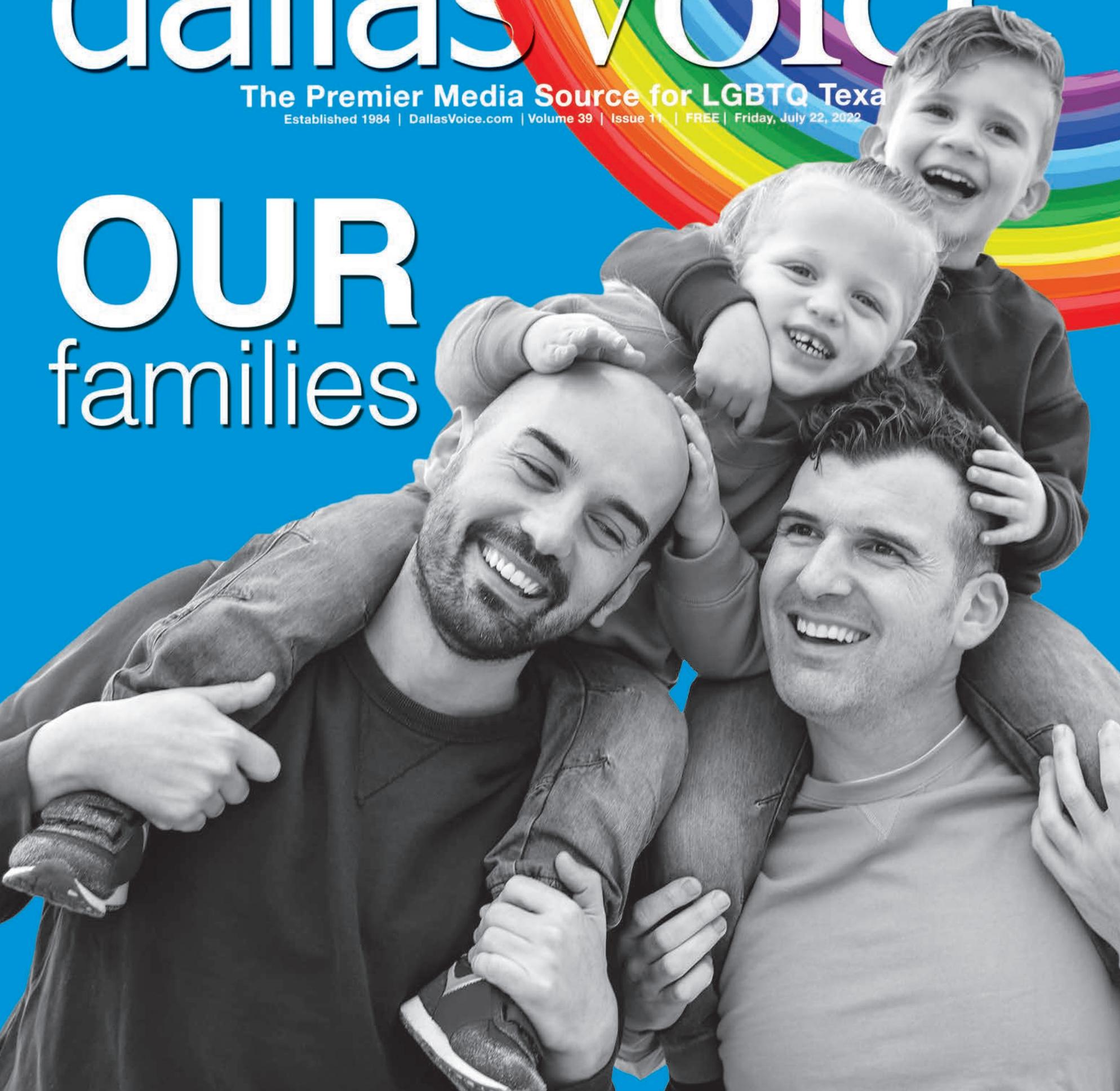


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# OUR families



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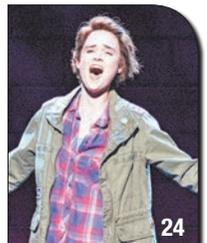
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# Bites from our blog

WHAT'S THE TEA: DallasVoice.com

## U.S. House passes Respect for Marriage Act



One day after being introduced, the Respect for Marriage Act passed the U.S. House of Representatives on a 267-157 vote with bipartisan support, the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus announced Tuesday, July 19, in a press release.

H.R. 8404 would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and “ensure critical protections for same-sex and interracial marriages,” the caucus’ press release noted.

The bill was co-led by every openly LGBTQ member of the House, as well as House Judiciary Committee Chair Jerrold Nadler of New York, Tri-Caucus Chairs Joyce Beatty of Ohio and Raul Ruiz and Judy Chu of California and Democratic Caucus Chair Hakeem Jeffries of New York — all Democrats.

Equality Caucus Chair David Cicilline, a Rhode Island Democrat, said, “The Respect for Marriage Act takes critical steps toward protecting marriage equality across this country. This legislation respects and recognizes the relationships, lives and marriages of same-sex and interracial couples across the country who deserve to be treated as equals.”

A companion bill was introduced by U.S. Sens. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Diane Feinstein of California, both Democrats, along with Maine Republican Susan Collins on Monday, July 18, the same day the measure was introduced in the House. Its prospects in the Senate are far less certain. Both Texas senators — John Cornyn and Ted Cruz — have already said, to no one’s surprise, that they will not vote for the bill.

— Tammye Nash

## Garage sale benefits Legacy Cares

City Yoga, 4311 Belmont Ave., holds an indoor garage sale on Saturday, July 23, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. benefiting Legacy Cares.

They promise cool items and fun surprises.

Turn to page 16 in this issue of Dallas Voice to read about the Legacy staff’s campaign to raise \$25,000 in honor of retiring Executive Director Melissa Grove.

— David Taffet

## Protests expected at drag brunch in The Colony

Twisted Drag Brunch takes place at Twisted, 6520 Cascades Court in The Colony on Saturday, July 23, at 1 p.m. Tickets are available at EventBrite.com.

That’s the good news.

But big surprise: Protests are expected. Protesters have been showing up on Cedar Springs Road in recent weeks, so of course they’re headed to The Colony. Unless they decide it’s just too far to drive.

The Colony police have been notified and will

help with any crowd control.

— David Taffet

## Alabama pastor sentenced for molesting boys

John Thomas Martin, former pastor of the adamantly anti-LGBTQ Lighthouse Baptist Church in Florence, Ala., has been sentenced to 10 years in prison per charge after admitting he molested young boys and pleading guilty last month to three counts of first-degree sexual abuse, according to



WHNT News 19 in Huntsville, Ala.

Martin first confessed to “having affairs” with young boys during a sermon from the church pulpit in 2019.

Lauderdale County Assistant District Attorney Coty Hand said, “Those sentences were split to serve two years and ran consecutively for a total of 6 years to serve in prison. He will be a registered sex offender for the rest of his life.”

WHNT also reports that Martin was under investigation for similar allegations in Murfreesboro, Tenn., where he served as a youth pastor at Bellwood Baptist Church in 2004.

— Tammye Nash

## Obituary



**Jennifer Reeves Young**, 75, died June 26, 2022, at T. Boone Pickens Hospice in Dallas following a lengthy illness. Born May 28, 1947, in Farmersville, Texas,

Jennifer graduated from Crozier Technical School and attended Southern Methodist University. She had lived all her adult life in the Dallas area.

She was well known in the Oak Lawn community as a barber, having worked in that profession since 1975. She also worked for Home Depot as a flooring specialist and as a designer in the store’s Design Center from 1999 until she retired.

Jennifer worked as a hair stylist and makeup artist for different companies through the years, including owning her own shop “The Aquarius” in the 1970s. She also worked extensively as a designer, as a model, as a photographer and even as an auditor for Mutual of Omaha’s travel insurance division.

Jennifer volunteered in different Special Olympics programs in the Austin and Dallas areas for five years. She loved the opera and gardening, and she loved traveling, especially to Mexico and to Paris, which she visited many times. She also loved spending time with her many close friends. She helped build a coalition focused on providing clothing to adults with mental disabilities and volunteered with Agape House, North Texas State Hospital in Wichita Falls, The Volunteer Services Council and more.

Jennifer was an advisory board member for the Texas Transition Task Force and was recognized many times for her work with agencies and programs catering to the needs of those with mental disabilities.

Jennifer is survived by her son, Ronald Young, of Garland, and her daughter, Tiffany Cox, of Ohio, and by a host of friends she loved like family.

A memorial service will be held at noon on Saturday, July 30, at Oak Lawn United Methodist Church, 3014 Oak Lawn Ave.

## ■ Adoptable / SEA BASS



Meet **Sea Bass**, a pretty kitty with black fur, a white underside and stark white whiskers. He is three-and-a-half years old and weighs

just 10 pounds. Sea Bass is somewhat on the shy side at first but warms up after a while. He’s a chill character who would appreciate a calm and quiet environment, especially as he settles in. From there he is quite the affable gentlemen and should be okay sharing space with another cat. However, Sea Bass is an FIV-positive cat, so any other cat in the home would have to be FIV-positive as well. It would be best if all children in the home were at least 12 years of age. Sea Bass is neutered and current on all vaccines. He is waiting for his forever home at the Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center and is available to meet seven days a week from noon until 6 p.m.

Adult dogs and cats are normally a \$75 adoption fee from the SPCA of Texas. Puppies and kittens under the age of six months are \$150. Adoption fees vary for small mammals, equestrian and livestock. Fee includes spay/neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, a heartworm test for dogs six months and older and a FIV/FelV test for cats four 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.

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**Tammye Nash**  
Managing Editor  
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## Creating a forever family takes looking inside

Leo Cusimano shares how adopting two young brothers changed everything.

**LEO CUSIMANO**

Courtesy of News Is Out | [newsisout.com](http://newsisout.com)

**M**y heart was racing as we walked to the front door of the foster home. I could hear the roar of children inside. With much anticipation, Tony and I knocked and could feel the rush of excitement in the air. Inside were two children: JJ, 3, and Elijah, 8. JJ rushed toward Tony and jumped up into his arms. Elijah sat very close to me.

I don't know if they completely understood that our lives would be changing forever. We would become a forever family.

Today, there are lots of ways to build or create a forever family, from public or private adoption, which includes both domestic and international placements, to surrogacy and in vitro fertilization.

Tony and I choose the foster-to-adopt program administered through Hope Cottage, a program called PRIDE training through Texas Child Protective Services (CPS). The program certifies parents and homes to be able to foster and/or adopt children. The intense classes took us through the process of how to protect and care for children that have been removed from their biological homes.

After the home visits, background checks, CPR training and three months of classes, we received our certificate to be foster parents. Now we could choose parameters for the child we were willing to welcome into our home. We did not have anything specific in mind, only that we were not looking for an infant.

If you are looking for a very specific child, you might be waiting a while to be matched. The program matched us with two children, half brothers, in a few months. We had checked a box on the application indicating that we were



Leo Cusimano, right, with his husband Tony Cuevas and their sons, Elijah and JJ



**Leo Cusimano**

From the Publisher's desk

for forever families, many in sibling groups.

We received our certificate in May 2007 and were matched in July. CPS took about five months to gather and copy paperwork, court records, police reports and more before we were able to see a picture or meet the children.

In December 2007 we finally visited the foster home and met the boys. After that meeting, we traveled to Fort Worth every weekend to visit them.

open to adopting siblings.

Checking that box accelerated the process; CPS has thousands of children looking

for forever families, many in sibling groups.

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for forever families, many in sibling groups.

On March 28, 2008, the boys were able to officially move into our home as our foster children. We consider this our "Gotcha Day" in the adoption process, and we celebrate it every year. But the children had to live in our home for six months as foster children before we were able to do the first adoption.

Then we had to schedule a second parent adoption six months after that so we could both be formally recognized as their parents.

My husband Tony always knew he wanted children. He is a great dad. Raising children takes lots of patience, and he has an abundance.

I, on the other hand, was less sure children would be in my future. Having patience? Not so much for me. I have always been a great uncle, a fun uncle. But as a dad I was less equipped. I would get them all excited and then struggle to calm them down for bedtime.

