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The Premier Media Source for LGBTQ Texas

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This weekend photog Mack Sturgis opens his first Dallas exhibit, 'Meat and Beats,' at Dallas Eagle; next weekend Dallas Bears welcome throngs of hot men to TBRU 28

By Rich Lopez, page 8



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COVER Photo by Mack Sturgis

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Bites from our blog

WHAT'S THE TEA: DallasVoice.com



Nex Benedict

Medical Examiner: Nex Benedict died by suicide

According to Oklahoma's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, 16-year-old transgender student Nex Benedict died from a lethal mixture of diphenhydramine and fluoxetine. The ME's office has determined manner of death as suicide, The

Advocate has reported.

Diphenhydramine is the allergy medicine commonly known as Benadryl. Fluoxetine, commonly known as Prozac, is prescribed for depression and anxiety disorders.

Benedict died Feb. 8 after having been assaulted by three female classmates in a bathroom

at Owasso High School the day before, and after having faced continual bullying and discrimination throughout the school year over his gender identity. (Initial reports identified Benedict as nonbinary and using they/them pronouns; friends have later said Benedict identified as a trans male and used he/him pronouns.)

Benedict's grandmother took him to the emergency room on Feb. 7 after the assault in the bathroom. Benedict told a police officer at that time that he had given up on reporting bullying to school officials because they never did anything about it.

The next day, when Benedict collapsed at home, his family took him back to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

— Tammye Nash

Sherman ISD suspends superintendent over 'Oklahoma!' controversy

The Sherman Independent School District Board of Trustees, following a closed session meeting on Friday, March 8, has voted to suspend Superintendent Tyson Bennett. Meghan Cone, the school district's chief communications officer, confirmed to NBC on Tuesday, March 12, that Bennett was suspended in connection with the investigation into



Tyson Bennett

Bennett's efforts to remove transgender senior Max Hightower from the school's production of *Oklahoma!*

Philip Hightower, Max's father, said he is "thrilled that the board made the right decision



Ismail Boodhwani
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Obituary



Jose Alexander Romero, 43, passed away peacefully on Feb. 25, 2024, at Denton Presbyterian, with loved ones by his side.

Alex was born Jan. 26, 1981, to Alonso Romero Bonilla and Maria Auxiliadora Romero in Miguel, El Salvador. He had many passions in life — making people laugh, cooking dinner with friends, travel, his passion for and love of animals.

Alex is survived by his husband, Byron D. Sims, many family members and friends, and his cousin, Xiomara, of Maryland.

A service to celebrate Alex's life will be held 4 p.m. Sunday, April 21, at Mulkey Mason Funeral home Lewisville. The family requests memorial contributions be made in Alex's name to the charity of your choice.,

to protect our kids from discrimination. I'm thrilled Max and the rest can be safe, and I'm proud that our community united and said no to transphobia.”

The board suspended Bennett with pay and appointed Deputy Superintendent Thomas O’Neal as acting superintendent, effective immediately.

Gordy Carmona, North Texas community engagement and advocacy strategist for Equality Texas, said, “News of the unanimous decision to suspend Superintendent Tyson Bennett was a welcomed surprise, but there is still room for growth in ensuring current and future LGBTQIA+ students can feel fully supported by their district.”

— Tammye Nash

■ Adoptable / JUNIOR & BIBI



Junior
Say hello to **Junior**, a four-year old male domestic short-hair tabby, and to **Bibi**, also a male domestic short-hair tabby. Junior, 11 pounds, and his pair-bonded friend, Bibi, 17 pounds, came to the SPCA of Texas from another local shelter to get a second chance at finding a new, forever home. As best friends, they must be adopted together. Both cats are real love and snuggle bugs! They



Bibi
will be great for cuddling on the couch watching movies or reading.

Bibi and **Junior** are waiting for you at the Greenville Ave PetSmart. You'll need an appointment to meet them, so simply find one of their profiles at [SPCA.org/Cats](https://www.spcatexas.org/Cats) and click on the “Make an Appointment” button. Junior or Bibi’s team will take it from there.


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Dallas Water Utilities (DWU) customers will soon use **DallasGo**, the new online payment platform for paying water bills and other City of Dallas bills.

Launching in spring 2024, **DallasGo** will replace ePay to offer customers a more convenient bill paying experience.

For more information on **DallasGo**, visit dallas.gov/DallasGo or call DWU Customer Service at 214-651-1441, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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The GOP's new strategy

Right-wing lawmakers using TikTok falsehoods to target LGBT nonprofits' federal funding

Every LGBTQ nonprofit in the nation should take note of something that happened last week, as it very likely will put them under the microscope when applying for federal funding.

Simply put, the Republicans have found a new way to go after our community; they are targeting our community by taking away funding from your local community center, your LGBTQ health clinic, your HIV/AIDS service organization, your LGBTQ youth programs and even LGBTQ affordable senior housing.

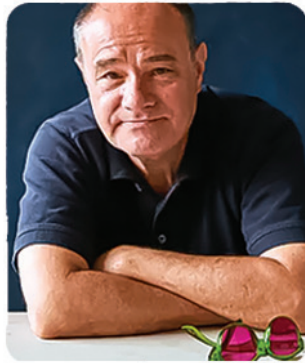
Any one of them could be next on the Republicans' hit list.

To do that, conservatives have used fake information, and Democratic Senators fell into their trap, defunding a \$1 million grant for renovations to a community center that, since the 1970s, has provided meals to HIV/AIDS patients, counseled homeless youth and provided senior programs, job training, and other services to low-income individuals. It has also served as a meeting place for scores of community organizations.

Does this sound like your community center?

I'm not sure how many millions of our tax dollars go to LGBTQ nonprofits, but what I can tell you, as a comparison, is that the largest federal nonprofit funding goes to the Catholic Church and its affiliates. The Associated Press puts the number at \$1.4 billion and \$3.4 billion — and that was for COVID alone.

We get a drop in the bucket, comparatively speaking, and they are attempting to take that away. Here's how it



Mark Segal
Contributing Columnist

happened already and can happen in your city:

A grant from the federal government to an LGBTQ community center was withdrawn

from the funding system of the federal government because a conservative TikTok site suggested that the community center was allowing an independent organization to rent space from the community center for kinky sex parties. That was false; no sex took place, only discussions of sexuality. The community center rents space to outside organizations that abide by the

many heterosexual members.

Here's the point: If your organization is renting space to third-party organizations, the Republicans might use those programs to defund you. They might go after a safe sex lecture, for example. The right wing has a fascination with our sexuality, and they like to paint us with that brush only.

Maybe that is why there is a need for sex-positive seminars in our community?

After the TikTok went viral, it was just like an old Keystone Cops movie. After all, this did take place in Pennsylvania, the Keystone State.

