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2021 in arts and entertainment

A look back at the year in music,
movies, theater, art, books and more

Begins on page 9

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New installations add artistic touch to Cedar Springs

Two new art installations were added late last week along the sidewalk near the curb in the shopping center anchored by Alexandre's.

Both are made of corrugated steel and designed to show two different designs, depending on which way you approach it. The art pieces were chosen through an open competition that was held pre-pandemic, with the final decision made by a committee from the Mayor's LGBT Task Force.

The first is either the city of Dallas Pride flag or a trans flag. The second is either a rainbow spiral or a black and white ... flower? fish? cactus? splotch? Not sure, but I love it.

— David Taffet

Not THAT Rick Perry is running for governor; Philip Kingston files for county commissioner

Dec. 13 was the deadline for candidates to file for the March primary. In the race for governor, Greg Abbott has attracted several Republican opponents. Among them is Don Huffines, a one-term state senator from Collin County who was defeated by Angela Paxton, wife of the attorney general. Allen West is also running. He was a congressman from Florida who moved to Texas to head the state Republican Party.

But it's Rick Perry who may give the governor the most trouble. The Rick Perry who's running is a computer technician from Parker County. He has no political experience, and, according to the Dallas Morning News, has made a few small contributions to some of the region's most conservative candidates.

But to make sure voters understand that they're not voting for former Gov. Rick Perry, Abbott may have to spend some money that he'd rather save for the fall campaign against probable candidate Beto O'Rourke.

In Dallas County, three of five members of the commissioner's court are up for re-election. Elba Garcia has no Democratic or Republican challengers, but Tim Miles has filed as a Libertarian.

J.J. Koch has no Republican opposition, but four candidates have filed to run in the Democratic primary. And County Judge Clay Jenkins has two opponents in his Democratic primary.

Koch, the only Republican on the commissioners court, sued Jenkins earlier this year, when he was removed from the floor of the chamber for refusing to wear a mask. That case is still pending.

Among the Democrats hoping to win the nomination to oppose Koch in the fall is former Dallas City Councilman Philip Kingston, who represented parts of Oak Lawn for six years.

Lines in that north Dallas district were redrawn to make it easier for a Democrat to win.

— David Taffet

10th annual Teddy Bear Party a 'huge success'

As with so many other charitable events in Dallas/Fort Worth's LGBTQ community, the

2020 version of The Teddy Bear Party — which would have been the event's 10th anniversary — had to be cancelled. But the party came back with a purpose this year, despite a last-minute change in DJs. Although the total amount raised has yet to be finalized, Teddy Bear Party brought in more than 1,000 teddy bears that were donated to Children's Health to help make sure every child hospitalized there has their own teddy bear to keep them company.

While the teddy bears, which are a required part of the cost of admission, are donated to Children's Health, other beneficiaries include Children's Cancer Fund, Equality Texas and Family Equality.

A last-minute personal emergency for one of the scheduled DJs meant organizers had to find a replacement, but DJ Aaron Elvis and DJ Corey Craig stepped right, joining opener DJ Winters to keep the music playing and the people dancing all night.

— Tammye Nash



'GenZ candidate' announces bid for Congress

Arthur Dixon, a 25-year-old from Dallas, on Monday, Dec. 13, announced his campaign for Texas' 30th Congressional District seat in the United States House of Representatives. The seat is open in the 2022 election following Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson's announcement last month that she is retiring from public office after 50 years as an elected official, the last 30 of which she spent in Congress.

Dixon described himself as a "lifelong Texan" and "one of the first GenZ and youngest major political candidates in Texas history," according to a press release announcing his candidacy. He said he hopes his age will be "a boost in a traditionally younger voting district."

— Tammye Nash

Round-Up Stocking Auction tops \$30K



The Round-Up Saloon and Dance Hall raked in an eye-popping \$30,390 Sunday night, Dec. 12, with the 22nd annual Christmas Stocking Auction benefitting Legacy Cares and Founders Cottage.

Legacy Cares Executive Director Melissa Grove thanked "Gary, Allen, Kevin, Shane, Cody and the staff" at the Round-Up, as well as all the folks who donated items to the auction and, of course, all the people who bid on those items. It was, Grove said, "the most successful stocking auction in 22 years."

"After a very challenging two years, it was wonderful to be back together for the holidays at one of our favorite events every year," Grove said

in a post to social media. "It was a wonderful event that will help ensure critically ill people living with HIV will have a safe place to go and be cared for. Many thanks to everyone at the Round-Up Saloon for making this event possible.

"Your support is invaluable to our clients."
— Tammye Nash

Schiff introduces PrEP Access and Coverage Act

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., and Sen. Tina Smith, D-Minn., this week introduced legislation requiring insurers to cover current and future HIV prevention drugs, or PrEP, and any associated costs.

Widespread uptake of PrEP is considered

by many experts to be essential for ending HIV, particularly in minority communities. CDC data from this month shows the rate of new HIV infections among Black and Latino gay and bisexual men has not budged over the past decade.

The PrEP Access and Coverage Act aims to change that by requiring insurers cover costs associated with taking PrEP — including the drugs, doctor's visits and testing. It also establishes a grant program to expand access for uninsured individuals and underserved communities. This is the second PrEP bill introduced this session. The PrEP Assistance Program Act, also authored by Rep. Schiff and colleagues, would provide \$400 million in funding for PrEP access.

— David Taffet

Adoptable / ANDY



comfortable, his playful side begins to show. He's mostly content to just hang out on the couch, but he does enjoy playing outside and playing with toys. Andy is a Shelter Sweetheart, meaning his adoption fee is sponsored, and he comes with extra perks when you adopt him, like free training. Andy is waiting to meet you at the Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas. To request an appointment to meet Andy, please visit SPCA.org/DogAdopt.

Regular adoption fees are \$150 for puppies and kittens aged 0-6 months and \$75 for adult dogs and cats aged 6 months or older. Fee includes spay/neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, a heartworm test for dogs six months and older and a FIV/FelV test for cats 4 months and older, initial flea/tick preventative and heartworm preventative, a microchip, 30 days of PetHealth Insurance provided by PetHealth, a free 14-day wellness exam with VCA Animal Hospitals, a rabies tag and a free leash.

In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and well-being of the animals in their care, their staff and volunteers, SPCA of Texas is requiring masks to be worn at all of their facilities. The Jan-Rees Jones Animal Care Center is open for adoptions every day from noon-6 p.m. Animals are available by walk-in on a first-come, first-served basis. Appointments are also available for select animals. Please browse 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.

Meet **Andy**, a sweet, 1-year-old Labrador retriever mix. With his floppy ears, black and white patches and big, brown eyes, it's hard not to fall in love with Andy at first sight. Andy came to the SPCA of Texas from a rough past, and he was very shy and timid around people at first. Over time, he has really warmed up to the staff and shown what a gentle, loving boy he is. He still needs to work on building his confidence, so he's looking for a patient family who will work with him on his social skills. Andy is a sweet, affectionate boy once he gets to know you, and once he's really

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VOICES

OPINIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Whatever the answer is, it shouldn't be 'more guns'

These are dark times. The Supreme Court is going to either overturn or completely gut *Roe v Wade*, making abortion illegal — or at least impossible to get — in states across the country. We're still in a pandemic which has killed well over 807,000 people in the United States alone, and yet, Republicans are still all, "Vaccines are a Biden plot to make you magnetic and/or put a tiny robot in your blood to track you," all while calling themselves the Pro-Life Party. Then there's the Republican plot to do away with democracy in favor of some kind of white-supremacist dictatorship.

And then there are the guns.

In the U.S., we have more guns than we have people. Which means that some people — a lot of people, actually — have NO guns, while some people — too many people, actually — have A LOT of guns.



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

I hate guns.

I hate how they're so widely and easily available. I hate how they are designed to kill people. I hate how gun culture

is fetishized in this country. I hate that legislators think it's cool to send out a Christmas card of themselves surrounded by their family where everyone, including the kids, are holding weapons designed to kill.

I hate how we are the only country on earth where school shootings occur reg-

ularly.

On Tuesday, Nov. 30, it happened again. This time at Oxford High School. A 15-year-old child killed four other children.

Oxford isn't that far from where I live now, and it is even closer to where I grew up. In fact, I went to high school with the mother of the shooter. Same graduating class. I didn't know her very well; I don't remember that much about her. To be fair, she probably doesn't remember much about me, either.

My son and my wife, who is a teacher, did not go to school on Friday because their schools were closed. Too many threats, not enough time to track them down. Too big of a risk.

Thankfully, this has given Michigan Republicans the chance to do what they have planned to do all along: Nothing. Or, worse than nothing.