To get to a place of acceptance was a learning process for me. I had to look

inside myself and understand what was important to me, take stock in where I was. I do not think I could have adopted children when I was younger. I have found what I really wanted was to make sure my life counted, that I stood for something. It was also important to me to give back.

When it came to having children, I had to look inside and evaluate how I felt about where I was — personally with myself and about the enormous task of raising children. I also understood that I needed to be prepared. As an Eagle Scout, I have learned that being prepared is highly important. However, when it

comes to adopting and raising children, it is hard to adequately prepare no matter how hard you try.

The boys are now 18 and 22, and I have loved having children and molding these young minds, watching them grow from little children to young men. Over the years we have witnessed a tremendous transformation in both our children and in ourselves.

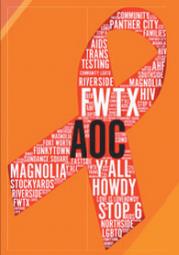
The most important thing we have learned, perhaps, is that building a forever family takes time, self-assessment and commitment. Whatever path you decide to take, make sure that you put in the work and prepare to be the best parent that you can be. ■

*Leo Cusimano is owner and publisher of Dallas Voice. News is Out is a pioneering national collaborative of the leading local queer news publishers. The collaborative includes 7 of the leading local and queer-owned LGBTQ+ publishers across the nation. Join the News Is Out newsletter here, <https://go.localmedia.org/NIO-DV>.*



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# Mom by law



Kimberly Kantor, second from left, and Lorie Burch, center, with their children, from left, Kaia, Poppy Jean (in Burch's arms) and Carlie, holding Adlee Louise

Especially in Texas, being a biological parent might not be enough to guarantee legal standing. That's where adoption comes in

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

When Lorie Burch and Kimberly Kantor first became a couple — they were married in 2017 — Kantor already had two daughters from a previous same-sex marriage — Carlie, now 17, and Kaia, now 12. But after a while, they decided they were ready to add to their family. Kantor was the one who would carry the pregnancy and give birth, but

Burch wanted to have a genetic tie to the new children, too. So they chose to go through a process called reciprocal IVF.

Burch explained, “I had my eggs frozen. They were then fertilized with donor sperm [through the same California cryobank and from the same donor as the two older girls] and then we ended up with two healthy embryos. Rather than having the embryos transferred to me, they were transferred to Kimberly.”

That happened first in 2018, and Adlee Louise was born on March 22, 2019. Then the couple's fourth daughter Poppy Jean was born three years later on May 27, 2022.

And yet, even though they are her biological children, noted Burch, Texas does not recognize her as the two girls' legal parent, putting her in the position of having to adopt her own biological children.

“The specific issue of why I am adopting Adlee and Poppy is arguably more a sex discrimination issue [than an

## Non-bio, non-adoptive parents beware



**Karri Bertrand**  
Special Contributor

In June 2022, I argued *In the Interest of N.H., a Child*, a case out of Harris County (Houston) to the 14th Court of Appeals, and on July 14 the court released its opinion, reversing and rendering the trial court's award of possessory conservatorship to my client, a non-biological and non-adoptive parent of a little girl who is now 6 years old. The opinion refers to my client as “Ex-Girlfriend,” which is accurate, as the parties never married. But let's not forget, however, that the ability to marry was pretty new, and not all same-sex couples rushed out to get married immediately.

The parties were in a dating relationship, and during that time, the biological parent became pregnant via assisted reproduction. Non-bio mom helped select the anonymous sperm donor, attended doctor appointments and paid for much of the process.

At the time of the child's birth, non-bio mom was present in the delivery room to cut the cord. She was given a hospital band and treated the same as any other parent. However, the court made it a point to note that non-bio mom “was not listed on the child's birth certificate, and ... never signed any sort of acknowledgment of parentage.”

Interestingly, I am unaware of a document called an “acknowledgment of parentage,” since the only document listed on Attorney General Ken Paxton's website is an “Acknowledgment of Paternity.”

Despite the fact that the two women lived together as a family and raised the child together for the first 16 months of her life, non-bio mom did not meet the statutory requirements to apply a presumption of paternity, which the Texas Family Code says must also be applied to maternity. But the courts in Texas neither consistently nor reliably apply the paternity presumption to maternity.

In 2018, my client was awarded temporary visitation with the child. Prior to the case going to final trial in 2021, in 2020, *In re C.J.C.* (also our firm's case) came down from the Texas Supreme Court, which required non-bio mom to rebut the “fit parent presumption.” The court cited to the case, stating that the “fit-parent presumption applies in any proceeding in which a non-parent seeks conservatorship or access over the objection of a parent.” (See *In re C.J.C.*, 603 S.W.3d 804, 817 (Tex. 2020)(orig. proceeding).)

Despite the fact that we had offered, on non-bio mom's behalf, undisputed evidence at trial of bio-mom's excessive drinking, including a DUI, depression and mixing alcohol with prescription drugs while handling the child as an infant, the court claimed there was “no evidentiary support” related to bio-mom's unfitness. Similarly, the court found that non-bio mom had failed to show that removing her from the child's life would cause “significant impairment” to the child.

Suffice it to say that the fit parent presumption equates to an exceedingly difficult burden for a non-parent to overcome.

The N.H. opinion finds that “a nonparent with [the ability to file a lawsuit] who has no biological or legal relationship to the child cannot obtain court-ordered possession of a child over the wishes of a fit parent” without proving significant impairment.

What does all of this mean for same-sex couples? It is not good news.

If you are not married and you have not yet adopted your child as a second parent, you must do so. If you are married and you have not yet adopted your child as a second parent, you must do so immediately.

If the bio or adoptive parent will not consent, you have the option of filing an adverse adoption. This option is newer, and the outcome is uncertain. But there is case law to support adverse adoptions under certain circumstances.

The U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs* opinion overturning *Roe v. Wade* and Justice Clarence Thomas' concurrence alluding to the high court overturning *Obergefell* has understandably led to widespread fear across the LGBTQ community. Members of the community must immediately and proactively seek to protect their rights and their families in every way possible. There are a variety of different ways that protection can be accomplished, and I strongly advise LGBTQ people to seek the advice of an experienced attorney familiar with LGBTQ challenges.

*Karri Bertrand is an associate at O'Neil Wysocki who specializes in LGBTQ+ family law and appeals. She can be reached at karri@owlawyers.com.*

# More than a camping trip



Rainbow Roundup brings LGBTQ families together to share resources, ideas and just have some fun

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

**T**he families of Rainbow Roundup are going camping the weekend of Sept. 23, and organizers are expecting a large and enthusiastic crowd, since this is the group's first camping trip since the pandemic set in. More than 200 people participated the last time the group took a camping trip — before the pandemic.

They'll be camping at Yogi Bear's North Texas Jellystone Park in Burleson, south of Fort Worth. The facility offers a variety of options from tent sites to bunkhouse rooms to pirate ship cabins and RV sites.

Group founder and organizer Kimberly Kantor said there will be visits with Yogi and friends, wagon rides, crafts, activities and more for the RR group, and RR will cover the cost of almost everything outside of the camping stay. Not only will most meals be covered, but so will campfire smores and Kona Ice.

The campsite offers an Airplay Zone, laser tag, paintball, a petting farm and a games pavilion as well as nature trails. And Pirate's Cove Waterpark is right next door.

That should provide for a busy weekend for LGBTQ couples and singles with families to mingle. It will also provide an opportunity for teens with LGBTQ parents to connect, and for kids to just be kids.

Kantor said that with what's going on politically these days, it's more important than ever for LGBTQ families to get together and share resources and experiences.

Rainbow Roundup has been getting LGBTQ families together since 2012.

The pandemic may have paused most in-person activities, but members continued to get together online with virtual events like cupcake decorating, scavenger hunts and chats. Teens got together to prepare meals for the homeless, and there were a few outdoor activities like picnics and a trip to the zoo.

Kantor said she's excited about getting families together for the camping trip.

"In the beginning, when I wanted to start Rainbow Roundup, there weren't resources available for families," she said. The resources she needed and wanted to share with others included lists of pediatricians who were happy to treat kids no matter what their families looked like, as well as references for obstetricians, attorneys who would file a second-parent adoption, fertility specialists and more.

What schools welcome students with LGBTQ parents and what neighborhoods welcome diverse neighbors? That was another question many families needed answers for.

But, Kantor said, "The resources weren't there."

So Kantor started a Facebook group with 19 members that began sharing resources and planning events. Today, that group has grown to more than 3,000 members.

At Rainbow Roundup events, kids and teens began talking to each other about their experiences.

"Our families have to come out on a daily basis to other kids at school, to teachers, principals," Kantor said, "coming out about how their family is made of love. How there are all types of families."

Rainbow Roundup events allow their kids to see other families like theirs, to make friends with families that look like theirs and to share ideas and stories about how they've come out at school and elsewhere.

## WHERE WE CAN BE FREE

One member, a parent named Red, said their family joined Rainbow Round-



Rainbow Roundup families enjoying Family Pride Zone at Dallas Pride

up just recently and have found it to be a "freeing" experience.

When they arrived for a family day at the park, Red said, their family members were offered name tags and asked what pronouns they used. Eight-year old Zane's eyes lit up at that question. For the first time in public, he could use his preferred pronouns and name, no questions asked. He proudly wrote the "Z" and added "He, Him."

In his Irving school, Red explained, Zane's teachers aren't as accepting of him and his gender identity.

Red said Zane proudly put on his name tag and ran off to play. "He was so excited [that] no one disrespected him," Red said, and he was so happy to tell his family, "Everyone's calling me a boy."

Red and their wife were thrilled to watch their son play, finally able to just be a kid around other Rainbow Roundup children. "It meant the world to him," Red said.

Red and their wife also have a 13-year old, who, they said, is always explaining his family. But, "At the picnic, he just got

to hang out with other teens his age," Red said. "It was amazing to just see my kids be kids."

Rainbow Roundup usually holds an event once a month. Since they joined, Red said, their kids regularly ask if there's something going on that weekend. They're excited about the next event, an afternoon at Hawaiian Falls Mansfield from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. on July 31. Kantor said her group will provide snacks and drinks, and there will be a meet-up at the pavilion.

Red said their older son is excited about getting together with others his age with whom he knows he won't have to explain anything about having two moms, one of whom is non-binary, and a trans brother.

"Rainbow Roundup is an awesome community," Red said. "It's helped everybody in my family."

Kantor said she looks forward to each event and loves watching kids and teens in a setting where "they don't have to explain their family dynamics and can just be free." ■

# Positive influencers



These '2 Dallas Dads' document an authentic queer family journey

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

**J**oe Riggs and Jason Hanna have taken their parental experience to the next level. With a variety of posts that include pool adventures, ice cream outings and vacation breaks as well as just quality time at home, the Dallas couple and their 8 year-old sons have amassed an Instagram following hovering above 76,000. Along with their day jobs, raising their family and community efforts (the two men are the force behind the annual Teddy Bear Party fundraiser), they have also grown into influencers.

Via email, the two discussed their paths on social media and how it intersects with their family life.

**Dallas Voice: On your Instagram alone, you have — to date — 76.4K followers at @2\_Dallas\_Dads. What was the inception of the account?** Two Dallas Dads: Jason changed the name of his personal account to 2 Dallas Dads in 2021 and started getting much more active with social media. We try to post every day, but we skip a day every so often.

**What was the point at which you discovered that you were influencers over merely posting? Does that term have any specific meaning to you?** It has been an interesting "influencer" journey as we didn't consider ourselves ones at first. We would just post random family pictures, and folks would start asking us about random products — how we like them, where we got them, etc. After a few months of increasing our Instagram presence, we started getting approached by marketing firms, and then we started getting much more serious about it.

**How would you describe your goal and the tone of Two Dallas Dads?** Instagram is our main account. We are on other



Joe Riggs and Jason Hanna with their sons, above, and having some "dads time" at sea, below.



platforms, like TikTok, but aren't nearly as active there. We drafted a mission statement to share our journey to help bring awareness of loving families like ours. We want to keep our tone positive and uplifting and focused on our relationship and our family in an authentic way.