First, Pennsylvania's junior senator, John Fetterman, the most progressive U.S. senator, wrote the committee rescinding his support. When his rescinding letter was posted, he said he had nothing to do with it and that his staff did it without his knowledge.

Then the senior senator, Bob Casey, also withdrew his support, stating,

"Consenting adults have the right to do whatever they want in their free time, but these types of appropriations projects warrant the highest level of scrutiny on behalf of taxpayers."

And that caused it to die in a Senate committee.

These are two senators who support same-sex marriage and marriage equality and have been endorsed by LGBTQ political organizations. Here's the clincher: Sen. Bob Casey is up for re-election, and it's the one seat Republicans believe they can pick up.

So I wasn't surprised when, less than 24 hours later, I received a text from a major supporter of Casey's Republican opponent. It asked me, "Are you signed up for McCormick now?"

That's David McCormick, the Republican candidate running against Casey. And that Republican candidate is seeking LGBTQ support; he even signed onto an amicus brief supporting marriage equality.

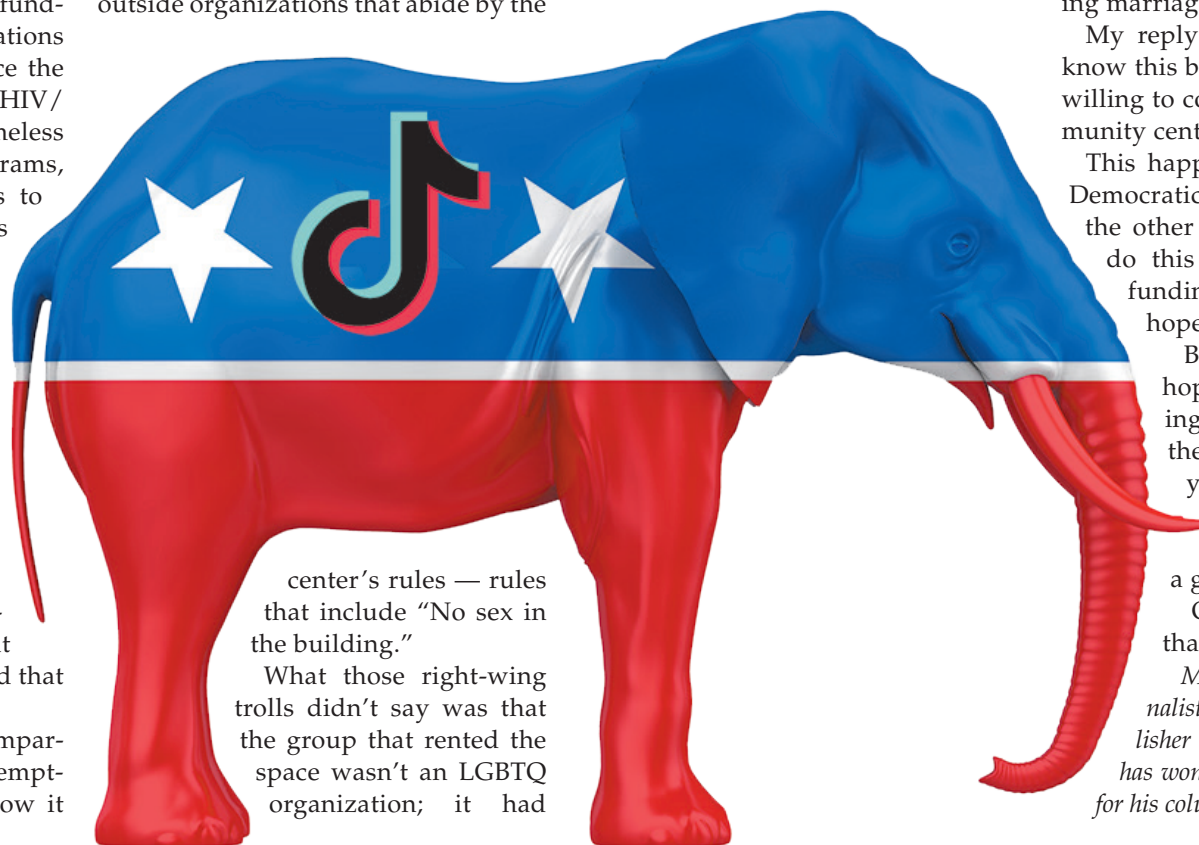
My reply was — and I know you know this before I type it out — "Is he willing to commit to funding the community center?"

This happened in a state with two Democratic senators, one progressive, the other centrist. Will Republicans do this in your state with your funding request? You'd better hope not.

But if they do, you'd better hope that you have the backing of your senators and that they'll support and defend you to the end and stand up to the homophobes who treat our lives like a game.

Otherwise, you can kiss that funding goodbye. ■

Mark Segal is an American journalist. He is the founder and publisher of Philadelphia Gay News and has won numerous journalism awards for his column "Mark My Words."



center's rules — rules that include "No sex in the building."

What those right-wing trolls didn't say was that the group that rented the space wasn't an LGBTQ organization; it had

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Bear shots

BEAR SEASON

Photographer Mack Sturgis marks his first Dallas show with Meat and Beats at The Eagle

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
rich@dallasvoice.com

For about 15 years, photographer Mack Sturgis has been working out of his studio in Weatherford, just west of Fort Worth. But even though he started building his reputation as a photographer of bears and daddies — and more — in Dallas, on Friday, March 15, Sturgis opens his first Dallas gallery show.

"I had my very first show in P-town but yeah, T-Don put this all together, and it will be our first time to show here, even though I'm based here," Sturgis explained.

Meat and Beats — *The Mack Sturgis Art Exhibit* will feature his signature style of hunky male models presented with a distinct artistic eye. The show opens at 9 p.m., with Sturgis and some of his models on hand for a meet-and-greet. He will also offer prints for sale.

Showing is something new for the artist. He has had some pieces on display at Skivvies, just not an actual show. He thrives by doing this all online. That's both easier and in line with his day job.

"I do all this stuff on the side," Sturgis said. "My day job is interior design, where we create wallpapers and provide art for hotels and shops. I combined it at first, but some clients were uncomfortable with [the bear/daddy photos], so I separated the day job from the photography."

And that's when the moniker Mack Sturgis was born. But his inspiration came way before then. In describing his work, he goes way back.

"I grew up in Catholic school, so the first images of men I felt drawn to were these biblical, saintly, epic looking images. So when I photograph everyday guys, I want to put an epic look to it," he said.

His work may be considered erotic,



but the craft he puts into his work is evident. It's not just hot men standing around naked. And his work is not just a matter of whipping out a smartphone with a great camera.

