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The Premier Media Source for LGBTQ Texas

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November 3, 2023 | Volume 40 | Issue 27

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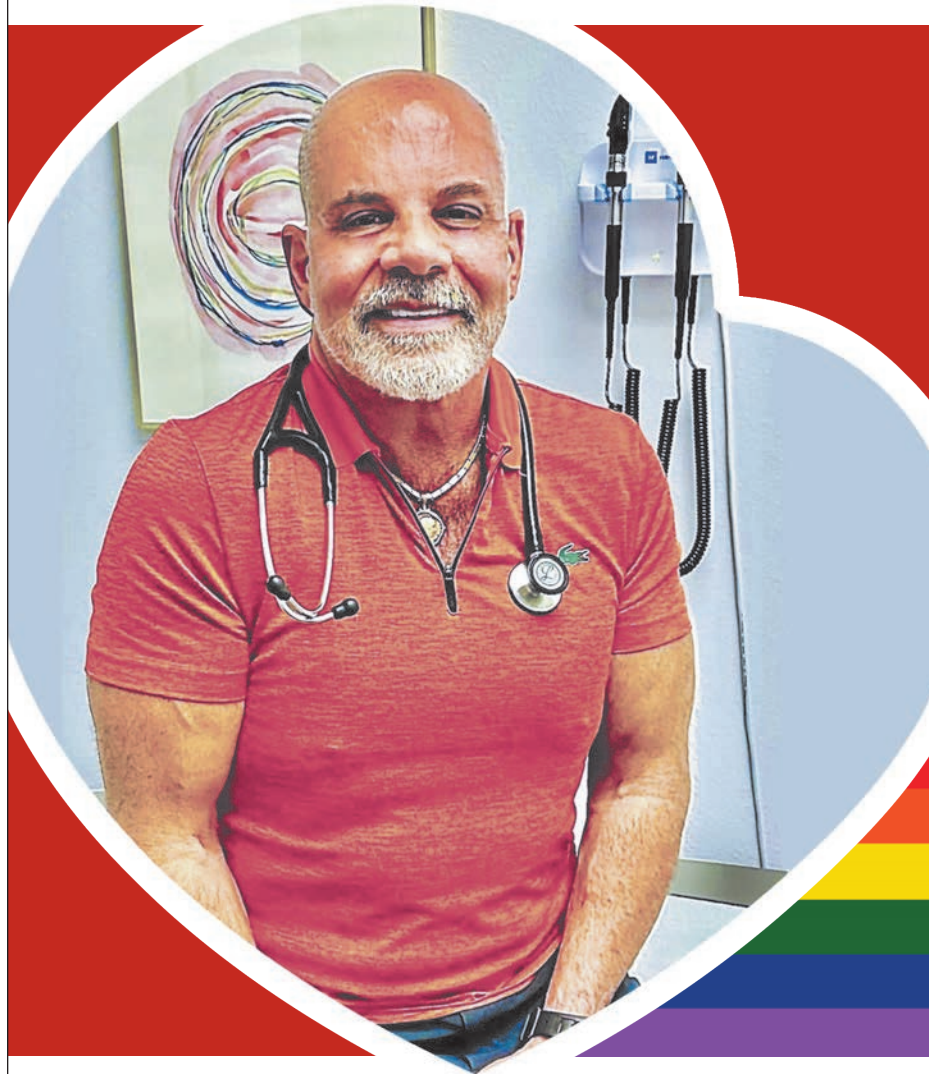
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Bites from our blog

WHAT'S THE TEA: [DallasVoice.com](https://dallasvoice.com)



Chefs Michelle Carpenter and Terance Jenkins of Restaurant Beatrice. (Courtesy photo)

Restaurant Beatrice, Dallas College team up for women's leadership program

Dallas College and the James Beard-nominated Restaurant Beatrice this week announced a collaboration to launch the Women in Restaurants Leadership Program, an eight-week, tuition-free program open to anyone looking to advance in the restaurant industry and supportive of the WRLP mission. The initiative will include seminars, training and intern-type opportunities for its participants.

The program was conceived by out Restaurant Beatrice owner and chef Michelle Carpenter with co-executive chef Terance Jenkins. "Not only is this program impactful for students trying to improve their lives, it can also advance the industry in Dallas by producing better qualified professionals," Carpenter said in a press release.

The goal of WRLP is to help retain and advance more women in the industry while also creating a more positive restaurant culture. The timing of this launch is ideal as a study by the National Restaurant Association last year showed that women entering the restaurant industry is happening at a higher rate than male counterparts.

The eight-week course will launch in the 2024 spring term, and the Dallas College Culinary, Pastry and Hospitality Center will host the classes on alternate Mondays, from 5-8 p.m., with industry leaders helping students master leadership skills and strategies to grow their careers as well as learn basics like résumé writing and financial literacy.

Outside of the classroom, students will attend stages at Restaurant Beatrice and other restaurant partners. Among those partnering with Carpenter's restaurant is Duro Hospitality Group, Rye, Zen Sushi, James Beard Foundation finalists Lucia and Roots Southern Table.

An orientation/information session will be held Monday, Nov. 13, at 3 p.m. at Restaurant Beatrice.

For questions about WRLP, contact DeShazo by emailing sdeshazo@dallascollege.edu.

— Rich Lopez

Dallas County DA Cruzot warns of scam calls

The Dallas County Criminal District Attorney's Office this week warned about scammers claiming to be the DA's office and trying to trick individuals into giving them credit card or banking information.

In a press release issued Wednesday, Nov. 1, DA John Cruzot said his office has received "multiple reports about unsuspecting members of our community getting calls from people claiming to be an investigator with our office telling them there is a warrant for their arrest that will need to be paid immediately or the victim will be arrested. This is a scam."

The statement continued, "The DA's Office wants to make it clear that law enforcement will never ask for payment over the phone, through wire transfers, gift cards, or websites not affiliated with law enforcement. If you get a call that you suspect is fraudulent, don't make a payment through these methods.

"If you get a call about a criminal or civil

accusation that you don't recognize, it probably is not true. Law enforcement officers will not threaten you or your family members with additional criminal charges."

Anyone who receives what they suspect to



enrollment assistance in both English and Spanish via a staff of seven ACA navigators," also beginning Wednesday.

The ACA navigators can also help with applications for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Prism officials said.

Residents of 13 North Texas counties — Collin, Cooke, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Fannin, Grayson, Henderson, Hurst, Kaufman, Navarro, Rockwall and Tarrant — can utilize the Prism Health ACA navigators program.

Noting that 16.6 percent of Texans are without insurance, Prism officials said in a press release, "This is a great insurance access option for those North Texans in industries that may not provide traditional employer-match healthcare, like hospitality, construction and retail."

The press release continued, "The organization is especially eager to assist with the enrollment process, which can be daunting and confusing, as inflation has impacted most wallets, healthcare costs continue to rise and Medicaid continues to unwind following the end of COVID-19 assistance programs.

"During the pandemic, many Americans were automatically re-enrolled in Medicaid via the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Now, more than 60,000 North Texans have been removed from Medicaid in the wake of the FFCRA program ending."

For more information, call 469-884-6801, visit PHNTx.org or complete a request form to be contacted directly.

— Tammye Nash

be a fraudulent call should contact the law enforcement agency the caller claims to represent. But do not confirm any identifying information to the caller. Anyone who may have already been the victim of this or any other scam should contact their local law enforcement agency, the DA's office recommends.

— Tammye Nash

Prism Health NTx offering free ACA enrollment help

The annual open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act started Wednesday, Nov. 1, and Prism Health North Texas has announced "free, friendly and easily accessible healthcare

Fort Worth Housing Solutions, SSCNI seeking FW muralist for new community

Fort Worth Housing Solutions and the Stop Six Choice Neighborhood Initiative this week announced they are looking for a local Fort Worth artist to create murals for the new SSCNI community, Cowan Place Senior Living.

Application deadline is 11:59 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 8.

For more information on the parameters of the project and instructions on submitting an application to be chosen as the muralist, visit StopSixCNI.org.

— Tammye Nash

Adoptable / CHASE



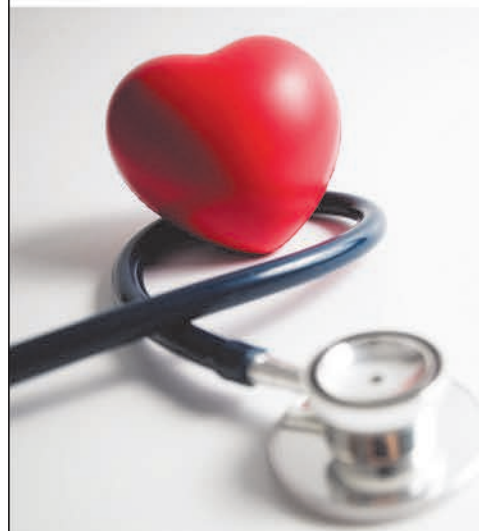
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No appointment is necessary to meet Chase, so come on down to the Dallas Animal Care Center, 2400 Lone Star Drive, any day of the week between noon-6 p.m. This Veteran's Day, Saturday, Nov. 11, adoption fees will be waived for all animals for all military personnel — past and present. Simply show your military ID at the adoption desk to qualify.



