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The
Law Issue

Arts, Community, Commitment

Terry Loftis, the man behind the bow tie, dedicated to activism for the arts and his LGBTQ community

By Rich Lopez, page, 12



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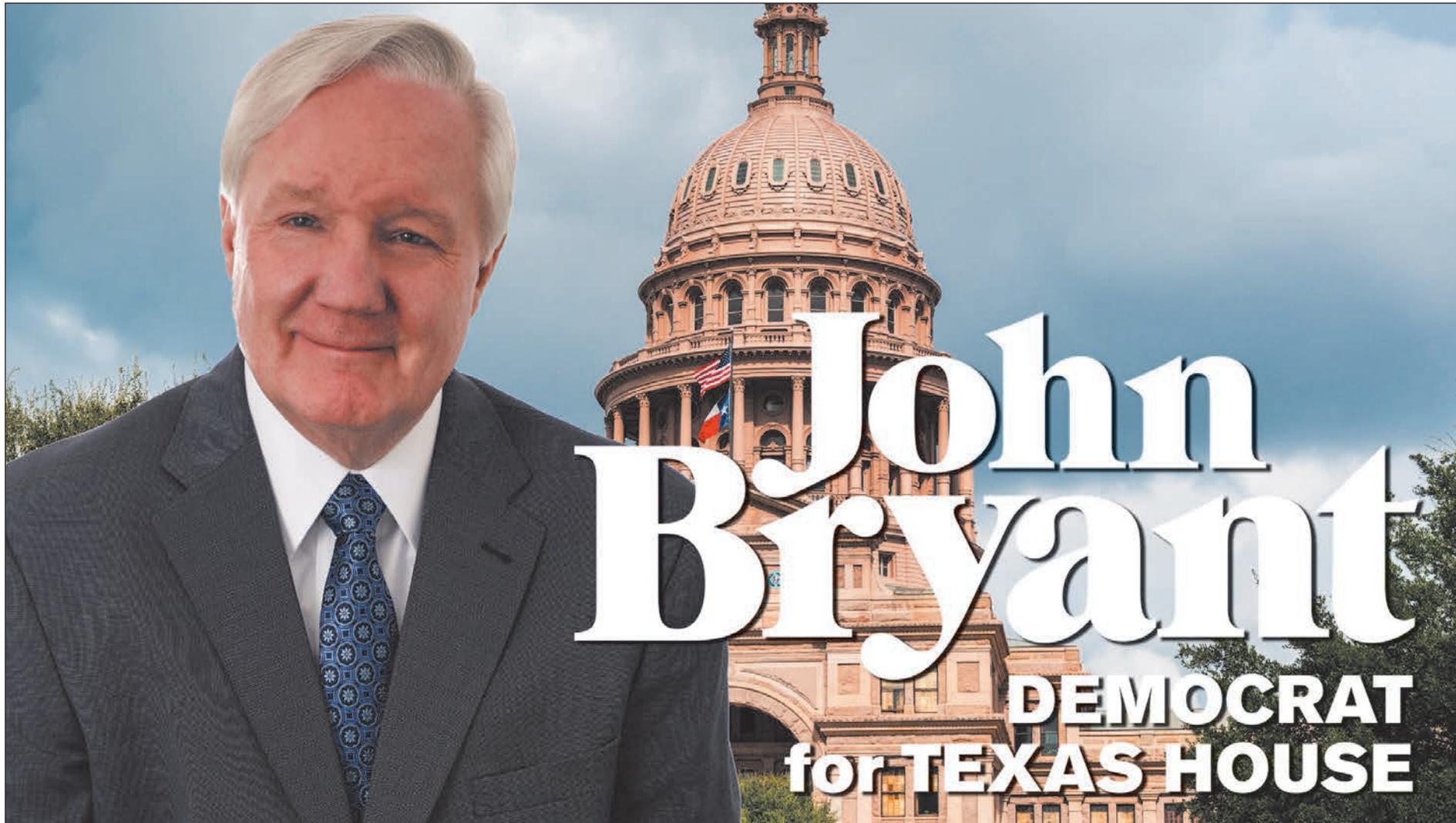
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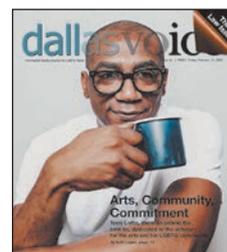


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Woman cured of HIV through stem cell transplant

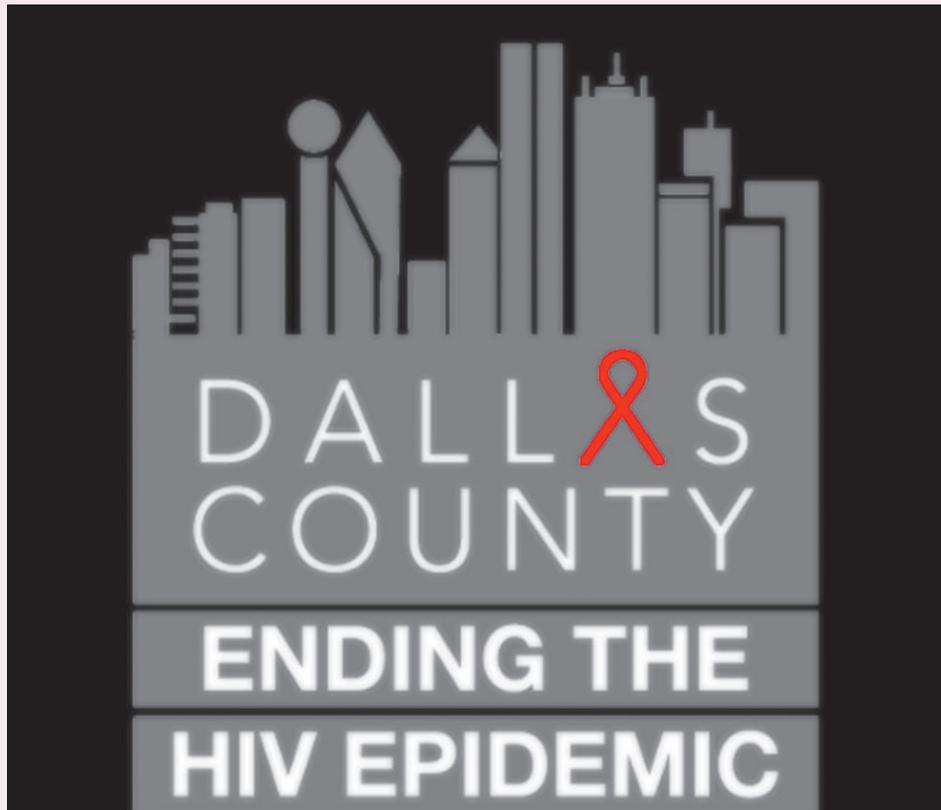
Researchers announced Tuesday, Feb. 15, that a U.S. woman has been cured of HIV after receiving a stem cell transplant from a donor who was naturally resistant to the human immunodeficiency virus, according to a report by Julie Steenhuisen with Reuters.

The woman is the third person and the first woman to be cured of HIV. Her case is the first involving umbilical cord blood, a newer approach that could make this treatment available to more people.

The woman received the stem cell transplant as a treatment for acute myeloid leukemia. She has now been in remission and free of HIV for 14 months without the need for antiretroviral therapy. The two other patients — a white man and a Latino man — were cured of HIV after receiving adult stem cells, which are more frequently used in bone marrow transplants.

Sharon Lewin, president-elect of the International AIDS Society, said that while bone marrow transplants are not a viable strategy to cure most people with HIV, this case “confirms that a cure for HIV is possible and further strengthens using gene therapy as a viable strategy for an HIV cure.”

— Tammye Nash



Dallas County launches campaign to end HIV epidemic by 2030

Dallas County aims to end the HIV epidemic by 2030 through a multi-pronged campaign that promotes HIV prevention, testing, treatment and substance abuse recovery, according to a press release from the county this week.

New diagnoses of HIV continue, and one in eight people unknowingly live with HIV, the press release notes, adding that “knowing your HIV status and taking steps to prevent further transmission will go a long way towards ending HIV in Dallas.”

The Dallas County Ending the HIV Epidemic Campaign focuses on information and resources that provide hope for eliminating the HIV epidemic, with information available at EndHIVDallas-County.org.

Dallas County Health and Human Services Director Dr. Philip Huang said, “This is an ambitious goal. But with new treatments, prevention methods and routine testing, we feel that it’s very achievable. Through our work with community stakeholders and organizations, we will continue to promote resources and information so that all Dallas County residents know their HIV status and have access to quality care.”

— Tammye Nash

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Obituary



Brian Arnold Lackey passed away on Jan. 5 at Baylor Scott and White Medical Center in Dallas after a short illness.

Brian was born May 21, 1962, in Los An-

geles, Calif. His true passion was his job. Brian got to see the world as a flight attendant. He started flying in 1981 with Eastern Airlines and flew with US Airways until 9-11 and ATA Airlines until being hired by Continental.

Brian was preceded in death by his furbabies Coco and Cesar. He loved his babies.

He is survived by his loving husband and partner of nearly 20 years, Larry Adams; his three furbabies Lucian, Karla Jean and Eva Marie of Irving; his mother Bonnie "Wanda" Lackey of The Woodlands; his father and stepmother, William and Ellen Lackey of Conroe; his sisters Susan Sallee and husband Rick of New Waverly, and Debra Felleer and husband Brent of Pomona, Calif.; sisters-in-law Connie Hornbeck of Logan, Iowa, Carolyn Wolterman and husband Michael of Missouri Valley, Iowa; brother-in-law James Adams and wife Amanda of Ludington, Mich., and many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held for Brian on May 14 at 2 p.m. at Cathedral of Hope United Church of Christ, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

The family has asked that memorial contributions be sent in Brian's name to your favorite animal rescue or Cathedral of Hope Outreach Ministries.



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Bliss? Or just ignorant?

History isn't likely to look kindly on the ignorance of the right wing

Ignorance is not bliss. But it is sometimes peaceful.