The shadows, the lines, his lighting — it all comes together to create distinct works of art that also emit sexual power.

Sturgis cites artists like Herb Ritts, Robert Mapplethorpe and George Platt Lynes and even the classic Hollywood style as inspiring as he grew up and came out. His interior design background lends to his work as well.

"I studied art history quite a bit, so I didn't want my work to look like cheap porn. I worked a lot with lighting for my interior design, and then we started playing with lighting in the studio space. Now though, I shoot in all natural light unless I'm traveling," he said.

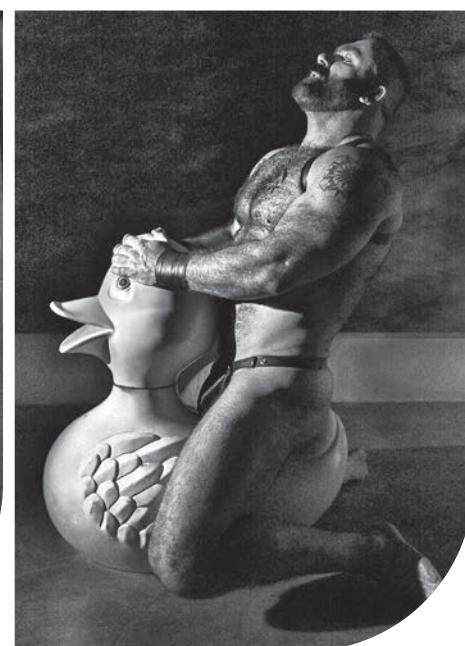
Sturgis shoots with his husband, Chad Newlon, a photographer who often captures behind-the-scenes shots and crafts his own portraits. The two have been together for 15 years and married for 10.

So how does Sturgis create his shots with often-imposing models standing in front of him? Firstly, they are on his turf, often working in Sturgis' home-based studio in Weatherford. Second, Sturgis plays it by ear until he feels the right vibe.

"It's almost like getting to know them when you have a model. I see their good angles and start figuring them out until things start to click," he said. "Once I start shooting, it's like a meditation to me, and I feel good about directing them how to move and finding their good sides and light."

While he may be recognized for his muscle-bear or otter shots, he sees and photographs all body types. It's a mix of people reaching out to him and people

SHOTS, Page 13



Where the bears are

BEAR SEASON

Texas Bear Round-Up just gets bigger with its 28th season — so here's how to do it right

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
rich@dallasvoice.com

In the late 1900s — ok, 1995 — Dallas Bears decided to host its very first local event geared toward the bear community. Today, the Texas Bear Round-Up (TBRU) is one of the largest bear runs in the world. The event continues to grow and attract not just bears, otters, cubs and admirers from all over, but also marquee talent to perform.

It's all about a partying with a purpose: Profits go directly to nonprofit beneficiaries in the Dallas Community. This year, Dallas Bears selected Cathedral of Hope Benevolence Fund, Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund and The Coalition For Aging LGBT as the beneficiaries for TBRU 28.

"TBRU 28: The Roaring '20s" runs March 21-24 at the host hotel, Hyatt Regency Dallas in downtown. Randy Flores — now in his second year as Dallas Bears president after six years before on the board — and his team all work as volunteers to present TBRU.



Randy Flores

Four days of bears, events, excursions and parties can be overwhelming — especially for first-timers. And this hefty schedule for TBRU may look

daunting, but you can either go in with a plan or just let it go and let it flow.

Flores offered some wise words about the event as a whole and what to keep in mind as everyone gets their bear on next weekend.

TBRU in Flores' words

"It was always presented to me as a 'party with a purpose,' and I've retained that mindset. We plan a weekend of events at the host hotel, excursions so visitors can get a better city experience and an awesome night at S4 with Bear-Dance on Friday night. Our event is fully staffed by volunteers, nobody makes a paycheck, so we're able to maximize the money we give back to the local community and the impact we're able to make.

"This event is wonderful because guys who are larger statured or older don't always get the recognition or affection they deserve. At TBRU, everyone is there

BEARS, Page 13

And the winners are ...

BEST OF THE BEST

Celebrate the best of the best in North Texas March 21 at the RVA Winners Announcement Party


This year, 2024, is turning out to be a banner year for Dallas Voice. For one thing, we will be celebrating our 40th anniversary all year long, with our commemorative 40th anniversary issue hitting stands on Friday, May 10. And the very next day — Saturday, May 11 — we are throwing ourselves a big birthday bash (watch for those details, coming soon). But before we start the birthday celebration, we will be celebrating the best of the best — our Crown Jewels of North

Texas — with our annual Readers Voice Awards issue, hitting the streets on March 22. But if you want to get ahead of the game and be among the first to see the 2024 RVA winners, then you want to be at The Rose Room, inside S4, on Thursday night, March 21 for our first-ever Readers Voice Awards Winners Announcement Party. “The Readers Voice Awards issue has been one of our largest and most popular issues each year since our very first RVA issue was published in 2006,” said Dallas Voice Publisher Leo Cusimano. “But this year, as we look forward to our 20th annual RVA issue in 2025, we decided to take this another step forward. This year, instead of just putting the RVA issue out on the streets on Friday, March 22, we wanted to do something to really honor and celebrate our winners. “After all,” Cusimano added, “when

the people have chosen you as the best of the best, as the Crown Jewels of our North Texas community, you deserve to be celebrated!” Doors open for the RVA Winners Reveal Party at 5:30 p.m. in the Rose Room (inside S4 at 3912 Cedar Springs Road). It will be hosted by Cassie Nova and will include the announcement of the winners, presentation of plaques and a show featuring some of our top drag performers. You’ll also get the 2024 RVA issue of Dallas Voice, hot of the presses before we even put the papers out on the street on Friday morning. There will be light bites from Big Al’s Smokehouse and, for dessert, liquid nitrogen ice cream prepared and served on site by the crew from Yelibelly Chocolates. And of course, the Rose Room staff will be serving up your favorite cocktails to go with everything else.



“We have been planning this for months,” Cusimano said, “and we are very excited that the time for the party is finally here. We look forward to gathering Thursday night with our families and friends, our readers and our advertisers and everyone else who can make it. So put it on your calendar, and we will see you there.” Visit the Readers Voice Awards Winner Announcement Party event page on Facebook to RSVP. RSVP is not required to attend, but it will help us plan! — Tammye Nash



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What's happening at SCOTUS

IN THE COURTS

So far rulings are positive on LGBTQ issues, but there's more to come

LISA KEEN | Keen News Service
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More than half-way through its 2023-24 session, the U.S. Supreme Court has dispensed with three appeals in ways that help LGBTQ people. But as many as seven other petitions are awaiting action before the justices.

