey. In 2020, she was the Democratic Primary state director for Joe Biden’s campaign and general election strategic advisor for the Biden-Harris campaign.

The Dallas Morning News suggests state Reps. Toni Rose and Yvonne Davis of Dallas and Carl Sherman of DeSoto may also be interested in running.

Sen. Royce West, who replaced Johnson in the state Senate, has long been viewed as her logical replacement in Congress. But last week, West filed for re-election to his Texas Senate seat.

A number of judges who attended Johnson’s event may be exploring a run. The only one who has publicly expressed an interest in the seat is former state District Judge Elizabeth Frizell.

Dallas City Councilwoman Vonciel Jones Hill has thrown her hat in the



Some of Congresswoman Johnson’s family (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

She said she would announce an endorsement before the primary and hoped to support a qualified woman as her replacement. A number of names have emerged as possible candidates.

The one name repeated most often is that of state Rep. Jasmine Crockett, 40, who is serving her first term in office representing the 100th District, which includes the Design District, West Dallas and portions of Oak Cliff and South Dallas. Her seat was previously held by Eric Johnson who stepped down when he was elected mayor.

Crockett is known for her warmth and engaging personality as well as her knowledge of the issues.

ring to replace Johnson. The LGBTQ community recently help quash Hill’s bid for a seat on the DART board earlier this year in response to Hill’s anti-LGBTQ record on the city council.

Former state Rep. Barbara Mallory Caraway has challenged Johnson in the previous five elections. Johnson made it clear when she said she would endorse someone to replace her in Congress that she would absolutely not endorse anyone who had already been rejected by the voters in her district.

Johnson’s career is one of firsts. As the longest serving member of the House from Texas, she’ll be hard to replace.

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*Phil Romano*

Hosted By  
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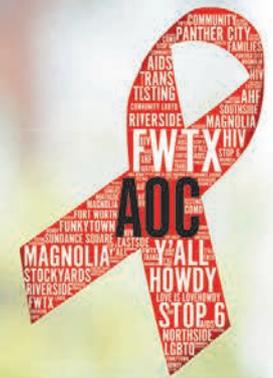
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The Tony-award winning Broadway blockbuster Hamilton plays Dallas through Dec. 6 at the Music Hall at Fair Park. This hot ticket is part of Dallas Summer Musicals' 2021-22 Broadway Series. Tickets are available at Dallas-SummerMusicals.org. Photo by Joan Marcus.

## 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.

### NOVEMBER

• Nov. 26-Jan. 2: Enchant Christmas Christmas light exhibit at Fair Park. EnchantChristmas.com.

### DECEMBER

• Dec. 1: World AIDS Day

• Dec. 2: Wine Walk

The Cedar Springs Wine Walk is back! Purchase a \$10 Cedar Springs Merchants Association wine glass and enjoy free wine all evening from participating merchants. Wine glasses can be purchased at the tent in front of the Round-Up Saloon. Receive a raffle ticket to win a great gift basket filled with goodies from the CSMA. The drawing for the gift basket will be held inside the Round-Up at the end of the event. From 6-9 p.m.

• Dec. 2: Brewing Up Business

Kick start your morning and your business. Grab some coffee, your laptop, tablet, or

phone and start Brewing up Business. Develop new business relationships by giving your 30-second commercial/elevator speech, sharing your contact information in the chat, and learning more about how we can do business with and refer business to each other. Each month, a spotlight member will give a 10 minute presentation to do a deeper dive into their organization and services. From 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Crickles & Co., 4000 Cedar Springs Road Suite E.

• Dec. 2: Red Ribbon

An outdoor community event commemorates World AIDS Day with a candlelight vigil and tree lighting ceremony hosted by Cassie Nova. Vigil led by the Rev. Neil Thomas. Performance by Vivacious, an ensemble of The Women's Chorus of Dallas. Food truck, hot chocolate, free HIV testing. From 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road.

• Dec. 4: Jingle Ball Show

United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents its annual holiday show from 4-7:30 p.m. at TMC: The Mining Company, 3903 Cedar Springs Road.

• Dec. 4: Reliant Lights Your Holidays

Reliant lights up the holiday season at the AT&T Performing Arts Center and presents an evening of holiday magic and music. The Center's campus will be lit with dazzling LED lights to celebrate the arrival of the holiday season. The festival includes a holiday concert featuring Vinyl Countdown: A Tribute to Arena Rock, Selena tribute band Bidi Bidi Banda,

incredible projections on our venues, crafts for the kids, and, of course, Santa. Free. AT&T Performing Arts Center.ATTPAC.org.