**What do you like about sharing that with your followers?** We love sharing our family journey and all the quirks that go with having kids. As dads, it's incredible to be able to relive our own youth and watch their eyes light up with new and exciting adventures.

**How do you find balance between posting your family stories and what you keep to yourself?** We want to post about things we feel are relevant and important as a two-dad family, but also, as gay men, we try and strike a balance between family posts as well as lifestyle posts for us as gay men. We are visible with our family, but we are trying to ensure we maintain a certain level of privacy for the protection of our family.

**You've grown enough to have sponsored posts. Congratulations on that! Is there a process for your sponsored posts in terms of which products/companies you partner with?** We are fairly open on the products we work with if they are great products and fit our brand, which is family- and lifestyle-focused. We have been approached by some brands that don't necessarily fit our page or that we simply don't like, so we kindly decline.

**Are you guys able to make a living through this or are there still day jobs?** We both have full-time day jobs. It was never our intention to make social media a full-time income, but it has generated income for us. We love the opportunities this has given our family, as we are using that income for the boys' college fund. It has become a part-time job for us with our boys on the payroll, so it's also teaching them financial responsibility at an early age.

**What do you want your sons to take away from this online/social experience?** The goal is to have fun. We take pictures almost every weekend, and it's fun when we get to be silly and capture the boys and all their silliness. We will cherish these moments for years to come and have all of these great pictures of their childhood.

**Has this enhanced your family bonding?** For the most part, yes. We want to keep it fun and light-hearted as we want to capture their full personality. However, there are some frustrating moments when they are too silly and not focused, and all we want to do is get a good picture — haha!

**Any tips/advice for other queer families who may want to follow in your footsteps of @2\_Dallas\_Dads?** Our advice would be to follow your heart. Don't let someone tell you what you can and cannot do. Stay focused on your goals and ensure you are taking the right steps to accomplish them.



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# Life after Dobbs



How LGBTQ parents can protect their families in the wake of SCOTUS' disastrous ruling

Since the U.S. Supreme Court decision that overturned abortion rights, "people are panicking" about its potential impact on LGBTQ families, said Polly Crozier, senior staff attorney at GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders (GLAD). How justified are the fears, and how can we best protect LGBTQ families after Dobbs? Crozier and Julie Gonen, federal policy director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, shared their thoughts with me.

Many are concerned that the court's



**Dana Rudolph**  
Contributing Columnist

Justice Clarence Thomas, in his concurrence, was the only justice to explicitly say this should happen, the majority's reasoning "could easily be applied in a future case about sexual intimacy or marriage equality. And we are already seeing officials in some states openly

June 24 decision in Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health could also be used to overturn other fundamental rights. Gonen said that while



saying they do want to return to a time when LGBTQ people were criminalized and barred from marriage."

For the moment, though, marriage equality "is the law of the land and we're not going to yield an inch," Crozier emphasized. "I feel like there's a renewed strength and vigor to hold the line."

Gonen said it was "very unlikely" that a challenge to these other rights would come before the court in its next term, because it would first need to move through the lower courts. Nevertheless, "We must take the threat seriously and be prepared to move aggressively in states that attempt to take us backwards."

Right now, she asserted, "The most important thing LGBTQ parents can do to protect their families is to get a court

order of adoption or parentage [for the nonbiological/nongestational parent]. That is essential, even for parents who are married and even for parents listed on a child's birth certificate."

A birth certificate is not a court order and does not confer parentage but merely records it, as LGBTQ legal organizations have long explained. (See more about adoption and other legal avenues on Page 8.)

"In some states," Gonen continued, "LGBTQ parents can use voluntary acknowledgements of parentage VAPs, which have the same legal effect as a court order." VAPs are free forms that can be completed immediately after a child's birth. Gonen cautioned, however, "It is important to consult an experienced, knowledgeable LGBTQ family law attorney to make sure you are eligible to use a VAP."

(Texas offers a document called acknowledgement of paternity, but no acknowledgement of parentage.)

Getting these protections is something that LGBTQ couples "should have been doing all along," Crozier said. She warned, though, that "there's still a lot of misinformation out there." with some



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lawyers and states telling people they don't need such court orders. If a court says that you don't need one, Crozier recommends asking a local attorney to file a motion to reconsider. You can also ask the lawyer to work with the local adoption bar to educate the court more systemically.

If you need a knowledgeable attorney, Crozier recommends searching the LGBTQ+ Bar Association's Family Law Attorney Directory or reaching out to GLAD or NCLR for names. She said some lawyers are even willing to do "low bono" or pro bono work, adding, "I think the legal community is here to help people."

You should also protect your family through estate planning documents like wills, powers of attorney, and health care proxies. While these can sometimes be expensive, "some of them can be very easy," Crozier said. In many states, a health care proxy is a form that can be printed out and executed. These documents will protect couples of any genders or marital status.

"People need to be using those tools" for parentage and estate planning, she insisted. "You never have been able to

rely on marriage."

Another fear is whether Dobbs will impact assisted reproductive technology. The American Society for Reproductive Medicine, in a recent report, said that Dobbs "does not necessarily restrict access" to ART, but "overly broad statutory language and definitions could, intentionally or not, implicate and even ban such procedures."

Gonen agreed that some state abortion bans may "[call] into question certain methods of assisted reproduction," but added, "Right now, LGBTQ people who are using ART to conceive should continue to do so, while keeping an eye on any potential legal obstacles. We will do our best to keep families informed, and we will certainly act to protect this essential means of creating families."

Crozier agreed: "We aren't seeing those curtailments on any assisted reproduction now, and we will fight back really hard." Such a fight would involve "a big coalition of people," LGBTQ and not, because "so many people use assisted reproduction to build their families."

Fertility advocacy groups like ASRM and RESOLVE are working "to make sure that any restrictions on abortion

care aren't implicating access to fertility care and that we're all in this one movement together."

Whatever may transpire later, Dobbs is already restricting access to abortion in some states. And while many LGBTQ people get pregnant with planning worthy of chess masters, academic studies show that LGBTQ people who have been pregnant are also more likely than cisgender heterosexual women to have had unwanted or mistimed pregnancies and to need abortion services, according to a fact sheet released in June from HRC. Additionally, it said, LGBTQ+ people "may be at increased risk of a pregnancy resulting from a non-consensual encounter."

Currently, abortion remains legal in most states, note NCLR, GLAD, Family Equality, and COLAGE in "What LGBTQ+ Families Need to Know," a guide they released July 1. The guide, available free at any of the organizations' websites, also offers suggestions for finding LGBTQ-inclusive abortion care in your state or another, and goes into further detail about many of the topics above.

What more can we do? Crozier said,

"There are ongoing efforts in the states to expand parentage protections and it's a great kind of practical, nuts-and-bolts, child-centered way to secure not only LGBTQ families but all children." She explained, "There's so much common ground" between LGBTQ people and others who want to build their families through ART. "We want all of those people to have paths to parentage."

"I don't think people still fully appreciate what it means for so many children to live in a system that is completely unequal," Crozier said. She encouraged people to get involved with their state efforts to update parentage laws.

Additionally, she said, "It's so powerful for people to share the stories of their families.... For people who can be out, be out, be joyful, and show the world how great your family is and that we are neighbors just like everybody."

"We're going to figure this out," she asserted. "The only way is to fight." ■

*Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory, with a searchable database of 1000+ LGBTQ family books, media, and more.*



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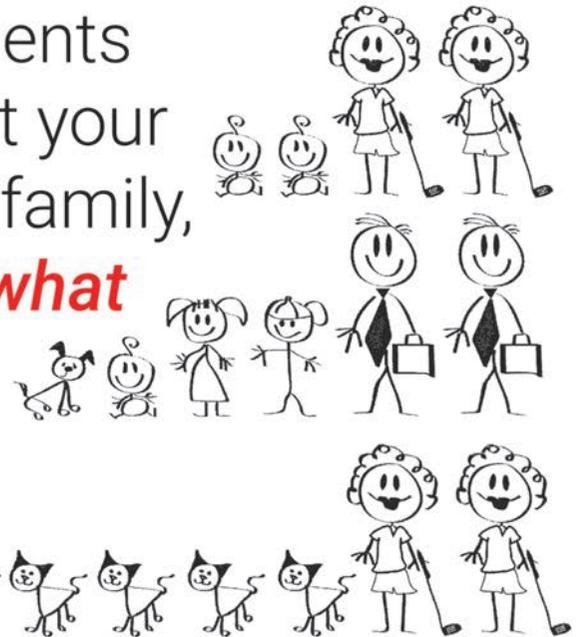


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# How families can support their queer kids



While the wording differs, the advice is the same: be loving and understanding

**DAVID TAFFET** | Senior Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

**A**s more and more youth come out at ever-younger ages, it's never been more important for families to offer love and support to their LGBTQ kids — even if they don't understand it.

The Child Mind Institute says that when a child is coming out, "the most important thing for them to know is that



their family supports and loves them."

If a parent is having trouble accepting that their child is gay, lesbian or transgender, speaking to a support group like PFLAG can help.

"Fear of rejection and serious negative reactions kept many LGB adults from openly sharing their lives," writes Caitlin Ryan, director of the Family Acceptance Project at San Francisco State University.

Ryan writes that on average, adolescents understand their sexual orientation around age 13. But

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children begin to express their gender identity by age 3.

Support begins with the parents, and supportive parents should require respect for their LGBTQ child from other family members. Sometimes LGBTQ children reach out to their siblings first, and supportive siblings can help pave the way for parental support.

One way families can be supportive is by reaching out to PFLAG. That organization offers parents a number of quick tips on how to support their LGBTQ children.

Lead with love is PFLAG's first idea. For many parents that's a natural response.

"For others, long-held beliefs may get in the way of being able to respond positively and supportively," PFLAG writes without being judgmental.

Their advice to those parents is to remember that as easy or difficult as it was to learn about the child's sexual orientation or gender identity, it was equally difficult for the child to come to the parent with the news.

What should a parent say to a child

who has revealed such deeply personal information? PFLAG suggests a simple, "I love you." Or if a parent is at a loss for words, a hug always works.

Next piece of advice from PFLAG: Listen with intention.

"Give your child ample opportunity to open up and share their thoughts and feelings," they advise. And if the loved one who just shared the news seems to want to talk but isn't opening up, a simple question like "How did things go in school today?" might start a conversation.

Most parents don't react by planning to march in the next Pride parade with their kids. Some do, but it's enough to show subtle support. That will make a difference, according to PFLAG.

What might that subtle support look like? Parents can speak positively about an LGBTQ person they know or a character from a book, movie or TV show. Reflect on a gender or sexuality issue in the news. Read a book about gender or sexuality diversity.

These are small hints, PFLAG explains, but they let kids know the parent is sup-

portive while learning more.

Finally, PFLAG advises parents to learn the terms: "What is sexual orientation?" the organization asks. "What does it mean to be bisexual?"

Learning the language, PFLAG explains, is a great way to start having some important and challenging conversations.

And mistakes? Parents will make them. Making mistakes is what everyone does.

Years ago, I was asked to speak at a PFLAG Dallas meeting. After I addressed the group, they broke up into discussion groups and I joined one of them. One mom was a little distraught: Her son had just come out to her, and she had responded all wrong.

"He came out on Thursday and by Monday you're at a PFLAG meeting?" I asked her. She nodded about to break into tears.

"Here's my number," I told her. "If he has any criticism, have him call me, and I'll tell him to back off. Just being here so you can be more supportive is one of the most loving things I ever heard." ■

## Wedding



Dr. Cathy (Kathryn) Brownlee and Elizabeth Brownlee were married Tuesday, July 12. Cathy is a music professor at Dallas College Cedar Valley Campus and founder/artistic director/conductor of the New Texas Symphony Orchestra. Elizabeth is a middle school teacher.

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# \$25K to honor 25 years

## LEAVING A LEGACY

As Melissa Grove exits Legacy Cares, she raises money to keep the organization financially sound

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

**B**efore Melissa Grove retires as executive director of Legacy Cares by the end of the summer, her staff wanted to surprised her with one last gift: Assuring her that she was leaving the agency on a solid financial footing. To achieve that, they've set a goal of raising \$25,000 over the next few weeks.