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Take action

Leveraging our differences to impact change

I conducted eight years of research after battling homelessness, harassment and discrimination as a proud out woman of transgender experience. The skills I learned around emotional intelligence and resource allocation were instrumental in my career development from homeless part-time bank teller at PNC Bank to becoming their national vice president of diversity and inclusion in four years.

I left after 11 years working there to focus full time on expanding my research on empowerment and publishing an award-winning and bestselling book. This research was centered around empowerment and how empowerment is impacted by our empowering differences, as we call them.

These differences were all the items that make up our human lived experiences, including our abilities and attributes, age, class, education, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion and sexuality. As I started hosting focus groups with people around the world across the differences, I realized that depending upon which differences we were trying to drive more empowerment for, there were certain actions that resonated towards empowerment faster. These actions then became what we call empowering actions, because they have the ability to connect empowerment people.

When looking at the definition of empowerment, I saw it said authority and power connected to people. I also really wanted to understand what people felt was authority, and what people felt was power in relation to empowerment.

My thinking was that if we could help people realize and measure their empowerment that this would have a more lasting effect toward success for people.

Measuring how people are feeling in relation to empowerment and what makes them different isn't easy. How we feel as people is central to driving empowerment on this planet for others.



Ashley Brundage
Special Contributor

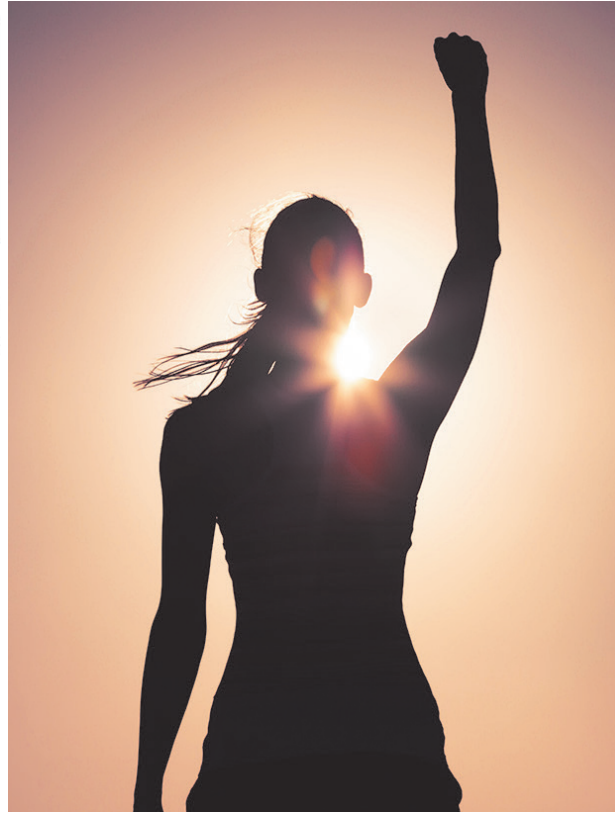
According to the dictionary, empowerment is authority and power connected to people. But what is empowerment to people? What I found in my research, through asking a thousand people, is that 85 percent of the responses included passion and other human-centric feelings. Other answers included communication, trust, empathy, confidence, decision-making and more.

Based on responses, it is hard to measure or track or judge the impact of each of these things, which means it's tough to communicate the impact of human feelings on others.

The remaining 15 percent of respondents mentioned items that were easy to track, measure and judge since most of them had a number or measure built into their response. These items were mostly time- or money-related, so their success and/or the connection to other people could be quantified.

This survey confirmed my suspicions that the definition could be validated by people's responses, so the emotional answers that are hard to measure became "authority," and the numeric responses were the "power" since power is measured by a numeric value typically.

After conducting the research on empowerment, the focus groups I hosted drove the empowerment algorithm of the top empowering actions for each of



the differences. Since our LGBTQ community centers around, technically, all the differences we have as a human, assigning which actions to prioritize can be difficult. The top three actions based on the research centered around a broader look towards impacting both gender and sexuality differences.

Gender and sexuality differences are the immediate cross-section that our community has that either garners more empowerment or less empowerment for us each day.

The first action to focus on is educate. This action, of course, stems around learning new skills, trades and resources. It also connects to impacting others through education.

Not everyone will be able to go and get a certification or a degree to empower themselves more. Remember that empowerment is about connecting your authority and power to people, so that means that education is most empowered when it's shared with others.

The second top empowering action,

based on our research, is inclusion, and inclusion is the connected sense of belonging and contributing to culture to build more emotional intelligence for others. Inclusion is the ultimate action that connects to others because it cannot be done alone.

One recommendation is to join a networking group or a chamber of commerce like the North Texas LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce. The act of joining another group and sharing your expertise, contributing or volunteering is always showcasing inclusion. This can be done as an ally as well, which can be even more empowering for others.

The third and final top empowering action to impact our community is access. Access is the act of accessibility and connection to others that should drive an equitable future for our entire society. People wondering how to drive the actual "equity" in diversity, equity and inclusion programming (DEI) need to focus on creating access for those who do not have access.

Access a very compelling empowering action for the LGBTQ community because it is a pathway to influential resources.

Both by our LGBTQ community and our allies must take these three empowering actions to strengthen our impact on the world. But don't just do a few actions and think that's going to be enough, because you must incorporate empowerment of others into everything that you do and track the success of it. This means that all your actions really should be empowering actions and together that's how we will make a difference, or as we say we will be empowering differences. ■

Ashley Brundage, who rose from homelessness to become national vice president of diversity and inclusion for PNC Bank, is the author of the award-winning book Empowering Differences. She is parent to two teenage sons, and in 2022 she consulted for the White House and won an award from the governor of Florida for her work in diversity and inclusion.

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Lyles on trial — finally

IN THE COURTS

The man accused of killing Muhlaysia Booker is scheduled for his day in court

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

On Monday, Nov. 6, more than four years after Muhlaysia Booker was found shot to death on an East Dallas street, the murder trial begins for Kendrell Lavar Lyles, the man charged in her death. The trial will be held in Judge Carter Thompson's court in the Crowley Courts building.

Dallas police on Saturday, May 18, at about 6:44 a.m., reported that the body of a Black woman had been found lying face down in the 7200 block of Valley Glen Drive. At about 3 p.m. the following day, police issued a statement identifying that woman as trans woman Muhlaysia Booker.

Booker was the fourth transgender woman, all of them Black trans women, to be murdered in 2019. But unlike the three earlier deaths that year — and unlike the murders of most trans, gender non-binary and gender nonconforming people — her murder immediately garnered national headlines, because Booker was already the focus of national headlines focused on anti-transgender violence.

The video

A month before her murder, on April 12, Booker made national news when a video showing her being beaten by several men as a crowd of onlookers laughed and cheered on her attackers went viral.

That first attack happened after Booker was involved in a minor fender bender in her South Dallas apartment complex, bumping into another car as she was backing out to leave. The other



Muhlaysia Booker

driver blocked Booker's car, holding her at gunpoint and refusing to let her leave until she gave him money to pay for the damage to his car.

As the two argued, a crowd gathered, and someone pulled out a cell phone and began to record the confrontation. Someone allegedly offered a 29-year-old man named Edward Thomas \$500 to beat up Booker, and the crowd closed in around, laughing and jeering and shouting transphobic and homophobic slurs as Thomas assaulted the young woman.

Then other men joined in, punching, kicking and stomping Booker as she lay huddled on the ground. By the time several women stepped in to stop the attack and help Booker to safety, she had suf-

fered a concussion, fractured wrists and numerous other injuries.

Someone uploaded the video to social media. It quickly gained national attention and put a spotlight on the epidemic of violence against the transgender community, especially trans women of color.

Thomas was arrested and charged with aggravated assault. He eventually pleaded guilty to a reduced misdemeanor charge.

A month later, when Booker was found dead, suspicion immediately focused on Thomas. But he had an airtight alibi and was quickly ruled out as a suspect in her murder.

Funeral services for Muhlaysia Booker were held Tuesday, May 28, drawing

an overflow crowd that included local and state elected officials to Cathedral of Hope. At least one local news station broadcast the services live from the church.