They want guns to be even easier to get and carry. They're talking, again, about arming teachers. With them, "more guns" is always the answer.

I was just reading about Robert Fehring, a 74-year-old New York man who was arrested for "mailing dozens of letters threatening to assault, shoot and bomb LGBTQ-affiliated individuals, organizations and businesses, including New York City's annual Pride festival," according to NBC News.

When police searched his house, they found two loaded guns and hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

His letters are vile and hateful — something that would make Fred Phelps and his Westboro ilk proud. I won't quote them here. But I will say he wanted to make the 2015 Pulse Nightclub shooting look like "a cakewalk."

Have you ever done a cakewalk? I know now that a "cakewalk" actually has a complicated history that is tied to slavery, which basically sums up American history.

But the only cakewalk I ever participated in involved walking around a room with numbers on the floor. There was music that stopped, like musical chairs. If you were on the number they called you won a cake.

One thing I know with certainty is that a cakewalk definitely does not include the murder of 49 people. It does not include guns. It does not include an attack on LGBTQ spaces.

And anyone who thinks the shooting of over 100 people is a "cakewalk" definitely shouldn't have guns.

According to NBC News, Ferling said that there is "a sick overdose of that stuff being shoved down everybody's face on the paper, on the TV and all over the place, and I'm not a fan of any of the homosexuality, homosexual thing."

And so, his response is to threaten death and violence and prepare to enact it.

There are a lot of things I am not a fan of. There are certainly things that you, reader, are not a fan of. But it's a symptom of our toxic-masculinity obsessed culture that the way to approach things you don't like is with a gun.

It's almost like there's a sick overdose of that stuff. And it's killing us. ■

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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All is Brightman

THE HOLIDAY STAGE

Sarah Brightman heads to Dallas with her first-ever holiday tour

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
rich@dallasvoice.com

With just 17 dates, singer Sarah Brightman is making her way across the United States with her soprano holiday cheer. In her extensive career, her “A Christmas Symphony” tour marks her first specifically for the season. But after the year we just had, she said it was necessary.

In fact, this tour started because of her initial efforts last year.

“This came about when we went into lockdown last Christmas,” she said by phone from Chicago. “I just thought about what I can do to be useful to myself and others. We put together this streaming concert which had a lovely response.”

That sparked the idea of hitting the road — specifically in the U.S. — for this tour.

With holiday carols, some covers and a smattering of her own hits, Brightman will bring a mix of sounds to the Winspear Opera House on Monday, Dec. 20.

“I’ve never done this kind of tour before, and it is very much a holiday feeling,” Brightman said. “I feel very relieved to be doing it and it’s so fun to hear the feedback from the audience.”

She toured America for a number of reasons, but it also made the most sense for right now.

“I’m hoping to take this show all over the world eventually. I’ve been asked to go to Japan and other countries, but for now, we picked carefully,” she said. “America always feels closest to me, and its very much a part of my life, and we’re all sharing the same language. So it felt obvious to come with a show like this first.”

The importance of this show and tour isn’t just the timing. The holidays are personal to Brightman, but with both the streaming event in 2020 and the tour, she’s able to employ folks who have been out of work for some time. She also adds hometown flavor to each of her performances this tour.

“Musicians had been out of work during lockdown, so it was great to employ them for the concert last year,” Brightman said. So when that idea grew into a tour, she and her crew hit the road with the idea of collaborating with local musicians at each stop.

“That’s been so interesting. We are using choirs and orchestras from each city we are in, which brings something slightly different to each show,” she said. “That makes it so nice to see new faces everywhere.”

Brightman’s not too shy to admit that she loves singing her hits in this show — especially those from her breakthrough performance in *Phantom of the Opera* as Christine: “It’s that moment when the audience goes ‘Yay,’” she laughed. “I think some people think I would get tired of these songs, but it’s what the audience wants and I appreciate that.”

But it doesn’t sound like she will be singing one song that resonates big time among the gays. In the late 1970s, Brightman was part of the disco group Hot Gossip, and the group’s big hit — “I Fell in Love with a Starship Trooper” — and its video was irresistible to the world of gay camp.

“Oh my gosh, yes we can talk about that,” she said. “Did you know I did a gay Pride in London, and I performed this song, and everyone went berserk. It’s so completely over the top.”

Brightman has always been aware since then that she has her gay fans. What Broadway diva doesn’t?

“I am so grateful, because you know why? The community really knows what’s coming next and has such good taste,” she said. “To be part of that and the community enjoying my music, I cannot be more appreciative.”

Brightman is best known for her work



in the theater. She was part of two blockbuster shows at their onset: *Cats* and *Phantom*. Now, we are in a time of musical blockbusters coming one after the other with the likes of *Wicked*, *Hamilton*, *The Lion King* and others entering the canon as fast as they can.

To have been a part of a time that paved the way for monster shows isn’t lost on her. “It was a privilege to be part of both and people came far and wide to see those,” she said. “It was an exciting time then, and it is now. I think then it was more specific, but now everyone wants to go see these shows, and there’s more interest in theater arts.

“Plus, when it was taken away, I think people also realized they missed it and that it’s good for the soul.”

Once her tour is done, Brightman will be back in England to celebrate. “Yes, I’m going back to my family. My brother and his boyfriend will cook the Christmas lunch, and all 22 of us will be together. It’s very lovely and traditional.”

But first, she’ll hit the high notes of the holidays for her Dallas audience.

“These shows are very much a two-way thing. We are celebrating something together, and the fans have been so lovely in the audience, at the meet-and-greets,” she said. “Christmas is quite a particular time and personal to people, so to be a part of their holidays is beautiful.”

Sarah Brightman performs Monday at the Winspear Opera House. For more information, visit ATTPAC.org.

2021: The year the comeback began

YEAR IN REVIEW • ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



Lil' Nas X

RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
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So. This has been quite a year. We started with a pandemic and, well, we're ending with a pandemic, too. And it certainly looks like that pandemic will be continuing into the new year.

Ugh.

But 2021 was also the year of COVID vaccinations, which helped get the world going again. With some mindfulness and masks, we could go out to

restaurants, shop a little more comfortably and have a night at the theater.

It still feels like we're getting into that groove again, but, for sure, we can allow ourselves to enjoy the good things.

For arts enthusiasts, the good stuff found its stride by mid-year as local theaters, organizations and venues figured out ways to keep people safe on and off stage as well as in the audience.

Music and movies fared a bit differently. The movie theaters may have been closed for a bit, but Netflix and Prime and Apple+ kept film fans entertained with new streaming films. Musicians pumped out music still, which kept our

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ARTS

From Page 9



Demi Lovato

Spotify and Pandora stations fresh. And simple pleasures like books and puzzles made us realize we didn't always need fancy gadgets or digital options to have a good time.

Our end-of-year arts and entertainment issue this week looks at primarily queer highlights in music and movies; it recalls some really fabulous stage productions and performances, and it has some book recommendations you may have missed.

There's no best or worst here because all these releases helped us get through some difficult times.

So, here's to 2021 — a year we had to figure out and make it work. Thanks to the following, that was a little easier to do.

A big year for queer music

This turned out to be a big year of smaller releases by queer artists. Pop,

hip-hop and country musicians turned it out big time in 2021, with major label and independent releases.

These album/extended play releases put some extra Pride in our ears this year.

Arlo Parks: *Collapsed in Sunbeams* (January) This bi British singer has made almost all of the year-end best-of lists with this impressive album of alt-pop-jazz-soul fusion. It's all in there in her debut, yet it feels like a complete experience of grippingly introspective songs that also feel like a cozy intimate listen.

• **Trixie Mattel: *Full Coverage Vol. 1*** (April) A mere four songs make up this delightful collection of covers of songs by Lana Del Rey, Johnny Cash, Violent Femmes and Cher. It definitely doesn't hurt that Trixie is also one of the very few Drag Race alums who can sing.

Demi Lovato: *Dancing with the Devil... the Art of Starting Over* (April) This is the first of several Texans on this list.

Lovato delivers their soulful voice in ways we haven't heard before. The first act is a bit somber until they declare ownership of their music, identity and individuality. This feels like the Lovato we've been



Todrick Hall



Allison Ponthier

waiting for.

Todrick Hall: *Femuline* (June) Another native Texan, Todrick churns out music relentlessly. *Femuline* is basically a banger-filled Pride parade in 14 tracks. He also released the final chapter of his *Haus Party* in February. The Pt. 3 EP, however, has been delayed since 2019.

Allison Ponthier: *Faking My Own Death* (August) This Allen native dropped a beautiful collection of songs that make this my album of the year even if it's only six songs. She comes out on "Cowboy" but it's "Harsh Critic" that drives home how she and we assess our own value.