• Dec. 5: The Dallas Way brunch

Kay Wilkinson hosts a brunch to raise money for The Dallas Way's UNT archives and for its Queer History South conference to be held in February. Rob Emery will match all money collected during the brunch. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. to attend, contact RobEmery@me.com.

• Dec. 6: Cassie's Freakmas Onesie Party

Bells are ringing, children singing, all is merry and bright. So hang your stockings and say your prayers, 'cause Cassie Nova comes tonight. Benefits the Personalized Learning Preparatory at Sam Houston's Secret Santa Program. Proceeds are used to purchase gifts and goodie bags for the kids and gift cards for teachers. 10 p.m. at JR.'s Bar & Grill, 3923 Cedar Springs Road.

• Dec. 6: Very Beary Christmas Bar Crawl

The sixth annual bar crawl benefits a charitable organization. Wear a costume, wear lights and tinsel and glitter. Meet up at 8 p.m. at Woody's Sports and Video Bar, 4011 Cedar Springs Road.

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

Look for extended listings online at

[DallasVoice.com](http://DallasVoice.com)

## GAY AGENDA



### SIP, SHOP AND STROLL

Sip, shop and stroll on Saturday, Nov. 27, with the Deep Ellum Small Business Saturday "Sip & Shop" event from noon to 3 p.m. in Deep

Ellum. Purchase one of the limited edition, artisan-designed wine glasses and get it filled up at participating businesses as you stroll through Deep Ellum, checking out the shop and restaurants and checking some items off your holiday gift list. Buy your ticket and reserve your glass online for \$15 at Eventbrite.com, and your glass and wristband will be waiting for you at the check in, 2650 Main St., when you get there. (Price to purchase a glass at the event is \$20). Follow them on Facebook and Instagram at @discoverdepellum for information.



### SHOPPING LOCAL ARTISTS

You know all that buzz you keep hearing about the ruined supply chain and how Christmas is ruined because the ships with all the goodies

are anchored offshore and can't dock to unload? Well, forget that bull. Because the works of local artists and craftspeople are not sitting offshore on cargo ships, and you have two chances this week to find the perfect gift for that special someone. The Boho Market is open in Klyde Warren Park from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 27-28. And the Orr-Reed Artisan Fair is open Saturday, Nov. 27, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Orr-Reed, 1903 Rock Island St. in Dallas.



### THE PROM YOU NEVER HAD

Did you not go to your high school prom because you didn't think you'd be welcome because you're LGBTQ?

Did you go to prom but not with the person you wanted to go with because same-sex prom dates weren't allowed? Or maybe you just went by yourself? Well, now Fevermatic Studios, 1515 S. Ewing in Dallas, presents "Queer Prom: A World AIDS Day Event," for those age 21 and older, on Wednesday, Dec. 1, from 7-10 p.m. They'll be serving small bites and alcohol, and Impulse Group Dallas will be offering free HIV testing on site all night. And best of all, it's all free! Register online at EventBrite.com.



### WALKING THE STRIP

The Cedar Springs Wine Walk is back, from 6-9 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 2. Purchase a \$10 Cedar Springs Merchants Association wine glass and

enjoy free wine all evening from participating merchants. Wine glasses can be purchased at the tent in front of the Round-Up Saloon. Receive a raffle ticket to win a great gift basket filled with goodies from the CSMA. The drawing for the gift basket will be held inside the Round-Up at the end of the event. Visit [TheStripOnCedarSprings.com](http://TheStripOnCedarSprings.com) for more information.

# Cassie Nova

## ASK A DRAG QUEEN

### Coping with loss

Hello all of you beautiful turkeys. I hope you all survived your tryptophan comas and awkward family gatherings. This is the time of year that we are supposed to say the things we are thankful for. Well, I am thankful that 2021 is almost over. I know most of you were saying that about 2020 but not me. I didn't hate 2020. I spent a lot of time at home. I cooked a bunch. I made bread. I got to be a lazy bum, and nobody said anything because we were all quarantining ourselves. It honestly was not the worst time for me.

Now 2021 can suck my dick. This year, especially the last four months, have really put me through the wringer.