By the time of Booker's funeral the number of trans women murdered so far in 2019 had risen to seven — again, all Black trans women. Four days after her funeral, 26-year-old Black trans woman Chynal Lindsey's body was found in White Rock Lake. Dallas police began considering the possibility that Booker's and Lindsey's murders could be connected with a non-fatal knife attack earlier in April on a Black trans woman in Dallas and with several other murders of trans women in Dallas over the previous several years.

Police redoubled their efforts. LGBTQ Liaison Amber Roman met with Abounding Prosperity Inc., an organization that had stepped in to help Booker after the April assault, and contacted Dallas Voice pleading for anyone with information to step forward.

Then on June 12, Dallas police announced the arrest of Lyles, 34, for the murder of Muhlaysia Booker. He had been arrested in Collin County in connection with the murder of two people in a drug deal gone bad. A witness placed his car in East Dallas at the last place Booker was seen alive.

Although he was initially considered a suspect in the deaths of three other trans murder victims, including Lindsey, and the April knife attack on another trans woman, he hasn't been charged in any of those cases.

On June 20, police announced they had arrested 22-year-old Ruben Alvarado and charged him with the murder of Chynal Lindsey. Although that murder occurred within a week of Booker's, it was apparently unrelated.

But it was Booker's assault and murder that made national news and that people remember.

Booker's mom, Stephanie Houston, started the Muhlaysia Booker Foundation in her memory. Ahmad Goree is president and board chair.

LYLES, Page 22

DRIVE

DRIVE: No cheap tricks

10 desirable rides for under \$25K

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
AutoCasey@AOL.com

It seems like every new vehicle wears a \$40k price tag. But you don't have to spend nearly that much to buy some of the best vehicles for style, utility, and comfort — whether you want a pickup, crossover or luxury car. Even at prices below \$25,000, these are ones you'll be proud to show your friends and to drive a very long time.



Buick Envista

Dynamic elegance meets crossover coupe with a fast roofline, large grille and optional 19-inch wheels. Wide display infotainment screens look expensive. The 1.2-liter turbo-three delivers 136 horsepower and 28/32-MPG city/hwy. AWD is not available. Safety is enhanced by automatic braking, lane keep assist and optional adaptive cruise.

Base price: \$22,400

Chevy Trax

Envista's buff brother dons muscular crossover bodywork and an interior laden with large touchscreens, spacious legroom and standard automatic braking plus lane keep assist. Wireless Apple/Android connectivity come, too. Tap a 1.2-liter turbo-three delivering 137 hp and 28/32 MPG. Heated seats/steering and adaptive cruise are optional.

Base price: \$20,400

Ford Maverick

A dirt cheap pickup that can actually haul dirt! Tight handling and standard AWD attack roads, but the 250-horsepower turbo-four achieves 22/29-MPG city/hwy. Check available contrasting color seats, Apple/Android connectivity and flip-up rear seats to load bicycles. An open bed with tie-downs is perfect for sports and yardwork.

Base price: \$23,400

Kia Soul

Funky urban-friendly style fronts a stylish cabin big enough for friends, bikes and IKEA haul. Moving it is a 2.0-liter four-cylinder providing 147 horsepower and efficient 29/35 MPG city/hwy. Safety is enhanced by automatic emergency braking, blind spot warning with intervention and adaptive cruise. Get it in Surf Blue with a black roof.

Base price: \$19,990

Hyundai Kona

All-new with a smoother design, this little crossover dons a cozy interior with wide flatscreen and full suite of crash avoidance technology that includes safe exit assist. Base models run with a 2.0-liter four-cylinder conjuring 147 horsepower and 28/33 MPG. Adaptive cruise and Bose audio are options. Spend more for EV and N editions.

Base price: \$24,100

Toyota Corolla

He's not sexy, but this Mississippi boy puts out. Sharpened styling encompasses a roomy interior for five, upscale materials, 8-inch dash screen and wireless Apple/Android connectivity. Beneath the hood is a 169-horsepower four-cylinder delivering 32/41 MPG city/hwy. Safety includes automatic braking, lane tracing, and radar cruise.

Base price: \$21,900

Nissan Kicks

The urban-sized Kicks' book is better than its cover as cavernous interiors offer intuitive controls, mini-crossover utility and solid quality. It's sporty to drive given a 122-horsepower 1.6-liter four-cylinder, CVT and tight suspension. Expect 31/36 MPG city/hwy. Adaptive cruise and headrests with Bose audio speakers are optional.

Base price: \$20,790

Mazda CX-30

Upscale and elegant, the Mazda3-based crossover is delightful. Interiors are dressed in stitched coverings, artful center display and cloth seats (leather optional). Radar cruise, auto braking and lane keep assist enhance safety. Sashay away with a 2.5-liter four-cylinder generating 191 horsepower and 26/33 MPG city/hwy — AWD standard.

Base price: \$24,995

Honda HR-V

Styling hints at Porsche Macan while interiors are more Civic with waffle pattern cloth seats, rubber steering wheel and flybridge console. Air vents hide behind mesh plastic. Get it with auto climate control, automatic emergency braking and adaptive cruise. Performance is amped by a 158-horsepower four-cylinder achieving 26/32 MPG.

Base price: \$24,100

Ford Maverick, left
2023 Nissan Kicks, 2024 Chevy Trax,
2024 Hyundai Kona, Toyota Corolla



Subaru Impreza

All new sheetmetal is sexier; interiors cradle tablet touchscreens, dual-zone climate and wireless CarPlay/Auto. Crossover hatchback utility melds with athletic handling and AWD. Enjoy a 152-horsepower 2.0-liter four-cylinder with CVT and 27/34 MPG city/hwy. Automatic braking, adaptive cruise and lane keep assist are standard.

Base price: \$22,995

More DRIVE, Page 10

DRIVE: Electrified

Alfa Romeo 33 Stradale, left

2024 Lincoln Nautilus, 2024 Toyota Tacoma Trailhunter,
2024 Chevrolet Traverse Z71, Dodge Hornet, Ford Ranger Lariat

Electric vehicles are on the way, but these fly rides are not finished burning fossils

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
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We're on the cusp of an all-electric future, but we're not there yet. While we wait, there is a club full of hot, sparkling young things just ripe for the taking — whether you want an advanced crossover, versatile pickup, iconic German sedan or sex-laden Italian sports car. Pick your pleasure and burn a few fossils while you can.

Lincoln Nautilus

Fresh curvaceous outerwear meets an orgy of interior glass including a full-width 48-inch info screen plus a 11.1-inch central touchscreen. Redwood and Chalet interior schemes add 28-speaker Revel audio, 24-way massaging seats and BlueCruise hands-off driving. Base models get a 240-horsepower turbo-four, but a 310-hp hybrid is available.

Base price: \$50,415

GMC Canyon AT4X AEV

This is a bad little f-er, bred for overlanding! It takes terrain easy with 12.2-inch ground clearance, underbody cameras, skid plates and winch mounts. Everybody will love the muscular style, crew cab interiors and available head-up display and wireless Apple/Android connectivity. Power out with a 310-horsepower 2.7-liter turbo-four engine.

Base price: \$65,000

Chevy Traverse

Updated exterior styling echoes Trailblazer with wing-fin on sail panel and tough facias, while interiors flash Corvette-style twin info screens. V6s are replaced by a 315-horsepower 2.5-liter turbo-four to tow up to 5,000 pounds. A new Z71 off-road package includes all-terrain tires, skid plates and tow hooks. Hands-off Super Cruise is available.

Base price: \$34,520

Mercedes-Benz E-Class

The Gold Standard of Mercedes sedans is all new with a sleek body and



interior employing wall-to-wall infotainment screens. You can use TikTok and Zoom video calls with a dash cam when parked. Two mild hybrids — a 255-horsepower 4-cylinder and 375-horsepower turbo-six — work the road through AWD and rear-wheel steering.

Base price: \$58,000

Ford Ranger

Bigger and buffer for 2024, Ranger amps its work ethic via box side steps, bed power outlets, trailer backup assist, integrated brake controller and fold-flat rear seats. Tow up to 7,500 pounds with the base 270-horsepower turbo-four or 315-horsepower turbo-V6. Wireless phone charging and automated parallel/perpendicular parking add convenience.

Base price: \$32,565

Hyundai Santa Fe

The three-row crossover trades flab for chiseled Land Rover style with square forms, 21-inch wheels and H-shaped driving lamps to optimize style and space. EV-style flat screen displays, larger front console and advanced safety tech add modernity. Base models get 280-horsepower turbo-fours, but hybrid and plug-ins are available.