Messer: *Roses* (August) Mitch Grassi stepped away from his Pentatonix sounds for this debut solo EP of thoughtful pop. The electronica-steeped songs are cool and confident with strong songwriting by the Arlington native. Don't worry. He's still with the a cappella group which also released two albums this year: *The Lucky Ones* in February and *Evergreen* in October.

Lil Nas X: *Montero* (September) Perhaps the queer album of the year, Lil Nas X did several things with this one album: He proved he was no one hit wonder. He unapologetically expressed his queerness, especially as a Black man. And he released a package of songs that were endlessly complex amid memorable hooks and beats. Also, this was his debut album. Just wow.

Brandi Carlile: *In These Silent Days* (October) It feels like on her seventh album that the world is finally taking proper notice of this longtime talent. She has the Grammys, she re-invigorated Tanya Tucker with 2019's *While I'm Livin'*, and co-created the genius supergroup *The Highwomen* with Natalie Hemby, Maren Morris, and Amanda Shires in the same year. This year, she wrote

songs during her lockdown and released this beautiful addition to her discography. The opening track, "Right on Time," kicks in the feels early.

Mainstream

Where the boys at? This was certainly a year of strong releases by female artists, and the following have all been either best sellers, critically acclaimed or

both.

Olivia Rodrigo: *Sour* (May) Rodrigo kicked off the year with the lauded No. 1 single "drivers license" and only kept up the energy from there.

Doja Cat: *Planet Her* (June) Doja Cat is so gloriously strange even with her blockbuster previous album *Hot Pink*. Here she mixes up hip-hop, pop and more with a continuing feminist statement that honors her contemporaries and forbearers. But it's also a just a bomb album to keep on repeat.

Billie Eilish: *Happier Than Ever* (July) You would never think that Eilish felt any pressure from delivering a stellar and award-winning debut full-length album *When We Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* in 2019 at the age of 17. Now at 19, she's bringing music that not only steps up from her last release, but makes music on her own terms. She's no doubt an original in today's music.

Kacey Musgraves: *Star-Crossed* (September) Musgraves debuted at No. 1 with her fourth album and garnered critical acclaim, but the album quietly came and went despite six songs released. "Justified" got the most attention. The album itself suffered under "is it country or pop" debates but either way, her reflection on her own divorce a month before Adele's is a remarkable, meditative listen.

Adele: *30* (November) I'm not gonna lie. I'm still deciding on this album, but what I know for sure is that Adele is reliable for emotion and drama. In her "divorce album," she delivers that which we love her, for but there are glimpses of her experimenting with new sounds that don't distract from her signature style. It's another chapter in her story that unfolds for us every few years or so. ■

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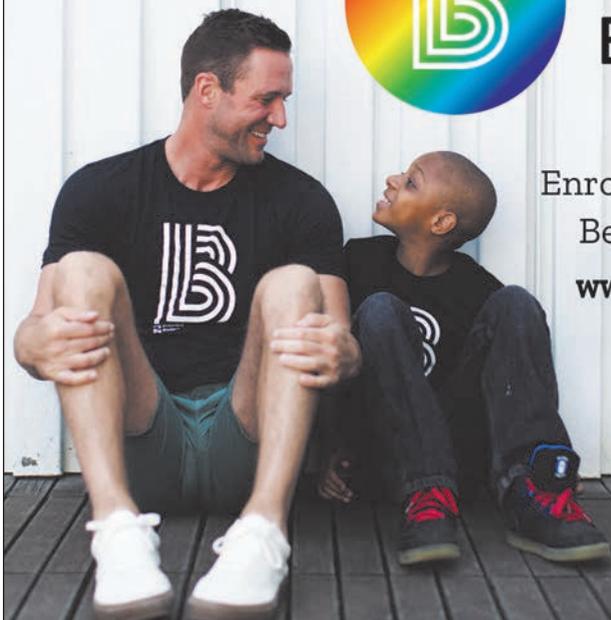
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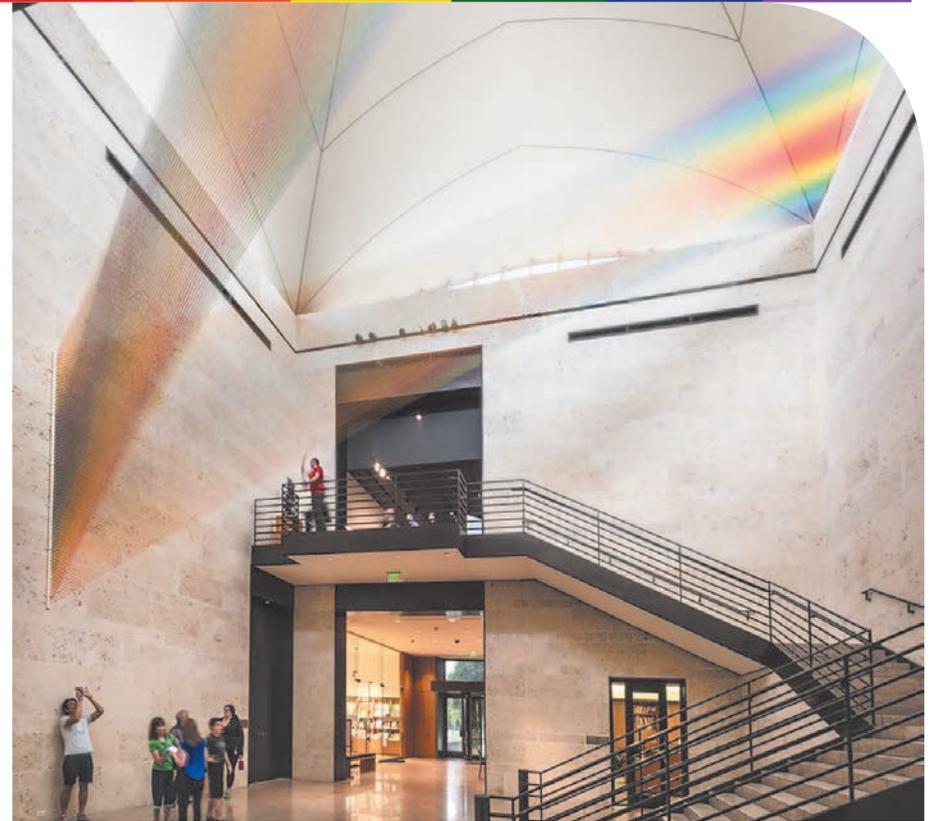
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Museums return with blockbusters

YEAR IN REVIEW • MUSEUMS



Gabriel Dawe's Plexus no. 34 at the Amon Carter Museum

From Queen Nefertari to Van Gogh, the local art scene offered a wide variety of well-attended shows

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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After closing for the pandemic, art museums in the area came roaring back with blockbuster exhibitions. The Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth kicked the year off with its *Queen Nefertari's Egypt* blockbuster that portrayed ancient Egypt as more progressive, in some ways, than Texas.

Under Egyptian law then, women were considered equal. Through artifacts that are surprisingly well preserved, we learn that women were al-

lowed to own property, own businesses and bring cases to court. In Texas, a woman couldn't own property without her husband's permission well into the 1970s. And in Egypt, women could serve as priestesses, something still denied women in many modern denominations.

Nefertari was the queen of Ramesses II, Egypt's most prolific builder, and the exhibit included hundreds of artifacts from her tomb.

The Kimbell followed up the *Queen* with *Buddha, Shiva, Lotus, Dragon*, pieces drawn from the collection of Asian art amassed by the John D. Rockefeller's. The only way to describe the quality of items shown in this exhibition is that on display was the finest example of that particular piece of glassware, pottery or sculpture known.

The museum ended the year with its encyclopedic exhibit *Turner's Modern World*. With more than 100 paintings included, the exhibit traced this first modern artist's career in a way he had



From the Kimbell's *Buddah Shiva Lotus Dragon* exhibit (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

never been studied before. From Fort Worth, the collection moves to the Tate in London.

The Dallas Museum of Art had a great year with a small Frida Kahlo exhibit, a first-of-its kind Van Gogh exhibit and a stunning Juan Gris show. With just a few pieces of Kahlo's art on display, lines formed to see the wide variety of her work from still life to cityscape to portrait, pencil sketch to oils represented in just a few examples. Hopefully, the DMA will share more of the work of this LGBTQ community favorite.

The current Van Gogh show presents a variety of the painter's olive grove canvasses created during the last year-and-a-half of the artist's life. The show's curator commented how surprised she was that these paintings had never been studied together as a group or given their own show before. And for real art nerds like me, what she learned through years studying these canvasses was how light affected the works. As vibrant as the colors remain today, they are faded compared to how they originally went on the canvases.