Back in August, I lost a close friend — Fantasha. Her death was sudden and surprising. Some days it still feels like a kick in the balls. She would do a song in the Rose Room, Pepper Mashay's "Dive In The Pool," and every time she would sing "Let's Get Soaking Wet!" she would pour a bottle of water or beer all over herself. Everybody loved it, and it was a big money maker, so she would do it often. When she would take off the soaking wet costume, she would drape it over a locker in the dressing room to let it dry for the next show, so she could do it again.

Her costume is still draped on top of the locker where she left it last. I don't want to move it. No one else has moved it. I like it being there; I think of her every time I walk in the dressing room and see it. It's stupid, I know. Fantasha made almost every costume I have worn in the past seven or eight years. I wear a Fantasha original in every show I do, and I have a flood of emotions every time I put one on. Every garment she made, she sewed by hand. She sewed faster by hand than most people sew with a machine.

Fantasha was also one of the most captivating performers I have ever watched. She performed like she was the headliner for the Super Bowl halftime show no matter where she was. She performed full out every time — the same for a packed house or just a few stragglers wandering the room. Where other girls, includ-

ing myself, would be irritated and half-ass a performance because the crowd was small or not paying attention to us, she did not. She put on a show, full force, no matter the size or mood of the crowd. It was my favorite thing about her and why she stayed fully booked.

I miss her.

Then in September we lost my Uncle David. He was a good guy with a heart as big as his cowboy hat. He always had a big hug for me and made me and my husband feel welcome whenever we saw him. As many of y'all know, that is a big deal to a gay boy. Uncle David and I were both smart enough to not talk about certain things around each other. Our world and political views were very different, but I loved him. Our family is feeling more and more like Swiss cheese — holes everywhere. Uncle David has definitely left a void in our family dynamic.

Then on Oct. 20, my husband and I lost our bestest boy, Sunny. He was the happiest, best dog you could ever hope to have. I got Sunny as a birthday present for my husband Jamie when Sunny was just a tiny little poofball of fur. He was so tiny. It was love at first sight for the two of them. Their bond was immediate and beautiful.

We knew pretty early that Sunny was special. We love all of our furbabies but the connection we had with Sunny was one in million love. Sunny and Jamie were connected in a way many people may never understand — well, unless



you are an animal person. If you are an animal person, you understand. I will never understand non-animal people. It sounds so depressing not having a pup greet you when you

come

home. Sure, a spouse is nice, but being greeted so enthusiastically every time you come home makes you feel like a rock star.

Sunny was a smart dog. Pomeranians usually are, but Sunny was crazy smart. I know people that couldn't learn things as fast as Sunny could. He could apparently spell. Every time we would spell a word to keep the dogs from knowing what we were talking about, like spelling treat or outside, he would bark knowingly. He was fully potty trained faster than any other dog I have had. He understood pointing. I know that doesn't seem like a big deal, but have you ever tried to get a dog to look where you are pointing? They just stare at the end of your finger, like what? Sunny understood to look in the direction your finger was pointing. I have only known two dogs that ever understood that, and they were both Poms.

Sunny was 13-and-a-half when he passed away. He was diagnosed with a heart murmur a few years ago and was on medication but his death still felt

like it was a surprise. He had white fur, which hid his grey hair. All of the other dogs we have had that have passed away looked older. Black and brown dogs' little faces turn white and are a constant reminder of their age. Sunny not only didn't look like an older dog, he never acted like one. He was up for whatever the Daddies wanted to do.

He loved the water. If we were in the water, so was he. He thought our boat was his, and if we went anywhere with it he had to go or would literally throw a tantrum. He loved to ride on anything that Jamie drove. If Jamie was on the riding lawn mower, Sunny was in his lap. A jet ski, a kayak, whatever it was — if Jamie was doing it, so was Sunny, without fear or hesitation.

He had this little dance he did; we called it the Sunny Shuffle. He did it when he was excited, wanted something or was just being cute. He would put his front paws together and bounce them up and down. He would do it laying down on his side when he knew we were looking. He knew he was adorable, and I think he did it because he knew we loved it. He was such a ham.