Base price: \$30,000

Subaru Crosstrek Wilderness

Subaru's smallest crossover goes Wilderness. Aggressive body cladding and lifted suspension accompany vegan leather seats, Harman Kardon audio, wireless phone charging and roof-top tenting. Tackle trails with a 182-horsepower four-cylinder and X-Mode for deep muck. Expect 25/29-MPG city/

hwy. Automatic emergency steering aids safety.

Base price: \$31,995

Nissan Frontier Hardbody

This special edition pickup returns to its '80s vibe with three-spoke heritage-style, 17-inch alloy wheels, black over-fenders, mud flaps, bed-mounted sport bar and blacked out bumpers, mirrors and grille. Unlike in the old days, this one has four doors. Underneath is a 310-horsepower V6, 9-speed automatic transmission and four-wheel drive.

Base price: \$29,770

Dodge Hornet

Essentially an Alfa Romeo Tonale in Dodge fashion, this Italian-built crossover stings with a standard 268-horsepower turbo-four or optional plug-in hybrid with 30 miles range. Sport mode sharpens the throttle but diminishes 21/29-MPG city/hwy. Get 14-speaker Harman Kardon audio before thumping backroads with abandon.

Base price: \$30,735

Toyota Tacoma

All-new for 2024 with Mad Max styling and interiors with flatscreen gauges and tablet touchscreen, big news focuses on the standard 278-horsepower turbo-four with an available 326-horsepower hybrid. The Trailhunter version goes overland, but city dwellers look to the rear-drive TRD Prerunner for angry style and better MPG.

Base price: \$30,000

Alfa Romeo 33 Stradale

We're including this just for the



wonton sex of it. Inspired by the Alfa Romeo Tipo 33 from the 1960s, it expresses stunning mid-engine proportions and a driver-centric interior. Choose a 620-horsepower twin-turbo V6 or 750-horsepower EV with 280 miles range. Hit 0-62 mph in under 3 seconds; top speed 206 mph. Each is bespoke art.

Base price: \$Millions



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Right, said Fred

BEYOND THE STAGE

Actor Randy Pearlman takes on an icon in Circle Theatre's *I'm Proud of You*

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
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Circle Theatre ends its 2023 season with a familiar face — sort of. The company closes its season with the world premiere of *I'm Proud of You*, a play based on the friendship between Fort Worth author and playwright Tim Madigan and Fred Rogers. The author adapted his work into a stage production with TCU theater professor Harry

Parker, who directs the show.

"I considered [Rogers] to be one of my closest friends. In fact, it's no exaggeration to say that if it were not for Fred Rogers, I might not be around today, alive to tell you my story," Madigan stated in Circle's publicity materials for the show.

Out actor Randy Pearlman was cast as the iconic Mr. Rogers for the show, which opened last weekend and runs through Nov. 18.

Pearlman said the task of portraying the iconic Mr. Rogers onstage was initially worrisome. "It was scary at first. I wouldn't say I look like him at all," he said. "I went into the reading thinking I needed to do 'Fred Rogers.' But by our second reading, Harry told me that's not what they were looking for."

Instead, Pearlman only needed to embody Rogers' kindness and empathy.



Randy Pearlman is Frank Rogers and Ritchie Haratine is Tim Madigan in *I'm Proud of You* at Circle Theatre. (Photo by Taystan Photography)

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Knowing that, the seasoned actor could take a breath and approach the show with his own characterization.

"That made it a lot easier to find the spirit of him, it and dissolved my initial fears fast," he said. "Plus, in the play you realize quickly that it's not the Fred Rogers we always saw on TV. I'm not dressed like that, nor do we have scenes from his show."

Madigan's book, *I'm Proud of You: My Friendship with Fred Rogers*, was published in 2006. It details a transformative relationship for Madigan as he was on assignment in 1995 for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram to interview the *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* host.

Madigan told the Star-Telegram recently that their friendship came at a time when Madigan needed support and mentoring, and it lasted up to Rogers' passing in 2003.

Richie Haratine plays Madigan in the show, "He does an excellent job, and he really carries the show," Pearlman said. "Talk about pressure."

The cast also includes Lisa Fairchild and Gabriel Whitehurst.

For Pearlman, it helped having Madigan there to tell the stories firsthand and to help develop his character.

Throughout this experience — and being that Fred Rogers is inherently a part of this — Pearlman found that he was learning or recalling some life lessons along the way.

"What I'm reminded about is that friendship is so important," he said. "They had this shared bond, trust — it was a love that wasn't physical. I'm learning that's a good way to live."

Pearlman also talked about having a more positive view and to always look deeper: "Little things aren't as important as the bigger things. We hold grudges and stick to first impressions, but I think I've learned you gotta go below that surface and really see what feelings are behind those things."

Pearlman has taken something away from this show while being onstage, but he thinks the audience will leave Circle Theatre with something as well.

"Audiences have been so into it. Those quiet moments onstage are really quiet out there," he said. "*I'm Proud*



Randy Pearlman had to learn to embody Fred Roger's kindness and compassion for Circle Theatre's production of *I'm Proud of You*, rather than the iconic "Mr. Rogers" TV persona. (Photo by Taystan Photography)

of You deals with death and conflict and family, but I believe there's a feeling of hope with this. People will leave with a catharsis and knowing there's a lot out

there that's more, bigger than any of us." ■

For more information and tickets, visit CircleTheatre.com.

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Baker's man

FOOD AND COMPETITION



Dallasite Greg Ballenger takes baking talents to 'Holiday Baking Championship'

JENNY BLOCK | Contributing Writer
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Greg Allan Ballenger is such a remarkable baker, you'd think that generations of frosting runs through his veins. But if you were to ask if he comes from a long line of bakers, it would be tough to get him to stop laughing.

"No one else in my family loves to bake," he said, "although before I was born I had a great-great-grandma, who we called Grandma Bumblebee, who was the baker of the family."

She baked for every event, from weddings to birthday parties, but "Sadly, she passed before I was born. But growing up, I always heard stories of how amazing a baker she was and how we would have been best friends," Ballenger said.

These days he's certainly making her proud. Ballenger, 30, is a competitor on Season 10 of *Holiday Baking Championship* on Food Network.

Ballenger did not go to school to learn to bake. The Tipton, Iowa, native holds a BA in exercise science from the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls and a doctorate in physical therapy from Clarke University in Dubuque. He is a full-time home health physical therapist with Healing Hands Healthcare.

But Ballenger also runs Greg's Goodies, the baking business that he started during the pandemic when traveling physical therapist jobs were all but impossible to come by. "With all my free time and the need for some supplemental income, I began perfecting the art of decorated sugar cookies," Ballenger said.

Doing both gigs isn't always easy. "It gets chaotic at times!" Ballenger said. But, "after more and more people began seeing my work and loving me for it, that love only fueled me to bake more and more."

Over the years he has gone from making simple cakes to making a tiered birthday cake for his great grandmother when he was only in the fifth grade. "From there my craft only continued to grow by continuing to watch Food Network," Ballenger said.

Fascinated with baking all through his childhood, Ballenger said he would watch Food Network constantly, particularly the baking competition shows. "I would see a cool technique to make a piece of edible art and would run

into the kitchen and try it," said Ballenger whose mother loved his experimenting but not cleaning up after him.

There are so many reasons why Ballenger loves baking, but the main one is the reaction he gets from clients when they first see his work: "Oh my God. This is too pretty to eat!" they tell me. I love bringing joy to people," He said,

He also loves the creativity it allows him — from flavors to design. "I love how baking brings people together," Ballenger said. "I love entertaining and hosting, whether it's for the biggest event or the smallest get-together, you can bet I'm bringing a baked dish for others to try."

How did Ballenger get a spot on *Holiday Baking Championship*? It could not have been anymore random, he said. He received what looked like a really suspicious message on his baking Instagram page. The person identified as a scout for a gingerbread show looking for an assistant baker.

So Ballenger reached out to his friend, Lio Botello, who had been on a cooking show on Food Network before, to see what he thought. Botello gave him the greenlight to reply. But once Ballenger learned more, he decided it wasn't the best fit for him.

"I have worked with gingerbread before, but I don't have a ton expertise to the degree that these other bakers had," he explained, having watched the show in question many times before.

But, as luck would have it, a few months later, the same scout reached out again, this time about *Holiday Baking Championship*. "We went through numerous Zoom calls so they could get to know me, and, finally, they offered me a spot on the show!" Ballenger said.

He said the show was the biggest roller coaster he has ever been on: "So exhilarating and fun, and, yet, so many nerves and pressure as we get the challenge and then get only a few minutes while scouring the kitchen for ingredients to think about what we are going to bake for the challenge, all the while knowing you are on a time clock and have millions of people watching your every move."