Watching the news on television or reading a newspaper has proven, in my case, to elevate blood pressure levels and induce a strong feeling of dread. When the Republican National Committee officially states that the deadly insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021, was "legitimate political discourse," and when local GOP groups invite certifiable wackos like Marjorie Taylor Green to be keynote speakers, I get a ringing in my ears that just might signal a stroke.

We seem to be living in an age where a good portion of the country's politicians would rather kowtow to a bellicose hate-monger than carry out the business of governing the country. A second-rate reality show personality has kidnapped the Grand Old Party and is holding it hostage. Politicians on the right are afraid of the power of his sound bites and fear losing their jobs if they don't play along.

That shows these politicians' shallow depth of character. Their principals and morals are subject to the whims of one man, and they look very much like a cult.

When their shining stars are Q-Anon followers, and their fearless leader is the man who stoked so much anger in a crowd of followers that they attacked Congress shouting threats of murder for Republicans and Democrats alike, I have to step back and wonder what alternate reality we are living in.

I am reminded of a quote by a Bush of official years ago who said, "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality — judiciously, as you will — we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study, too. And that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors ... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."



Hardy Haberman
Flagging Left

its roots it would be unrecognizable to onlookers from just a decade ago. The leaders of today's GOP have become masters of deception and media manip-

At the time I thought it mere hubris. But today I fear it is much more.

The party of Lincoln has strayed so far from

ulation and have raised ignorance to a high art.

Though this may be bliss for the party's "base," it should sound major alarms to the rest of the country. Book burnings, banning teaching of facts that might disturb students, "alternate" news services that spew patent falsehoods and complete fabrications — all are signs of something very bad happening in our land.

History rarely deals kindly with "empires" that do such things.

The idea that "history is written by the victors" only holds true in the short term. In time, the truth usually comes out, and often history is written in the dust of "victorious" civilizations that rose and

fell believing their own lies.

So, I won't stop reading the newspaper, whether online or in the quaint, old-fashioned printed version, and I'll keep watching the news on TV. And I will definitely take the time to cross reference what I read, just to make sure from where it came.

I guess I will have to live with my anger and dissatisfaction with the current miasma in which our land is mired. Perhaps my anger comes with the knowledge that temporary bliss is not worth the price we'll pay long term. ■

Hardy Haberman is a longtime LGBTQ activist and chairperson of the Woodhull Freedom Alliance board. Read his blog is at DungeonDiary.blogspot.com.

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A passion for arts, advocacy

PROFILE

In service to Dallas and its communities, Terry Loftis is the man

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
rich@dallasvoice.com

Terry Loftis' daily schedule is not an envious one at all. For this interview, he pulled over and sat in his car for over an hour to talk about local arts, the LGBTQ community and sometimes his own personal life. And this was our scheduled time to talk before his next appointment.

A full schedule is his daily life and honestly, he seems pretty fine with that.

The Dallas Morning News profiled Loftis in 2020. The piece talked about how Loftis grew up in Oak Cliff and about his return to Dallas. And yet, there was still so much to talk about.

For this interview, Loftis touched on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the Dallas arts landscape. He explained the value of working within his various communities and setting an example. And we talked about the future and his vision for both the local arts scene and the philanthropic community, particularly focusing on LGBTQ issues.

His close friend Cordey Lash seemingly encompassed Loftis' attributes in one sentence: "Whether health disparities, professional advancement, artist excellence or just bringing the best of the best together to benefit the community, Terry Loftis brings honor to the Dallas community through his purpose, compassion and integrity. [He is] truly one of the finest philanthropists I know," Lash said.

Looking ahead, we stepped back to October 2021:

A formal affair

Last year's Black Tie Dinner was a record-breaking effort for Loftis. He described it as nail-biting "due to the fact of being the first person of color to co-



Terry Loftis, left, and his fiancé Jon Adams

chair the event."

The evening was a massive night at the downtown Sheraton. While BTDA always draws a crowd, the pandemic-exhale seemed to give it some extra energy.

People were looking forward to getting back out and having a fancy, celebratory night at this fundraiser that serves a number of LGBTQ organizations in North Texas.

For Loftis and the rest of the board, though, there was a daunting amount of preparation.

"The excitement and the pressure of putting it together is not something I think the public is fully aware of," Loftis said. "The bulk of it is led by a volunteer board. It's a lot of work, but it's a lot of fun."

The dinner was in its 40th year, and for Loftis, he said, it was a privilege and honor to serve as the event co-chair after spending some time on the BTDA board.

But it also put him in the spotlight in a way that wasn't entirely comfortable.

"Despite the press, I am by nature generally shy," Loftis said. "I spend a lot of time in the background, but as my career progressed, I've needed to be more

in the public. I had to suck it up and embrace it, but also, I am very proud of the work I do for Black Tie."

The dinner was appropriately fabulous, but moving forward, there is more in his eyes, to be done with the organization both in its outreach and in its make-up.

"I want us to make sure that every aspect of Black Tie as an organization looks like and represents the community we serve from our beneficiaries to our board and our community engagement," he declared.

Loftis expounded on criticisms that the organization is too white and non-inclusive, as well as criticisms surrounding its transparency. As the senior co-chair, he has seen strides forward regarding BTDA and diversity. The board is working on the planning process strategically that looks at the demographics of the dinner and expanding it.

This goes back to his point about representation.

"What are the things we need to let go of and change?" he asked. "We want to look at ourselves from the perspective of the bigger community. What can we do

outside of just writing those checks to our beneficiaries.

"We are keenly looking at areas like fundraising, development, our board, our initiatives and programs that will help us be a true partner to those beneficiaries."

In today's societal dialogue, Loftis added that it has to be more than optics, more than just checking a box. That alone, he said, is offensive and wrong.

For him, it's incumbent on the organization to advance its beneficiaries' missions and their causes. But it's not just Black Tie.

State of the arts

The Arts Community Alliance (TACA) is a longtime organization in Dallas that works to support area arts organizations through grants. Its proper mission is "to support excellence and impact in the arts through grant-making, capacity building, and thought leadership," the organization's mission statement declares.

Loftis joined the organization as its director in 2019.

"Terry has done an amazing job raising money for TACA, which is essentially benefitting the whole arts infrastructure of Dallas. He is a relationship builder and is also creative and entrepreneurial in finding ways to connect with funders and grantees," said Kim Noltemy, Ross Perot president and CEO of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.

The organization has been around for almost 60 years in service of Dallas' arts, but these pandemic years really put TACA to the test. As companies and organizations closed in the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, they also lost any revenue that would help simply keep the organization afloat. TACA was going to be their buoy.

"It was utter insanity in those days," Loftis said. But they persevered through it. Thanks to their efforts as well as vaccinations, the arts have been continuously coming back.

These days, though, Loftis is examining the arts through a different eye — or

Not the father, but still a parent

LEGAL ISSUE: CUSTODY BATTLE

Denton judge rules a same-sex parent listed on birth certificate should have visitation rights

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

During a divorce proceeding that included a child custody battle, the attorney for the birth mom argued her wife should be denied visitation because, “She is not the child’s father. Her status is no different than a step-parent.”

But attorney Michelle May O’Neil argued in court just how wrong those statements were.

O’Neil’s client, Christine Becker, was there when her now-estranged wife gave birth to their daughter, and Becker is listed as a parent on the birth certificate, since Texas law allows two moms on the birth certificate, rather than a mother and father only.

Becker and her estranged wife were married when the child was born, and Texas law presumes a legal spouse to be the second parent, O’Neil pointed out. All of those are different from being a step-parent.

And while we say she “argued in court,” O’Neil would say she presented the law to educate the judge, who may not have had all the current information to make a fair and legal ruling.

O’Neil’s law firm has probably handled more custody lawsuits for non-birth moms than any other legal office in Texas. Among attorneys in her office, Karri Bertrand has argued cases around the state, while attorneys Jordan Ezell and Kassie Hines are helping expand what O’Neil calls the firm’s growing sub-specialty.

O’Neil said there are still holes in Texas law when it comes to same-sex couples and their parental rights. While the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Obergefell* marriage equality decision in 2015 made it



Christine Becker and River

clear that a same-sex married couple should have all the same rights and responsibilities as an opposite-sex married couple, some areas of the law still haven’t been litigated to set precedent. That means that situations that are clear-cut, legally speaking, for opposite-sex couples can still be problematic for opposite-sex couples.

That’s why O’Neil recommends that even a second parent named on the birth certificate should complete a second-parent adoption.

While most Dallas County judges will rule fairly in a same-sex divorce case, Becker faced her wife, Heather D’Agostino-Becker, in a Denton courtroom in front of a judge with little experience with same-sex marriage.

The case, as O’Neil laid it out, began with adultery. D’Agostino-Becker — while married to Becker — had an affair with a man and became pregnant. Becker, however, remained with her wife through the pregnancy and was present for the birth. Becker noted that she cut the baby’s umbilical cord and that her name is on the birth certificate as the presumed parent.

At this point in the trial, O’Neil presented the judge with the text of *Pavan vs. Smith*, a case out of Arkansas in which a same-sex married couple had a child through insemination by an anonymous sperm donor. The state refused

to put the non-birth mother’s name on the birth certificate.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Pavan* that *Obergefell* requires states to treat the marriages of same-sex couples the same as other couples’ marriages for all purposes under the law. If an opposite-sex couple in Arkansas had con-

ceived through in vitro fertilization, the husband’s name would still be required to be on the birth certificate as the presumed second parent. Therefore, when a same-sex couple has a child, the spouse is also the presumed parent.

So, while the opposing counsel argued that a child can have only two parents, and that both of this child’s parents were sitting at his table in the courtroom (the biological father was sitting with D’Agostino-Becker and her lawyer in the courtroom), O’Neil argued the birth certificate agrees there are two parents, but that “They are named Heather and Christine.”

Then O’Neil went a step further: She argued the man now claiming to be the father has not submitted any DNA evidence to prove his connection to the child. In what divorce case would the person who had committed adultery with the divorcing spouse even be in the courtroom, she asked.

But David Housal, the opposing attorney, thought that it was appropriate to have the man there.

“I’m sure that Mr. Housal is going to point out that his client is now living with the gentleman that they allege is the father of the child,” O’Neil told the judge. “Whether or not he is biologically related to the child is irrelevant to today’s hearing, and we move to strike

him from the lawsuit and strike his presence from this hearing.”