For a number of years, raising that kind of money came easy to Legacy: Make a call to Leslie Jordan who would jump on a plane and fill a theater — cash raised. But Jordan's become one of the hottest stars on TV. Currently, he's starring in *Call Me Kat* and can't get away.

So Legacy is raising money the old fashioned way — pleading with supporters one last time while Grove as executive director.

"I'm so honored they decided to do this in my honor," Grove said. "The best gift they could give me is letting me leave knowing Legacy is in good shape."

When Grove took over as executive director, the agency was expected to close before long. That was 25 years ago



Legacy's Executive Director Melissa Grove with actor Leslie Jordan, a longtime Legacy supporter (Photo courtesy of Melissa Grove)

when the small organization that offered counseling to people with HIV and ran a hospice for those who would soon die of AIDS.

At that time, new medications had just come on the market and the need for hospice services would soon go away — or so everyone thought. Instead, Legacy Founders Cottage became a place where people with HIV came to recover after suffering serious illness.

Grove turned Legacy around financially as well. Rather than cut any services, she expanded funding and added programs.

Housing has become an important component of Legacy Cares with housing referrals and its Master Leasing

program. The Grace Project is the largest conference in North America for women living with HIV.

In addition, Legacy offers a 24-hour hotline, counseling via telehealth services, a walk-in clinic, community education and outreach.

In honor of her 25 years of service, Legacy Cares has kicked off its 25K for 25Y Campaign. Any monetary donation given until September will support the campaign.

Levels of contribution include \$1,000 to become a Milestone Sponsor in honor of one of the years of Grove's

service.

Legacy Counseling Center opened in 1989, and Grove became its second intern in 1990 while she pursued her master's degree. She said she chose Legacy because no one wanted to go there during the depths of the AIDS epidemic.

In 1992, Grove became a licensed therapist, and, four years later, she was hired to run the newly-opened Legacy Founders Cottage. In 1999, she was promoted to executive director.

That year, she started a substance abuse program, created the Grace Project and wrote a grant to the city of Dallas to expand the cottage from three to seven bedrooms.

But Grove was just getting started.

"It was a real gift seeing what the needs were in the community and being able to fill those needs," Grove said.

In 2012, she created Homebase for Housing, a centralized place to meet the housing needs of people living with HIV. That same year, she established the Legacy Walk-in Clinic to meet the needs for essential, immediate mental health care.

With the success of Homebase for Housing, in 2013, she created the Master Leasing Program to house homeless people living with HIV and in 2016 added eight units.

There have been a number of awards and recognition during her 25 years. In 2007, Grove was selected grand marshal of the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade. The National Association of Social Workers named her Public Citizen of the Year in 2014, and the next year she won Black Tie Dinner's Raymond Kuchling Award. Dallas Voice Readers chose Grove as Best Straight Ally in the 2021 Reader's Voice Awards.

In 2020, Grove hired Brooke Nicker-Henderson as Legacy's first associate executive director. Last summer Grove announced her upcoming retirement, and the board named Nicker-Henderson as her replacement.

"I'm happy to be passing the torch to Brooke who's so committed to treating everyone with respect and dignity," Grove said.

To donate to 25K for 25Y, visit [LegacyCares.org/Melissa](http://LegacyCares.org/Melissa).

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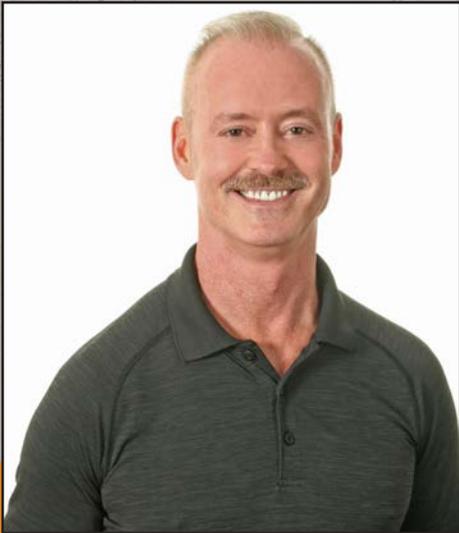



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# Black Tie announces honorees

COMMUNITY CHARITY



Robert Emery

Activist/philanthropist Robert Emery to receive Kuchling Award; actor Colman Domingo will also be honored

Colman Domingo at the event.

The announcements came Thursday night at Black Tie's Summer Social, hosted by Park Place Motorcars. The 41st annual Black Tie Dinner, presented by PNC Bank, will be held Sept. 24 at the Sheraton Dallas hotel.

"Coming off of our record-breaking 40th dinner in 2021, where we distributed \$1,450,000, our goal this year is to far surpass last year," said Loftis, this year's senior co-chair, noting that Black Tie officials are "so excited to welcome the North Texas LGBTQIA community, our many allies, and supporters to the 41st Black Tie Dinner, presented by our amazing partner PNC Bank."

Loftis continued, "Our work has become increasingly more impactful, and our beneficiaries need us more than

## FROM STAFF REPORTS

**B**lack Tie Dinner co-chairs Terry D. Loftis and Regina Lyn Pierce announced this week that longtime Dallas activist Robert Emery will be receiving the 2022 Kuchling Humanitarian Award at the Black Tie Dinner in September. And, they added, Black Tie will also be honoring actor

ever as we collectively take on new challenges confronting our community. We promise another incredible Black Tie Dinner experience for our guests and supporters this year.

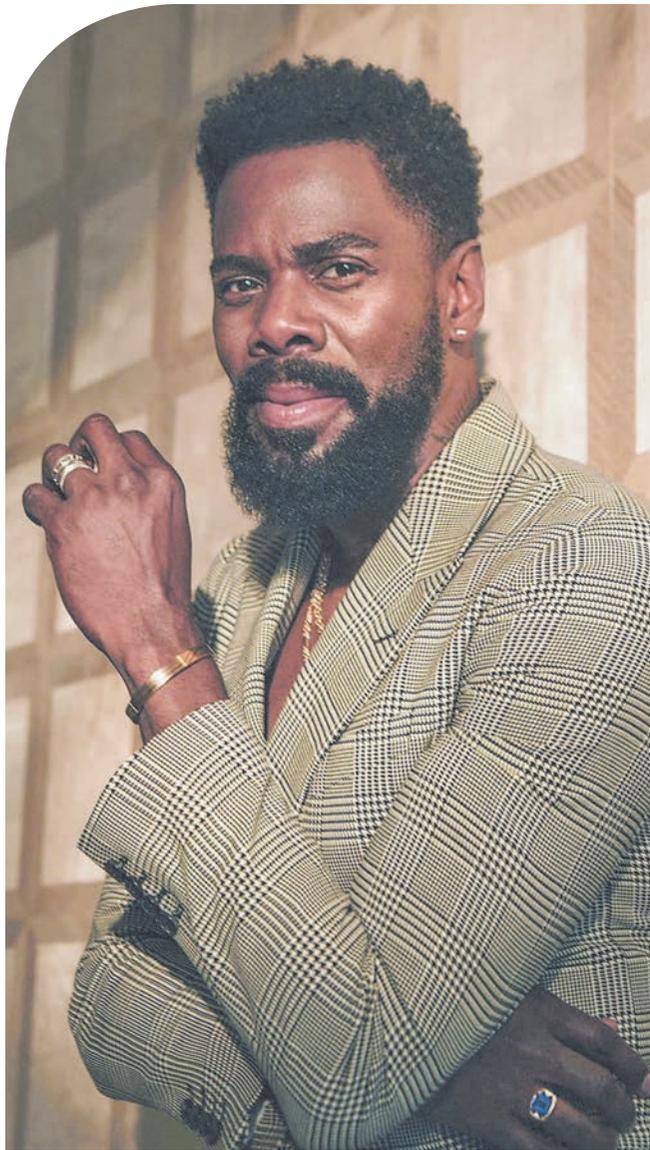
“Together, we can once again make a significant impact on our beneficiaries and the countless people they serve across our community.”

Pierce, this year’s junior co-chair, noted that the theme for the 41st annual fundraiser is Power of Pride.

“This theme is so impactful because it represents the power of the LGBTQ community, our allies, our beneficiaries, our sponsors and the overall power of the Black Tie Dinner family,” Pierce said. “We look forward to joining our wonderful guests for a fabulous evening where we can all gather to celebrate our pride, lift our spirits and arm our beneficiaries with funds so that they can continue to relentlessly fight for our LGBTQ rights and promote equality in the years ahead.”

Emery has been an active volunteer in the LGBTQ community for some 35 years. He is one of the co-founders of The Dallas Way, the organization working to preserve the history of North Texas’ LGBTQ community through written and oral archives. He is also a founding board member for Coalition for Aging LGBT, which serves an estimated 400,000 LGBTQ seniors throughout North Texas, and he is also well known for his philanthropic efforts in the community.

Domingo stars as gay civil rights icon Bayard Rustin — friend of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and organizer of the 1963 March on Washington — in the Netflix/Higher Ground production *Rustin*, now available on Netflix. The award-winning actor also stars in the acclaimed HBO series *Euphoria* as Ali Muhammad and as Mister in the musical motion picture *The Color Purple* produced by Warner Broth-



Colman Domingo

ers, Oprah Winfrey and Steven Spielberg.

Over its first 40 years, Black Tie Dinner has raised more than \$27 million dollars, distributing those funds to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, the dinner’s national beneficiary, and to a variety of local organizations serving the LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS communities. Organizers said they are in “full planning mode” for this year’s dinner, and are looking “to make an even bigger splash than years before.”

Board members said they are expecting “another year of high demand from both local and national supporters,” and they encouraged sponsors to secure their spots early. The “Black Tie Dinner Ambassador Program,” which gives individuals the opportunity to donate to Black Tie beneficiaries throughout the year, is also available, and raffle tickets for a chance to win a 2022 Mercedes donated by Park Place Motorcars of Dallas are on sale now at BlackTie.org and in person through board members. ■



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# Sweet dreams

## BEYOND THE STAGE

Husband-husband duo Emerson Collins and Blake McIver Ewing combine talents to take their dreams on tour

**RICH LOPEZ** | Staff writer  
[rich@dallasvoice.com](mailto:rich@dallasvoice.com)

**T**he pandemic clearly sucks, and it has for more than two years now. But big thanks are long overdue for all the creative types who still managed to provide entertainment during the dark days of COVID quarantine, whether from their living rooms or outside filming with their smartphones.

Staged readings, concerts, short films and theater pieces all had their Zoom moments in the last couple of years. But two performers turned their home-grown musical revue into a full-on tour.

Like all of us, Emerson Collins and Blake Ewing McIver were stuck at home in those lockdown months. But an opportunity came to the talented duo and real-life couple by way of the Public Theater of San Antonio.

"Del [Shores] and I had done our *Sordid Lives* streams, so I was doing that. But the theater called Blake and me asking if we had a show," Collins said. "They were willing to do anything for their audience to enjoy some theater — and we had nothing but time."

Collins and McIver aren't short on talent, and their talents have been displayed across stages and television screens.

Both were stars of Bravo's *The People's Couch*. McIver was famous at a young age as the junior vocalist champion on *Star Search*, and he appeared in *The Little Rascals* and *Full House*. Collins — a longtime collaborator with Texas favorite Shores — appeared in and produced the films *Southern Baptist Sissies*, *A Very Sordid Wedding* and LOGO's *Sordid Lives: The Series*.

Both have also worked locally with



Blake Ewing McIver, right, and his husband Emerson Collins are on tour with their show *I Dreamed a Dreamgirl*

Uptown Players, most recently at the theater's fundraiser revue *Broadway Our Way* this spring.

So when the San Antonio theater called, McIver told them, "We'll put together something for you."

What they came up with is the early version of their show *I Dreamed a Dreamgirl*, which they are now touring and are bringing to Dallas on Sunday, July 24.

The thing was, they both acknowledged that their styles aren't quite on the same page, and yet they have come up with a whole show of solos and duets.

"Our styles aren't exactly copasetic," Ewing said with a laugh. "My earliest vocal influences were from Disney."

"And I sing like Josh Groban-lite," Collins added. "When we first started dating, we wondered how would we ever sing together."

And yet, here they are.

The title of their show comes from both of their Broadway loves. *Dreamgirls* is McIver's favorite musical, and Collins is a big *Les Miserable* fan, hence the take on "I Dreamed a Dream."