Still, he said, he doesn't regret a thing and would do it all again in a heartbeat.



"I made lifelong friends who geek out about the same stuff as I do, which is rare to find," Ballenger said. "I also loved it, as I am an avid Christmas fan and am constantly obsessed with Christmas. I dressed as the Grinch for Halloween last year, and have a Buddy the Elf costume, one of my favorite Christmas movies."

Ballenger said if he had one piece of advice for aspiring bakers, it would be simple: Practice, practice, practice. "I am a home baker who has not taken a single class about baking — not even home economics," he said. "With enough determination and gut, you can get to any level that is possible."

Baking is a science, he added. "You are going to have many flops and mistakes. But if you continue to stay with perfecting the craft, you can get there. And, trust me, once you perfect the bake, and others try it and give you all the amazing feedback, it is so worth it!"

You can join Ballenger for a premiere watch party at JR's Bar and Grill on Monday, Nov. 6 at 7 p.m. "I will have plenty of baked goodies for all to try!" he said. "My creations are wacky and crazy. So, if you have any event coming up and you'd like to wow your guests, shoot me a message and we will come up with something fabulous. The sky's the limit!" ■

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Plugging into 2024 with the hottest EVs rolling

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This is the year during which our travel from gas to electric gets real — and really cool. From an electric Cadillac Escalade to a fossil-free Rolls-Royce coupe, Ram pickup, Fiat city car and every shape and price of crossovers, let's kick it in the power plug and get going!

Cadillac Escalade IQ

Caddy's hedonistic SUV goes electric. Passengers enjoy a cabin with pillar-to-pillar infotainment screens, second-row executive package and 40-speaker AKG audio. Specs measure 750 horsepower, 450 miles range, charging 100 miles in 10 minutes, 4-wheel steering, and 0-60 mph under 5 seconds. It can even low-ride and crab-crawl to curbs.

Base price: \$130,000

Kia EV9

Like a grown-up EV6, the EV9 is Kia's first three-row crossover. Future-tank design fronts modernist interiors with dual displays, vegan leather and second row leg extensions. It boasts 379 horsepower, 5,000 lbs. towing capacity, 0-60 mph in 5 seconds and ability to fast charge 10-80 percent in just 25 minutes. Lidar collision avoidance tech enhances safety.

Base price: \$55,000

Honda Prologue

Imagine an all-electric Passport sharing platform, motors and batteries with GM vehicles like the Chevy Blazer EV. But it has a unique Honda style from California studios with 21-inch wheels, panoramic sunroof and interior with wide touchscreen. It claims 300 miles driving range, Google built-in and likely hands-off driving

Base price: \$48,000

Chevy Equinox EV

Joining the Bolt, Blazer and Silverado in Chevy's EV line-up is a smooth electric version of the Equinox with up to 290 horsepower and 300-mile range.



Add 70 mile-range in 10 minutes. AWD is optional, as are 21-inch wheels, hands-free liftgate, head-up display and Super Cruise hands-off highway driving. Check the twin dash screens.

Base price: \$30,000

Fiat 500e

Italy's favorite city car returns to America as the ultimate fossil-free fashion accessory. Concepts from Armani and Bulgari embrace sustainable luxury as both three-door hatchbacks and cabrios. Super simple interiors with digital gauges add a 10.3-inch touchscreen with wireless CarPlay/Auto. Expect 117 horsepower and 180 miles driving range.

Base price: \$30,000

Ram 1500 REV

Following Ford and Chevy, Ram goes electric with a pickup boasting 350 miles range (500 miles optional) and ability to charge 110 miles in 10 minutes. It tows up to 14,000 pounds, but more impressive is a luxurious interior that adopts a passenger-side screen and 23-speaker Klipsch audio system. Power open the frunk for easy loading.

Base price: \$60,000

Acura ZDX

Acura's first EV busts out with future edgy styling that showcases its new direction and a cabin awash with Google built-in, Bang & Olufsen audio and available hands-free highway cruising. In Type S trim, it generates 500 horsepower — the most of any Acura SUV —

for brisk acceleration. Expect up to 325 miles driving range.

Base price: \$60,000

Nissan Leaf

It isn't fancy, but it is affordable. Tall crossover proportions graced with boomerang lamps and available black 17-inch wheels encircle luxuries like heated seats and steering wheel, adaptive cruise with lane tracing and fold-down seats for loading one's stuff. The 214 horsepower system delivers 212 miles range, but it takes 45 minutes to fast charge.

Base price: \$28,140

Fisker Ocean

Designed by Henrik Fisker with a Pacific vibe, the little crossover delights with a rotating touchscreen for movies, taco trays that pop from the console and 575 watts of 3D audio. Engage California Mode to open all windows plus the panoramic roof for beach days. Top models deliver 564 horsepower, 360-mile range, and 0-60 in 3.7s.

Base price: \$37,499

Rolls-Royce Spectre

"Silent, luxurious and fast" defines RR — and will continue to as it debuts its first dedicated EV. Like any Rolls, it exudes superlatives: 584 horsepower, 329 miles range, 0-60 in 4.4 seconds and doors illuminated with 4,796 light points. As is tradition, owners can order the aerodynamic coupe bespoke with swaths of custom wood and leather.

Base price: \$420,000



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DRIVE: Be safe!

Make good choices to be safe for you and safe for them when behind the wheel

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
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As in most enjoyable activities, it's important to keep you and others safe. It's also good to accept wise counsel of those who have learned their lessons. That's especially true of automobiles, and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety recently found muscle cars to be among the deadliest.

Six vehicles with the highest driver death rates are variants of the Chevy Camaro, Dodge Challenger/Charger and Ford Mustang. Vehicles with the lowest death rates include minivans, SUVs and luxury vehicles.

Making Wise Choices

"We typically find that smaller vehicles have high driver death rates because they don't provide as much protection, especially in crashes with larger, heavier SUVs and pickups," said IIHS President David Harkey. "The muscle cars on this list highlight that a vehicle's image and how it is marketed can also contribute to crash risk."

In other words, sexy vehicles are purchased by sexy people who want to get busy. Sometimes, it's not the vehicle, but how it is used. Human drivers contribute more to a car's statistical death rate than what's under the hood, but it's not preordained.

I've driven all of models cited by IIHS. I once drove a Jeep Grand Cherokee Trackhawk with its supercharged Hellcat V8 howling to work in an ice storm. Last winter, I drove a Ford Mustang Bullitt two hours in pounding snow. Electronic throttles and traction systems allow these vehicles to be gentle when driven gently, but they can become devils on the road when driven with abandon.

High-Tech Gear

Not long ago, a car only needed a good crash rating to attain top safety scores. But vehicle safety now goes beyond high-strength steel, as driving a modern car is often a cacophony of beeps and blinks as cameras and sensors buzz

seats, nudge steering wheels and flash lights to get your attention.

Blind spot warnings, lane departure mitigation, and lane keep assist are great systems, but my favorites are rear cross path detection, automatic emergency braking and rear child reminder. The last counts door openings or uses motion sensors to prevent parents from leaving their kids in a hot car (or perhaps, friends leaving drunk friends back there). Rear sensors keep drivers from backing into "things."

One of my latest favorites is automatic evasive steering, enabled by the new three-camera EyeSight system on the 2024 Subaru Crosstrek and Impreza. It detects obstacles in front, alert drivers and, if nobody responds, will take the initiative to steer around the object. This and similar systems have the potential to save countless lives.

Best and Rest

With IIHS tests and data crunched, vehicles with the lowest rates of driver deaths surface. Volvo, Mercedes-Benz, and Subaru perform predictably well, but so do others.

The BMW X3, Lexus ES 350, Mercedes-Benz E-Class sedan and Nissan Pathfinder top the list with 0 deaths. Other top performers are the Audi Q5, Volvo XC60/XC90, Subaru Outback/Ascent, Toyota Sienna, Chevrolet Traverse, Honda Odyssey, BMW X5 and Acura RDX/MDX.

GMC Canyon and Toyota Tacoma pickups also performed well.

And, the other end of the list? You might double-think the Mitsubishi Mirage, Hyundai Accent, Chevy Spark, Kia Rio and Ford EcoSport — all subcompacts. And those muscle cars are down there too.

IIHS data is only one safety aspect to consider when buying a new vehicle. High-performing crash structures, advanced safety systems, and the human purchasing them matter too. Almost all of today's vehicles can be driven safely — if they're driven safely.

So make good choices when behind the wheel.

Storm Forward!

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

DRIVE: Mod squad

Whether you like '80s retro or today's modern rides, take your pic with these iconic models

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
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From vinyl to fashion, all things '80s are in. *Pac Man*, *Frogger* or *Donkey Kong*, anyone? While we can't go back to Grandma's house to watch *The Golden Girls*, we can travel back in time to drive our favorite cars. And, if the memories aren't quite what you remember, check out today's version to get your motor revving.