The hearing, O’Neil said to the judge, was to determine visitation rights for one of the parents, which had been denied with advice of counsel. In his opening statement, Housal began arguing whether Becker was fit to have visitation. O’Neil countered that this wasn’t a fitness hearing.

When Housal saw he was losing in court and that he was up against someone who knew the precedents that had been set, he agreed to begin negotiations.

Becker said in a phone interview that in the three-and-a-half years since her daughter, River, was born, the presumptive father had never pursued parental rights. He hasn’t undergone DNA testing and hasn’t paid any child support.

“Since she was born,” Becker said, “he had nothing to do with her.”

Becker noted that O’Neil wasn’t her first attorney, and when things didn’t go so well in court after the first hearing in the divorce and custody case, that first attorney recommended Becker talk to O’Neil’s firm.

Before leaving court that day at the beginning of this month, Becker was granted temporary orders for joint custody. So far, she’s spent two long weekends with her daughter who, after not seeing Becker for almost six months, “smiled the biggest smile” when she saw Becker. The child was a little hesitant through that first weekend, Becker said, but by the second weekend, she was right at home, acting as if they’d never been apart.

“If everything was ideal, this case should have been easy,” Becker said.

The wording in Texas law talks about fathers, she said, and at the first hearing, which Becker attended with her first attorney, D’Agostino-Becker’s attorney was able to confuse the court.

But, Becker said, she is impressed with the judge, who was striving to make a proper ruling within the confines of the law and legal precedent.

“I’m so appreciative of Michelle and her team,” Becker added, “because all I care about is I have my daughter back.”



STONEWALL ENDORSEMENTS

MARCH 2022 PRIMARY

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✓ Early voting: February 14th-25th ✓ Election Day: March 1st

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STATE

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LOCAL

State Board of Ed. District 11 Luis Miguel Sifuentes	State Board of Ed. District 12 Alex Cornwallis	Senate District 12 Francine Ly
TX House District 100 Venton Jones	TX House District 108 Elizabeth Ginsberg	TX House District 113 Rhetta Andrews Bowers
TX House District 114 John Bryant	192nd Judicial District Judge Maria Aceves	204th Judicial District Judge Bree West
255th Judicial District Judge* Vonda Bailey	256th Judicial District Judge David Lopez	282nd Judicial District Judge Andy Chatham
County Criminal Court #1 Dan Patterson	County Criminal Court #4 Dominique Torres-Williams	County Criminal Court #10 Elissa Wev
Criminal District Court #6 Nancy Mulder	Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot	County Judge Clay Jenkins
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PASSION, From Page 12



Terry Loftis, right, with his Black Tie co-chair Brad Pritchett and guest speaker Nancie Nash at the 2021 Black Tie Dinner

at least, one that's not distracted as much by the pandemic.

"There is systemic racism in the cultural arts here in Dallas," he said. "We looked at various institutions and their policies and who they are working with. I don't think it's intentional, but through EDI initiatives, it's our job to put a spotlight on these and first be our most authentic selves to sort it out."

This is his vision.

He sees an arts community that is woven together, all working toward the same goal of EDI.

"In this path forward, those negative attributes can be opportunities of acceptance and love," Loftis said. "It's imperative for us to encourage principles and practices that do not infringe on others. We have to show younger generations that we are advocating for equality and inclusion on all levels."

He's so board

TACA and Black Tie can take a lot of Loftis' time, but why stop there?

Loftis is also on the board of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Arts District and Texans for the Arts. He is a member of the Dallas Assembly, and he has served as the board chair of Resource Center and on the boards of Friends of the Katy Trail, TITAS, USA Film Festival, The Dallas Way and Legacy.

Take it easy? Not this guy.

"I really didn't set out to become involved so deeply in the community. It really just happened," Loftis said. "I will say that Resource Center is probably the one Dallas nonprofit, other than TACA, that has my heart and soul."

He's volunteered with the organization for 20 years, and he finds it crucial to be steeped into the LGBTQ community in this way — or perhaps in his way.

When he came out, Loftis said, he didn't see a large demographic of Blacks and Hispanics working within the community. He added that just not that long ago, the community didn't quite understand trans issues.

We have to see us all as part of the family, he insisted.

"At the end of the day, I want to be of service and primarily in the community," Loftis said. "These organizations are important to me, and supporting them is not just about the dollars raised but boots on the ground to help them do what they do better."

But sometimes — amid all his work, board engagement and philanthropic responsibilities — he's just concentrating on getting home at a decent time to his partner John.

Here come the grooms

On top of everything else, Loftis still has a wedding to plan. He's still mum on that right now, just to maintain some privacy at this point. But on top of his work and volunteer duties, he and his fiancé are working on their special day.

John is a stylist for Nordstrom's. The two have been together since the summer of 2019, and both have full work schedules. Loftis described a recent "regular" night for the two:

"I left the office about 4:30. Went home, went to the gym. We had dinner and spent the evening together," he said. "That's the anomaly! I'd say a nor-

mal night is one of us picking up dinner, depending on who gets home first.”

When he has the time, Loftis does try to decompress — if he’s not opening his laptop to get back to work or take a lengthy BTD board meeting. He enjoys reading, and he and John love entertaining and hanging out with their friends. John has to serve as the couple’s social planner sometimes.

“Most of the time, we have to have an advance plan, but spontaneous moments, if possible, I love,” Loftis said. In fact, he started the relationship when he was also joining TACA and a pandemic was on the horizon.

And he wasn’t even looking for a relationship.

“I wasn’t,” Loftis said. “I’m no spring chicken, but I’ve never dated someone who so easily integrated into this vortex of my existence, and he does it from a very individual perspective. He knows when and how to put me in my place, which very few people can do, and of the relationships I’ve been in, he is my equal.”

But it’s John’s sense of humor that really makes an impact: “He’s probably the most caring person I’ve ever met,

but outside of that and finding him adorable, is his ability to crack me up. I love to laugh and if someone else can make me laugh, that’s huge.”

In perspective

While he’s technically working during this interview, perhaps Loftis is having a bit of downtime to just talk and reflect on the ideas and purposes and people he values. He lives this big life, and much of it is in service to others — the arts, the city, the community, his future husband.

When he looks inward, he’s simply grateful.

“I have been blessed exceedingly with an amazing life and interesting career. It has not been a boring existence,” he said. “At the end of the day, I want to be in service and be genuine. These views are my own.

“If by virtue of who I am [I do something to] inspire someone to get involved and make a difference, or if my presence helps in some way, that’s the motivation. I think as I’m physically and mentally able, I will keep doing what I can until I’m gone.” ■

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Enriching the SMU community

LEGAL ISSUE: LAW STUDENT RESOURCE

Dedman School of Law's OUTLaw group offers resources for law students, faculty

It's no secret that LGBTQ people can face unique problems and hurdles, in both educational and workplace environments, that non-LGBTQ folks don't have to deal with. Affinity groups and employee resource groups can help alleviate some of those hurdles. And for LGBTQ faculty and students at SMU's Dedman School of Law, that's where OUTLaw comes in.

Colleen Collins, a student at the Dedman School of Law and secretary for OUTLaw, answered a few questions this week about the organization and its purpose.

— Tammye Nash

Dallas Voice: What is OUTLaw and when was it created? Colleen Collins: OUTLaw is our LGBTQ+ student group at SMU Dedman School of Law. It is created for LGBTQ-identifying individuals and allies. We think it was founded sometime after the year 2000, but due to a gap in programming, we are trying to connect with prior alumni to make connections with prior OUTLaw Members.

Who is in charge, and how is the leadership chosen? Our group has a student executive board and two faculty advisors. We have six students that run our executive board as well as four 1L representatives. Our modern constitution was written after the gap in programming and states that the leadership is chosen by voting by OUTLaw members. Current officers are President Alex Guerrero; Vice President Matthew Gamboa-Lutz; Secretary Colleen Collins; Treasurer Richard Friedl; Social Media Director Hannah Ali Grant and Director of OUTReach Doug Brown.

About how many people participate in OUTLaw? Who can join, and how does one go about joining? We have a roster of about 60 members, and we have about 15 to 20 people who are very active. Any ally or LGBTQ-identifying individual can join, and it is super easy to join. All you must do is sign up on our Student Organization's Connect page or contact one of our executive board members to join. We have no membership fee, so it is completely free to join.

What is OUTLaw's primary focus? OUTLaw works to enrich the SMU Dedman School of Law community by providing educational programs open to the entire student body, career-related events linking students with the local Dallas legal community and social and small group events both on and off campus.

OUTLaw promotes equality, enlightenment and advocacy. We are trying to promote and show that there is an accepting community, both on campus and in the

legal field.

I read online that OUTLaw holds educational programs open to the entire SMU student body. What are some of the programs the group has offered? Which programs seem to be most popular? We have offered a few educational programs this past year to our student body in partnership with other student organizations. A few that we have offered with other student groups are "Reflections: Realities of Being 'The Diversity Hire,'" and a judicial clerkship program.

Judge Tonya Parker was the representative that OUTLaw asked to come for the Diversity Hire program, and she spoke among other diverse women about her experiences. We are also offering an LGBTQ-focused allyship training this semester for our diversity week programming.

How does OUTLaw work to connect SMU's students with the local legal community? We have been working on



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OUTLaw Secretary Colleen Collins, left, with fellow SMU Dedman School of Law students Jason and Hannah.

this a lot this past school year. We have partnered with Legal Aid of Texas, have members that volunteer for Equality Texas, have attended legal-oriented happy hours hosted by the Dallas LGBT Bar Association, and have had legal professionals come speak to our student body.

What are some of the benefits OUTLaw offers to law students and/or the local legal community? Are there benefits to membership for those not in the legal profession? OUTLaw offers a community of like-minded individuals to do law school along-side. OUTLaw also offers educational opportunities, opportunities to get together as a group and bond and opportunities to connect with current practicing lawyers. We are also trying to build an outline bank to help our current students and build an alumni network to benefit our current members. We are not an organization aimed towards membership outside the legal profession, but we welcome any support from all realms.