On March 26 as the U.S. Supreme Court hears oral arguments in two consolidated appeals to determine whether courts can pull the early-stage abortion drug RU-486 (aka mifepristone) off the

market.

Lambda Legal and other LGBTQ groups have long warned that any damage done to the right to have an abortion could have deep implications for the right to have intimate relations, including marriage, for LGBTQ people. How the high court rules in the mifepristone case (*Food and Drug Administration v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine*) could negatively impact the availability of HIV prevention medication, IVF services for lesbian couples and medical treatment for transgender people.

In an apparent 6-2 vote last year, the justices temporarily blocked enforcement of a lower court decision in Texas that sought to pull RU-486 off the market.

The legal questions at the Supreme Court will focus narrowly on whether doctors who oppose abortion have legal standing to challenge an FDA approval of RU-486 to terminate pregnancies even

though the doctors do not prescribe the drug themselves.

Other LGBTQ-related cases before the Supreme Court this session — some concluded, some pending — include:

- Campus hate speech: Good, for now. In what appears to have been a 6-2 vote, the Supreme Court on March 3 granted a petition of appeal challenging a policy against hate speech on the campus of Virginia Tech. Without argument, the court vacated the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals decision with instructions to dismiss the lawsuit as moot (because the school had significantly pared back its protocol for addressing hate speech on campus). There are numerous attempts by universities around the country to create policies to tamp down hate speech. Justice Clar-

ence Thomas, with his plus one, Justice Samuel Alito, dissented. (*Speech First v. Virginia Tech*)

- Bathroom ban: Good. On Jan. 16, without comment or dissent, the Supreme Court denied a request from an Indiana school district which sought to require transgender students to use a separate bathroom from other students. (*Martinsville v. A.C.*)

- Conversion therapy: Good. In a 6-3 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court on Dec. 11 rejected the appeal of a therapist who challenged a Washington State law prohibiting "conversion therapy" for anyone under 18. (*Tingley v. Washington*)

- Fighting bathroom ban. Pending. Three transgender adolescents in Tennessee have filed an appeal with the Supreme Court, seeking to reverse a Sixth Circuit ruling that upheld a ban on gender-affirming medication. (*L.W. v. Tennessee*)

- Pronoun v. Parents. Pending. A couple in Indiana say their Christian beliefs hold that God "creates each person as immutably male or female," and they refuse to refer to their "biological male" child with female pronouns as the child wishes. The Indiana Department of Child Services removed the child from the parents' home, noting the child had developed an eating disorder as a result of the conflict with the parents, and state courts, including the Indiana Supreme Court, upheld that action. The child has since turned 18, potentially rendering the case moot. (*M.C. v. Indiana*)

- Fighting for parental rights. Pending. In this appeal, the ACLU and the National Center for Lesbian Rights is challenging a state law passed last year by Kentucky to ban the use of medical treatments to alter the appearance of a minor from the gender the child was identified at birth to the gender the child identifies with now. (*Jane Doe 1 v. Kentucky*)

- Fighting treatment. Pending. Idaho has asked the Supreme Court for an emergency stay of a lower court decision preventing the state from enforcing its ban on medical treatment for transgender youth. (*Idaho v. Poe*)

- Reverse discrimination. Pending. A straight woman in Ohio is appealing her case to seek a declaration of sexual orientation discrimination when the supervisor at her job twice passed her over for promotions and chose gay employees instead. The straight employee was eventually fired by two straight employees. (*Ames v. Ohio*).

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The diva speaks

BEYOND THE STAGE

Patti LuPone talks about going solo with her life story

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
rich@dallasvoice.com

There are numerous Broadway divas and legends who are also gay icons: Idina Menzel, Kristin Chenoweth, Jennifer Holiday, Betty Buckley — and the list goes on.

And then there's Patti.

Patti LuPone is in a league of her own. Perhaps it's her no-nonsense demeanor that doesn't stand for misbehavior in the theater. Or maybe it's her strong opinions that often inspire gay gasps and clutched pearls.

Whatever it is, Patti LuPone's strength of character — and in her characters — stands on its own.

The legend puts that on display on March 23 for one night only with her solo show *Patti LuPone: A Life in Notes* at the Eisemann Center in Richardson.

Just last year, LuPone headlined Turtle Creek Chorale's Rhapsody Gala. In some ways, that offered a glimpse into this upcoming show as she regaled the audience with anecdotes from throughout her career. The three-time Tony winner calls *A Life in Notes* a personal music memoir that touches on her life through song and story.

Of course, if she were singing and reading the telephone book, she'd still draw an audience.

LuPone spoke with Dallas Voice by phone about the show, her gay icon status and why Hollywood wasn't in her sights — that is after an embarrassing admission which may have helped settle any nerves before chatting with a legend.

Dallas Voice: Hello Ms. LuPone. To be honest, I almost missed this call because I was playing a game on my phone.



Patti LuPone tells Dallas Voice, "I appreciate people appreciating me." (Photo by Douglas Friedman)

Patti LuPone: (Extended laughter)

It was pretty intense. Do you have a phone app that you spend a lot of time on? Well, yes. I don't play games on my phone. I just troll, really.

Even better! To get right into it, you are undoubtedly a queer icon. Was there a moment or maybe even a role where you knew you were in with the gays? I grew up with gays in my life. My oldest friend is gay, and, at the time, when I was five, we didn't say "homo" or "gay." I just knew he was different. All that was quite normal in my household with no discrimination. So I think that helped me.

You were already vibing on that gay wavelength. Maybe that's the baseline of what resonates with us outside of your signature roles and songs. The whole icon status — I appreciate people appreciating me. I am grateful however I can make an impression and that people can latch onto that.

I think I resonate with the gay community

because there was a similarity. I would see a prejudice against me throughout my career and sometimes even at home. I would always question why, and I don't even know why I do it.

Did those questions come regarding your friend or in general? I have this need to understand why things occur or happen, and I've been in trouble all my life for doing it. As a kid, I'd get punished for it and not understand. That built a rage inside of me to challenge people. I think people would rather not discuss anything, and it's a ritual that's passed down.

Do you go back to your childhood in *A Life in Notes*? Oh yes. But you know, it's more about the music. Rock-and-roll and I grew up together, so that was my first choice of music. There was always music in the house. There's music in everyone's life that triggers emotions. Those touchstones are part of the show, and, plus, listening to those stage musicals as well — I knew I'd end up on the stage.

We associate you with Broadway almost exclusively and with a cast. How then do you approach this show where not only are you solo, but also not in a character? There's something about doing one-person shows that you're just more in control of. There is no mask or character. These concerts are me. You have to look the audience in the eyes with confidence.