"We joked about this title forever," Collins said. "We wondered what a mashup would be like, and now it's our opening number. When we first did the livestream, it was this terrible idea that became a hilarious mashup."

The two began to create an actual show, and both put their collective skills to work. As time went on, and vaccinations happened, and theaters reopened, they fine-tuned the show. Meanwhile,

Collins got to work booking the show, while McIver arranged and produced the show's music and mashups.

Before they knew it, they had a nine-city tour on their hands (well, nine cities so far).

"I reached out to the theaters we knew. We made a sizzle reel, and I thought four or five shows would be amazing," Collins said. "Now we have a real tour."

The two-man show is a mix of music and storytelling. Collins and McIver two talk about their relationship and careers, tying in showtunes, Disney favorites and deep cuts along with their unique selection of mashup medleys they both say "probably shouldn't exist."

But that's what dreams are for. ■

*I Dreamed a Dreamgirl* is presented by Uptown Players at the Kalita Humphreys Theater. For more information and tickets, visit [UptownPlayers.org](http://UptownPlayers.org).

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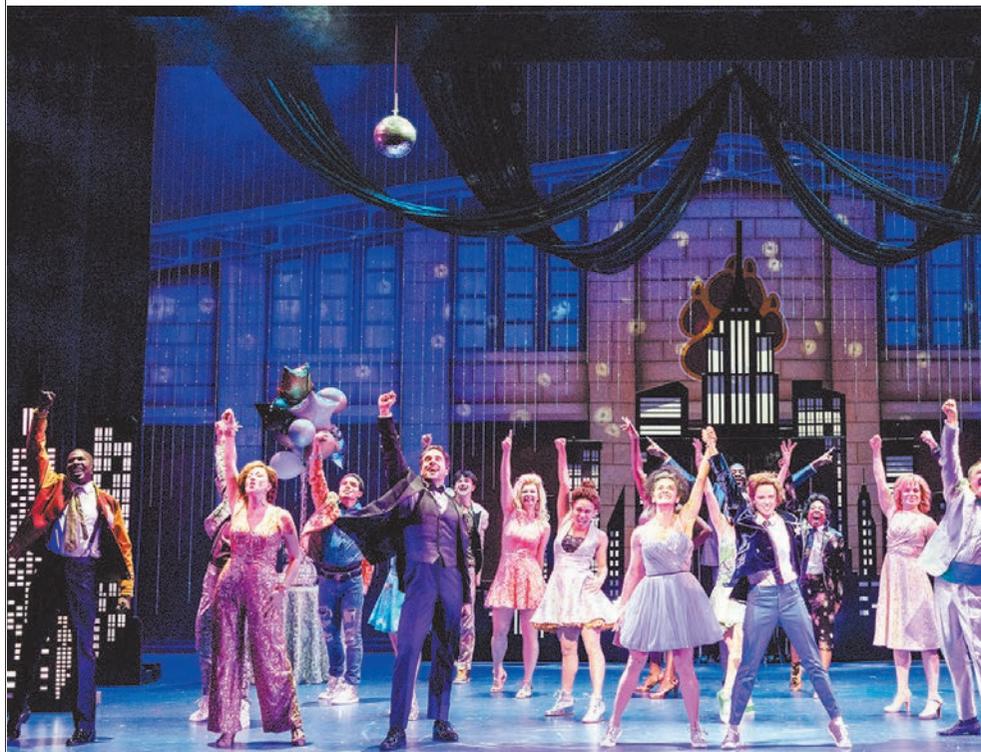
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## Representing

BEYOND THE STAGE



The national touring company of *The Prom*. (Photo by Deen van Meer)

Nonbinary lead takes audiences out to 'Prom'

**RICH LOPEZ** | Staff writer  
[rich@dallasvoice.com](mailto:rich@dallasvoice.com)

On paper, the musical *The Prom* may come off like a colorful, feel-good musical comedy that's fit for any sweet tooth. And it's just that — only unapologetically so. The show's nonbinary lead, Kaden Kearney, finds that even with all its exuberance, there's still a message to be found amid the frivolity.

"The show is just a wonderful experience and so joyous, but, also, everyone has a chance to learn about themselves," they said by phone.

Kearney plays Emma who wants to take a girl to the high school prom — only her school's PTA isn't down for that. At the same time, four Broadway has-beens are trying to restart their careers and are in search of a cause — which turns out to be Emma's prom ordeal.

*The Prom* opens Tuesday and runs through July 31 at the Winspear Opera

House.

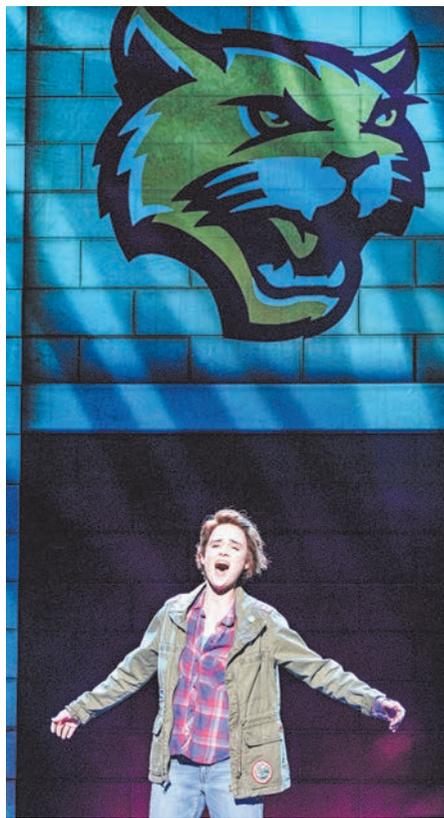
For Kearney, much of the show's story sounds very topical.

"I believe the script was written in 2016, inspired by events at that time, and here we are in 2022, and it's still relevant," they said. "I hate that we're still talking about this stuff, but it provides, I hope, an opportunity for people to learn. Everyone can really see themselves in a character."

Taking on the role of Emma, Kearney makes their national tour debut, which isn't a bad start for someone who graduated from the University of California in Irvine with their MFA in 2019. After moving to New York City from California, Kearney did smaller shows and off-off-Broadway gigs, but then they found out it was time to go to *The Prom*.

"This was the first job I got after the pandemic hit. I had been doing theater for a while through school and other parts, but this is a unique situation, I feel, to arrive on the scene in New York and now on a national tour," they said.

Kearney describes their character Emma has someone who knows what she wants and knows what she stands



Kaden Kearney (they-them) in the National Tour of *The Prom*. (Photo by Deen Van Meer) contingent and has lately seen more trans actors in its ranks. To come to this show as its nonbinary lead is an added piece to the LGBTQ+ representation on the stage.

for. They related to her steadiness. Kearney admires that about Emma.

But the show also lets Kearney step back in time.

“What’s beautiful about it is that it’s healing,” they said. “I get to go back to my high school self, and I give them a big hug.”

Kearney came out in their senior year. As a queer person — and high school being what it is — they didn’t have that prom experience.

“I never got to go to my prom so being able to go to prom every night now is amazing and sweet,” Kearney said.

To add to that, Kearney expressed gratitude for the opportunity to tell a queer story onstage to audiences as a nonbinary actor. In short, this national tour is a dream of theirs in so many ways.

“I take the responsibility of it very seriously. I appreciate the chance to connect with young queer and trans people who might see themselves in these characters. You can’t underestimate the importance of feeling seen.”

It’s fortuitous for Kearney to find themselves in this role. As a performer, they want to see their own stories onstage as well as some queer representation. Theater has certainly has its gay

“I hope this continues more and more. Emma’s not written as nonbinary, but there is a gender journey she’s on,” Kearney said. “Being able to represent the community, I hope, tells nonbinary people who want a career in theater that there is room for them. That’s so special.”

They know audiences may not see that Kearney is nonbinary, but they also know that the ones who do know are seeing that inclusion happen onstage.

Beyond the story of the two girls and the Broadway actors, Kearney adds that this is a story about family, as well, and what that means for queer people.

“First, I think families would love the show. I also think *Prom* touches on both chosen families and relatives and how we navigate those by creating that support system. Even if your own family doesn’t accept you — like Emma’s — there are people out there who can be that family for you. There’s something special about that.”

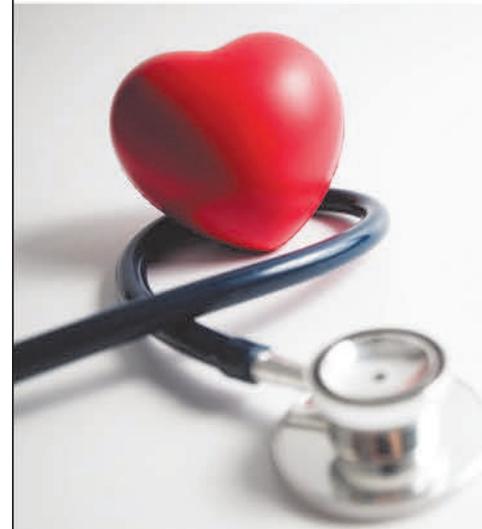
Now Kearney’s got to get ready for their date, because they got a Prom to go to. ■

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# Memories

## ON THE PAGE

Memoirs offer great post-Pride reading

**TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER** |  
Bookworm Sez  
BookwormSez@yahoo.com

**LGBTQ Memoirs by  
various authors, c.2022;  
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**A**nother Pride Month is in the can. All that planning, preparation and execution of events is done, and now you find yourself with lots of time on your hands. So why not reach for one of these great memoirs to read.

A little bit of memoir, a little bit of sympathy, advice, and several biographies are at the heart of *Here and Queer: A Queer Girl's Guide to Life* by Rowan Ellis, illustrated by Jacky Sheridan (Quarto, \$14.99). This book leans mostly on the serious-but-lighter side, with plenty of colorful artwork and suggestions for teen girls on figuring out who they are and what it means.

There are fun activities, quizzes, essays, and tips inside; readers will find plenty of one-liners to take away, a comprehensive timeline of LGBTQ history and biographies that reflect women of many ages and races. That all makes this a book that even adult women and, perhaps, some questioning boys will appreciate.

Speaking of lighthearted, try *Start Without Me (I'll Be There in a Minute)* by Gary Janetti (Holt, \$27.99). TV producer, writer, social media star and sometimes curmudgeon Janetti is annoyed — mighty annoyed in several essays here. But his aggravation is not meant to bring readers down. It's meant to make you laugh and — with very funny, wry takes on finding the perfect tan and the perfect man, friendship with a nun, hotel rooms, mothers-in-law, *The Wizard of Oz*, vacations, weddings and more — you will.

For something a little more somber,

reach for *Side Affects: On Being Trans and Feeling Bad* by Hil Malatino (University of Minnesota Press, \$21.95). Honesty is at the root of this semi-biographical look at being trans: If you are trans, says Malatino, you may struggle with several righteously negative feelings you have, like disconnect, anger, fear, numbness, burnout, exhaustion — feelings that exist, in part, because of the times in which we live now and the transphobia that seems to be everywhere. Counteracting these feelings — or, at least being able to survive and thrive despite them — may be as simple as some type of activism, and Malatino explains the details as he shares his own story as well as many case studies.

And finally, if you love watching or participating in drag, then you'll absolutely love *How You Get Famous* by Nicole Pasulka (Simon & Schuster, \$27.99). This book tells the story of a coat-check boy who loved performing in drag and who talked her bar-owning boss into letting her host a drag show in Brooklyn. But this was no one-night stand, and soon the event had a lot of fans — among them, dozens of "kids" who sneaked into the club to practice their acts next to experienced performers.

But when you're on the edge of what's about to be a popular kind of entertainment, amateur status doesn't last long enough — and neither does this upbeat, wonderful book.

And if these don't fit the bill, be sure to ask your favorite booksellers or librarians for help. They've got your next best read in the can. ■

# Female energy

## IN YOUR EARS

New releases recall the '80s, '90s

GREGG SHAPIRO | Q-Music  
GreggShapiro@aol.com

It's not necessary to quantify the musical status of Bonny Light Horseman by calling them a "folk supergroup," when supergroup would suffice. After all, Anaïs Mitchell is a Tony Award-winner (for *Hadestown*) in addition to being a singer/songwriter. Eric D. Johnson is the longtime leader of folk-rock outfit Fruit Bats, and multi-instrumentalist Josh Kaufman is a member of the band Muzz (in addition to Bonny Light Horseman).