What else do people need to know about OUTLaw? It is truly remarkable what community can do, and this community has a tight, close-knit bond and has really made some important strides to improve our campus in every way we can. We envision a future where LGBTQ+ lawyers feel comfortable representing our community.

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Still so far to go

LEGAL ISSUE: TRANSGENDER POINTS

Despite some progress, gender status still affects access to health care, housing, custody and more

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Attorney Kerri Bertrand recently represented the defendant in one of the first divorce and custody cases in Texas filed against a non-binary parent. In an affidavit submitted in the case, the husband charged that his spouse was exposing their child to “the LGBT lifestyle.” That, Bertrand explained, was a ploy to win custody that would ordinarily have worked in this Corsicana courtroom.

“What scared the other attorney was [that] a Dallas attorney showed up,” Bertrand said. The opposing side had based their entire case on anti-LGBTQ bigotry. But Bertrand wasn’t putting up with that, and in the end her client retained primary custody.

Transgender attorney Jayla Wilkerson said custody and equal division of property are still real concerns in cases involving a transgender spouse. While things are better in Dallas and other large cities in Texas, at least one Dallas judge has repeatedly demonstrated bias against transgender people in the court-



Jayla Wilkerson

room.

“Generally, in Dallas, the LGBT community is treated fairly by the courts,” Wilkerson said. But she has seen courts show bias in favor of a cisgender spouse, not only in terms of custody but also when it comes to division of property.

Texas is a community property state, and in a divorce, property is normally evenly divided between the former spouses. But a judge can rule that property should be divided unevenly in cases where fault can be shown. And in some courts around the state, Wilkerson said, being transgender is seen as “fault” and a reason to give the cisgender spouse a larger portion of the community property.

because a Texas birth certificate has a space for sex but not gender. Wilkinson said to make things more difficult, the state requires the court order to be specific.

Despite that, Wilkerson said, “Name and gender changes are easier here than in a lot of jurisdictions.”

One reason for that is that in Texas you can choose your venue for such proceedings. As an example, she filed a name and gender change for a client from Eagle Pass in a Dallas family court.

Wilkerson says nonbinary issues are the next frontier. Some states and the federal government offer X as a choice for gender in addition to M and F. But Texas doesn’t offer that option.

McMurray said she’s spoken to trans folk who have had trouble with an amended Texas birth certificate. Because it is marked as “amended,” the birth certificate literally outs the person as transgender.

Wilkerson said she received a new birth certificate that was identical to her original one except for her name and sex.

Litigation is sure to follow the recently enacted ban on trans teens participating in school sports. “Hopefully,” Wilkerson said, “there will be litigation challenging the bans.” But when she stopped and thought about the makeup of the current U.S. Supreme Court, she added, “We may have to wait until we have a more friendly court.”

Another legal concern for trans people has to do with incarceration. Federal law prevents separating inmates based

But transgender legal issues go far beyond cases of divorce where custody and division of property is determined. Leslie McMurray, who is Resource Center’s transgender education and advocacy coordinator, said the trans community has a number of legal issues that affect their everyday life.

Many transgender people change their names legally, and most trans persons must change their gender markers on IDs and other official documents. And just that wording causes some confusion in Texas.

Before a birth certificate may be corrected, the court order changing the gender marker must instruct the state to update the sex of the individual. That’s



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on genitalia, Wilkerson said. But that's the criteria most jailers use, and it mostly affects trans women without bottom surgery.

McMurray pointed out a number of other areas where the trans community just doesn't have the same legal protection as those in the gay and lesbian community enjoy. For example, under Texas hate crime law, sexual orientation is covered but gender identity isn't. McMurray said trans people are obviously a target of hate, but the incidents aren't counted in hate crime statistics in this state.

While Dallas offers protection for discrimination in housing, the state and federal government do not. Local protection is great, but the fine is just \$500 — not a lot of deterrence for a landlord who really wants to discriminate.

And according to a rule issued by the Trump administration, homeless shelters may refuse service to trans people. The rule was rescinded by the Biden administration last April but could be just as easily reinstated the next time a conservative administration takes office.

And then there is the issue of healthcare. Trans people many times already found themselves the target of bias from those in healthcare. But recent efforts by right-wing forces have put trans healthcare in an even more precarious position.

A group of five states and religiously affiliated health care organizations have filed a suit known as *Franciscan Alliance v. Burwell* to clarify a portion of the Affordable Care Act. The suit challenges a Health and Human Services regulation prohibiting any entity receiving federal funds from discriminating against trans patients or those seeking reproductive care. Some courts already have ruled that HHS rules interfere with "sincerely held religious beliefs." And apparently, some sincerely-held religious beliefs in-



Leslie McMurray

clude withholding healthcare from some groups of people simply because of who they are.

But McMurray said that possibly the most insidious legal issue transgender people face is simply the way they're portrayed in court.

Part of the strategy Edward Thomas' attorney used in Thomas' trial for assaulting trans woman Muhlaysia Booker was to repeatedly refer to Booker as "he." The fight in the apartment parking lot following a minor fender bender accident was simply between two guys, the attorney claimed in an effort to convince the jury charges against Thomas were overblown.

That language, McMurray said, is used in a number of ways through the legal system, including in efforts to prevent trans people who were dishonorably discharged under the military's anti-LGBTQ Don't Ask, Don't Tell from getting their records change to reflect honorable discharges. ■

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LEGAL ISSUE: FINDING AN ATTORNEY

Dallas LGBT Bar Association

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The birth of the Dallas LGBT Bar Association came in January of 1992 when gay attorneys Lee Taft and Ed Ishmael sat down together and talked about the need for just such an organization. LGBTQ attorneys in Dallas were already meeting infrequently in private homes as The Stonewall Legal Society, and Taft and Ishmael felt it was time to formalize the group and thus become a voice for LGBTQ attorneys and their clients.

They started out by creating the Gay and Lesbian Study Group within the Dallas Bar Association, which lasted through 1999, when Rob Wiley formed the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Bar Association and served as its first president. And then in November 2019, the board of the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers voted to recognize what had by then become the Dallas LGBT Bar Association as an official Sister Bar Association. It was the first time that any Bar association in Texas had recognized a local LGBTQ affinity Bar association as a Sister Bar Association.

Dallas LGBT Bar Association is made up of “lawyers, law students, para-professionals and related professional allies



who share an interest in the laws that affect and protect” the LGBTQ community.

The association’s mission is to “promote awareness in its community of issues pertinent to the lives of gender and sexual minority citizens, lawyers, legal professionals, and law students; celebrate the diversity and culture of GSMs; advocate for inclusion and equality of all persons regardless of sexual orientation

or gender identity; assist in research and further legal scholarship on GSM concerns; educate fellow lawyers on how to be inclusive of GSMs in the community, work place, and legal academy; provide a safe space for GSM lawyers and allies to meet and form a sense of community; and show appreciation to allies of the GSM community.”

The association’s 2022 board and officers are:

President Nadia Haghghatian; Secretary and Vice President of Communication — and President-elect — Callie Butcher; Treasurer Sean Buckley; Vice President of Programming Michael Debnam; Vice President of Community Partnerships Adwoa Asante; Vice President of Professional Development Karri Bertrand; Vice President of Membership Elissa Wev and board member Derek Mergele-Rust. ■



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LEGAL ISSUE: FINDING AN ATTORNEY

Legal Directory

When it comes to legal matters, whether that is a divorce or child

custody case, a criminal defense case or a case dealing with discrimination, members of the LGBTQ community often face issues and problems that the hetero and cisgender communities don't have to worry about. Even something as simple as a drawing up a will or a power of attorney can be fraught with hurdles.

Sometimes, it's not even a matter of specific legal questions related to LGBTQ issues as it is just a matter of wanting to know the attorney you are dealing with truly understands your situation and feeling you can be fully open

and authentic with your attorney.

For that reason, Dallas Voice has compiled this directory of attorneys who are either LGBTQ or allies, and who have the experience and understanding LGBTQ people are looking for.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of LGBTQ and ally attorneys. But it is certainly a place to start. Contact these attorneys or visit their websites for more information on their experience and their specialties.

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Obituary



Billy Keith Deramus, 57, of Dallas, formerly of Mena, Ark., passed away Monday, Feb. 14, at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas.

He was born Aug. 30, 1964, in Mena, Ark., to the late Glen and Iona (Bryan) Deramus. He was in the pharmaceutical industry and was married to Emanuel Cornelio. Billy enjoyed spending time with close friends and family, traveling, volunteering at the AT&T Performing Arts Center and helping those in need.

Billy was preceded in death by his parents, Glen and Iona Deramus. He is survived by his husband, Emanuel Cornelio; brother Tommy Deramus and wife Fran of Round Rock; sisters, Donna Bushe of Mena and Tammy

Harrell and husband Derek of Marion, Ark.; and several nieces, nephews and friends.

Graveside services will be held Sunday, Feb. 20, at 2 p.m. at Pinecrest Memorial Park in Mena with Derek Harrell officiating. Arrangements are entrusted to the Beasley Wood Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Crohn's Colitis Foundation at CrohnsColitisFoundation.org

New LGBTQ media organization needs your input

Dallas Voice, along with six other leading LGBTQ news and media outlets, recently joined the newly-formed News is Out: A Queer Media Collaborative, which is supported by the Google News Initiative Innovation Challenge and managed by the Local Media Association. To ensure that the collaborative is providing readers

the most informative and entertaining experience possible through this venture, News Is Out is asking readers to complete the survey available online at <https://tinyurl.com/573tjtz2>.

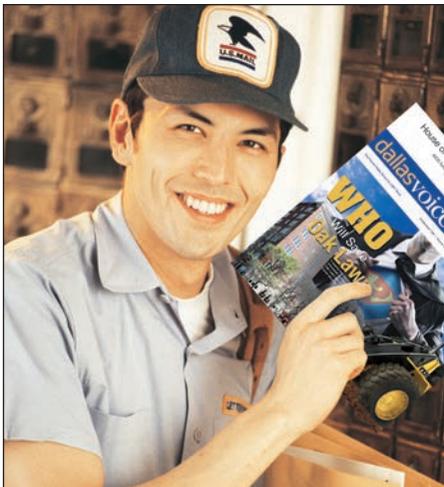
Participants will also be given the chance to participate in a focus group in the future. We ask that our readers be sure to note on the survey that they found it through Dallas Voice.