Did you not want to do the Hollywood route? We see you pop up in movies and shows, but mostly you're on Broadway it seems. I always dreamed of Hollywood, but I was told early on my face was not Hollywood material. I wasn't the all-American white girl. I'd love to finish my career on TV and film. But I did just do a show for Marvel, and that was great!

Patti LuPone in the Marvel Universe.

Wow. I know — I'm so glad I did that!

You've played *Evita*, JoAnne in *Company*, Rose in *Gypsy* and so many other iconic roles. Which of your characters would you be friends with? I love this question. All of them! Yeah you have to love the character, even if they are villains. They all have some purity of heart, and that's where they discover how they are. That helps me with their goodness and liking them.

For tickets, visit EisemannCenter.com.



Patti LuPone says of her one-woman shows, like her upcoming performance at The Eisemann Center, "These concerts are me." (Photo by of Rahav Segev)



SHOTS From Page 8

he may simply find interesting to shoot. "I like some grittiness and realism in different types of people and pulling a classic shot that's bigger than life in a way," he said.

Sturgis' work can be seen on Instagram, but there are parameters. He likes the social media platform, but the inconsistency of their guidelines works against his posts. He's used X (Twitter), but he said it's not the same audience. And he features the full shots on OnlyFans. Instagram though seems to be his primary focus

"I don't mind that Instagram censors, because I like to leave something to the imagination," he said. "I don't keep up with OnlyFans, and I think Twitter appreciates the work for different reasons."

Hidden in his work, Sturgis adds a deeper message beyond the muscle and skin, using that to make statements about religion or politics. He has a few conceptual pieces like The Gift, a concept he shot about the AIDS crisis and growing up in the middle of it, and Church and State about where we are headed if things don't turn around.

He's curious how Friday will play out and what people will see in his work.

"I am looking forward to seeing how people respond," he said. "It's interesting to take the work and prints into a show and give them a life almost. Plus, people will see the models there who are in the photos. It's gonna be fun."

To view his work online, visit @MackSturgis.g on Instagram.



BEARS From Page 8

because that's the exact body type and look that they love! I've never been to another local event that celebrates body positivity the way TBRU does. It's not like any other day where bigger guys are looked over, or should be afraid to approach someone they may typically see as out of their league. Here, the playing field is leveled, and it's a totally different experience."

What's new for TBRU in 2024

"We're finally in a position with the event to not only buy out the hotel for Friday/Saturday, something previously unheard of, but to also make significant investments in the future of the event. We've got some awesome decor planned, and a fun collaboration with the Hyatt and their HyPride initiative to highlight LGBTQIA+ staff and hotel guests!"

Tips for TBRU virgins

"I encourage those attending for the first time to hold their head high, be confident about themselves and what they have to offer and go into it with the understanding that you may meet some of the best people you'll ever meet in your life. I certainly did.

"Most importantly, for both guests and volunteers, is to have fun! We work hard to put this on, and the smiling faces

or laughter and excitement we see in the attendees makes it all worth it."

(Ed. note: Also, stay hydrated.)

Hirsute hacks to keep in mind

"The Hyatt itself offers unbeatable views of Downtown Dallas from the terrace suites, so all of the affinity receptions (Asian Bears, Black Bears, or Osos Latinos) take place with access to that outdoor space. It's a great photo opportunity.

"Our shuttle service runs every night and will go to the host hotel, overflow hotels, The Strip on Cedar Springs, Hidden Door and The Dallas Eagle. Take advantage of the free transportation; it's included with your run pass."

What can non-registered guests do?

"Our vendor market features about 60 different vendors from all over the world and is open to the public, ages 18 and older. Friday evening, the Bears take over S4, and those tickets are available to the public (18+) as well. A run pass isn't required to attend. Tickets can be purchased at Beardance.org.

"On Saturday evening, we have the incomparable Darienne Lake as our featured entertainer, and that show is open

BEARS, Page 17

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Kinky Boots

ON EXHIBIT

An exhibit of shoes tracks American history

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

When shoe company owner and designer Stuart Weitzman's wife bought him a pair of shoes for his birthday, that was the beginning of what became a most impressive collection. But what is the connection to the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum?

Images of shoes piled outside of Nazi crematoriums come to mind, but this exhibit isn't gruesome. Instead, this history of the last 200 years of shoes traces American history. So the current exhibition, *Walk This Way: Footwear from the Stuart Weitzman Collection of Historic Shoes*, is the story of women's rights.

Well, mostly women's rights.

In a display case near the entrance of the exhibit is a pair of red boots from the show *Kinky Boots*, which tells the story of Charlie Price, who recently inherited a shoe factory from his father. Charlie brings the drag queen Lola into the company, and while producing a line of high-heeled red boots, Charlie and Lola save the business and discover they're not so different at all.

Most of the shoes in the collection were not designed by Weitzman, although one pair is dubbed "Stuart Weitzman's Million Dollar Shoe."

Created for a red-carpet event, the diamond-studded shoes were designed to draw attention down to the floor. Until these were worn, only the dress designer was announced as celebrities stopped for photos before entering the Oscars or other star-studded event.

The pair on display has had the diamonds removed and replaced with fakes.

The oldest shoes included in the collection are from the 1800s: Shoes made for slaves were cheaply pegged together



Flashy sandals, top, inspired by the Hollywood epics of the 1940s and '50s are included in the Weitzman exhibit on display now. Pegged shoes, above, made for slaves in the early 1800s were held together with wooden pegs to make them easy and cheap to mass produce. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)



The *Walk This Way* exhibit includes Lola's red boots from *Kinky Boots*. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

er. A marker in the exhibit explains the shoes were "held together with durable wooden pegs and rapidly assembled with little skill," so they could be made cheaply in mass quantities.

In contrast, also included from that era is a pair of pumps owned by Queen Victoria.

The shoe manufacturing industry was at the center of the industrial revolution. Leather cutting machines were widely used by the 1820s, and sewing machines for leather were introduced in 1852. Lasting and welting machines were introduced in the late 1800s.

Factories, mostly clustered around eastern Massachusetts, put out thousands of shoes a day.

As early as the 1830s, union activity among women shoe stitchers began. The women argued for "fair compensation for their work." An 1860 strike in Massachusetts protested low wages, and

in 1868, the first national union of working women, the Daughters of St. Crispin, was founded and successfully fought wage cuts in 1871.

In the early 20th century, the women's suffrage movement brought change to women's shoe design. The first suffrage parade took place in 1910 as hundreds of women marched down 5th Avenue in New York City. Hundreds of marchers grew to thousands before the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920.

The department stores, especially those lining 5th Avenue, were important institutions in women's rights. Before 1850, women rarely were seen in public without a male companion. Department stores became a place "respectable women" could socialize, have refreshments and shop. Department stores offered women employment opportunities as sales clerks and as buyers and, in a few cases, even as executives.