Finally, the DMA opened the year with its Juan Gris exhibit. One of the four pillars of cubism, along with Picasso, Braque and Leger, this was the first major retrospective of the artist's work in 35 years. What set Gris apart from the other cubists is that he was not an abstract painter. His subjects were very recognizable, making his work more accessible than that of the other great cubists.

Across the street, the Nasher Sculpture Center ends its year with the first museum presentation of Carol Bove's steel sculptures. Two of the nine pieces on exhibit were created especially for the exhibition.

At the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, *Imagined Realism: Scott and Stuart Gentling* remains on exhibit through Jan. 9. The 80-foot mural on the dome at Bass Hall was done by the Fort Worth brothers. Here's a chance to see the variety of work produced by these talented local artists.

Also on view is Gabriel Dawe's Plexus no. 34. Commissioned for the Carter, the museum notes that another in his series of rainbow-colored thread works is installed at Resource Center. Interesting to compare how this soaring piece reflects light and appears even more ethereal than even the centerpiece of Resource Center's art collection and how the artist's work has developed over the last few years.

The Modern began the year with gay artist Mark Bradford. His show studied his use of end papers, which protect hair from burning while using curlers to create permanent waves, in his multi-media creations. Coming to the Modern in May, *Women Painting Women* will feature 50 portraits from 46 artists from the 1960s to the present. Women have painted for centuries, but have never been given equal exposure by galleries or museums. This show promises to begin doing something about that. ■

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Roaring back

YEAR IN REVIEW • A&E



Theater, dance companies returned in 2021 to enthusiastic fans

RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
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The theater — as in capital T theater, including dance — suffered big in 2020/early 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. So when companies

began bringing shows back, audiences were there for it. Roaring applause was consistent and wasn't just for the performances, but for the entire experience of seeing live performances. There is a new energy in the audience at shows now and perhaps a deeper appreciation for theater and performing artists.

Here are some highlights of the year that resonated with or within the community.

Theatre Three: *The Music Man* at Union Coffeehouse (June). T3 made the clever decision to "tour" this outdoor production to three venues around Dal-

las. This Oak Lawn locale was a charming spot for a charming production. The outdoor summer night was just right and the actors worked well with the innovative blocking and passing emergency vehicle sirens.

ographer Omar Román De Jesús.

Uptown Players: *When Pigs Fly* (July) Not only did the company mark its 20th anniversary with this show, it came back with a vengeance to the stage. This explosion of color and queerness was the



Uptown Players celebrated its 20th season with *When Pigs Fly*

Bruce Wood Dance: *UNITE* (June). In this return to in-person performances, Bruce Wood Dance helped us finally take a breath and exhale. At what was possibly the first indoor venue performance in Dallas since COVID, the audience exploded in applause when the dancers simply came out onstage. Seeing them felt like we were given a chance at hope. Featuring two BWD pieces, the night also included two world premieres, including Joy Bollinger's "Blue" and "Sombrestistas" by New York-based queer chore-

ographer Omar Román De Jesús. For a couple of hours, Uptown safely gave us the escape we all needed after months of lockdown and anxiety with this laughalooza.

Dallas Summer Musicals: *Wicked* (September). What's to say about this show that hasn't been said? For those of us who hadn't seen it, this spectacle lived up to its hype in all its emerald glory at Music Hall. With a broader audience, crowds gladly followed rules and

ROARING, Page 21



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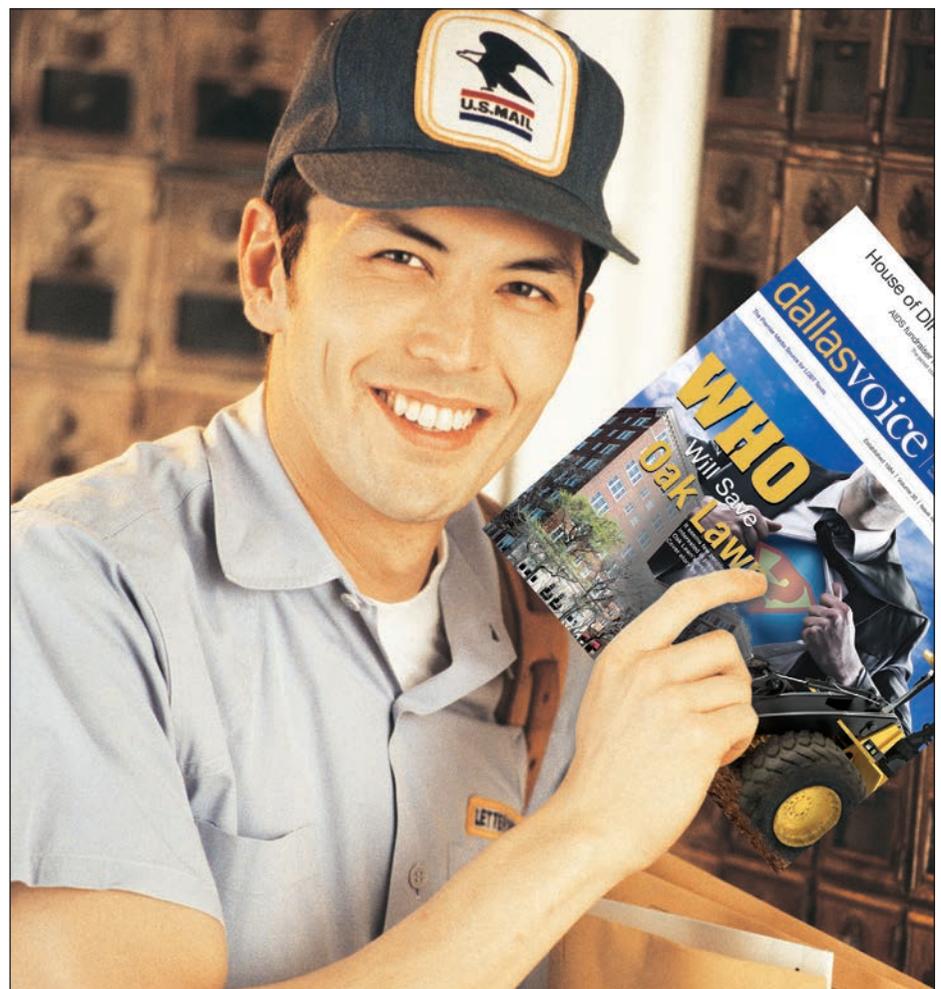
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ROARING

From Page 17



Turtle Creek Chorale brought 'Broadway Back' in 2021, top. Below, Talia Suskauer and Cleavant Derricks in *Wicked*. (Photo by Joan Marcus)

masked up to experience the return of touring big shows to town.

TITAS/DanceUnbound: *Alice by MOMIX* (September). This dance performance was jaw-dropping and a mic-drop return for T/DU to the Winspear Stage. The dance-illusion company gave a stunning performance that just filled the stage with movement and visuals that washed over the audience. Art, music, adventure and humor all rolled into this show that left a wonderful mark.

Echo Theatre: *It's My Party* (September). Telling the story of the women's right to vote and the divisiveness among two groups with the same goal was a masterful piece of theater by Echo. History and drama mixed well here in this clever regional premiere.

Broadway at the Bass: *Come From Away* (October). The season opening musical was a pure delight and a perfect return to a regular season for the

Bass. This Tony-winning musical may be one of the few ebullient and sweet stories about 9/11 with chipper tunes and a big heart.

Turtle Creek Chorale: *Broadway's Back, Baby!* (October). The TCC not only celebrated the return of Broadway, it was the first main stage show in almost two years. Featuring Major Attaway and Patty Breckinridge alongside the chorale's voices, this concert was a return to form.

Dallas Summer Musicals: *Hamilton* (November). Y'all. It's *Hamilton*. Despite any hype that may have died down, the show's energy did not and the audience was along for the ride the entire time with concert-like energy. The show was simply sensational with its choreography, storytelling and songs that — even after hearing them a million times (just me?) — still gave chills. ■



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LGBTQ on screens, big and small

YEAR IN REVIEW • FILM AND TV

During COVID, TV took up the slack, now the big screens are coming back

RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
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Just as did theater and live shows return in 2021, so did the movies. Film had kind of hovered there for a bit, but then the problem was finding an actual theater that was open. Our streaming services stepped up and saved us from absolute isolation.