— Tammye Nash

Adoptable / SHAYLA



Meet **Shayla**, a petite, 4-and-a-half-year-old Bulldog mix who is one sweet lady. She's smaller than she looks, weighing in at 37 pounds, and with her short, stout body and adorable underbite, she is as cute as can be. Shayla is shy around strangers, but once she gets to know you, she is a total snuggle bug. She loves playing with cardboard toys filled with treats and adores back and ear scratches. She'd love a laidback home where she can spend her time inside cuddled up on the couch with her people and soaking up lots of love. Shayla is a Shelter Sweetheart, meaning her adoption fee is sponsored, and she comes with extra perks, like free training. To learn more about Shayla and schedule a time to meet her, visit SPCA.org/Adopt.



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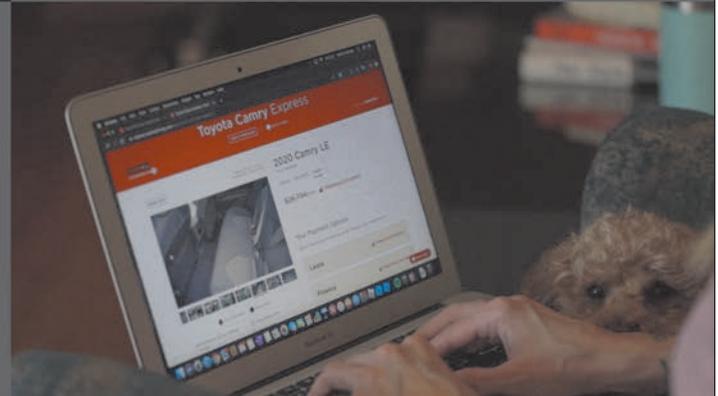


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Another time/this time

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Queer cast members find hope in 'Ragtime'

RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
rich@dallasvoice.com

These days, the “American dream” may be different from the dreams of generations that came before. Or maybe in today’s “woke” culture, it may not be a dream at all. The country still suffers from racism, homophobia and inequality, among other prejudices — to the point that legislation is created to perpetuate those notions.

So how does a classic musical about that dream stack up to today?

Ragtime tells the story of the American Dream from three different perspectives: a young African-American ragtime musician, a white, upper-class wife and a Jewish immigrant father. Despite their differences, the three discover a shared belief in their vision of America’s promise.

This weekend Lyric Stage presents *Ragtime* in Concert at the Majestic Theatre. The show opened Thursday, Feb. 17, and runs through Sunday, Feb. 20. Based on the novel by E.L. Doctorow, this production strips down the turn-of-the-century story about New York into straightforward song and music.

“It’s kinda this hybrid, because even though it’s a concert, it is still very much staged,” cast member D’Mariel Jones said. “There is choreography, and it is perhaps more like a stage version of a concert, with blocking and dramatizing.”

Jones, 23, is one of three out actors in the cast. He stars as Matthew Henson, and castmate Anthony J. Ortega, 28, stars as Harry Houdini in the production. As queer persons of color, both still find hope in the show’s message, despite how relevant some of the lyrics still are to some of today’s unpleasanties. The two actors recently discussed the show and their roles in it with Dallas Voice.

Dallas Voice: For this version of *Ragtime*, how are you approaching the show?

Anthony Ortega: The main thing they told us about the concert is that we have the music as the focus, but we have so



D’Mariel Jones, left and Anthony J. Ortega, right

much more room for telling the raw story. The audience gets some kind of emotion from it without any distractions. We’re all focusing on making sure everything we are saying is conveyed.

Can you tell us about your character? Ortega: So, I am Harry Houdini and he’s this symbol of success for a lot of people coming to America. I learned that Houdini played the Majestic many times, so I’m really excited, and I just know that the energy is going to be there.

D’Mariel Jones: I play Matthew Henson, and I’m in the Harlem ensemble. I did not know my character, and I’ve seen the show. So, when I was cast, I looked it up. He was a real person. He was an explorer and this Black man doing things unheard of. working on a ship and having this position with this white captain and traveling the world. He was able to have this Black American dream and that really set him apart.

***Ragtime* premiered in 1996, but the songs reflect the time of the show which was early 20th century. The show is particularly about race as well as family and more, but how do you see these songs today? Do they resonate in today’s environment?** Ortega: For sure, because in this story, you see how society is built to be against these people. We as queer people have made our strides, but there are still laws pertaining to or trying to



pass against queer and trans rights. Even though we are a marginalized group of people, we’re still people.

Does your queer identity intersect with your race identity at all here? Jones: Funny, because I’ve thought about that — being a queer Black man in this time when people Black people are fighting for equality. It was so taboo back then. So, I think about living then and what the dream looked like for not only being Black but also queer. How can you be seen as a person and not judged also for who you love? I think a lot about that.

The “American dream” is a big theme in this show. Is that notion tainted today or do you see it still there? Jones: There are themes that we’re dealing with today. People want this dream and are not giving up on it. To me, it’s kind of sad that this takes place in 1906, and yet what these characters are going through is still going on today. But even though that’s sad at times, there’s still so much hope here.

Ortega: I like to see it as hope of what can be. I’m a brown-skinned, Latino gay man, and it can be hard for us. It’s just so difficult when you’re not “the normal” to get it. But I understand why people come here for it. We should be that country for people to find a better life here. I see hope in our country, but it’s not always great at it.

Anthony, you don’t perform just on the

theatrical stage. Ortega: So, I am a drag queen. I’m Sierra LaPuerte (Editor’s Note: That translates to “shut the door” in English). I started with North Texas Drag Bingo, and I’ve performed at Club Reflections and Marty’s and also around Denton.

Is there a particular difference going on stage for a show versus going onstage for drag? Ortega: You know, I still get nervous. There’s the same adrenaline even though it’s a different type of performance.

Does drag help your acting? Ortega: I think it’s helped with my improv skills. You have to be quick and always thinking as a drag queen, and that has made my acting better.

D’Mariel, you’re currently studying musical theater at TCU. What about the theater speaks to you? Jones: I love storytelling and being able to do that through song, dance and acting. It combines all these things I love, and incredible stories like *Ragtime*, I think, can change people’s lives and perspectives.

How do you describe your queer experience as a student and an actor? Jones: It can be hard at times. The stereotype is that we are all queer, and, sometimes people want to pigeonhole you into queer roles but never the leading or straight man role, but it’s all just acting. It can be hard to break out of your sexuality. I mean, just being a Black queer person is a whole other thing to navigate in life. The aspect of a being Black is a threat, but then queer is an additional threat. I just take it one day at a time. I have strong support, and I’m unapologetically me.

Final words on the show? Ortega: You know the ice storm stalled us, so we haven’t had as much time. But we have a strong team behind us that really was passionate and pushed us into a beautiful show. You’ll see that everyone loves this show because of how quick we were able to pull it together.

Jones: I think this show honors the struggles people of this time went through. The people of Harlem, immigrants and others living in that world. We stand on their shoulders but also continue those legacies. Everyone wants to be seen. That’s the dream.

For more information and tickets, visit LyricStage.org.

Short and sweet

FILM REVIEW

New gay parenting doc "Circus Boy" offers sweet moments but leaves unanswered questions,

DAVID-ELIJAH NAHMOD | Contributing Writer
Twitter: @DavidElijah

At a mere 52 minutes long, Lester Alfonso's new documentary *Circus Boy* is short and sweet. There are many lovely moments in the film, yet Alfonso's work also leaves many unanswered questions.

The story follows Thomas, a gay man in Canada who, with his husband Michael, is raising a teenage boy named Ethan. They never legally adopted the boy yet in their hearts, he's their son.

Thomas is preparing for a visit from his mother, who's going to meet Ethan for the first time. She's also going to watch Thomas and Ethan perform in the circus acrobatic act they've been working on. Ethan has been training to be a performer with the Cyr Wheel. Thomas is his coach as well as coach to a number of other young people.

The film moves along cinema verité style, following Thomas and his mother as they drive home from the airport and as mom has her first meeting with Ethan. We learn that Ethan still has a relationship with his birth parents, with Thomas' mom and Ethan's mother meeting to talk about their boys. It all adds up to being a sweet, unflinching look at an alternative type of family who love and care for each other deeply.

And yet, so many questions go unanswered: Why does Ethan's mom allow her son to move in with these two guys? Why does Ethan want to live with them, since he apparently has a decent relationship with his birth parents?

These issues are never addressed which leaves the film with an unfinished feeling. But what is included in the film is worth a look.

Ethan is a nice kid who loves his adoptive parents dearly. The fact that they are a gay couple is a complete non-issue to him. The bond between Ethan and his surrogate dads is a strong one, and it's a nice thing to see. It's also nice to see Thomas and Michael together sharing an intimate moment. This is a couple who love each other deeply.



Thomas' mother, who the film does not name until the closing credits, is a likable woman who totally accepts her son's sexuality and his relationship with Michael. She embraces both Ethan and his mom, who she meets with separately.

Ethan and his mom are never seen together in the film, and this also adds to the feeling of the film being incomplete.

Though it is a touching piece of work, the film would have benefited from a longer running time, which would have allowed auteur Alfonso to explore the relationship between Ethan, his mom and his dad.

But there are still many lovely moments. Towards the end of the film, as Thomas, Michael, Thomas' mom and Ethan eat dinner, the mom recalls a time in the past when Thomas was working as a barista in the cafe at a Border's Bookstore, a huge chain that is no longer in business. Each night Thomas would take his tip jar and give all his change to an older homeless woman who slept in the doorway of the store. As Thomas' mom tells it, the woman turned to her and said "without your son, I wouldn't eat today."

This is Thomas' mom expressing her deep love and admiration for her son. This kind of love is a recurring theme throughout the film, and it ultimately will leave most viewers with a warm and fuzzy feeling. The film poses the question What is family? And the answer is simple: Family are the people we love. ■

Circus Boy is now streaming at Apple TV, iTunes and Vimeo on Demand.

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Dr. Carole Ann receives Lucy Hobbs Project's Icon Award

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Dallas dentist Dr. Carole Ann Boyd has been awarded the Industry Icon Award by Benco Dental's Lucy Hobbs Project, which honors women in dentistry for excellence in six different categories.