"In 1934, Hortense Odlum became

the first woman to head a major fashion retailer as president of Bonwit Teller," the exhibit information tells us. That would make Odlum one of the first women to head a company that large.

(And as an odd aside, Trump Tower stands on the site once occupied by Bonwit Teller making his property a landmark in women's rights history.)

Hollywood in the 1940s

and '50s was working under a strict production code that kept on-screen wardrobes very modest. Producers got around the censorship by making biblical pics with actresses clad in skimpy outfits it was imagined they wore at the time.

To accompany the semi-nudity, shoe designers created gold and silver sandals that became fashion trends. On exhibit in *Walk This Way* are sandals worn by Lana Turner in *The Prodigal* in 1955 and by Hedy Lamarr in *Samson and Delilah* in 1949.

The loss of domestic shoe manufacturing to cheap off-shore imports was one of the earliest losses of an entire industry in the 1960s and signaled the beginning of the U.S. to a service economy. ■

Walk this Way: Footwear from the Stuart Weitzman Collection of Historic Shoes remains on view at the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, 300 North Houston St., through July 12. Visit DHHRM.org for information.



BEARS, From Page 13

to the public.

"We also are happy to have an amazing working relationship with all of the gay bars on The Strip and the Hidden Door and The Dallas Eagle, and each venue is open to the public during TBRU weekend as well. We encourage non-attendees to continue to support the bars, and that's always a good place to spot some bears!"

What is a common issue the Dallas Bears confront?

"The thing I see the most is people who just need a little encouragement to come out of their shell. There are always people who feel much more comfortable in their hotel room rather than any of the events, and before they know it, the weekend is over, and they feel like they



missed out.

"What the Dallas Bears do incredibly well is our brand of Texas hospitality that starts immediately when you check in. Our registration team always greets people with a smile, and we have volunteers everywhere to answer questions and encourage people to try new things. Anyone we see sitting alone or looking dejected, we are very quick to approach and offer a friendly hand.

"We try to plan different types of events for everyone's comfort level. If you're interested in learning more about certain kinks, we offer classroom sessions. If you prefer a quiet environment to read or relax, we've got the Chill Lounge. If video games help you unwind, our Video Game Room is the per-

fect place. And if your happy place is in the middle of a sea of dancing bears, our Hospitality Suite is open every night as well as BearDance Friday at S4."

What is something about TBRU that people may not know about?

"The positive impact our event has on the local community! Over the years, the Dallas Bears and TBRU have been approached by many different city governments across the nation in an effort to move our event to their locales. The revenue our guests bring into the city is tremendous, and the money we give back continues to benefit those in need. Each year in June, the Dallas Bears, in conjunction with BearDance, distribute our funds to our charitable beneficiaries. I encourage everyone to follow our social media and see the real-world impact an event like this can make on those who need our help the most."

Online registration is closed but at-door registration begins at noon on March 21 at Hyatt Regency. For a full schedule of events or to purchase tickets to Darienne Lake, visit TBRU.org.

TBRU: The parties

BearDance is the official party of TBRU. Doors open at 8 p.m. Friday, March 22, at S4.

BearDance: Jungle Roar will feature music by DJs Hex Hector and Red Eye. Special guest entertainment will be *RuPaul's Drag Race All-Stars* winner Shea Coulee making her Dallas debut in the Rose Room. The event opens with its Opposites Attract Mixer.

For tickets, visit BearDance.org.

These TBRU adjacent parties aren't part of the official schedule but will still bring all the bears to the yard.

March 20: *Bears Boots and Boxers*, 10 p.m. at the Round-up Saloon.

March 23: *Beards, Bears and Brews* 8, 1 p.m. at Dot's Hop House and Cocktail Courtyard. *Beef* with DJ Tristan Jaxx, 9 p.m. at the Dallas Eagle.

Big Bear Round-up Dance Party with DJ Jamey Boozer, 10 p.m. at the Round-up Saloon.

Mega RAM Party: BEARDONNA, 10 p.m. at Crowne Plaza Dallas Downtown.

DaddyErsin.com.

March 24: *Drew G's Dirty Pop Tea Dance*, 2 p.m. at the Round-up Saloon.

Furball: Bear Zone tea dance with Alex Ramos, 5 p.m. at The Nines. Furball.nyc.

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The band Empire 6 performs at the annual No Tie Dinner and Dessert Party on Saturday, March 16, starting at 7 p.m. at the Frontiers of Flight Museum. See listings for details.

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

■ Every Wednesday: THRIVE

Resource Center's THRIVE Wednesday Support Group for LGBTQ adults 50 and older meets from 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. at Resource Center Community Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road, and is led by interns from the SMU counseling program. For more information on the support group and how to join, send an email to THRIVE@myresourcecenter.org.

MARCH

■ March 15: Business Exchange Network: Plano

The North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce Business Exchange Network (BEN) meets at Del Frisco's Grille Plano, 7200 Bishop Road from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Registration information is available at LGBTChamber.com.

■ March 15-16: 'Hank and My Honky-Tonk Heroes'

Eisemann Center, 2351 Performance Drive in Richardson, presents a personal look at singer/songwriter Hank Williams' upbringing. Information and tickets are available at EisemannCenter.com.

■ March 15-16: Parsons Dance

Known for its energized and joyous style, Parsons Dance comes to Moody Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St.,

at 8 p.m. Tickets and information are available at ATTPac.org.

■ March 16: No Tie Dinner & Dessert

Get ready to dive headfirst into the St. Patrick's Day Vibe at the annual fundraiser benefitting AIDS Services of Dallas from 7-11 p.m. at the Frontiers of Flight Museum, 6911 Lemmon Ave. Check NoTieDinner.org for details.

■ March 16: Luck of the Holden Tucke fundraiser

The DFW Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and Novice Sister Amanda Holden Tucke host Sister Amanda's novice project, Luck of the Holden Tucke, at The Hidden Door, 5026 Bowser Ave. Party starts at 7 p.m.; proceeds benefit Texas Latino Pride.

■ March 16: Gaybingo

The Resource Center hosts this event each month from 6-9 p.m. at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Tickets go on sale at 3 p.m. the Wednesday following each Gaybingo event at MyResourceCenter.org.

■ March 16: Preston Hollow Democrats March Meeting

Dr. Parker Hevron, Ph.D. is the guest speaker. 11:30 a.m. at The Walnut Hill Recreation Center, 10011 Midway Road.

■ March 16: HRC DFW Spring 2024 Brunch: Spring Into Action

Join the HRC and DFW Federal Club for a panel discussion featuring Beto O'Rourke, Jasmine Crockett and Julie Johnson. 10:30 a.m. at the Warwick Melrose, 3015 Oak Lawn Ave.