1989 Corvette C4

Forget DeLorean; here's a 1980s time machine with Knight Rider digital gauges, Bose cassette player, flip-up headlights and removable targa top. It was my teenage dream, so I bought one with a six-speed manual in 2000. The 245 horsepower V8 clicks 0-60 mph in under 6 seconds and 150 mph top speed. Pay \$10,000 for a nice example.

2024 Corvette E-Ray

We face the first Corvette with all-wheel-drive and a 6.2-liter V8-based hybrid powertrain, slaying 655 horsepower and 0-60 mph in 2.5s. The mid-engine supercar places its engine behind the seats for better performance. Magnetic Ride Control adjusts the suspension in real time. Prices start at \$104,295, but just wait for the all-electric version!

1988 Mercedes-Benz 560SL

Bobby Ewing drove one on *Dallas*, and it starred in movies like *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, *Beaches* and *Troop Beverly Hills*. My doctor even had one. The lift-off hardtop, quad round headlamps and 227hp V8 add to its allure. It is one of the fastest-appreciating and most enjoyable classic Mercedes. You can get a good one for around \$35k.

2024 Mercedes-AMG SL

Mercedes' roadster advances with a hybridized turbo-four pumping 375 horsepower, but top-trim SL 63s pack a biturbo V8 delivering 577 horsepower and go 0-60 mph in 3.5 seconds. Power soft tops, massage seats and AIRSCARF provide comforts. All-wheel steering and adaptive suspension enhance the drive. Prices start at \$109,900.



1989 Chevrolet Corvette



2024 Chevrolet Corvette E-Ray



1984 Dodge Caravan



2023 Chrysler Pacifica



Mercedes 560SL



2024 Mercedes-AMG SL 63

DRIVE: Butch vs. Femme

1984 Dodge Caravan

The homely front-drive K-Car begat a boxy, garage-friendly van for hauling Baby Boomer children. Sliding doors and bench seats marked the era. Just having cupholders was big! Nobody went quickly with a 96-horsepower four-cylinder engine. Turbos and V6s came later. Mini-vans were ubiquitous, foreshadowing today's crossover craze.

2024 Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid

The deliciously sleek Pacifica is available with a V6 hybrid, delivering 30 miles EV range. Families enjoy Amazon Fire TV, second-row captain's chairs, 20-speaker Harman Kardon audio and wireless Apple/Android connections. Luxuriate in available Nappa leather seats and S appearance package to faux your sporty. Prices start at \$51,095.

1993 Ford Mustang SVT Cobra

Ford's square "Fox-bodied" Mustang that ran from 1979 finished with venom. Grabbing the Cobra name from Shelby, it boasted a 5.0-liter V8 delivering 235 horsepower — good for 0-60 mph in 5.9 seconds and 140 mph top speed. I especially love the directional alloy wheels. Get it in red. Depending on mileage, \$35-55k buys a keeper.

2025 Ford Mustang GTD

Flash forward a few decades to the Mustang GTD employing carbon fiber bodywork, active aerodynamics, semi-active suspension and Brembo carbon ceramic brakes. Kicking its gallop is a 5.2-liter supercharged V8, connected to an 8-speed dual clutch transaxle, targeting 800 horsepower. Expect a \$300,000 sticker when it debuts late 2024.

1980 Toyota Land Cruiser

What was "the Japanese Jeep" would soon become a luxury SUV, but it wasn't there yet in 1980. Its white lift-off roof and rear barn doors are iconic, but it came stripped with an agrarian 133-horsepower 4.2-liter inline-six engine. Manual gear ratios were changed in 1979 to make it livable on-road. Expect to pay \$40-50k for one restored.

2024 Toyota Land Cruiser

A white roof references the original, but four doors and smaller footprint add utility. Interiors harbor 14-speaker JBL audio, wireless phone charging and 12.3-inch touchscreen. It comes as a turbo-four hybrid with 326-horsepower, CRAWL control for off-road cruising and Multi-Terrain Select for all surfaces. Prices start around \$55,000.

Sparking a rivalry as old as Bette and Joan, the Ford Bronco and Chevy Blazer EV battle to see who is butch and who is femme

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
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If you thought Bette Davis and Joan Crawford threw storms of shade, there's even more manhood displayed over the hard-core Ford Bronco and car-based Chevrolet Blazer crossover. Amping both for 2024 are the Baja-ready Bronco Raptor and petrol-free Blazer EV.

Let's see who is butch and femme now!

Play Room

Bronco: Completely inhibited, this blistering Ford takes it in the back, and only at service stations. **Blazer:** It's done it in the garage, on the street and even at the mall. It will expose its plug almost anywhere for as long as it takes.

Deep Fortitude

Bronco: Growls with a throaty twin-turbo V6 engine pumping over 400 horsepower. It's the most powerful street-legal Bronco ever, custom tuned with selectable exhaust notes including Quiet and Baja. **Blazer:** Oh please, I toss down 557 horsepower in WOW (Wide Open Watts) Mode straight from the plug. Use regen on demand to travel 320 miles as quiet as a purring cat.

Sexy Underbits

Bronco: I obliterate terrain with a race-ready suspension with semi-active dampers, fully boxed steel frame and all-terrain tires. Skid plates protect from the front bumper to engine, transfer case and transmission. **Blazer:** I can sprint, turn, and stop with 22-inch wheels, sport-tuned chassis and Brembo front brakes. My skid plates are practically useless, but they look good.



Ford Bronco, left, and Chevy Blazer EV

Alter Ego

Bronco: Duane "The Rock" Johnson — It looks suave, but packs heavy-duty gearing and a wider stance for better performance. **Blazer:** Roscoe P. Coltrane — Serving up justice everywhere, it comes as a bitchin' fast police cruiser with vinyl flooring/rear seats, pre-wiring for flashing cherries, steel wheels and bicycle racks.

Beauty Pageant

Bronco: It's ruggedly handsome with fresh styling cues that pay homage to classic Broncos. Check the BRONCO lettering across the grille, composite hood with air vents and steel front bumper with tow hooks. **Blazer:** Fresh off its supporting role in Barbie, style is more evolution of the gas-powered Blazer but laying some Corvette style. Check the black roof, illuminated Chevy emblem and front fender coves.

Packed Inside

Bronco: Get it with 10-speaker B&O audio, adaptive cruise and orange interior touch points. Marine-grade vinyl seats and rubberized flooring make clean-up a quick wash and wipe. **Blazer:** Standard headz-up display, wireless phone charging, twin screen infotainment and hands-free starting are electrifying. Dip the sueded microfiber seats in Adrenaline Red or apply Argon Orange accents to shine a bright on it.

Track Days

Bronco: Its track includes the desert where it can run highway speeds or slow for Baja rock-crawling. Uses 4x4 LO crawl ratio and G.O.A.T. (Goes Over Any Type of Terrain) Modes to configure its bad self for any adventure. **Blazer:** Bitch'll rip a drag strip, tapping into electric torque-vectoring all-wheel-drive to eviscerate 0-60 mph in under 4 seconds. God-Almighty! Corvettes can barely do that!

Best Talent

Bronco: I'll strip off my top and doors before getting dirty in the sunshine. It all snaps back in place quickly when the rain comes. **Blazer:** Get me going on the right highway to take your hands off the wheel for Super Cruise. Keep your eyes on the road, but your hands on a soda, cheeseburger, or ...

Concert Ready

Bronco: Oh, fark that! I'd rather crank up Skynard and transplant my mechanical bits during a long night in the garage. **Blazer:** Take me to the ball, babe! I can waltz with Strauss, rock to Elvis and swoon my misty eyes over Audra McDonald.

Empty Wallets

Bronco: You'll think you paid to educate a cadre of go-go boys when you pop for the \$89,935 price. **Blazer:** They're not cheap, but you won't have to rent out the boys given a more affordable \$51,800 base price.



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LYLES, From Page 8



Stephanie Houston and Ahmad Goree with HHS Assistant Secretary of Health Rachel Levine

Goree said he only met Booker briefly before the assault that April. He described her as energetic and loved by the people she was with. The weeks of her life after the assault were difficult, he said, and, while she remained endearing, it was a difficult time for her, and she became withdrawn.

Goree said the circumstances leading up to Booker's murder, including the viral video of Booker being so violently assaulted, brought into horrifying reality for many people the violence and danger Black transgender women face daily — violence and danger, he stressed, that often cost them their lives. The video, Booker's brutal death and the ever-rising toll of death and violence against trans women that followed in their wake made this murder a national story, when so many others had faded into the background.