The Lucy Hobbs Project is named for Dr. Lucy Hobbs Taylor who earned her dental degree in 1886, a pioneer in the industry who advanced gender equality within the profession, leading with clinical proficiency and innovative thinking and then mentoring others to follow in her footsteps.

Dr. Boyd "manifests two beliefs in her

career as an oral health care humanitarian: 'When adversity strikes, persevere,' and 'Love trumps hate,'" a statement announcing the award. "In her first days as a dentist, and in the 37 years since, Dr. Boyd has demonstrated a commitment to the dental health of the LGBTQ community."

The statement points out that as a new graduate of Baylor College of Dentistry, Dr. Boyd "treated HIV- and AIDS-positive patients with dignity when the disease carried extraordinary stigma. She was instrumental in creating the Ryan White Dental Clinic at the San Antonio AIDS Foundation, which she led as its inaugural dental director."

Dr. Boyd earned a Dental Diagnostic Science Certificate at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio in 1992 and completed fellowships in geriatric dentistry and medical



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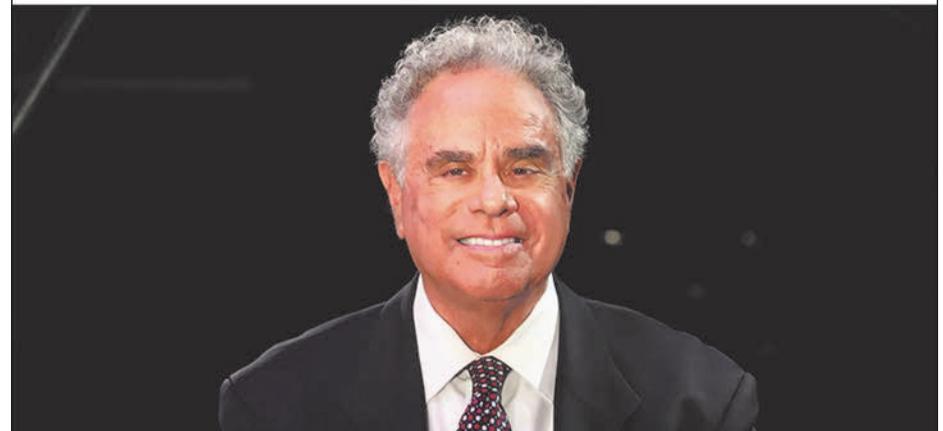
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Dr. Carole Ann Boyd and Max, far left; Dr. Boyd and her wife, Barbara Hudson, and Max, left

ethics. When she returned to Dallas after lecturing extensively and performing research, Dr. Boyd re-established dental operations at the Nelson-Tebedo Clinic and was its director of dental services for the next five years.

"In the past 25 years, her compassion and empathy have become a hallmark of her private practice, Carole Ann Boyd DDS PC General and Cosmetic Dentistry, in Dallas," the announcement notes. "She is a member of the American Dental Association, Texas Dental Association, Dallas County Dental Society and Organization for Safety and Asepsis Procedures, among others. Previously, Dr. Boyd was recognized with the Dallas Extra Mile Award for her service efforts."

Dr. Boyd said that outside of her, it is her time spent in nature that helps keep her grounded, and often starts her days with a stop at the small pond on Turtle Creek to "be mindful and peaceful," and she enjoys spending time canoeing, bird watching or scuba diving.

She also looks to her family to help her stay grounded, saying, "I have been best

friends with my wife, Barbara Hudson, since 1981, and we have lived together since 1988. She has helped balance my life and tried to keep me from being too intense.

"Our dog, Max the giant poodle, helps keep both of us grounded and is an extraordinary example of pure love."

Max is also well known as Dr. Boyd's dental service dog, helping soothe patients' worries and anxieties during dental visits.

As a teenager, Dr. Boyd said, she daydreamed about being a marine biologist or a photographer, but her path toward a career as a doctor had been set since she was very young. But, she added, "Fortunately, by middle age, I was able to enjoy my daydreams as serious hobbies."

When asked what is the best advice she has ever given a patient or team member or colleague, Dr. Boyd replied, "Pace yourself. This career is not a sprint but a marathon. As a younger person, achievement meant so much to me that I often pushed myself harder than I should have. Burning the candle at both ends leads to burnout."



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Hits and misses

ON THE TABLE



Bowen House has a hospitable staff and great drinks, but entrees came up short

JOEY CASIANO | Dining Critic
joeycasiano11@gmail.com

One night I was speaking with a friend about needing a new restaurant to review, and he suggested Bowen House, 2614 Boll St.. After a quick Google search, I found it was formerly known as a Dallas “Ahab-Bowen House,” and it is classified as a historic landmark. When looking at the photos and the menu, I immediately knew I had to go and experience what Bowen House had to offer. So, I found a friend to accompany me, and we were off to see the wizard.

There is no signage on the restaurant to protect the integrity of the build-

ing’s status a historic landmark. At first glance, I found it very lively, despite it being dark, dulling the neutral green exterior. Once inside we were greeted by a handsome host and escorted to our reserved spots at the bar. I asked if there happened to be any table cancellations we could take over, and, to our delight, there was a table available — a very cramped table.

We admired the Victorian accents in the décor, but it was incredibly dark, creepy almost. I felt like maybe we had stepped into a Victorian funeral home, which isn’t necessarily a bad thing, had the lighting been brighter. I noticed the large frame of the window we were sitting next to cut off part of the light which should have illuminated our whole table.

You can present the world’s greatest cassoulet to me, but if I can’t see it, it might as well be goulash.

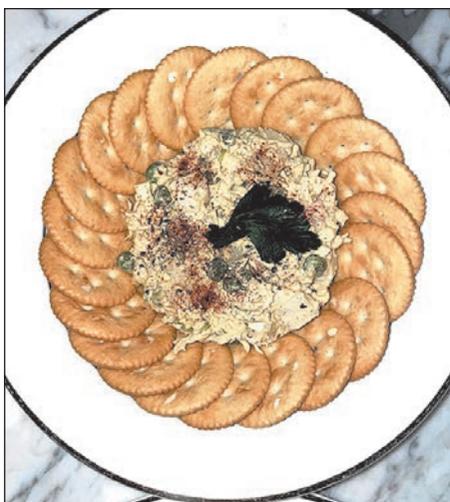
For our first course we had the fried

brie and escargot. With the candle, side plates, bread plates, flatware and water glasses, I was looming over a battlefield of obstacles. I had just about an inch of room between my torso and the edge of the table. Nevertheless, we dug in. L’Escargot came first, since it was my friend’s first time trying this dish. And It. Was. Exquisite. Creamy and savory yet bright, it was a joy just to dip our bread in the sauce and savor that. Next we dug into the fried brie — pizza-shaped with a dollop of blueberry compote seemingly plopped on top. We felt as though the dish were lacking. Yes, brie is good. And fried Brie? Great! Along with blueberry compote? Sure. But the compote tasted like Smuckers. It could have benefited from being a little less dense, less sweet and, maybe, with a hint of lime, a dash of champagne vinegar — something added to brighten up the very heavy sensation of eating fried cheese.

Along with these dishes, we shared a cocktail called “A Tree Grows In,” which was recommended by our lovely server, Monika. It was an absolutely perfect pairing. The gin, sherry, cucumber and saline in the cocktail complimented L’Escargot so perfectly, I’m going back just for those two items.

But while we did take our time enjoying our first course, there was a good five to 10 minutes in which our flatware was crossed on our plates, and we sat there with a messy table. This seemed to just be how they operated; servers, bussers and bartenders didn’t seem to care about clearing the table. They refilled our water, walked by and smiled, but no one thought to ask if we’d like our table cleared but, instead, spent time socializing with each other.

After 15 minutes I decided to go ahead and just make eye contact with every employee, and finally another server



took notice and asked if we needed anything. I let her know we were ready for our second course, and she smiled and said she'd let our server know — still leaving the dirty plates. These plates stayed til our second courses arrived — and before our second place settings were brought.

Let me be clear, by no means am I coming down on Bowen House. But even in casual restaurants touting an elevated dining experience, the guest should always have their utensils before their course, even if only for a few seconds.

Normally I'd forgive this but even the manager, who seemed to stay in one spot the whole time, did not notice the mess on our table. Everyone was incredibly kind, and the team there exudes a gracious and hospitable attitude, but there are some improvements that need to be made in terms of operations.

Now for the second course: We opted for the chicken salad with ritz crackers. They call them butter crackers, but they're ritz, according to the chef, and hey, I don't mind. Who doesn't like ritz crackers?! It actually comforted me, like I was a little 10-year-old feelin' fancy.

We also had the ratatouille; my friend and I love a good veggie dish.

Unfortunately, the chicken salad was bland. It seemed fresh, but it needed salt and acid, so I had to send it back. The ratatouille was better, with a bit more salt, but it also could have benefited from some acid.

We had the Clear and Sunny cocktail with our entrees, and, although we were disappointed by the entrees, the drink was once again a perfect pairing.

The dessert was a cheesecake with the blueberry same compote. I get zero waste cooking, but this just seemed uninspired. Still, it was absolutely delicious. It's hard to mess up cheesecake, plus it's a favorite for both me and my dining companion.

Overall, it was a pretty space, despite the 1980s-excess type "chandelier" highlighting the bar, reminiscent of something you'd see in the Netflix series Pose. I don't disapprove of it; it just seemed out of place. Everyone was nice, and the drinks were great. I just wish the other three dishes were as well balanced as the escargot.

(Special thanks to Nyx Winters for helping me with my assessment yet again.) ■

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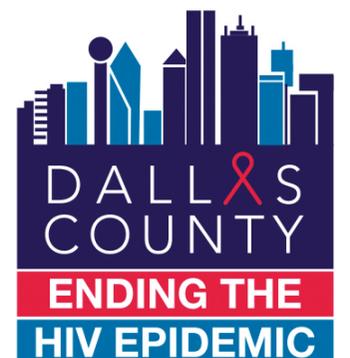
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Fascinating but flawed

ON THE PAGE

The gist of 'Personal Effects' is unforgettable, but its problems make it a rough read

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER | Bookworm Sez
BookwormSez@yahoo.com

***Personal Effects: What Recovering the Dead Teaches Me about Caring for the Living* by Robert A. Jensen; c.2021, St. Martin's Press, \$28.99; 294 pages.**

Pick up eggs. Milk. Macaroni. Bread. If you don't jot down a list of things you need to find, you'll forget something.

