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Dallas Voice endorses the Harris/Walz ticket



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— Taylor Schmidt

Taylor Schmidt grew up in Elmore City, Oklahoma, and graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 2012 with a degree in history. He then moved to Dallas, Texas, for medical school at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and graduated in 2017. His education continued at UT Southwestern with a residency in Internal Medicine in 2020 and a fellowship in HIV Medicine in 2021. He was awarded with a national clinical fellowship from the HIV Medical Association in 2020. His interests include HIV primary care and prevention, general internal medicine, and transgender medicine.

In his spare time, he enjoys playing the piano, reading non-fiction books, running at the Katy Trail, learning new recipes, and spending time with family.

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ON THE COVER: Vice President Kamala Harris and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz at a campaign rally in Milwaukee. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

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WHAT'S THE TEA: DallasVoice.com

Black Tie Dinner announces Dylan Mulvaney as Equality Award honoree



Dylan Mulvaney

Black Tie Dinner officials announced Tuesday, Sept. 24, that LGBTQ content creator and actress Dylan Mulvaney will be honored at this year's dinner with the Black Tie Dinner Equality Award.

The 43rd annual event will be held Nov. 16 at Sheraton Dallas Hotel. Watch for more announcements regarding the event later this week.

Mulvaney gained prominence by sharing her transition journey through her *365 Days of Girlhood* video series, which amassed nearly 1 billion views and inspired millions of people.

"Over the last few years, Dylan has amplified the trans experience through her social channels, taking up space in the best way possible" said Black Tie Dinner Senior Co-Chair Dustin Vyers. "She embodies pure joy and happiness, and that is so important right now. We are excit-

ed to honor her this year."

Black Tie Dinner Junior Co-Chair Liliana Villarreal added, "By using her platform to raise awareness about LGBTQ+ issues, Dylan not only challenges societal norms but also inspires countless individuals to stand proud in their identities, making her truly deserving of this recognition and honor."

This year's Black Tie Dinner will also feature Human Rights Campaign President Kelley Robinson and HRC National Press Secretary Brandon Wolf, a survivor of the Pulse Nightclub shooting. Indie pop duo Fly By Midnight will perform.

— Tammye Nash

Hunky's Hamburgers celebrates 40 years

The Gayborhood institution Hunky's Hamburgers celebrated four decades of burgers, shakes and service on Tuesday, Sept. 24, by partying like it was 1984 when the burger joint first opened, with \$1.75 burgers and \$1.40 beers at both its Cedar Springs and Bishop Arts locations. The restaurant also debuted its new Boozy Milkshakes.

The restaurant was started in the heart of the Crossroads by Rick Barton and his brother, David Barton. The new owners, who took over this past spring, honored Barton as "our one-of-a-kind legend."

Although the Oak Lawn area "was still gritty" when Hunky's first opened in 1984, the restaurant's "warm, welcoming environment made it a mecca of the community and propelled Hunky's to a successful start and made it an integral part in creating the neighborhood we know today," according to a Hunky's press release.

In February of this year, Rick sold Hunky's and catering service The Hamburger Man to veteran restaurant and bar owner and real estate broker, Jeffrey Yarbrough and his partners, Sejal Tailor and Aaron Evans.

— Rich Lopez



Hunky's founder Rick Barton, in the apron, with the new owners, from left, Aaron Evans, Jeffrey Yarbrough and Sejal Tailor.

State Fair can ban guns — for now

Attorney General Ken Paxton lost an appeal to allow guns at the State Fair of Texas, but plans to appeal that ruling to the Texas State Supreme Court.

The 2024 state fair opens Friday, Sept. 27, and runs for three weeks.

Paxton sued after the private nonprofit that operates the state fair earlier this year announced that fair-goers, including those with licenses to carry concealed guns, would not be allowed to bring guns into the fair. That change came after an incident in 2023 in which a gunman shot and injured three people at the fair.

The city of Dallas owns the park where the fair is held, but the fair is run by a private, non-profit organization. Private non-profits may ban guns from their events, but cities are not allowed to ban weapons, although guns are not allowed in Dallas City Hall.

The Appeals Court ruled Wednesday, Sept. 25, agreeing with a Dallas County District Court that guns could be banned from the park during the fair.

— David Taffet

Anti-LGBTQ 'School choice evangelist' has a gay porn past



Corey DeAngelis, the 'school voucher evangelist,' on the left, and his alter ego, gay porn actor Seth Rose, on the right

Corey A. DeAngelis is best known for his enthusiasm for school vouchers — the policy of using government money to send kids to private schools. In fact, the San Antonio

native has become the most vocal warrior for the cause, a key issue for many conservative Republicans and some Democrats.

They call him the "school voucher evangelist," and to drive home his point, he uses the new anti-LGBTQ talking points about men in women's bathrooms, the "sexualization of children" and outing transgender kids to their parents in the name of parental rights.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who spent millions this primary cycle to defeat lawmakers who opposed a bill creating such a program last session, even appeared in a photo with him.