Looking for closure

Goree said Lyles' trial should bring closure to Houston and her family and to Booker's friends. The foundation Stephanie Houston created in her daughter's memory provides support of all kinds to the transgender community and emotional support to their families. Houston has spoken to families of transgender people around the world in the four and a half years since her daughter was killed.

On a recent trip to Washington D.C., Houston and Goree met with a variety of national leaders, including senior ad-

visors at the White House. They spoke with Justice Department officials to discuss hate crime reporting, and with Assistant Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine, the highest ranking transgender government official, at HUD to discuss housing discrimination, and with House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and FBI officials.

"All were familiar with the case," Goree said.

He said with all the anti-transgender pieces of legislation that have passed in Texas and other states, the foundation's work is more important today than when it was founded several years ago.

Goree said that for Houston, telling Muhlaysia's story and how she adjusted to her child's transition is a mission of passion. He said she incorporates her faith into the guidance and mentoring she provides.

"We want people to remember Muhlaysia as a person who left this life, and now her story is educating people about what people who look like her are going through," Goree said. Supporting the foundation, he explained, helps more people have a healthy transition and maintain family bonds. Supporting the Muhlaysia Booker Foundation supports the community overall, he added.

In the four and a half years since Muhlaysia Booker's murder on May 18, 2019, at least 192 transgender/gender nonconforming individuals have been murdered in the United States. ■



Feeling blue? Or better yet, do you look fabulous in blue? Or maybe you are just in the mood to help out a worthy cause. Whichever, you'll want to check out the DFW Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence's Blue Ball Enchanted Azure Affair on Saturday, Nov. 4, at Halo's Bar & Grill, 3500 Alta Mere in Fort Worth. Proceeds benefit AIDS Outreach Center. Get your tickets at DFWSisters.org.

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

■ **Weekly: Frontrunners**

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

NOVEMBER

■ **Nov. 3-11: Gay Games 11**

Gay Games take place in Hong Kong and Guadalajara. GGHK2023.com.

■ **Nov. 3-4: Les 7 Doigts' Passagers (Canada)**

A fascinating work of dance and circus exploring life. At Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. at 8 p.m. For info and tickets visit attpac.org.

■ **Nov. 3-4: Vignette Art Fair**

The fifth-annual Vignette Art Fair, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at Dallas Market Hall, 2200 N. Stemmons Freeway. For information visit TexasVignette.org.

■ **Nov. 4: DIVA after DARK**

Dallas Independent Volleyball Association presents DIVA after DARK at JR.'s Bar & Grill, 3923 Cedar Springs Road, at 7 p.m. Hosted by Miss DIVA 2023 Liv Laughlove and Miss DIVA 2019 Ophelia Oliver. Benefiting Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund.

■ **Nov. 4: 'Blue Ball Enchanted Azure Affair'**

The DFW Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence present Blue Ball Enchanted Azure Affair at Halo's Bar & Grill, 3500 Alta Mere Dr., Fort Worth at 8 p.m. Proceeds benefit AIDS Outreach Center. For info and tickets visit DFWSisters.org.

■ **Nov. 4-5: Shop American Field Co.**

Free bourbon sampling, tricked out cars and dozens of unique vendors with American-made products that you can't find anywhere else. 403 Bishop Ave., from 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

■ **Nov. 4: Walk to End Alzheimers**

Join North Texas Pride at the Walk to End Alzheimers at Dallas City Hall Plaza, 1500 Marilla St. Site opens at 7:30 a.m., ceremony begins at 8:30 a.m., and walk begins at 9 a.m. For more information visit the team's page at Act.Alz.org.

■ **Nov. 5: Thanksgiving Cooking Class**

Fern Connections presents a beginner-friendly Thanksgiving cooking class from 1-3:30 p.m. at 4887 Alpha Road, Ste. 288, Farmers Branch. Info at FernConnections.com.

■ **Nov. 7: Election Day**

■ **Nov. 8: 'Aging Solo: Who Will Take Care of Me When I'm Old'**

Join the Coalition for Aging LGBT for an interactive workshop with aging expert and author Joy Loverde from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at 4847 W. Lawther Drive. RSVP by calling 214-949-1226.

■ **Nov. 9-12: Beyond Vanilla**

National Leather Association — Dallas presents a three-day conference in Mesquite geared toward

educating those interested in exploring the leather/BDSM/fetish lifestyles. Visit BeyondVanilla.org for details and to register.

■ **Nov. 11: Veteran's Day**

■ **Nov. 11: Equality Texas Gala**

Largest fundraiser for Equality Texas takes place at the Hilton Austin, Governor's Ballroom, 500 E. 4th St., Austin, from 6-9 p.m. EqualityTexas.org.

■ **Nov. 11: Cancer Support Community North Texas**

A 1920s themed red-carpet experience with live music, entertainment, tapas, open bar, silent and live auctions in the grand ballroom of the Warwick Melrose Hotel, 2015 Oak Lawn Ave., at 7 p.m. \$225 single/\$400 couples.

■ **Nov. 11: 'Michael Feinstein Celebrates The Judy Garland Centennial'**

Eisemann Center presents *Get Happy: Michael Feinstein Celebrates the Judy Garland Centennial* at 8 p.m. in the Hill Performance Hall, 2351 Performance Dr., Richardson. Tickets available online at EisemannCenter.com.

■ **Nov. 12: Vogel Alcove Toy Drive**

Bring unwrapped toys for the children served by Vogel Alcove to Resource Center at Jubilee Park, 907 S. Carroll Ave.

■ **Nov. 12: The Queer Club: November Book Club**

Fern Connections presents a virtual book club discussion of *Marriage of a Thousand Lies* by SJ Sindu at 2 p.m. For information visit FernConnections.com

■ **Nov. 12: Border Songs**

Join four Turtle Creek Chorale ensembles as they perform works in English and Spanish in reverence of the stories of immigrants from our southern border. At Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 3836 Gilbert Ave., at 7 p.m. Info and tickets are available at TurtleCreekChorale.com

■ **Nov. 13: Kim Petras**

Kim Petras performs at Southside Ballroom. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster.com.

■ **Nov. 16: Log Cabin Dallas**

Log Cabin Republicans meets for happy hour at 6 p.m and a presentation at 7 p.m. at Mattito's, 3102 Oak Lawn Ave.

■ **Nov. 16: All That Glitters: DIFFA Dallas' 29th Annual Wreath Collection**

DIFFA's Wreath Collection lights up the festive

season at The Empire Room, 1225 N. Riverfront Blvd. from 6 p.m.-9 p.m. For tickets or to make a donation, visit One.Bidpal.net/wreath2023/welcome

■ **Nov. 17: Versa-Style Dance Company**

Eisemann Center continues the 2023-2024 season with *Freemind Freestyle* by Versa-Style Dance Company at 8 p.m. in the Hill Performance Hall, 2351 Performance Drive in Richardson. Tickets are available at EisemannCenter.com or by calling (972) 744-4650.

■ **Nov. 18: Naughty or Nice Gaybingo**

Gaybingo at 6 p.m. Play for a chance to win cash and prizes. Station 4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Tickets at MyResourceCenter.org/GayBingo.

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

Look for extended listings online at DallasVoice.com



Miss DIVA 2023 Liv Laughlove and Miss DIVA 2019 Ophelia Oliver host DIVA After DARK on Saturday, Nov. 4, at 7 p.m. at JR.'s Bar & Grill. Proceeds benefit GDMFAF.

Jenny Block

GIRL ON GIRLS

At the end of it all, what is enough?

My grandmother Estelle died last week. My step-grandmother actually, but the only grandmother on my dad's side I have ever known.

I was very close to my dad's father, my Papa — very close. Papa Herbie visited often when I was a kid but almost always alone. My grandmother had to stay home with her son, Keith, who was unwell for most of his life.

My grandmother fell two weeks ago and had to go to the emergency room, leaving her son home alone. He died while she was gone. She blamed herself. She died a week or so later.

The whole thing has gotten me thinking a lot about regret. And about love. And about, well, life.

I loved my grandmother, but I rarely saw her. We emailed. I had lunch with her a few years ago when I was in Florida on another trip. She had a penchant for hoarding and lived in a tiny condo with Keith, so going to stay with her had never been an option.

She was funny and feisty when I saw her, just like I remembered. From the sound of her emails, that was true right up until the end.

Should I have visited her more? Called more? Sent more emails? More photos? Would I have felt differently about her passing if I had? Would she have felt differently?

She was 98 when she died. It was a whole life, a long life, not always an easy life. I hope it was a happy life. I remember photos of her with Papa in Europe, smiling. No, grinning. It was bigger than smiling — happier, more real.