Apples. Light bulbs. Flour. Putting things on paper helps you to remember what you need and what's missing.

But in the new book, *Personal Effects* by Robert A. Jensen, the pick-up is more personal; the items, more heart-wrenching.

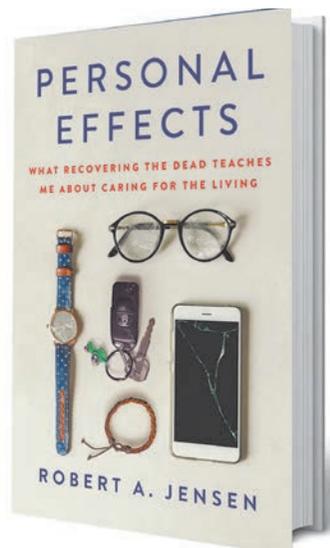
Robert Jensen's growing-up years were not what you'd "call a normal childhood." His mother suffered from mental illness; his father treated him as "a secondary concern." It perhaps didn't help that there was no room for discussion about Jensen's being a boy "who liked boys as much as girls."

Says Jensen, "I hope you never have to see the things that I've seen ..."

He doesn't say that because of his personal life, though, but because of his job: Jensen is an expert in recovering human remains and personal effects when disaster, accidents, murders and battles occur. He says it's not even his "first weird job," but as the chairman of Kenyon International Emergency Services, he knows that it's one of the most important.

Jensen, for instance, was called to work after the Murrah Building was bombed in Oklahoma City. He's recovered the dead for the U.S. government in Somalia; helped recovery efforts in places such as Haiti, New Orleans and New York, and he's worked to resolve what happened in devastating plane crashes around the world.

He's brought back the remains of loved ones to their grieving families, and he's also been involved in the efforts to recover valuable cargo for insurance



companies.

"Being prepared for a disaster is really not that hard," he says. Just "don't prepare for the last disaster that just occurred."

Something bad is going to happen to you. If not now, tomorrow; if not then, soon. Disasters happen, as author Robert Jensen indicates, and there are things you can do to minimize the damage and hassle. But getting the information you need to do so won't be easy, if you want advice from *Personal Effects*.

The thing is that this book is solid. For fans of the unusual, you can't get any more unusual than the story, both personal and professional, of a guy who searches for body parts. Jensen's tale is thrilling, cringe-worthy and heroic; there's advice and little-known minutiae that only an insider would know.

You won't be able to forget the gist of this book.

And yet — man, it's a rough read! *Personal Effects* is laden with choppy half-sentences, errant punctuation, and too much repetition — things which are relatively common, and forgivable. But then there's the irritatingly incorrect homonym usage, a maddening assumption of readers' prior knowledge, and an extremely unfortunate quotation from a grieving mother that really could've been told better, and you've got a book that'll make you sigh but not in a satisfied way.

For most readers, this'll be a deal-breaker, and that's too bad. *Personal Effects* is basically very, very fascinating, but its errors might make it not worth picking up. ■

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Dallas-based company B. Moore Dance, pictured, joins Avant Chamber Ballet, IM Terrell Academy, Impulse Dance Project, Sarah Newton and DanceTCU in a performance on Saturday, Feb. 19, benefitting AIDS Outreach Center in Fort Worth. The annual event, organized by the TCU students of Chi Tau Epsilon Honor Society, was first organized 20 years ago as a memorial. This year's performance begins at 7:30 p.m. in the Studio Theatre in Erma Lowe Hall, 3000 S. University Drive on the TCU campus in Fort Worth. Tickets will be available at the door. For information call 817-257-4255.

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
- Orange for civic events and holidays

■ Weekly: Frontrunners

Running club for the LGBTQ community and allies of DFW. Meet at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesdays and 8:30 a.m. on Saturdays at the corner of Hall Street and Turtle Creek Boulevard in Turtle Creek Park for a one-hour walk/run on the Katy Trail.

FEBRUARY

■ Feb. 18-20: *Rent*

25th anniversary tour of the Pulitzer Prize winning musical. Fair Park Music Hall. Tickets at Ticketmaster.com.

■ Feb. 18-26: *Madame Butterfly*

The Dallas Opera presents *Madame Butterfly* on Feb. 18, 20, 23 and 26. DallasOpera.org.

■ Feb. 18: Federal Club Mixer

Cocktails and lite bites at Hotel Zaza, 2332 Leonard St. from 6-8 p.m. RSVP at hrc.im/dfwmixer.

■ Feb. 18-20: Queer History South conference

Queer History South conference has been postponed until Sept. 30-Oct. 2.

■ Feb. 19: Blue Moon Dances

Women-only dances the third Saturday of the month from 7 p.m.-midnight at DanceMakers of Texas, 6125 SW 820, Suite 140, Fort Worth. BYOB. \$10.

■ Feb. 19: Benefit concert for AOC

Avant Chamber Ballet, B. Moore Dance, IM Terrell Academy, Impulse Dance Project, Sarah Newton and DanceTCU perform in a benefit concert for AIDS Outreach Center at 7:30 p.m. at TCU Erma Lowe Hall in the Studio Theatre. Reservations and information at 817-257-4255.

■ Through Feb. 20: *Ragtime*

Lyric Stage presents the musical based on E.L. Doctorow's 1975 novel. Majestic Theatre, 1925 Elm St. Tickets at TicketDFW.com.

■ Through Feb. 20: *Our Town*

Thornton Wilder's classic play staged by Dallas Theater Center. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Tickets at DallasTheaterCenter.org.

■ Through Feb. 20: *Maytag Virgin*

This Theatre 3 production can be seen at Bryant Hall at the Kalita Humphreys, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Tickets at 214-871-3300.

■ Feb. 20-June 12:

Murillo: Picturing the Prodigal Son

Murillo's series of six paintings illustrating the parable of the prodigal son travels to the U.S. for the first time. Meadows Museum, 5900 Bishop Blvd.

■ Feb. 22: Same-sex spouse grief group

Grief support group for people who have lost a same-sex spouse or partner meets on Zoom on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month from 6:30-8 p.m. In person group should return sometime this spring. For notifications, contact Richard DeKnock at tastefullyrichard@gmail.com.

■ Feb. 24: Gay and Lesbian Fund for Dallas

Big plans and initiatives will be presented at a Gay and Lesbian Fund for Dallas happy hour from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Enoteca Italia, 3102 Oak Lawn Ave. #116. GLFD.org.

■ Through Feb. 25: Early voting

Vote at any early voting location in the county where you're registered.

■ Feb. 26: Dash for the Beads

Co-founded by gay Cliff Dwellers David Sassano and Chad West, the 12th annual event is \$25 for the 1-mile fun run, \$40 for the 5K distance and \$70 for the 10K distance. One-mile and 5K participants will receive a race T-shirt and commemorative medal. 10K runners will receive a high quality race jacket. 10K participants: Be sure to register early to ensure your jacket is ready in time for packet pickup. Jackets are only available while supplies last. Race registration ends Feb. 20. Register by Dec. 31 with promo code "lufdfb" for \$5 off your 5K or 10K registration. Supports local schools. DashForTheBeads.org/sign-up.



DANCE BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

Artist Lauren Burch once said, "We can thank our lucky stars when once in a blue moon we find rare and kindred

souls along the pathways of our lives." Well, the lucky stars align on the third Saturday of each month when all the kindred souls head to **Blue Moon Dance Fort Worth**, the women-only party holding its grand re-opening this month on Saturday, Feb. 19, in its brand-new location, DanceMakers of Texas, at 6125 SW Loop 820, Ste. 140 in Fort Worth. Admission is \$10, and you can BYOB, with sodas and bottled water available there.



BOYS A-GO-GO

It's Fable President's Day Weekend, and — just like the dictionary says — it's gonna be legendary ... maybe even supernatural! The party starts

at 10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 19, and lasts through 7 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 20, then starts all over again Sunday at 8 p.m., and lasts through 7 a.m. Monday, Feb. 21. That's 17 hours spread out over two nights filled with five DJs, hot go-gos, costumes, sizzling performances and lots, lots more. The Space Dallas, 5214 Botham Jean Blvd. in Dallas, is the location, and tickets, ranging from \$65-\$130 for Saturday night and \$40-\$130 for Sunday night, are available online at AVW.TicketLeap.com/Fable.



GET YOUR GAME ON

What's more fun than a night at an arcade bar with more than 140 games available for just a \$10 admission fee AND Bishop Cider (and other adult

beverages)? Why, a night at an arcade bar with 140-plus games and adult beverages with **Dallas Bears**, of course. Dallas Bears head to Cidercade Dallas, 2777 Irving Blvd., Ste. 200, for a night of fine fellowship and unlimited gaming on Thursday, Feb. 24, at 7:30 p.m. You won't need bills or quarters to play the games, but you will need plastic to get in the door (Cidercade Dallas doesn't take cash).

■ Feb. 26: Erykah Badu

Dallas' own Erykah Badu brings her *But You Caint Use My Phone* tour to Dallas. The Factory in Deep Ellum, 2713 Canton St. TicketNetwork.com.

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

SCENE

PEOPLE, PLACES AND FACES



Sunday Funday at JR's



Cody, Jada and Eddie at Primos



Three amigos at TMC



The Wonder Twins at Sue's



Will dressed to impress



Hottie night at S4



Oh yes, it's Ladies Night!