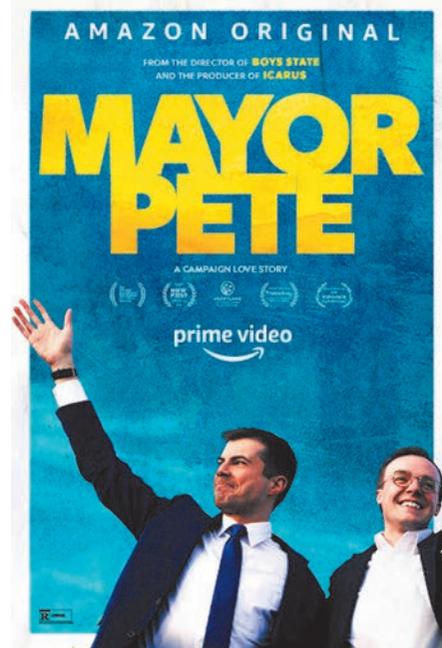
Now, we're getting the best of both

worlds: Films are on the big screen again; television continues with both network and streaming offerings that are satisfying. And some movies are including their first runs on streaming services and in theaters (thank you, HBO Max and Disney+).

LGBTQ content was diverse throughout this year in films, but queer female-centric shows seemed to be lacking a bit this year. Here are some highlights of this year from both the big and small screens.

Film

Fear Street trilogy (June). A same-sex couple is at the center of all the strange goings-on in this Netflix troika of films.



Based on R.L. Stine's teenage horror series of the same name, these films delivered the goods on horror. The first film, *Fear Street Part One: 1994* follows a group of teenagers in Shadyside who unleash an ancient evil that has troubled the town since its early colonial days. Deena is at the center of it all, and, through the course of the three films, is determined

to save her girlfriend. (Available on Netflix).

Everybody's Talking About Jamie (September). This fun adaptation based on a true story was set for a 2020 release but debuted in the U.S. this fall. Jamie is a 16-year-old student who dreams of becoming a drag queen. But he's also in high school. The prom is soon; the boys are bullies, and even Dad is an obstacle. Thrilling songs and fabulous set designs (and a lovely Richard E. Grant) help Jamie figure out just what needs to be done. Available on Amazon Prime.

Mayor Pete (October). This documentary tells the tale of Pete Buttigieg's effort to become the youngest and the first gay president. The film follows his campaign to what was considered an unexpected win in Iowa. Not only does it focus on the goings-on, it also gives airtime to the man who is now Secretary of Transportation and his husband, Chasten. Available on Amazon Prime.

Marvel's Eternals (November). Marvel returned with a vengeance to movie theaters this year, with three huge flicks. Disney finally released *Black Widow* followed by *Shang Chi and the Legend of the*



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10 Rings. But we got our first gay superhero in *Eternals*. Audiences were introduced to the genius Phastos, along with his husband Ben and son Jack. Bad guys and superpowers aside, the husbands' kiss was a big moment for us queer fans. Available on Disney+ in January.

Single All the Way (December) All the elements of a Hallmark/Lifetime movie are here: the New England set-

ting, the rugged object of attraction, the Christmas play debacle. Only this time, the love interests are gay. Michael Urie is a social media specialist who just wants to own a plant shop (Awww!). He's also perpetually single and doesn't want to deal with his family who just wants him to find a good man. The glory of this story is that there's no big deal about the queerness here. Like *Schitt's Creek*, everyone just gets along, and two

guys holding hands isn't a shocker for the rest of the townspeople.

Television

Halston (Netflix) Queer TV icon Ryan Murphy (*American Horror Story*, *Scream Queens*) created this mini-series about the gay designer starring a straight Ewan McGregor (*Really, Ryan?*). Fortunately, McGregor gave a career-high performance as the designer in this story of his rise to fame in the '70s and '80s. Also starring Vera Farmiga, Rory Culkin and Bill Pullman.

It's A Sin (HBO Max) The scene is London in the '80s, and the group of gays in this series come of age in the face of HIV/AIDS. The limited series is just five episodes long, but that covers a decade as friends navigate lives, parties and disease through 1991.

We're Here (HBO Max) *RuPaul's Drag Race* alums Bob the Drag Queen, Eureka O'Hara and Shangela head to small towns across America in this reality series. What's really hooking fans is the emotional connection the queens make

with their newly-minted "drag children" as well as those folks' friends and families. This isn't about who has the most fabulous "lewk" on the mainstage or who wins a lip-sync battle. *We're Here* is about people helping people be out, loud and proud and make a difference right there where they live.

Queen of the Universe (Paramount+). Hosted by Graham Norton and produced by RuPaul, this competition takes drag to a new level with queens who can sing. Queens from around the world compete, including Texas performer Ada Vox. Judges include Michelle Visage, Trixie Mattell, Vanessa Williams and Leona Lewis. The 14 queens compete for \$250,000. No lip-synching for their lives here.

Queer You Are (HBO Max) This Spanish gem was a delightful find on the streaming service. Based loosely on the life of series creator Robert Enriquez, the dramedy follows him in the '80s when he's an overweight teen who loves musicals. Then we see him grow into his adulthood and finally catch up to him today as a writer. ■

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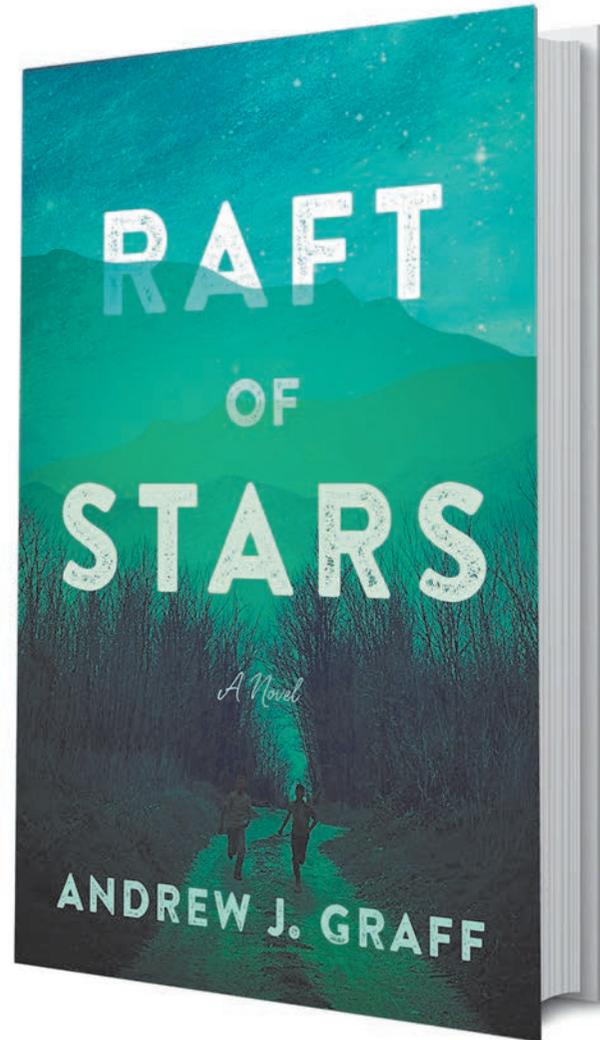
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Top reads

YEAR IN REVIEW • BOOKS



There's a lot of winter left, and 2021's best books offer a great way to spend it

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER | Bookworm Sez
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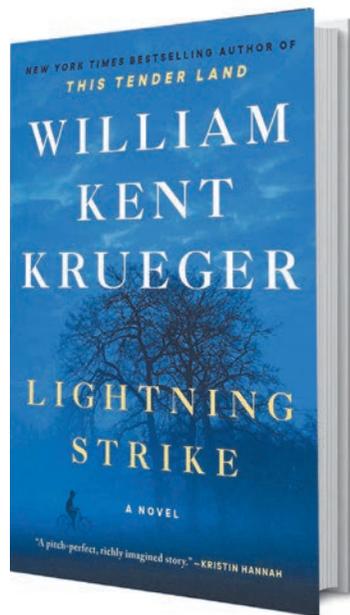
There's still a lot of winter left. That's the fact staring you in the face. Once the holiday decorations are down, the toys are all put away, and you've rediscovered your gift certificates, what do you do with them?

You buy books, of course! And to get you started, here are a few sure-fire picks for the Best of 2021:

FICTION

What would you do if life throws you a curve-ball? *In The Guncle* by Steven Rowley (Putnam, \$27), gay man, former TV star, Palm Springs fixture, no-responsibilities Patrick is asked to take care of his niece and nephew for the long-term. He never wanted kids at all. He never wanted to fall in love with them, either. Cute, sweet, funny, heartfelt — what more could you want?