In other words, this trio is more than just a convenient label. For its forthcoming second album, *Rolling Golden Holy* (37d03d), Bonny Light Horseman remains faithful to the traditional sound it crafted on its eponymous 2020 debut album while enhancing the sound with modern touches, giving the album a richer sound. Standout tracks include "Sweetbread," "Exile," "California," "Fleur de Los" and "Someone to Weep for Me."

Of all the musical genres bucking for a revival, how many people would have had ska-punk near the top of their list? The second wave revival of the early-to-mid 1990s was led by California bands including No Doubt (led by Gwen Stefani before she became a glam-pop diva), Rancid and Goldfinger. This next (third?) wave is being powered by The Interrupters, a West Coast group with a female lead vocalist who goes by Aimee Interrupter.

As if to cement The Interrupters' credibility, it enlisted '80s ska legend Rhoda Dakar (of the Bodysnatchers and the Specials), as well as '90s ska-punk star Tim Armstrong (of Rancid) for its new album, *In The Wild* (Hellcat/Anti-).

Aimee Interrupter's vocal delivery owes more to Joan Jett than Stefani, but she gets her points across from start to finish on "As We Live," "In the Mirror," "The Hard Way," "Kiss The Ground," "Let 'Em Go," "Love Never Dies" and "Burdens."



The Interrupters aren't the only ones looking to the '90s for inspiration. On the female-fronted quartet Momma's third album *Household Name* (Polyvinyl), you can hear echoes of Veruca Salt, Liz Phair and Juliana Hatfield. Those aren't bad influences, and Momma treats them with respect while also making an effort to establish its own identity. This is best achieved on "Medicine," "Speeding 72," "Tall Home," "Spider" and "Brave."

While we're on the subject of the 1990s, San Francisco-based band Deerhoof hails from that distant period, and continues to make music to this very day. An experimental noise-pop unit (imagine Captain Beefheart was fronted by a Japanese woman named Satomi Matsuzaki), Deerhoof is also unexpectedly accessible. *Actually, You Can* (Joyful Noise) opener "Be Unbarred, O Ye Gates of Hell," which poses the musical question "If we only have planted onions, how are these tomatoes all growing?" manages to be both welcoming and off-putting simultaneously. On the other hand, the gently shuffling "We Grew, And We Are Astonished" is Deerhoof at its most restrained. "Plant Thief" is a rocker that grows on you, while "Dive Comedy" is no laughing matter.

On its new album *From Capelton Hill* (Last Gang), Canadian synth-pop band Stars, featuring vocalist Amy Millan, has included one of the hottest dance songs of the year, "Build A Fire" (get it?). It's the kind of timeless bouncy and rhythmic track that could be from the '80s or the 21st century. Just try to resist the urge to dance when you hear it.

Other songs, including "Hoping," "Palmistry," and the funky "If I Never See London Again," are also irresistible when it comes to moving and grooving. ■

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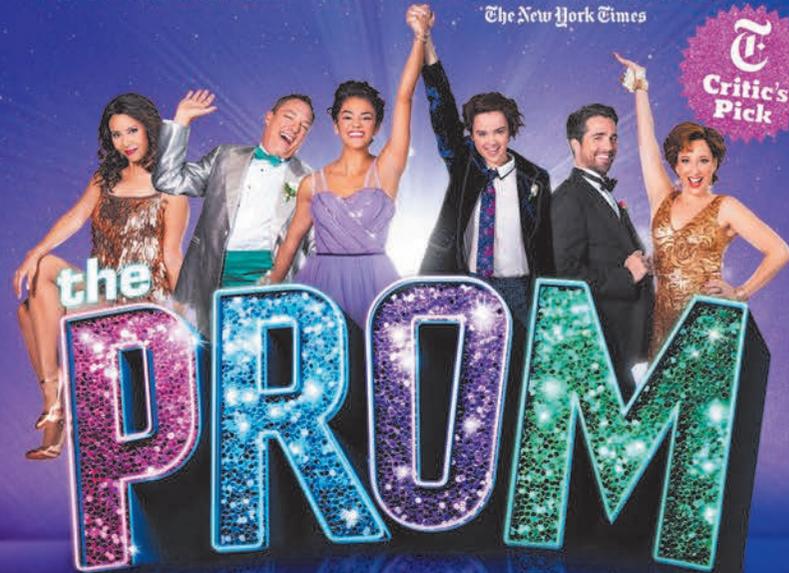
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# The state of HIV and aging

## POSITIVE THOUGHTS

PLWH are living longer, but stigma remains a big issue

**B**y now we've all heard the statistics: 50 percent of people living with HIV (PLWH) are over the age of 50, and by 2030 it will be 70 percent. When we talk about HIV and aging it always tends to sound like a laundry list of everything that can possibly go wrong as we get older. But please indulge this old-timer as I ponder a few things for us to consider.

Today, thanks to advances in treatment, older adults with HIV are faring better, but we tend to have an average of three or more co-morbidities than our peers without HIV, and these occur more



**Jeff Berry**  
Special Contributor

frequently and at an earlier age.

Things like frailty, bone and neuro-cognitive issues, cardiovascular disease, cancers, kidney and liver disease — and inflammaging, the idea that chronic inflammation is the driver of many of these co-occurring conditions.

But what about invisibility as a co-morbidity? Stigma is still a huge issue for PLWH, and for those of us who are aging, we face the dual stigma of aging

and HIV. Our society does not value our elders or the wisdom that can come with aging. How do we tap into that wisdom and begin to turn the tide of this impending silver tsunami?

We hear about trauma, too. Many long-term survivors have experienced multiple traumas — trauma from our childhood, the trauma of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia — and the trauma of losing entire support networks of lovers, friends and family members to AIDS early on in the epidemic. People who acquired HIV around birth or at an early age and have been living with HIV 10, 20, 30 years now are also long-term survivors. We need to include them in the conversation and pull up a chair for them at the table.

Along with these co-occurring conditions, we see increased rates of isolation, depression, substance misuse, post-trau-

matic stress disorder and other psychosocial issues.

We know that HIV disproportionately affects Black, Indigenous and other people of color. And then issues such as unstable housing, justice system involvement, poverty, food insecurity and other social determinants of health all affect the quality of life of people aging with HIV and often can change the trajectory of the lives of PLWH, for better or for worse.

As advocate Jules Levin likes to point out, our healthcare system is broken and ill-equipped to deal with an aging society, let alone people who are aging with HIV.

We've heard stories of older LGBTQ people and PLWH having to go back into the closet when entering into long-term care facilities for fear of being outed, ostracized and stigmatized — and

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still being stigmatized and receiving suboptimal care.

Not only is our healthcare system broken, the entire system is broken. But, I promise, there is some good news.

The updated national HIV/AIDS strategy includes people aging with HIV and long-term survivors for the very first time. Clear goals for improving the quality of LTS are articulated in the strategy — let's hold our leaders accountable, and work together so that we may achieve them. Organizations and programs around the country and globally are already starting to address some of these issues.

We know that many LTS have developed resilience in the face of all these odds, so how do we help support and build models of resilience? Just as PLWH created a system of care and support where none existed early in the epidemic, we are the ones who will need to create new systems and models of care, from the ground up, because no one else is going to do it for us.

We need to advocate for policies and

reforms that will improve the quality of life and deliver culturally appropriate services and care for people aging with HIV.

We need increased research on HIV and aging, but we also need implementation science that will help translate that research into improved outcomes and quality of life.

And lastly, it's imperative that we strengthen and harness the collective voice and power of networks of individuals living and aging with HIV to achieve all of these goals, and provide people living and aging with HIV the support and dignity we all so richly deserve.

We've earned it.

Jeff Berry is the editor-in-chief of *Positively Aware* magazine, and he is director of publications at *Test Positive Aware Network* in Chicago. This column is a project of *TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ* and *Q Syndicate*, the LGBTQ+ wire service. Visit their websites — *TheBody.com, HIVPlusMag.com, PositivelyAware.com* and *Poz.com* — for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.



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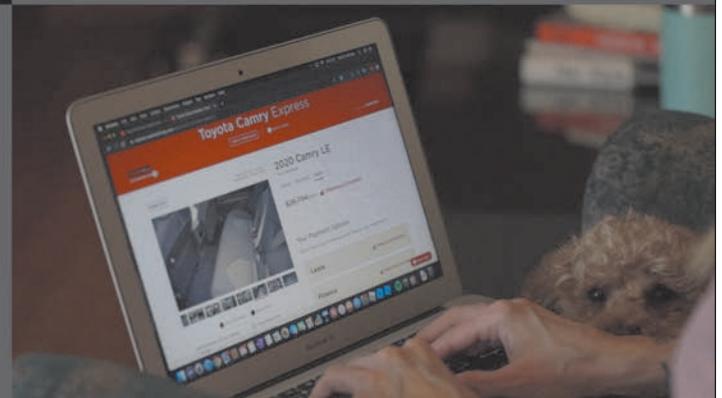


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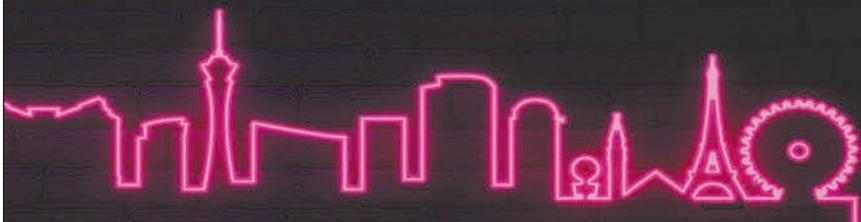


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LGBTQ issue] because I am a woman, and I did not give birth to them,” Burch explained. “The Texas Family Code is very specific on what defines a mother. It’s not about gender-neutral terms. If I were a man, then there would be no issues since Adlee and Poppy are biologically mine.”

Although Burch is an attorney herself, “my practice is really focused on wills, trusts, guardianship, and estate planning,” she said. So she and Kantor turned to attorney Jaime Dugan, who specializes in adoption, to create the legal foundation of their family.

In cases like this one, Dugan said, “The issue is related to how the law identifies a legal parent. Every state has their own laws — ours is in the Texas Family Code — that lays out the ways you can become a child’s legal parent. Our Texas Family Code uses gendered terms, and therefore defines a parent using the terms ‘mother’ and ‘father.’ Other states might use ‘parent,’ which could make becoming a legal parent less cumbersome for LGBTQ folks than it is in Texas.”

In Texas, Dugan said, there are just three ways a person can legally become a mother: give birth to the child (as Kantor did), adopt a child or have a court order signed by a judge. But not one of those has anything to do with being biologically related to the child or with the marital status of the mother.

“Also, a very important note that many folks don’t realize, none of those three ways has to do with being listed on the child’s birth certificate as a parent/mother,” Dugan said. “Being on a child’s birth certificate — which Texas allows same-sex couples to do at the child’s birth IF they are married — does NOT, in and of itself, make someone a legal parent.”

In Kantor and Burch’s situation, Kantor is Adlee and Poppy’s legal mother, even though she has no biological connection, and Burch — despite being named as a parent on the birth certificate and being their biological mother — had no legal standing as their parent.

Thus, the need for Burch to adopt her own biological daughters.

Dugan noted that the third way she mentioned — having a court order signed by a judge in a process called “adjudication of parentage” — was only recently adding to the Texas Family Code,

and “in my opinion as a Texas family law attorney, should still raise some significant concerns for LGBTQ parents and their decision-making process.

Adjudication of parentage “requires a judge to interpret the Texas Family Code, Texas case law and U.S. Supreme Court case law to determine the person is a legal mother,” Dugan explained. And while she has been able to “win” some adjudication of parentage cases, “because of the newness of this law, there is not a lot for a judge to consider or scenarios to follow, so it may end up being a case-by-case situation, determined judge-by-judge for quite some time.

“And, the reality for some parents will be that they may end up ‘losing’ in front of a judge at the initial court level and then have to appeal the case to a higher court, which often takes years. That has potential of the parent losing precious time with the child while the case works its way through the court system.”