Our home does not feel right. Even with four other dogs, it seems empty somehow. After he passed, we brought his body home to let the other dogs smell him. I don't know if they understood but I'm glad we did it. Our Riley, another Pom, was Sunny's shadow and has seemed a little lost without his big brother around. He tries to pester the other dogs like he did Sunny, but they just ignore him for the most part. We have been giving him extra attention to make up for it, but it feels like he is grieving with us. I think they understand more than we realize. We miss our good boy.

I'm hoping writing about all this death will help me. The heaviness my heart has had these past months feels like a constant companion. I compartmentalize my grief, as I do with most of my emotions. It is probably not healthy, but it is how I cope. I apologize for being such a Debbie Downer, but that is who I am today. Tomorrow, I hope I am different.

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

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# SCENE

PEOPLE, PLACES AND FACES



Grace Project 2021 VIP Reception



Richard and DR at the Coalition for Aging LGBT event



Dale Hansen and Black Tie board members visit S4



Diane Thornton, executive director of Coalition for Aging LGBT



DOPE



S4's new lightshow



Kandy gets us in the holiday spirit

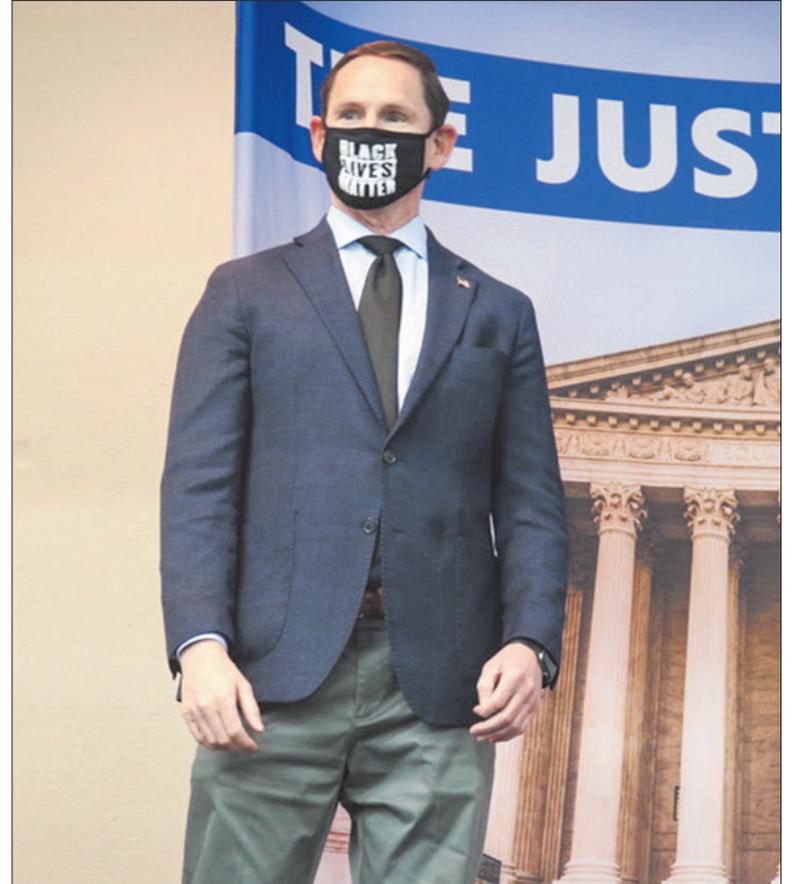


Joseph Veazie at the Coalition for Aging LGBT event

# EBJ announces her retirement



Dallas County Democratic elected officials



County Judge Clay Jenkins



Judge Tina Clinton on stage (with mic) with Dallas County judges



Pauline Medrano



EBJ's family

# Trans Day of Remembrance at Northaven UMC



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Nick LaRocca



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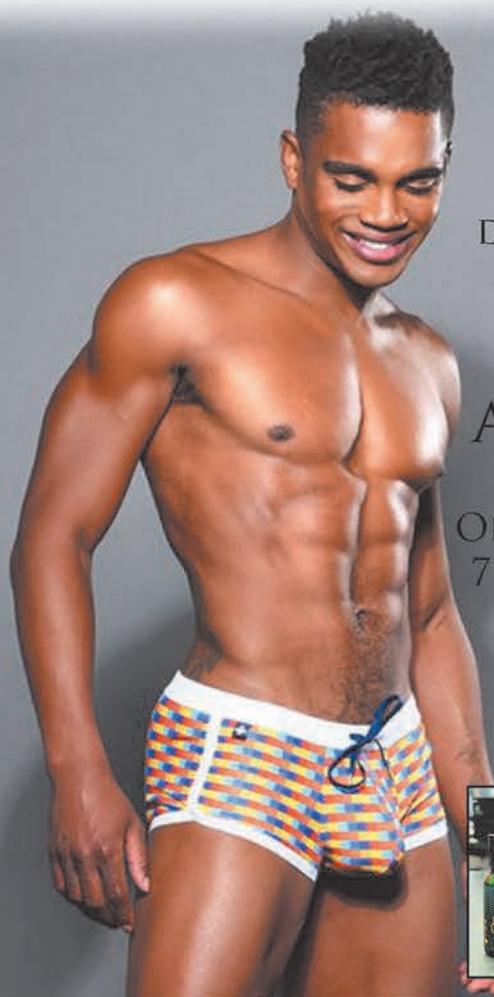
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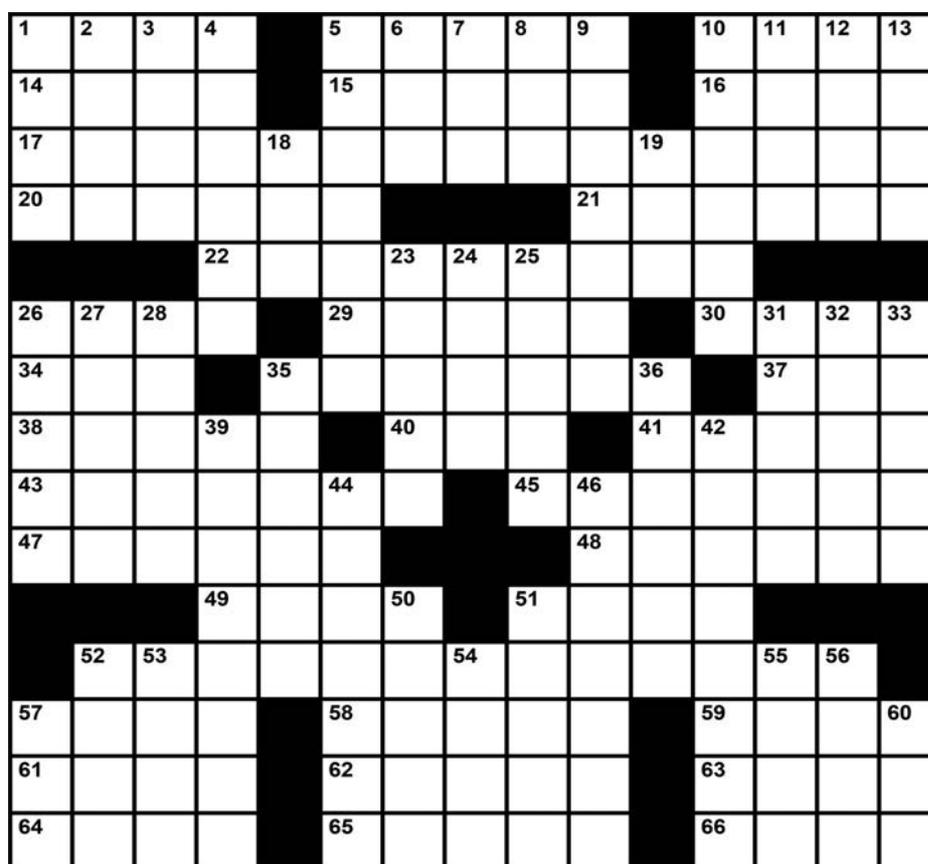
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# PUZZLE |

Advice from  
a Friend



Solution on Page 22

### Across

- 1 Cassini of A-line dresses
- 5 Dooryard bloomer, for Whitman
- 10 Bushy do
- 14 Fielder's call, to Bean
- 15 Contest venue
- 16 Witty Coward
- 17 Start of advice from a friend
- 20 Cause anguish to
- 21 Boneless cuts
- 22 Hamlet, to fans?
- 26 Word after "Dear"
- 29 "Do" in *The Sound of Music*
- 30 Broadway opening for a lot?
- 34 Long sandwich, for short
- 35 Aroused in bed
- 37 Physicians' org.
- 38 Bear
- 40 Solidly behind
- 41 She's George
- 43 More of the advice
- 45 End of the advice
- 47 Drenching rain
- 48 *Three's Company* actress
- 49 Butch neckwear, perhaps
- 51 Broadway ticket souvenir