You don't have to have read any of the other Cork O'Conner novels to



want *Lightning Strike* by William Kent Krueger (Atria, \$27), which takes readers back to 1963 and a murder in small-town Minnesota. Cork O'Conner is a young teen then, the son of the local sheriff, and he knows that Big John Manydeeds couldn't have possibly hung himself. But how does a boy go about proving something like that? For existing fans, that's a can't-miss question. For new fans, it'll send you racing toward the rest of the Cork O'Conner series.

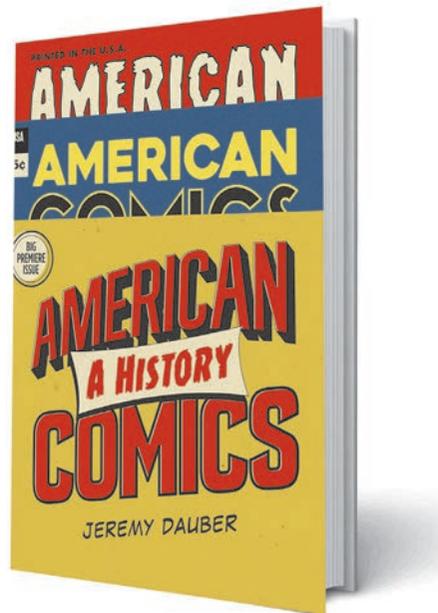
Watchers of *The Handmaid's Tale* will absolutely devour *Outlawed* by Anna North (Bloomsbury, \$26). In a small corner of Texas, at an unstated time, 17-year-old Ada is struggling to give her husband children, which embarrasses him, and that's something only witches do. And so, Ada is cast out of the community and heads north, to safety, where barren women are outlaws. This dystopian, feminist Western is dangerous and delicious.

Raft of Stars by Andrew J. Graff (Ecco, \$26.99) is a coming-of-age story of two boys who are best friends, and one of them is abused by his father. Tired of seeing his friend hurt, the other boy shoots the man, and both boys run away to escape what surely will be legal trouble and maybe even jail time. They're running toward a lie, though, and they're heading for a waterfall they don't know is there. This is one of those books with heartbreakingly beautiful prose in a story that'll leave you with sweaty palms.

And finally, have you ever wondered what your life would be like if you'd taken a different path? In *The Nine Lives of Rose Napolitano* by Donna Freitas (Pa-

mela Dorman Books, \$26), one woman has many options in her life, each one ending in a way she never thought possible. It's like *Groundhog Day* but with a twist that'll roll around in your mind for days.

NON-FICTION



For every kid who grew up with a pile of comic books next to the bed, in a drawer, or in the closet, *American Comics: A History* by Jeremy Dauber (W.W. Norton, \$35) is a must-have. Here, Dauber follows comics from their political roots to today's activist cartoons and how we went from Katzenjammer Kids to MAD Magazine to comix as we know them. The bonus is that Dauber puts comics into fascinating historical perspective.

Did you buy your lottery ticket this week? If you did, it'll make a fine bookmark for *Jackpot: How the Super-Rich Really Live — and How Their Wealth Harms Us All* by Michael Mechanic (Simon & Schuster, \$28). You might think twice about the burdens of wealth after reading this book, and you might re-examine your thoughts on what one person's wealth does to everyone else.

Readers who love memoirs will enjoy *Punch Me Up to the Gods* by Brian Broome (HMH, \$26), who writes about growing up, being in love with the boy who abused him and the father who did, too. It's a coming-out tale that's sometimes funny and always graceful, one that will sometimes make you gasp and that you'll be glad you read.

You know that feeling you get when

TOP, Page 27



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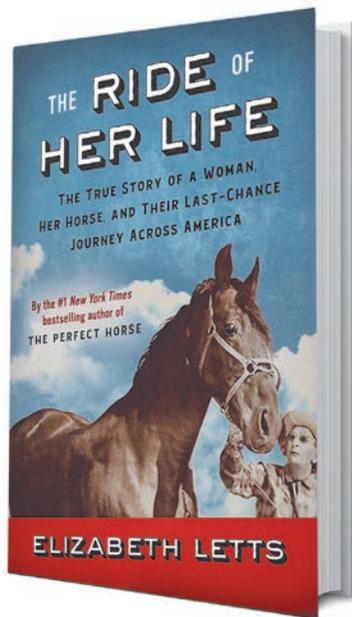
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TOP, From Page 25



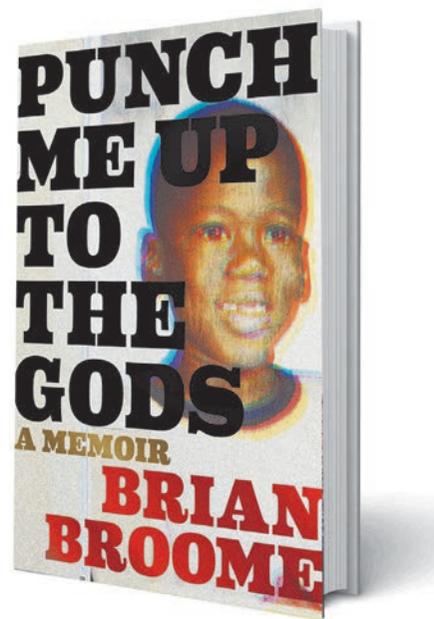
you come across a stack of old magazines in the attic? That gentle, hometown, old-time feeling is extra-rich inside *The Ride of Her Life* by Elizabeth Letts (Ballantine, \$28). This is the story of Annie Wilkins, aging, ailing and alone, and the audacious cross-country ride she decides to

take on a horse she'd just purchased. This feel-good story is set in the 1950s, and its neighborliness might make it be the perfect antidote for today's world.

Lastly, *The Redemption of Bobby Love* by Bobby and Cheryl Love with Lori L. Tharps (Mariner Books / HMH Books, \$28) might be the most unusual memoir you read this winter. As a young man, Walter Miller ran away from a prison bus and to New York, where he renamed himself Bobby Love and went into hiding in plain sight. Love kept to the straight-and-narrow, fell in love, got married and raised a family but 40-some years later, the law caught up with him. This astounding, impossible story, told alternately between both Loves, is one you'll ... um, love.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Based on a real event (the Mexican Revolution), *The Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* by Alda P. Dobbs (Sourcebooks, \$17.99) is the story of a young girl who becomes responsible for her Abuelita and her little sister when the Federales destroy their village and their



home. This causes the trio to run north, one step ahead of those who wish to kill them, on a race to reach the border and make it to America. It's an exciting read for 8-to-14-year-olds.

Kids who love silly stories will enjoy *Egg Marks the Spot: A Skunk and Badger Story* by Amy Timberlake, the second in what appears to be a series. A whirlwind named Skunk and his very

staid, very reticent friend, Badger are at odds again — this time, over a missing rock from Badger's collection. There are chickens involved, a bit of a mystery, dinosaurs and a lot of fun for your 7-to-10-year-old. Hint: find the first Skunk and Badger book; your child will want that one, too.

For teens who enjoy unique memoirs, *Violet and Daisy: The Story of Vaudeville's Famous Conjoined Twins* by Sarah Miller (Schwartz & Wade, \$17.99) is the story of the Hilton sisters and their careers and lives. Born conjoined at the bottom of the spine, Violet and Daisy were "adopted" by a woman who ruled their lives. When she died, the girls were passed on to that woman's heirs, who mishandled their careers and left them nearly penniless. This is a thrilling tale of legalities, Vaudeville and two women determined to make their own ways, despite that they were conjoined forever. It's the perfect read for any 14-and-older reader, including adults who love memoirs.

So now, get to the bookstore. Hunt at the library. Don't miss these excellent books for adults and kids — and Season's Readings!

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GAY AGENDA



THE TURTLES ARE SINGING

Turtle Creek Chorale wraps up its 41st season with a return to Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St., for the

2021 version of the group's beloved holiday concert. There's something for everyone in the Turtles' "Sure Stars Shining" show, including plenty of the joy, laughter, peace and love we've all come to expect from TCC for the holidays, conveyed through traditional carols, new renditions of old favorites and even some dancing. TCC presents the 90-minute-no-intermission holiday show at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 17, 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 18, and again at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 19. And if that isn't enough for you, TCC presents "An Evening with David Archuleta" on Tuesday, Dec. 21, at First United Methodist Church in Richardson, 503 N. U.S. 75, beginning at 7 p.m. The season 7 *American Idol* runner-up will perform solo and, on a few songs, with the men of TCC. Tickets for all the shows are available at TurtleCreekChorale.com.