Dugan said that her law firm “strongly recommends” going through the adoption process rather than relying on adjudication of parentage “because an adoption is generally a universal way to identify a parent from state to state, and adoption is also a process identified in other areas of Texas law, like in the probate code or in personal injury claims. Extremely significant rights are associated with being a legal parent and adoption is the best and surest way in Texas right now for someone in Lorie’s position to become a legal parent to her daughters.”

Dugan said that if it were to come down to a court battle, Burch’s status as the two girls’ biological parent, in and of itself, would afford her no legal standing. And, she stressed, even if it did, just having standing to file for custody does not automatically mean a person would win.

“Monumental preferences are given in the law to legal parents over non-legal parents,” Dugan said. “In circumstances where the couple has raised the child together before splitting, there are often other ways they can obtain standing — besides biology. But that doesn’t automatically mean they will win or be successful.”

And while it is difficult, given the variety of factors to consider, to give one single, definitive answer to the questions

surrounding what would happen if the legal parent and bio parent were to split, or if something were to happen to the legal mom, “it is absolutely possible, and the law allows for the possibility that the bio mom could be in a situation to have to fight for custody against birth mom’s relatives or — given the way other things have been going in Texas — against the state through the Department of Family and Child Services.

Dugan also notes that, while this kind of situation where a bio parent is adopting their own child is most often seen with lesbian couples, “it is certainly possible for there to be other situations where it would be necessary ... particularly for trans parents.”

While legally “there is no such thing as a second-parent adoption [because] under the law it’s just an adoption,” members of the LGBTQ community and attorneys who are in the community or who work regularly with clients in the community usually refer to these kinds of adoptions as “second-parent adoptions,” Dugan said, adding that her firm would refer to the process as a second-parent adoption whether there were biological ties between the child and the adopting parent or not.

“Good family law attorneys who are in and who respect the LGBTQ community also understand how demeaning and demoralizing the need for the process can be, and they use the term ‘second-parent adoption’ as a show of respect,” Dugan said. “Well-versed attorneys also have specific processes within their law firms to handle the cases with the courts in ways that can make the adoption process easier and sometimes faster.”

Time is always definitely a factor, Dugan acknowledged, and there are “a number of variables” that can affect how long it takes for an adoption to be completed. “And the one we can’t change is the speed of the court,” she said.

“Since it’s still a court process, we can sometimes be delayed in the way a specific court is handling their cases in general, not just adoption cases,” she explained. “There are also things well-versed family law attorneys can do and advise their clients to do to help speed up the process in some cases. I would say it ranges from about four to eight months — sometimes longer.”

Cost is another consideration, and Dugan said that can also depend on a number of factors, including which firm you hire and the cost of the adoption



Jamie Dugan

evaluation, which is required. “In general, I would expect the entire process — including court fees, attorney fees and evaluation fees — to be somewhere around \$5,000-\$7,000,” she said.

But what if something happens in the meantime? That, Burch said, is where other legal steps can come into play.

“Wills, trusts, guardianships and the designation of a health care agent are documents that, regardless of legal status, will ensure that the non-birth/non-legal parent can be guardian of the child, take care of the child and even take the child to the hospital and/or for doctor visits, which is especially critical in an emergency situation,” Burch said. “You never know what can happen day-to-day and if something happens to the birth/legal parent, the other parent will have no legal rights to take care of their child” if these documents are not in place.

Burch continued, “Getting your estate planning documents can be done in a matter of weeks, much quicker than an adoption, and will ensure that in the meantime, if something happens, the non-birth/non-legal parent can take care of their own children. Therefore, we strongly recommend getting the estate planning in place first.”

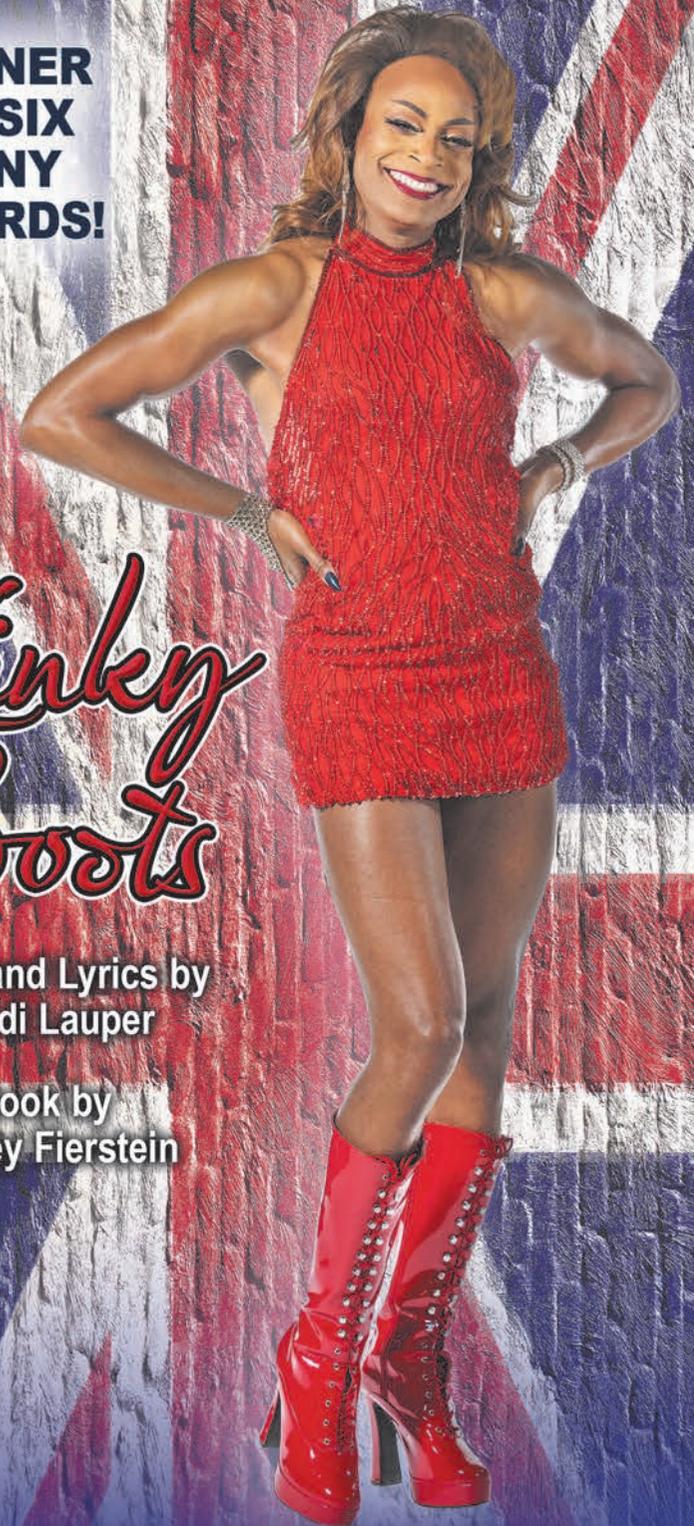
While it can be a long and potentially expensive process, Burch said it is well worth it in the long run: “In a nutshell, in any instance where the state or governmental agency would recognize a parent, wouldn’t I want that for my own children?” ■

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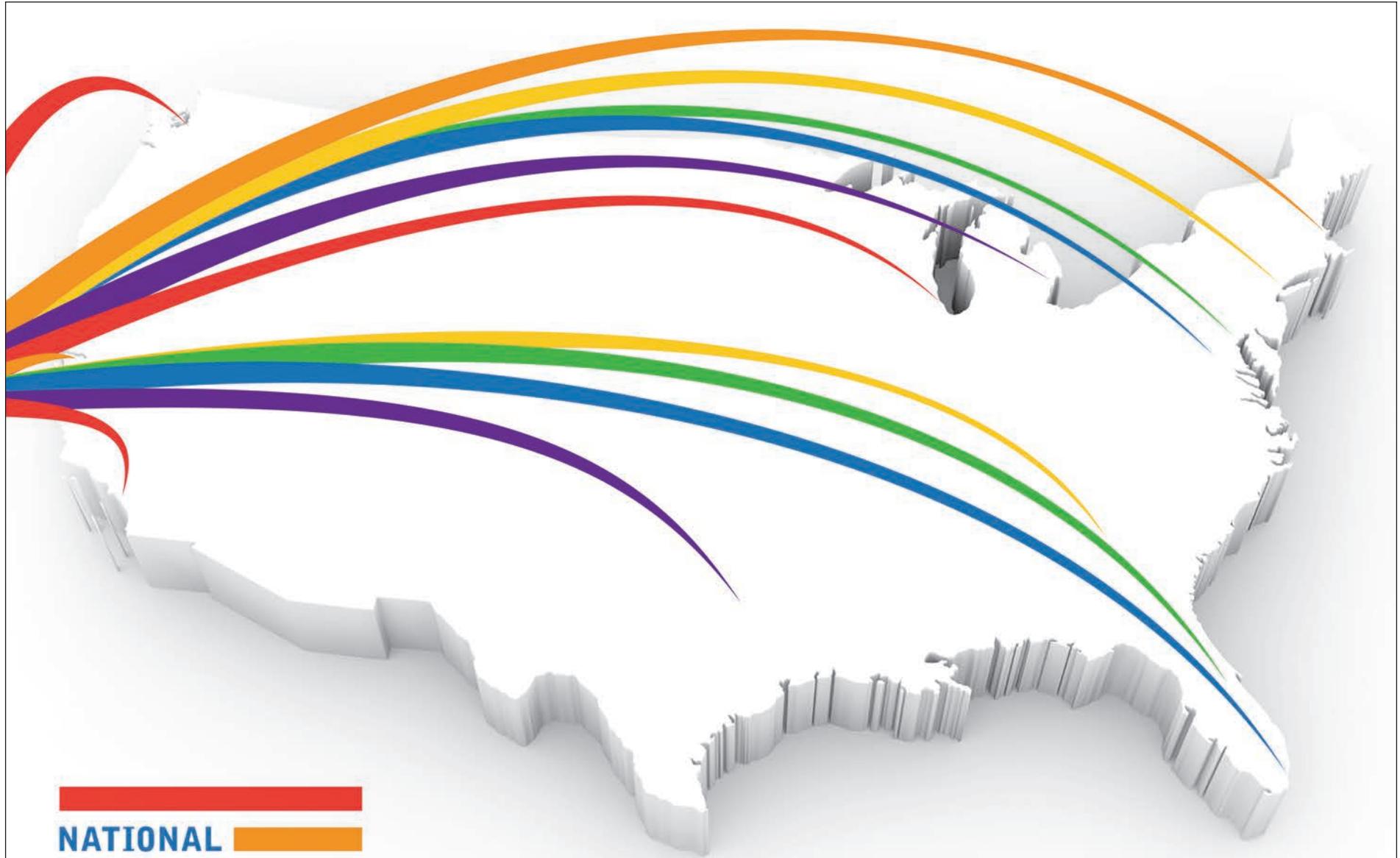
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# GAY AGENDA



North Texas artist Ted Kincaid is known for his work that “subverts the notion of an objective photographic record and examines the play between painting and photography,” taking on topics ranging from poetry to politics, from sexuality to climate change. He is also known as an icon of the North Texas LGBTQ community, alongside his husband, activist Steve Atkinson — which is why he is among the artists showcased in *Pride Then and Now*, a curated selection of art drawn from AT&T’s Corporate Art Collection and from the Dallas area, on view now at the AT&T Discovery District Showcase Gallery, 208 S. Akard St. It’s a don’t-miss exhibit, but you better hurry because it closes July 25.

## PLAN YOUR WEEK

- Red for community events
- Blue for arts and entertainment
- Purple for sports
- Green for nightlife
- Orange for civic events and holidays

### ■ Biweekly: Hope Cottage Foster Parent Information Meeting

Hope Cottage holds information meetings for those interested in becoming foster parents. The meetings are held alternately on Saturdays at 10 a.m. and Thursdays at 6 p.m. For information email Clyde Hemminger at [chemminger@hopecottage.org](mailto:chemminger@hopecottage.org).