So, though I don't remember those days, there must have been times she left her son, who was in his sixties when he died. What I remember is there being a pull toward him and away from the world.

I know it was hard for her. But I also felt her deep commitment to him, her love. And I wonder now that they are both gone, was that enough? Is that enough? What is enough to mark a life, to make a life?

Matthew Perry just died after a life-



long struggle with drugs and alcohol, after a successful acting career. The country, maybe the world, is mourning him. He was, after all, our friend, at least in our minds.

Is that enough? Was that enough? Does the world have to love you? Do you have to amass great wealth? Must you accomplish something recognizable? Measurable? Envied, perhaps?

They are all gone now. All dead. All both remembered and forgotten. The world still turns.

What did they think before they were gone? Did they think it was enough? Did they want more? And, if they did, what did they want more of?

Glimmers maybe? Fresh blueberry yogurt in glass jars. The Spanish Steps of Rome at sunset. Surprising your wife with buttery leather loafers that make her feel like a million bucks. Friendly dogs on cobblestone streets with wag-

ging tails. The sun on your skin. A smile from across the room from someone you love.

Time. Comfort. Joy. Ease.

Some say you can judge a person's life by how many people attend their funeral. But I don't know if that's true. I can think of many a famous person's funeral where "mourners" spilled out into the streets and tuned in on TV, and yet the lives they were there to "honor" were riddled with loneliness and pain and maybe even terrible wrongdoing.

I imagine a small gathering of friends at the grave of someone very few knew. They share stories about the life lost, and they laugh and cry together. They comfort one another. They celebrate and honor a life that maybe they alone know was well-lived. I hope that is enough, for them and the person they lost.

Sometimes I write because I understand. On the subject of love and loss,

I find myself writing to understand. I don't have any answers here. I'm not even 100 percent sure I'm asking all of the right questions. What I do know is that now is the time to think about it.

What do you want out of your life and your relationships? If you lost someone today, would you feel good about yesterday? If you took your last breath would you regret that there were no more tomorrows — regret all the "someday I will" or "one day we should" or "when there is time..."?

It goes without saying that you should tell the people you love how you feel. That you should listen to people who need to share their story. That you should taste the fruit and drink the wine and try that dish. That you should sit longer and breathe deeper and explore further. And wander more and wonder "what if?" less.

But what, perhaps, does need to be said is that there is no perfect life, no calculations to be made. Numbers lie anyway. We can count ourselves lucky if we ever truly know ourselves, let alone anyone else. There is only this — this one life, this one ticket to ride, as my dad says.

So the only question is this, if you had only one day in the park, what would you do with it?

this week's solution

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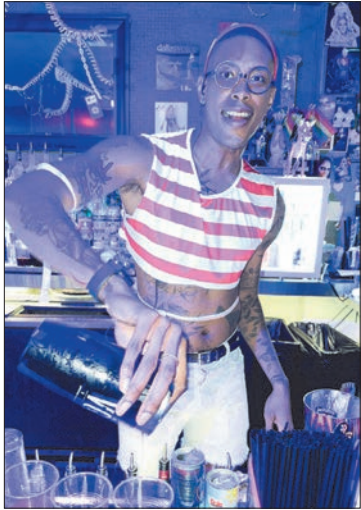




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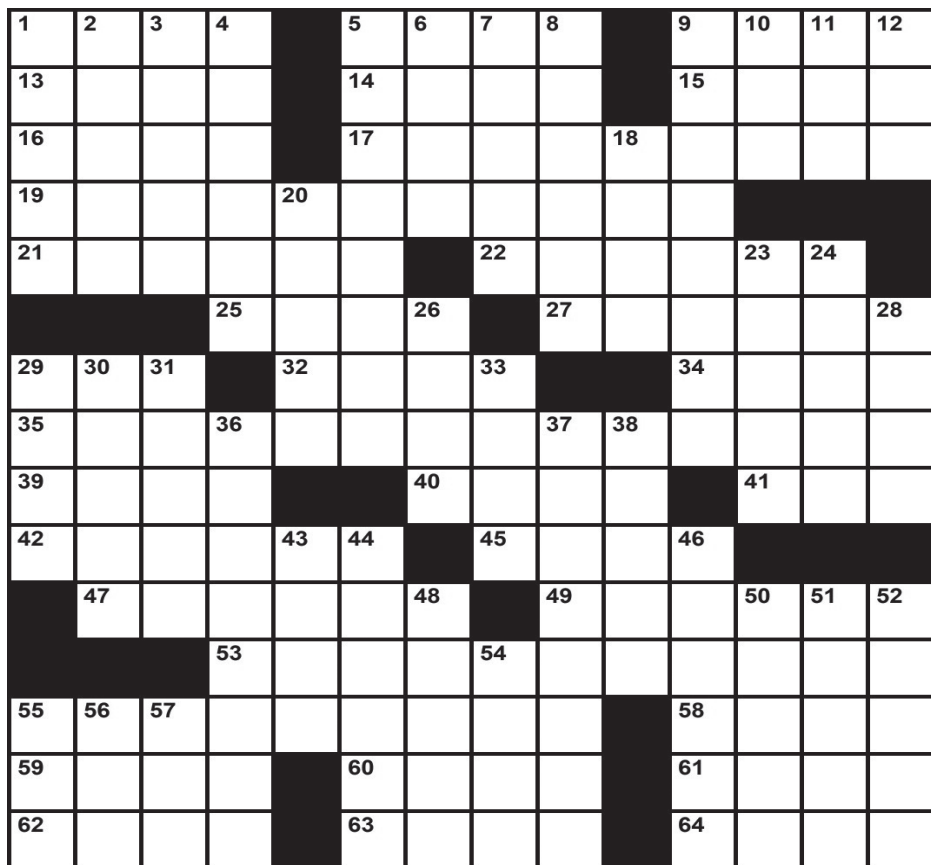
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PUZZLE | Dumbledore



Solution on Page 20

Across

- 1 Collette of *United States of Tara*
- 5 Salsa rating
- 9 Martin's *Ed Wood* role
- 13 What muscle Marys pump
- 14 *Nurse Jackie* portrayer
- 15 Spit it out confidently
- 16 Jazz singer James
- 17 Reproduce nonheterosexually
- 19 Film in which Michael Gambon played a wealthy industrialist
- 21 Putting on airs
- 22 Bad way to come
- 25 Precious stones
- 27 Egyptian king of the dead
- 29 Suffix with homoerotic
- 32 Gather, after s pilling seed
- 34 Bond's first foe
- 35 Film in which Gambon played George V
- 39 South Pacific island
- 40 Cruising
- 41 Beginning of a hickey?
- 42 Chews the scenery
- 45 Jodie Foster's *Little Man* ____

Down

- 47 Remove a blockage from
- 49 Putting the kibosh on
- 53 Series in which Gambon played Dumbledore
- 55 It projects from the body
- 58 Singer Norah's father
- 59 *Lawrence of Arabia* director David
- 60 Judy or Barbra, for example
- 61 Britten's pub potables
- 62 Rainbow shapes
- 63 Laura of *Marriage Story*
- 64 Put into piles

Down

- 1 '70s supermodel Cheryl
- 2 Halliwell's partner
- 3 Response to an error in "Do Re Mi"?
- 4 Dazed and confused
- 5 Robin's gay guys
- 6 Put the finger on
- 7 Painting Fra of Florence
- 8 Middle name of Eleanor's beard?
- 9 It is but a butt
- 10 Madonna's Peron role
- 11 Do-over for Mauresmo

- 12 *Diamonds ____ a Girl's Best Friend*
- 18 Gershwin and Levin
- 20 *SNL's Cheri*
- 23 Screwed up
- 24 Five for Frida
- 26 *Iliad*, e.g.
- 28 Arty district of London
- 29 The Beatles' *Let ____*
- 30 SeaWorld resident, once
- 31 Pink fruit
- 33 Oral attention getter
- 36 Kristen Kish works in them
- 37 He played Harvey Milk
- 38 Barbecue site
- 43 Zip
- 44 Like details to be spared
- 46 Actors with small parts
- 48 Will's former girlfriend
- 50 Prefix for Da Vinci's land
- 51 *You'll ____ Walk Alone*
- 52 Grain to be ground
- 54 Role for Bela
- 55 Home state of J. Nabors
- 56 A shot
- 57 D.C.-based lobby group Gender ____



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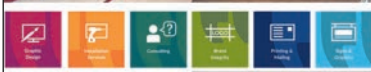
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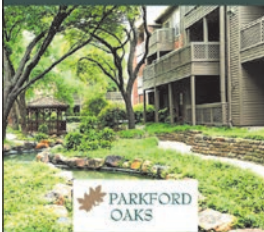
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