PRIDE ON ICE

The Allen Americans ice hockey team hosts **Pride Night Friday**, Dec. 17, at The Village at Allen, 200 E. Stacy Road, No. 1350. Tickets for

the game, which will see the Americans face off against the Orlando Solar Bears, range from \$26-\$37, and for each ticket to the game sold, the team will donate \$6 to the Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund. Get tickets and information at AllenAmericans.com.



PAWS AND CLAUS

Operation Kindness, one of North Texas' leading no-kill shelters, is bringing in Santa Claus on Saturday, Dec. 18, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. to pose

for pics with your furry friends. For \$20, a professional photographer will take 10 photos and put them on a flash drive for you, or for \$15, the photographer will shoot the photos on your phone if you prefer. Proceeds benefit Operation Kindness, located at 3201 Earhart Drive in Carrollton.



HAVE A HARMONIOUS HOLIDAY

Pentatonix, the a cappella quintet created by Arlington natives Scott Hoying, Mitch Grassi and Kirstin Maldonado

(and that is featured on the cover of the 2021 edition of Out North Texas, the area's premiere LGBTQ visitors and relocation guide) performs in concert Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 22-23, at Texas Trust CU Theatre, 1001 Performance Place in Grand Prairie, beginning each night at 7 p.m. This is the group's first tour since the pandemic began, and fans are eager to see them live again. So tickets are going fast. Get yours soon at TicketsOnSale.com.

David Archuleta, who became a star as the runner-up on season 7 of *American Idol* and who recently came out as bisexual, performs Tuesday, Dec. 21, with The Turtle Creek Chorale at First United Methodist Church Richardson, 503 N. U.S. 75-Central Expressway 1000. Archuleta will sing a selection of solos, and some numbers with TCC. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the show starts at 7 p.m. General admission tickets are \$50, available at TurtleCreekChorale.com/season.

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.

• Every Monday: THRIVE

Resource Center's THRIVE Monday Support Group for LGBTQ adults 50 and older meets via Zoom at this time. It starts at 11:45 a.m. and it is led by interns from the SMU counseling program. For more information on the support group and how to join, please send an email to THRIVE@myresourcecenter.org.

DECEMBER

• Dec. 17: Pride Night at Allen Americans

The Allen American Professional Hockey Club holds Pride Night at Credit Union of Texas Event Center, 200 E. Stacy Road, Building 1350, Allen. AllenAmericans.com.

• Dec. 17: LeAnn Rimes

LeAnn Rimes performs an evening of holiday classics and hits in her Home for the Holidays Christmas concert at the Winspear Opera House. ATTPAC.org.

• Dec. 17-19: Hollywood Holidays

Experience the magic of the silver screen come to life with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. DallasSymphony.org.

• Dec. 17-19 Sure Stars Shining

The Turtle Creek Chorale wraps up its 41st season with a return to Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. for its holiday concert.

Friday at 7:30 p.m., Saturday at 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Tickets at TurtleCreekChorale.com.

• Dec. 18: Vets of SNL

Saturday Night Live veterans Jon Lovitz, Chris Kattan, Tim Meadows and Finesse Mitchell appear at the Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. at 7 p.m. ATTPAC.org.

• Dec. 18-April 17: Sandy Rodriguez in Isolation

A selection of new works on paper conceived by the Los Angeles-based painter during her Joshua Tree Highlands Artist Residency in Southern California at the height of COVID-19. The exhibition features more than 30 landscapes, protest scenes, maps, and botanical studies, created using Rodriguez's hand-processed inks and watercolors, which she derived from plants and mineral pigments native to the region. Amon Carter Museum, 3501 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth. CarterMuseum.org.

• Dec. 20: Sarah Brightman

Sarah Brightman – A Christmas Symphony at 7:30 p.m. at Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. ATTPAC.org.

Dec. 21: An Evening With David Archuleta

The evening will feature David singing many of his solo offerings, as well as a few selections with the men of the Turtle Creek Chorale. The TCC will also share some holiday favorites of their own at 7 p.m. at First United Methodist Church Richardson, 503 N. U.S.

75-Central Expressway 1000, Richardson. TurtleCreekChorale.com.

• 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.

• Dec. 22-23: Pentatonix

A capella quintet Pentatonix at 7 p.m. at Texas Trust CU Theatre, 1001 Performance Place, Grand Prairie. ticketsonsale.com.

• Dec. 25: Christmas

• 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. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

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

Ask Howard

HOW TO DO THE WRONG THING RIGHT

Another COVID Christmas, and some birthday wishes

“Dahoo Dores, Fahoo Fores/Welcomes Christmas, come this way . . .”

Ah, pray tell, and what enchanting aromatics are these, wafting their perfumes so sweetly in the crisp holiday air? Is that frankincense, I smell? Myrrh? Succulent Whoville roast beast? Ha! Dream on, bitches!

Uh huh, my fellow revelers, that’s right: Merrily, we all stand here, again, globally shackled in the frost of our togetherness, shambling into yet a third year now in a row, silently screaming against our forced entry into the bottomless maw of a world roiling in COVID unkillable.

No longer an anomaly, Rona, and her passel of demented, shapeshifting sisters, ain’t just pitching their camp tents here on Earth, en route to juicier killing fields. No, they made it to where they were heading. Destination: Earth! Ever forward, each mutant year shall be slightly more zombie-worthy than the one preceding it.

In the beginning, way back now in that antediluvian era of the year 2020, the tastelessly unhinged Rona’s apocalyptic pod crash-landed, apparently, from outer space onto some provincial, previously unheard of iron-curtain nest of minions calling itself, of all laughable things, Wuhan; next, popping up her even uglier head out of nowhere, pod sister Delta, took over the reins for 2021. And now comes that preciously arduous little puddle of phlegm, our newest Tomb Patrol Chief Prison Guard of 2022, Bitch Mistress Omnicorp? Omnicorp? Omarosa? Or whatever the fuck it is she politely calls herself.

One would think such terror-tweaking triplets as these three yeller-eyed scamps — capable of holding the entire world hostage, possessing all the allure of some blood-splattered tripod left abandoned in a jizz-reeking dungeon’s snuff film raid — ought to be minimally capable of putting their trident skullcaps of respiratory relinquishment together to come up with just some kind of representatively pithy acronym easily digestible for public consumption — these three wizened shrews holding Christmases past, pres-

ent and future all in padlocks.

Unfortunately, RDO as an acronym — Rona, Delta and Omicron, abbreviated — doesn’t possess one scintilla of any ominously memorable zing. ODR, likewise, sure doesn’t have any zip to it. ROD, being that it’s a real word already, would only muddle the confusion further.

DOR, maybe? Nah. Wait, now! What if we just add another letter to that last one? Say, an “A”? I mean, hell, an A-named variant is bound to show up eventually. With DORA, we’re just beating ‘em to the punch, is all. If you ask me, she’s welcome to cover the whole, representative bitch lot of ‘em here on out.

DORA! So slimily innocuous, so harmlessly horrific. “Why, DORA, you grinning little rascalion! Whatcha got hidin’ there behind your back? Come on, DORA, show Daddy whatcha found.” Purr-fect!

Alrighty then, my pretty little lost toys, everybody in unison now, ready? Set? Aaaaand, with a big ol’ holly-to-the-jolly, snap it — one, two, three: “DORA, you whore, stay away from me! Don’t want no kisses. Not one. Not three. DORA, you Grinch, where your heart be?”

“Dahoo Dores, Fahoo fores/Welcomes Christmas, bring your cheer/Welcomes all Whos, far and near . . .”

So to close the final Ask Howard column of this hideous year, my sweet tots, during this twinkling week leading up to Jesus’s birthday, allow me give a big Christmases past, present and future shoutout, please, to three dear friends of mine — each of whose birthdays also falls during this same festive week.

Firstly, I must blow a remembrance kiss up to my friend, Diane, the best true friend I ever made upon moving here to Dallas, way back 27 years ago now. Sadly, she was also the first one I lost. What was supposed to have been but a three-hour, same day in-and-out minor surgical procedure didn’t turn out quite as expected. At least Diane’s death wasn’t for naught: ever since, blood clot-preventative leg-gings have become mandatory for any



patient undergoing surgeries necessitating bed convalescence afterwards. Beautiful Diane. I only wish we’d gotten to share this ride together a little longer, Sweetie, here on planet Earth.

Secondly, to a man who’s been a treasured friend of mine now, since from way back in my wild-child/youth-quaker days of giddy, unexpected success with my first novel right out the starting gate, at 23. There Louis stood, sparkling in the June sunshine, silver-haired and gleaming, as he ground-out a flicked cigarette butt upon the stoop of his Chelsea brownstone, nodding my way. “You Norwegian?” he grinned, while I skipped blondly by, to which I turned back, smiling, to answer, “I can be.”