- 52 Figurative friend of gay men, and source of the advice
- 57 Broadway slave
- 58 *Damn Yankees* song
- 59 "Why should \_\_\_ you?"
- 61 Rod attachment
- 62 Ewing matriarch, on *Dallas*
- 63 Boy of Kahlo's country
- 64 Make messy
- 65 Queer coins
- 66 *Quills* subject

### Down

- 1 Cut
- 2 Cukor's A \_\_\_ of *Her Own*
- 3 *Lord of the Rings* singer
- 4 Lynn Redgrave's \_\_\_ *Girl*
- 5 Of milk
- 6 Gershwin of *Of Thee I Sing*
- 7 Sportscaster Berman
- 8 Offspring of a queen
- 9 Bedside table money
- 10 Bend over and grab them
- 11 Baudelaire's liver
- 12 Musical based on *La Bohème*
- 13 Ford contemporary
- 18 Egypt and Syr., once
- 19 One to Rohm
- 23 Roll with the punches
- 24 O-o-o-okla., once
- 25 Discharge, among soldiers
- 26 Former leader of Syria
- 27 Elevation with a flat top
- 28 Sport of the Chicago Sky, for short
- 31 Peter of *Say Uncle*
- 32 Colette's love
- 33 Husband and husband, for example
- 35 Butler's \_\_\_ for *Strings*
- 36 Eat with enthusiasm
- 39 Swiss soldiers, in WWII
- 42 Sweetie-pie
- 44 Gets hot
- 46 Will subjects
- 50 South Beach souvenir
- 51 Bit of mistletoe
- 52 Deity of Debussy
- 53 Lines from Lesbos
- 54 Yellow Sea feeder
- 55 *East of Eden* director Kazan
- 56 Split
- 57 Place for tats
- 60 Ballerina's perch

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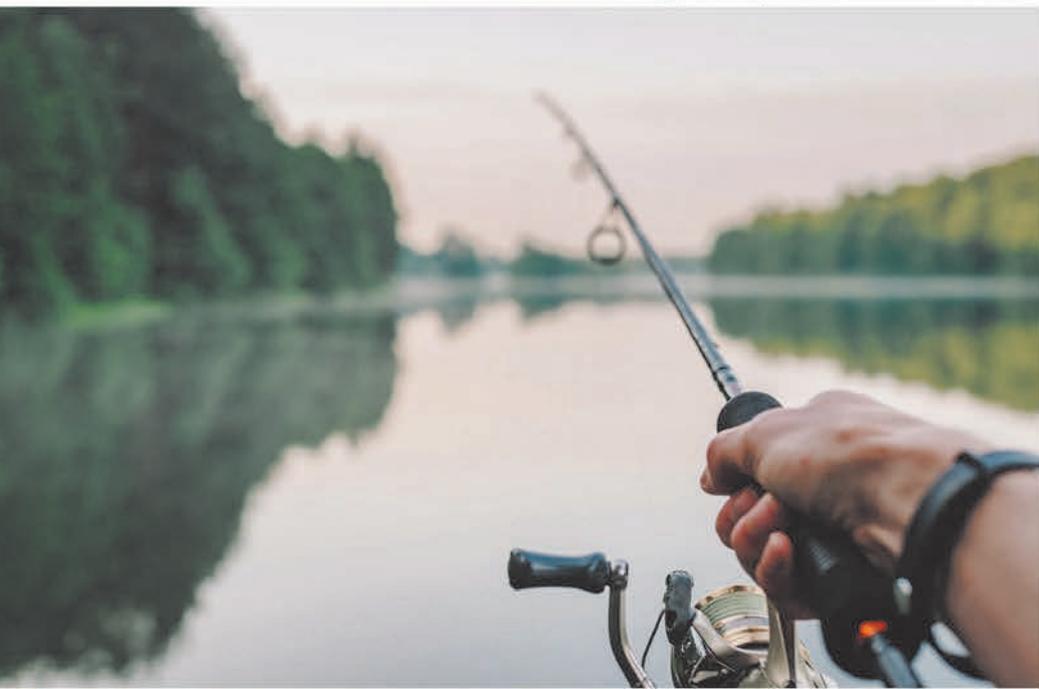
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