Tickets and information available at Eventbrite.com.

■ March 16: Café Americana Grand Opening

Café American, 403 E. Main St. in Arlington, holds its grand opening from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Visit CafeAmericanaTX.com for information.

■ March 17: Saint Patricks Day at Sue Ellen's

Join LezBeFriends at Sue Ellen's, 3014 Throckmorton St., for a fun St. Patty's Day celebration beginning at 3 p.m.

■ Through- March 17: 'Fire and Air'

Uptown Players presents *Fire and Air*, a captivating play by playwright Terrence McNally at the Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Tickets and info are available at UptownPlayers.org.

■ March 19: Up & Out: LGBTQ Caregiver Support Group

Up & Out is a welcoming supportive group for LGBTQ caregivers who are currently caring for anyone 50 and up. This is a virtual event from 6-7:30 p.m. RSVP at CSP@TheSeniorSource.org.

■ March 19: Business Exchange Network: Oak Lawn

The North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce Business Exchange Network (BEN) meets at the Landmark Restaurant in the Warwick Melrose Hotel, 3015 Oak Lawn Ave. Registration information is available at LGBTChamber.com.

■ March 19: THRIVE Linoleum Block Carving

Learn how to carve linoleum blocks for printmaking and stamping at Resource Center Community Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road, from 6-8 p.m. Reserve your spot at Eventbrite.com.

■ March 20: Business Exchange Network: North Dallas

The North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce Business Exchange Network (BEN) meets from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Sidecar Social, 5100 Belt Line Road. Registration is available at LGBTChamber.com.

■ March 20: Pride Happy Hour

Join the chamber for their monthly Happy Hour at Restaurant Beatrice, 1111 N. Beckley Ave, from 5:30-7 p.m. Registration information can be found at LGBTChamber.com.

■ March 20: U.S. Navy Band Sea Chanters

Eisemann Center, 2351 Performance Drive in Richardson, presents the United States Navy's official chorus at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free, but tickets are required and are available at EisemannCenter.com.

■ March 20: Dallas Stars Pride Night

Join the Dallas Stars as they take on the Arizona Coyotes for Pride Night at 7 p.m. at the American Airlines Center, 2500 Victory Ave. Visit Ticketmaster.com for tickets.

■ March 20: House of DIFFA Royalty Untamed Patron Preview Party

Join the House of DIFFA for an exclusive preview of the Luxury Jacket Collection from 6-9 p.m. at The Eye at The Joule, 1601 Main St. Get your tickets at OneCause.com.

■ March 21: OASIS LGBT+ Monthly Social Support Group

Oasis is an online, 90 minute monthly social support group for LGBT+ folks 18 and older providing a safe, welcoming space for people to connect. To register email Oasis.Tag.Plus@gmail.com.

Have an event coming up? Email your information to Mathew Dominguez at Mathew@DallasVoice.com by Monday at 5 p.m. for that week's issue.

Look for extended listings online at DallasVoice.com



Join The DFW Sisters for Sister Amanda Holden Tucke's novice project, "Luck of the Holden Tucke," Saturday, March 16, at The Hidden Door. See listings for details.

Ask Howard

HOW TO DO THE WRONG THING RIGHT

Spring weather is springing

Hooray! Official springtime begins next week — March 19 — and maybe, at last, it'll even rain in west Texas, hopefully dampening down what has now become the largest wildfire in American history. Perhaps, too, the Amazon basin's third 100-year drought in a row will also end despite nary a drop having fallen upon a single jungle leaf so far this year.

And maybe enough precipitation shall return to the Panama Canal to render it fully functional again, as well, or enough that the oceans' Thermal Conveyor isn't really showing every sign of imminent catastrophic collapse due to too much fresh water cascading from Greenland's hypersonic meltdown.

And perhaps even our weather here in Dallas — which has now been mimicking June ever since February — is, you know, only a fluke? Uh huh, and I've got a most lovely stretch of pristine coastline for auction along the shores of downtown Bangladesh ... bidding starts at a dollar.

Lockdown occurred during this very week, exactly four years ago. Remember those contagiously fun, crazy spring days, kidz? Seems more like 4 million years ago, does it not?

If you ask me, the Pandemic of 2020 was when we — formerly a morally-responsible, sympathetically-conscientious, get 'er done civilization — finally just dropped the ball altogether, and with a nihilistic sigh, nodded, "Doom, you've won: Have at us."

Nowhere back in 2019, as I recall, were half-empty store shelves just the given norm. Now even basic grooming supplies are now held ransom, under constant lock and key. Remember back when you could toss razor blades, eye drops, teeth whitener and even lube straight into the basket on your arm without necessarily triggering a cacophony of blue-swirling sirens?

Still, who in Dallas doesn't count his blessings for living where we do? After all, we're not among those poor unfortunates trapped in, say, Ukraine, Gaza, Haiti or the Texas Panhandle. We're not having to traverse the dreaded Darien Gap or literally keep our heads above

water in an overcrowded, capsizing boat of fellow refugees praying for asylum from no country who'll take us.

No, here in the high spring of our American heartland's great plains, we're the lucky ones. Let's just get all days of Lent and mercenaries right to it, shall we?

Dear Howard: Easter's just around the corner, and my mother's commanding me to drive all the way down to Corpus Christie to attend sunrise service with her — same as our family has always done. It'll be Mom's first Easter without Dad there, too. But here's where things get sticky: I'm an atheist, which of course I've never told Mom. My partner's religious dogma isn't too far behind mine.

Muddying things further, Mom doesn't acknowledge the love of my life as anyone more significant than a Craigslist roommate; we've been living together for more than two years, and she still can't recall his name. Walt and I are engaged to be married the day before Easter.

My mother never joined the computer age, so I resorted to sending her a snail-mail invitation to my wedding, which she claims never to have received. "But, it's Easter," she scoffed. "Now, son, unless you've gained too much weight since leaving home, don't worry about what Easter ties to wear, or even which suit to bring. Thankfully, you and your father were always the same size. In fact, bring a couple extra suitcases along with you. It'll save me a trip to the Goodwill."

Howard, help? — **The Lad in Easter Plaid**

Dear Who's Your Laddie: Lemme guess: Southern Baptist? Nothing will turn off a Heaven-bound soul to religion faster than having to grow up Southern Baptist. I feel for you, man.

OK, so here's what you do: Call up your mother, and remind her that the internet — just like faith — possesses the



power to connect everyone to what they need, and that your present needs require you to get on with your newfound life here in Dallas.

Remind her again that you'd love her to attend your wedding to Walt; nevertheless, if she'd rather prefer never being uncomfortably associated with the hell-bound, then she's perfectly welcome

to continue watching *The Price is Right* in living color, while staring at her living room's walls shrinking ever further inward.