I need to say to Louis, “Happy birthday, Sunshine! I hope you’re strong enough, still, to read this. But, don’t give up. Not yet. Hell, you’re radiant! You’re my only friend still around who also managed to maneuver blindly through that fuckin’ two-decades’ long stretch of untreatable, AIDS-laced minefields, and come out unscathed on the other side without so much as even a scratch. What’s a goddam little tumor, Louis? Just hold on. You can beat this! I’m coming home at Christmas — see you then, Sunshine!”

And, finally, in my homage of holiday closure here, so befitting the still rescuable hopes of next Christmas Future’s recovery, I’d like to give a Happy 30th salute of admiration to no cooler a dude you’d ever hope to meet than my friend, Clayton, whose 30th birthday just so happens, serendipitously enough, to coincide precisely with this very column’s publication date.

Blessed with rakishly handsome looks — think square-jaw bravura of KGB secret agent meets chiseled Olympian icon, Michael Phelps — famous within certain circles of town for his intrepid decency and moral trustworthiness, Clayton inadvertently reveals himself, over and over, to be one of the most conscientious-

ly honorable persons I’ve ever known. They don’t make ‘em much stronger than he. Must be something in Clayton’s background; as a former PJ (pararescue jumper) and an elite member of the Air Force’s Special Ops Command, it was Clayton’s former job, by definition, to lead humanitarian missions of rescue and recovery within combat environments. The right stuff required of a man to become a PJ is informally known as “Superman School.” Necessitating two full years to complete, it is the longest, most arduous military training course in the world.

The PJs’ motto — “These Things We Do, That Others May Live” — is, apparently, a life-long dedicated commitment to an ever-forward marching mantra. All I can say is, “Way to go, Clay! Trust me, it only gets easier from here out. Anyone with the goods to live to be 30, under such pressure-extremes as you handle daily, can surely glide it to 90. You’re just getting started, man!”

“Dahoo Dores, Fahoo Fores/Christmas Day is here at last, so long as we have hands to clasp/Welcomes Christmas, Christmas day!”

— Howard Lewis Russell

We all ask ourselves questions, some even crazier than me, and some shall ride agleam rocketships tiptop the Christmas tree! My gifted ones, send in brightly your 2022 daz- zlers to AskHoward@dallasvoice.com.

this week’s solution

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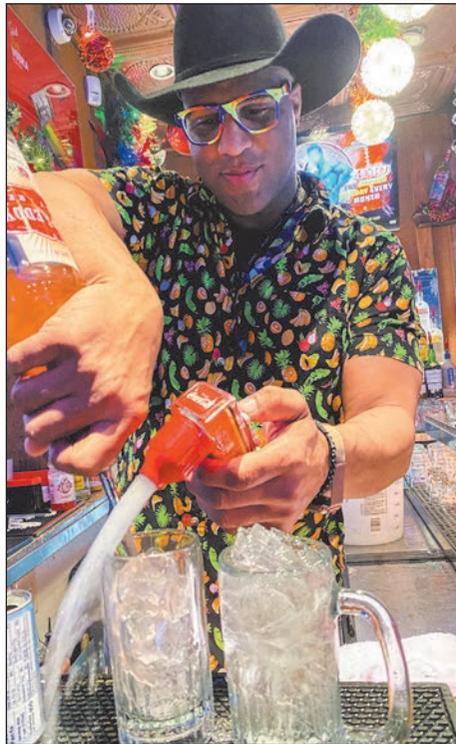


Mena and Taylor



Mychael and Morgan

SCENE • On the Strip



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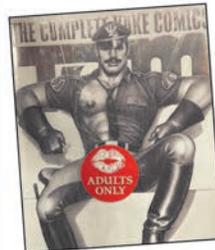
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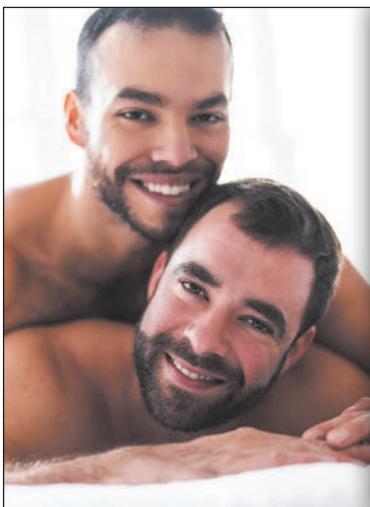


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Solution on Page 29

Across

- 1 Successful cross dresser's cry?
- 6 Sissy
- 10 Fruity drinks
- 14 Snaky discharge
- 15 General vicinity
- 16 Distance of 1760 yards
- 17 Cause of "bed death"
- 18 Brown quickly
- 19 "Woe ___!" *Hamlet*
- 20 Start of a line from *Frasier*
- 23 Morally straight kind of badge
- 24 Amount of AZT, e.g.
- 25 Large droning bugs
- 28 Photo in an old album
- 31 United, to Renee Vivien
- 32 Med. care groups
- 34 Contemporary of Bela
- 35 More of the line
- 38 More of the line
- 41 Brew ending
- 42 Does without oral gratification
- 44 Home for Troy Perry
- 45 Some, on the Somme
- 46 "Puttin' on the ___"
- 47 Fused
- 48 Unlikely male stat posting
- 50 Bird feeder food

51 End of the line

- 54 Christmas threesome
- 58 Beginning of *Rent*
- 59 Cut
- 60 Character that said the line
- 61 Ridge on Melissa's neck
- 62 *Aida* solo
- 63 Ryan of *Partners*
- 64 Top target
- 65 Belgian border river
- 66 Brand for cutting leaves of grass

Down

- 1 ___ *Got You Under You Under My Skin*
- 2 Word on a Cambodian map
- 3 A girl named Frank
- 4 Bourbon blend
- 5 Used the mouth to express pleasure
- 6 Short-tempered
- 7 Start of a legal conclusion
- 8 Angry in., for example
- 9 Toni Morrison novel
- 10 In the thick of California mecca
- 11 Gay-friendly Patron of people in the navy

13 Get a load of

- 21 SEP, e.g.
- 22 It's attractive and a bit of a shock
- 25 Cut up
- 26 Toughen up
- 27 Socrates' Athens, and others
- 28 Vibrator and plug
- 29 Model's asset
- 30 Came to a halt
- 33 City of Baudelaire's land
- 36 Zimbalist of *The F.B.I.*
- 37 Save money for it
- 39 Nemesis of Tinkerbell
- 40 Ball-busting workplace
- 43 Salon workers
- 47 "M-m-m!" to Sappho
- 49 Head of costume designing
- 50 Allan once of Minnesota politics
- 51 Rubber vessel, perhaps
- 52 Light brown
- 53 Confession of mendacity
- 55 Protected, to seamen
- 56 Its teeth point in all directions
- 57 Mykonos, for one
- 60 Head movement

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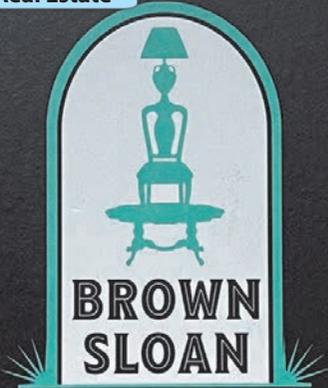
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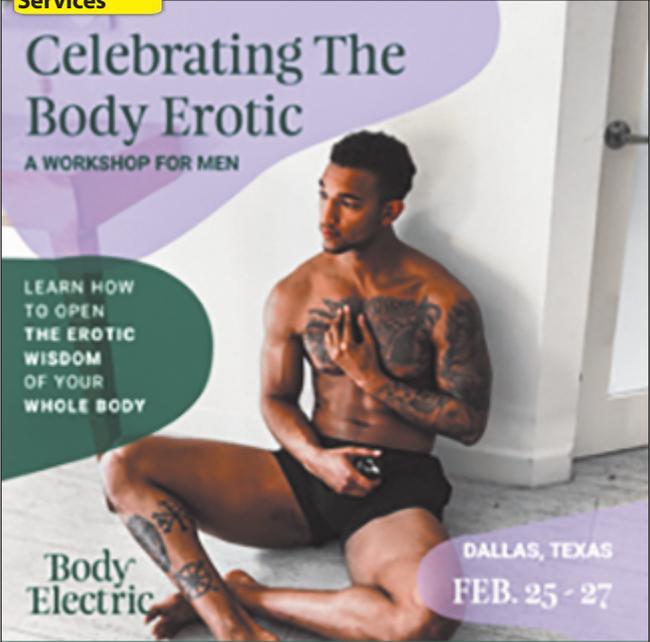
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