Saint Dorothy would approve

SCENE • SMU

PEOPLE, PLACES AND FACES



Tino, Mike and Harvey



Semler is coming to SMU



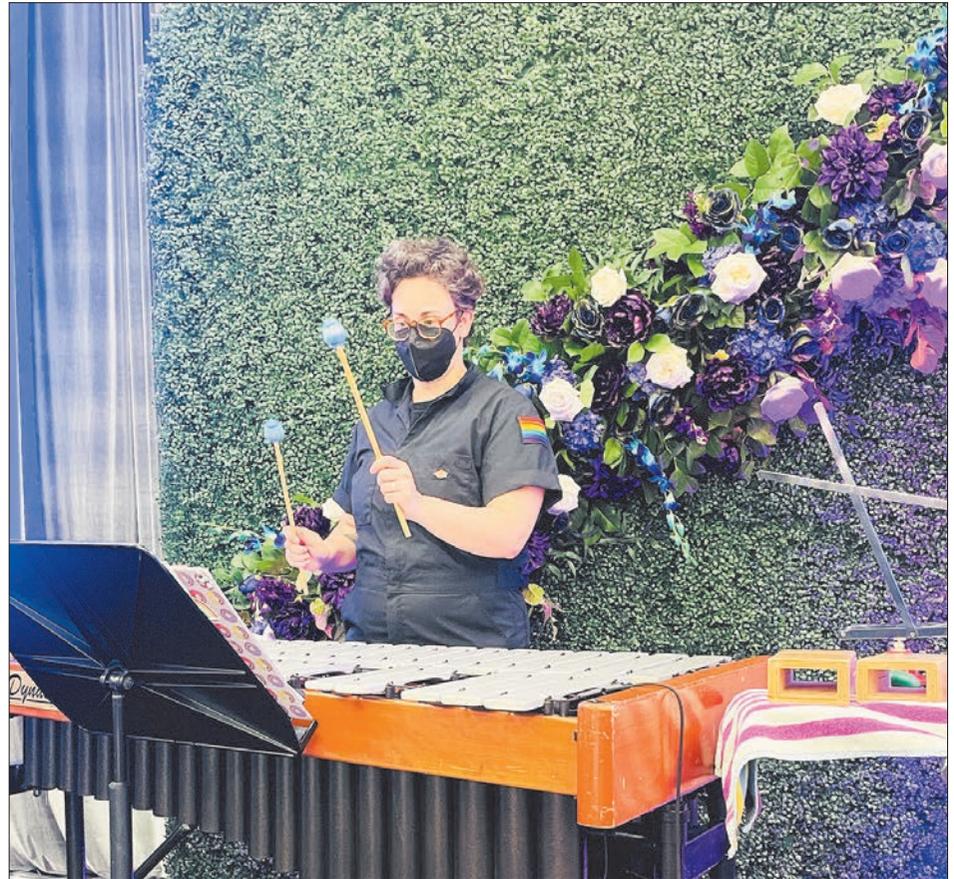
Dr. Gardner at the mic



Mace of UKIRK



Lilly, president of Spectrum



Spectrum Ensemble



Bri leads the way!



Caroline, Ash, Hannah and Leia

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SCENE ● Red Tie Dinner at Celebration Church on the Lake

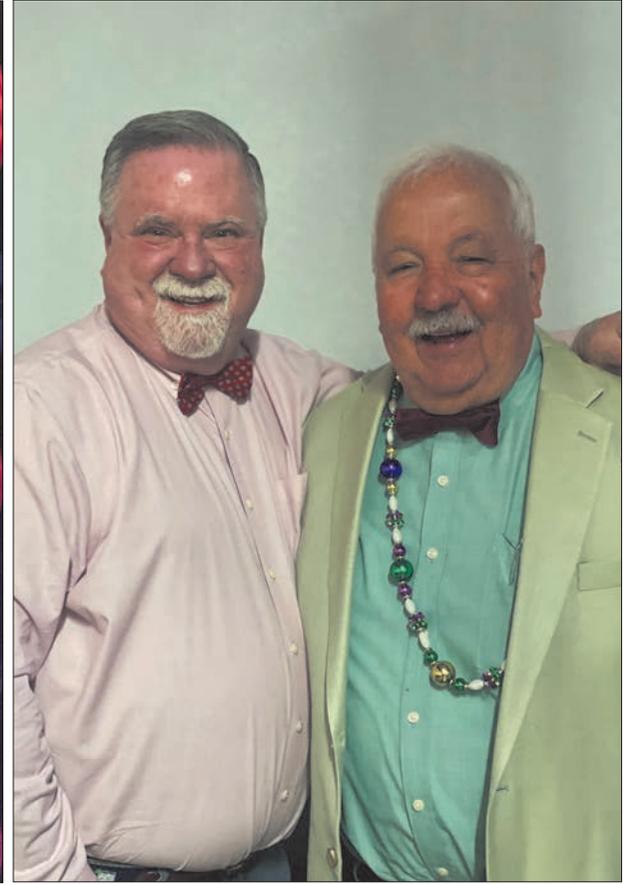
PEOPLE, PLACES AND FACES



David and Carol dance the night away



Joey and David



David and Lupe



Red Tie event coordinators



Lori and Dana



Jerry and Josh

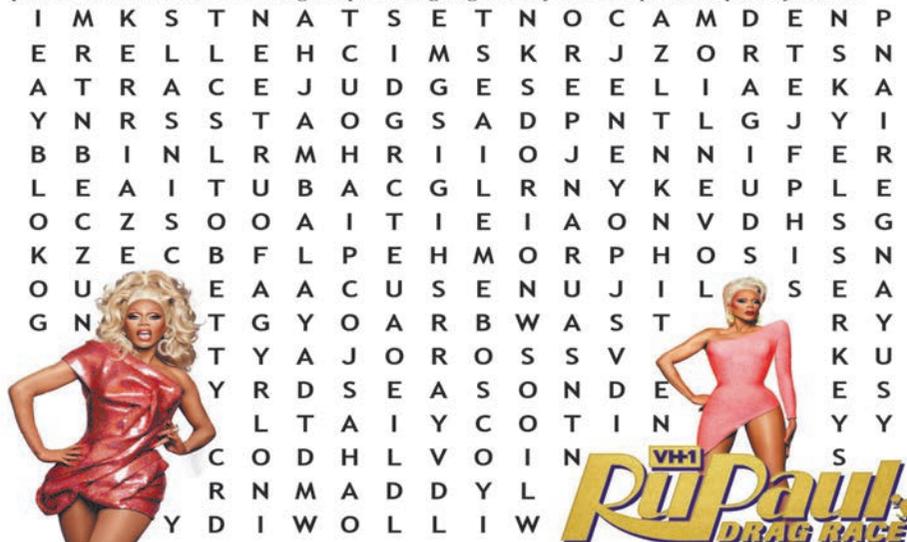


Tony and Leo and David and Lupe

WORD SEARCH

Diversions Word Search - RuPaul's Drag Race Season 14

Find the words in the list below hiding across, backwards, up, down and diagonally in the grid. Words separated by a slash "/" are found individually in the puzzle. Words in parentheses "(") are not in the puzzle. The unused letters starting at top left and going down by row will spell out a quote by RuPaul!



RuPaul's/ Drag/ Race	Contestants	Deja/Skye	June/Jambalaya
Season/Fourteen	Alyssa/Hunter	Lady/Camden	Angeria/ Paris/ VanMichaels
Michelle/ Visage	Bosco	Orion/Story	Kornbread/ "The Snack"/ Jete
Ross/ Mathews	Daya/ Betty	Willow/ Pill	Guest/ Judges
Carson/ Kressley	Jorgeous	Jasmine/ Kennedie	Alicia/ Keys
	Kerri/ Kolby	Maddy/ Morphosis	Lizzo
			Loni/ Love
			Jennifer/ Lopez

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/DiversionsPuzzles> for more free puzzles and book info by Kerry Shatzer!



Dinner, drinks and Red Ties



The artist signs her name

Solution on Page 36

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matters!

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PUZZLE |

Horror in Good Taste

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
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Solution on Page xx

Across

- 1 Goes to low beam
- 5 Opera queen's delight
- 9 *The Bells* ___ Mary's
- 13 Mishima's continent
- 14 Like the Ladies of Llangollen
- 16 Ill humor
- 17 Prop for Juliet
- 18 Shell competitor
- 19 Neighbor of Pakistan
- 20 Start of a quote from 35-Across
- 23 Cause of Venus envy?
- 24 Gladiator's protection
- 25 Farthest from the start
- 27 Papers of D.H. Lawrence, e.g.
- 29 Condemned openly
- 31 Say "nothin'," say
- 35 With 37-Across, Elvira portrayer
- 37 See 35-Across
- 39 Start of a rhyme about a tiger
- 40 Top's betting phrase?
- 41 One who says "Bottoms up!"
- 45 Be of interest to
- 47 Pink triangle, for one
- 51 India's first prime minister
- 52 Gay couple as parents, sometimes

- 53 Rene Auberjonois role
- 54 Eleanor's beard?
- 55 End of the quote
- 58 Gershwin and Levin
- 60 Beau chaser
- 61 Message at LesbianaNation.com
- 62 Family heads
- 63 Eurasian range
- 64 Schoolyard retort
- 65 Picks out, with "for"
- 66 Fire Island ___ girls

Down

- 1 Homophobe Kim
- 2 N.B.A. great Thomas
- 3 Beach of a White Party
- 4 Ointment for a gash
- 5 Tony and Oscar
- 6 Big name in wine
- 7 ___ Paris
- 8 Opposite of goes down on
- 9 Alec's *Star Wars* character
- 10 Winter warm spot
- 11 Lady of the evening
- 12 Perfect scores for Caesar?
- 15 BART users at rush hour
- 21 Recipient of Bugs' kisses

- 22 Song title spelled in pantomime
- 26 Hard to bear
- 28 Contempt
- 30 Frequent Hudson costar
- 31 Larger-than-life
- 32 It's fruity and makes you pucker
- 33 Wandering worker
- 34 Judi of *Notes on a Scandal*
- 36 One, for James M. Barrie
- 38 Well hung, like Christmas lights
- 42 Peter or Paul, but not Mary
- 43 Like a lonely bottom?
- 44 *Frozen* queen
- 46 Pitching stat
- 48 Advance from third, for Billy Bean
- 49 Black Sea city
- 50 Ed of *Fight Club*
- 52 Like people near a leaning erection
- 54 One who may want a bone
- 56 Lois portrayer of *Lois and Clark*
- 57 Broadway opening for a lot?
- 59 Teakettle sound



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Adventure.

Love is a
Journey.



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