The inherent problem with these sorts of "Let Go, Let God," bumper-sticker philosophies is that they so neatly absolve them of all responsibility for the subsequent consequences of doing absolutely nothing toward accepting others as they are. Regardless, the sun will always rise anew tomorrow, with or without the blessings of sweet baby Jesus.

Dear Howard: I just asked my boyfriend to move in with me, even though my older sister — she's my only living relative — has despised Jay from the very start. I invited her to dinner at a restaurant to introduce them, but when the bill came, I guess I must have left my wallet at home, which I never do. "No worries," my sister said, reaching for her handbag. Jay just rolled his eyes at me, chuckling, "You're so forgetful." He turned to Lauren. "It's a mystery to me how he even makes it through the day." Later, Sis pulled me aside and said, "Don't dare even think of considering that one long-term. A good gaslighting's all you'll ever get from him."

Gaslighting? Man, what does that even mean? — Sparky

Dear Where's-The-Light: Gaslighting is about the most destructive form

of emotional abuse; it comes cloaked in sympathy toward the victim's slow descent into questioning their own perception of reality — manipulative mind-fucking at its most malignant. The sole purpose is to ensure someone else begins to doubt their own beliefs.

If you suspect you're being gaslighted, here are a few red-flag phrases to watch out for: "You're too emotional. I think you're blowing things way out of proportion here. You just need to calm down. You know I would never intentionally hurt you. Trust me. I've got you, babe."

Then there's, "Wherever did you get such an idea? I never agreed to that. You know, I'm not sure if your family has your best interest at heart." For the successful gaslighter, repetition is key. Simply blame the victim relentlessly enough, and victory is yours!

Meanwhile, y'all don't forget now, come April 8, it's your once-in-a-lifetime chance of being directly in the path of totality, here in Dallas, at witnessing nothing less than a total eclipse of the sun!

— Howard Lewis Russell

Howard's now taking your April showers' questions for next month, sweet readers—or golden showers—whatever sorts of precipitation floats your boats highest, at AskHoward@dallasvoice.com.

this week's solution

A	M	I	S	H		A	C	E	S		I	D	B	E	
M	O	T	T	O		G	O	R	P		C	R	U	X	
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T	A	T	E		N	O	E	S		S	T	Y	L	E	

browse
For a more complete Community Calendar online, visit [Tinyurl.com/dvevents](https://tinyurl.com/dvevents).

submit
To submit an item for inclusion in the Community Calendar, visit [Tinyurl.com/dvevents](https://tinyurl.com/dvevents).

SCENE • Gaybingo

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House

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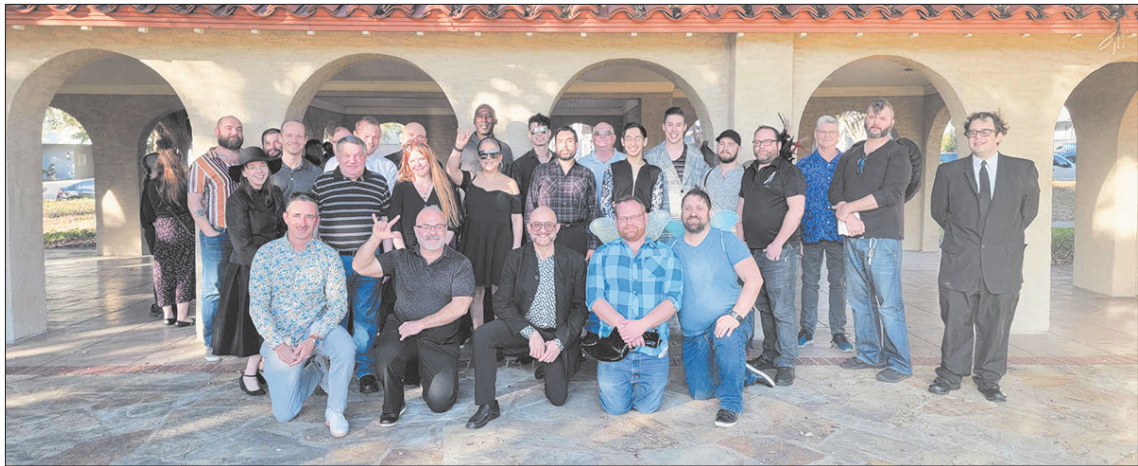




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Saying goodbye to Nicholas



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1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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67					68					69				

Solution on Page XX

Across

- 1 They won't pose for nude photos
6 Perfect serves from Mauresmo
10 "Why, ___ delighted!"
14 "Lesbians ignite!" e.g.
15 Hiker's snack
16 Kahlo's cross
17 Word after "pinky"
18 Diva's piece
19 Brontë woman
20 Start of a Cyndi Lauper quote
23 Get hard
24 Floor coverings
25 The 411
28 Chemist's workplace
31 Accusations of pedophilia, e.g.
34 Swiss town with a bear mascot
35 Gave a pink slip to
37 Nancy Clue creator Maney
38 It may come before long
39 More of the quote
41 Breeder need
42 "Do" equivalent for the von Trapps
44 Roman deity identified with Diana
45 Carpenter's connector
46 Lili Taylor's ___ Pizza

- 48 Get dressed, with "up"

- 49 Goes out with
50 Part of UTEP
51 Blind rage
53 End of the quote
61 Wilde country
62 Quartet after a desertion
63 Sal of *Rebel Without a Cause*
64 Begin to wake up
65 Fairy tale bad guy
66 Kind of bear
67 Jodie Foster's *Little Man* ___
68 Naysayers' words
69 What *Queer Eye* gives to straight guys

Down

- 1 Schoolyard retort
2 Like recently cut leaves of grass
3 Ted Casablanca bit
4 Decides not to go
5 Throng of people
6 Tutti-frutti ingredient
7 Stick it in your bunghole
8 Lake of Ohio ferries
9 Orgasms, e.g.
10 Brewed drink for teetotalers
11 Like a member needing lube?

- 12 Hide well
13 Former lovers
21 Words on a shingle
22 Representative Baldwin
25 Erection supporter
26 Socially challenged
27 Allen Ginsberg, for example
29 Doug Mattis leap
30 Humdinger
32 Stage show
33 Supporters in the bedroom
36 Bond foe
39 Like Emma Donoghue
40 Harry Potter's field
43 Place for trinkets
45 His poems inspired *Cats*
47 ___ Blossom (*Show Boat* song)
52 Easy wins
53 Top
54 First name among lesbian writers
55 And so
56 k.d. lang record label
57 Coral hanky fetish
58 Etheridge's *I'm the ___ One*
59 Kind of time
60 Needing BenGay

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