### JULY

#### ■ July 23-31: *Steel Magnolias*

Presented at Casa Mañana, 3101 W. Lancaster Ave., Fort Worth. [TicketMaster.com](http://TicketMaster.com).

#### ■ July 24: *I Dreamed a Dreamgirl*

Emerson Collins (*Southern Baptist Sissies*, *Sordid Lives: The Series*) and his husband Blake McIver (*The Little Rascals*, *Full House*) appear together for the first time in a two-man tour de force as they tell the stories of their relationship and careers through show tunes, duets, Disney faves (and deep cuts), mashups and medleys that (probably) shouldn’t exist combining theater, cabaret and pop. Presented by Uptown Players at the Kalita Humphreys Theater at 7 p.m. Tickets at [EmersonCollins.com/tour](http://EmersonCollins.com/tour).

#### ■ Through July 25: *Pride Then and Now*

Ted Kincaid is among the artists showcased as AT&T celebrates Pride month by showcasing LGBTQ artists who exemplify and empower their community. This curated selection of art draws from AT&T’s Corporate Art Collection and from the Dallas area to present emerging artists alongside some of the most influential LGBTQ artists of the 20th century. AT&T Discovery District Showcase Gallery, 208 S. Akard St. Open daily until 10 p.m.

#### ■ July 26: *PrimeTimers*

Last Tuesday lunch at 11 a.m. at Hunky’s, 3930 Cedar Springs Road.

#### ■ July 26-31: *The Prom*

Broadway Series presents *The Prom* at the Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. [ATTPAC.org](http://ATTPAC.org).

#### ■ July 27: *Same-sex spouse grief group*

Grief support group for people who have lost a same-sex spouse or partner meets in person at 6:30 p.m. at Union Coffee, 3705 Cedar Springs Road.

#### ■ July 29-31: *Yalla Raqs the Palace*

Three-day convention featuring world-renowned Middle Eastern dance teachers, dancers and musicians — including Amaya, Aziza, Bozenka, Jamilla Al Wahid, Jillina and Karim Nagi — with classes during the day and shows and competitions each night at The Palace Arts Center, 300 S. Main St. in Grapevine. Seating begins at 6 p.m. with the show starting at 6:30 p.m. Friday, and

seating at 5:30, shows at 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Arrive early to shops at vendor booths. In-person tickets are \$65 for all three nights, or \$25 each for Friday and Sunday, and \$30 for Saturday. Zoom tickets are \$50 for all three nights, \$20 each for Friday and Sunday, and \$25 for Saturday, available online at [IsisAndTheStarDancers.com](http://IsisAndTheStarDancers.com) and at the ticket booth the day of the event.

#### ■ July 30: *THRIVE Family Picnic Potluck*

Join Resource Center’s Family and Community Services department for its first-ever Family Picnic Potluck for people 50 and older from noon-3 p.m. We will provide entree BBQ options from Aloha Hawaiian Barbecue, a vegetarian entree option and drinks. Since this will be a potluck, please let us know what you’d like to bring when you register at [family@myresourcecenter.org](mailto:family@myresourcecenter.org)

#### ■ Through July 31: *The Language of Beauty in African Art*

Presenting over two hundred works of art, *The Language of Beauty in African Art* emphasizes concepts of beauty through the languages and perspectives of indigenous African communities. Kimbell Art Museum, 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth. [KimbellArt.org](http://KimbellArt.org).

### AUGUST

#### ■ Aug. 2: *Classic Chassis Car Club meeting*

Enjoy the car out in the parking lots and then enjoy the food from 6-8 p.m. at Ojeda’s, 4617 Maple Ave. [ClassicChassis.com](http://ClassicChassis.com).



### GAYS ON STAGE

Emerson Collins is well known around North Texas for his work on stage and on screen, mainly for his outstanding work in Del

Shores’ comedies *Southern Baptist Sissies* and *Sordid Lives: The Series*. But now he’s teamed up with his husband, Blake McIver of *The Little Rascals* and *Full House*, to bring their own stories to the stage. Uptown Players presents Collins and McIver in *I Dreamed a Dreamgirl* on Sunday, July 24, at Kalita Humphreys Theater. Check calendar listings — and Rich Lopez’s interview with the couple on Page 22 of this issue — for details.



### CROWNS AT STAKE

Who will win the giant, sparkly Miss Gay Fort Worth State and Miss Gay Fort Worth State at Large crowns? Head on over to the Urban

Cowboy Saloon, 2620 E. Lancaster Ave., on Sunday, July 24, to find out. The event is themed “**A Night at the Grammy Awards**” and will feature Miss Gay Texas State Sienna Silver, Miss Gay Fort Worth State Sapphire Tailor, Miss Gay Fort Worth State at Large Marina Drooms and Miss Gay Texas State at Large Carmella DuBuque. The pageant starts at 6 p.m.



### THIS IS A BOUGHT TITLE

Have no doubt, if you want to win the title of Mr. or Miss Texas Star, break out the bucks. That’s because these are “bought” titles, and

the **United Court of the Lone Star Empire** makes no bones about it. That’s because this pageant is “camp in nature and in the spirit of fundraising.” The event starts at 4 p.m. Sunday, July 24, at TMC, 3903 Cedar Springs Road, and will be hosted by Devon DeVasquez, the court’s Empress XXXIII and princess royale to the current reign. The theme is “Red, White & You 3,” and they will be taking applications up until 4 p.m. when the contest starts. Proceeds benefit GDMAF; contact the court for details.

#### ■ Aug. 2: *PrimeTimers*

First Tuesday lunch and games at 11:30 a.m. at Flaming Buffet, 11722 Marsh Lane.

#### ■ Aug. 2: *Let’s Do Dinner*

Coalition for Aging LGBT’s Let’s Do Dinner takes place the first Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. at El Fenix, 6391 Camp Bowie Blvd. Ridglea #6, Fort Worth.

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



# SCENE: Our Families

PEOPLE, PLACES AND FACES



Mariel with Eloise and Ophelia



Griffin, Laura, Grayson and Deanna



The Besson family goes boating



Kimberly and Lorie with their newest little one, Poppy Jean



Jason and Joe with their family



The Pullin family



Todd, Mason, Claire and Cooper Koch in Alaska



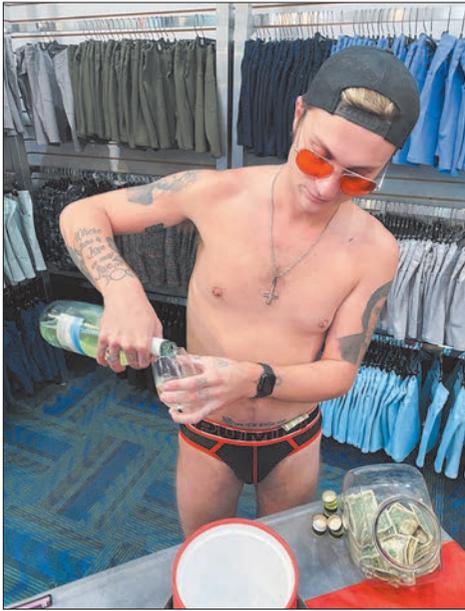
The Hewitt family



Thomas, Scott and their kids

# SCENE

PEOPLE, PLACES AND FACES



Servin' drinks and looks at Skivvies



Pride in Dallas board at Round-Up Saloon



Drinks at Lava Lounge



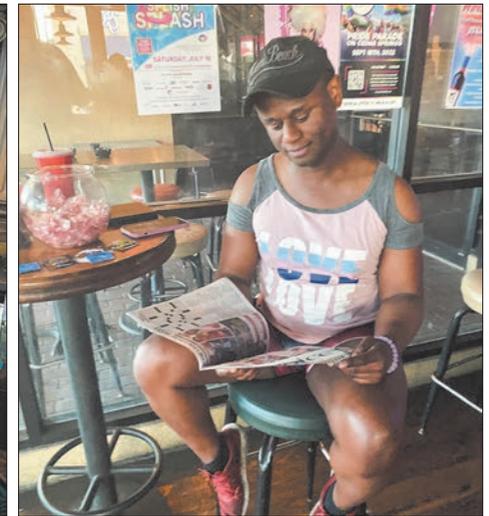
Are they twins?



Lisa serving up some Jagerbombs at Sue's



Cedar Springs Wine Walk at JR's



Brice checks out Dallas Voice at JR's



Julio and Felipe



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# WORD SEARCH

## Diversions Word Search - Michaela Jaé Rodriguez

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 reveal more about Michaela Jaé!



- |                               |                               |                         |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>Michaela Jae/Rodriguez</u> | <u>TV, Film/(and) Theatre</u> | <u>FX Series/Pose</u>   | <u>Apple TV (Series)/Loot</u> |
| Actress/Singer                | Nurse/Jackie                  | (as) Blanca/Evangelista | (with) Maya/Rudolph           |
| (Born in) Newark/New Jersey   | (The) Carrie/Diaries          | Emmy/Nominee            | (Debut 2021) Single           |
| Berklee/College/(of) Music    | Luke/Cage                     | Little/Shop of/Horrors  | "Something/To Say"            |
| Ballroom/Scene                | Runaways                      | (as) Audrey             | Queerty (2022)                |
| Off-Broadway/Rent/Angel       | Saturday/Church               | Tick Tick/Boom          | Icon/Award/Winner             |

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

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# PUZZLE | Gay Antagonists of the Screen

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59							60					61		
62							63					64		

Solution on Page xx

Across

- 1 Word with Mary
- 5 Like a Muscle Mary who works out
- 9 Malone of *Life as a House*
- 13 First name among lesbian poets
- 14 "If I Only \_\_\_ Brain"
- 15 She beat Navratilova in the '91 US Open finals
- 16 He played the title role in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*
- 18 Like Emma Donoghue
- 19 Parting words, old style
- 20 Nellie-lover in *South Pacific*
- 21 Rent
- 22 Ted Casablanca, for one
- 24 "Beg pardon ..."
- 26 \_\_\_ Kong
- 27 Poorly endowed Dickens character?
- 31 Go straight
- 34 Third in rank
- 35 Friendly opening
- 36 Peter of *The Maltese Falcon*
- 38 Jungle warning
- 39 *Mamma Roma* director
- 41 "Blame It on the \_\_\_ Nova"
- 42 Peter Nero, for one
- 43 Figure out in your head
- 45 Green of *Buffy* fame
- 46 Tchaikovsky or Nureyev

Down

- 50 Sugar sources
- 53 Creme de la creme
- 55 Gomer's Sgt. Carter, for one
- 56 Mete out
- 57 She played a lesbian high school teacher in *Notes on a Scandal*
- 59 Sometime label of Dusty Springfield
- 60 Unrefined metals
- 61 Educator Charles
- 62 Distance from crotch to waist
- 63 Vidal's *The \_\_\_ Man*
- 64 Pull out your shooter
- 1 Cut off from escape
- 2 *Rainbows Reign!* e.g.
- 3 Coming up behind
- 4 Caesar's lang.
- 5 Medicine man
- 6 Causing a limp
- 7 Madonna, to many gays
- 8 Hall & Oates song about a fellator?
- 9 He did the voice of Scar in *The Lion King*
- 10 Kazan, whose desire was a streetcar
- 11 Untouchable head

- 12 Tennis stadium in Queens
- 15 Etheridge's \_\_\_ *Legacy*
- 17 Discharge gay soldiers, e.g.
- 23 She played a bisexual serial killer in *Basic Instinct*
- 25 Put on the staff
- 28 New Mexico art colony
- 29 Gershwin with a nest egg?
- 30 Vidal's Breckinridge
- 31 Kentucky arena namesake
- 32 Morales of "La Bamba"
- 33 "\_\_\_ Lady" (cross-dressers' show of old)
- 34 Cycle beginning
- 36 Santa's got a long one
- 37 At work
- 40 Misleads with the tongue
- 41 Headquartered
- 43 Groups in *The Lion King*
- 44 Musician of old
- 47 Boyd's *Gay Priest:* an \_\_\_ *Journey*
- 48 Capital of Ghana
- 49 Gomer's not at all
- 50 Roseanne, before and after Tom Arnold
- 51 K-12
- 52 David Hyde Pierce and peers
- 54 Seduce
- 58 Top or bottom

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