But, as we learned last week, DeAngelis is also similarly enthusiastic about jacking off on camera for men who like watching naked men get off. DeAngelis, as discovered by the website Current Revolt, a conservative publication, is a former gay-for-pay performer who appears in a handful of videos under the stage name Seth Rose.

In one video, *Jerk Off Race*, the skinny guy with gay face is in a jerk off competition with three other buff naked guys standing behind him as pornography plays on the television facing him.

That brings me to the point about this voucher scheme: DeAngelis is the perfect face for the system that has caused chaos for state budgets like in Arizona, funded schools

that discriminate against students and only shown marginal gains for students.

That's because they are both frauds.

— James Russell

Adoptable / PATRICK



Meet **Patrick**, the 1 1/2-year-old pup weighing 57 pounds and with short red coat with white highlights and a huge smile that can brighten anyone's day. He has a cheerful, outgoing personality and hound heritage making him a curious, adventurous spirit who is always ready to explore. Despite being a tripod, Patrick gets around effortlessly. He's excellent on a leash, so walking him is a breeze, and he adores hopping into the car for a fun ride. If you're looking for a dog with a big heart, an even bigger smile and a love for life, Patrick is your guy.

Like all pets from the SPCA of Texas, Patrick has been neutered and microchipped and is up to date on all his vaccinations. He is at the Dallas Animal Care Center, 2400 Lone Star Drive, so you come by any day of the week between noon and 6 p.m. to meet him. Animals are also available for adoption at the Ellis County Animal Care Center, 2570 FM Road 878 in Waxahachie. Through Sept. 30, you can "Name Your Cost" for all animal adoptions at both SPCA of Texas locations.



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Trump's troll

Even MAGAs like Graham and Greene don't like Laura Loomer

OK, so let me see if I have this right: Disgraced former president Donald Trump hates Taylor Swift, one of the most beloved people in the country.

Swift, as I am sure you know, has endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential race. So now Trump has declared publicly on Truth Social that he hates her.

It would be funny if, you know, this man wasn't in a tight race for president and if so many of his supporters weren't violent psychopaths.

But who needs Taylor Swift when you've got Laura Loomer?

If you're asking, "Who is Laura Loomer?" then congratulations. That is the correct answer. Because if no one knew her, we'd all be better off.

Alas, that is no longer possible. Now that Loomer is apparently Trump's new BFF, it's kind of important to expose what a vile person she is.

In 2020, Loomer ran for Congress as a Republican in Florida and lost to her Democratic opponent, Lois Frankel. She ran for office again in 2022 and was defeated in the primary but has never conceded the race, claiming it was stolen.

Since then, she's basically been a professional shit-stirrer. She's a conspiracy theorist, racist, Islamophobe and homophobe.

One of Loomer's pet conspiracies is that Sept. 11 was "an inside job." So, guess who Trump brought as his date to the Sept. 11 memorial ceremony.

Yep. Loomer.

He also took her with him to the Sept. 10 debate against Harris. The fact that Loomer apparently has unfettered access to Trump is making Republicans nervous. Because even Republicans don't like her, including Trump sycophants like Sen. Lindsay Graham and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Loomer recently posted on social me-



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

dia that a President Harris White House "will smell like curry & White House speeches will be facilitated via a call center and the American people will only be able to convey their feedback through a customer satisfaction survey at the end of the call that nobody will understand." [sic]

Greene responded via an NBC report with, "This is appalling and extremely racist. It does not represent who we are as Republicans or MAGA. This does not represent President Trump. This type of behavior should not be tolerated ever."

And she's right! At least, she's right that it shouldn't be tolerated. But it sure does represent Trump and his MAGA Republican Party.

Sen. Graham called Loomer's racist post "abhorrent" and essentially said that Trump should distance himself from

her.

Loomer, who has called the United States "a giant, third world shit hole," responded on X by calling Graham "disloyal to Trump and the American people."

But she didn't stop there.

"When is Lindsay coming out of the closet? We all know you're Gay, Lindsey," Loomer continued on X. "And that's ok. It's ok. It's 2024. There's nothing wrong with Gay people. I like men too. You and I have something in common we can bond over. Just be honest about it. Nobody is going to judge you for being open about who you are."

This is coming from a woman who isn't exactly an LGBTQ ally, to say the least. Her Loomered website is littered with stories about drag queens being a threat to children, attacks on transgender student athletes and claims that public schools are indoctrinating children.

Whether Graham is gay or not really doesn't matter at this point. I mean, his voting record is staunchly anti-gay, so people have been trying to out him for a very long time in order to prove that he's a hypocrite. But Republicans truly do not care about being hypocrites and neither do their supporters.

Of course, that's not why Loomer is

bringing it up. She's trolling him. That's what she does.

You may recall that before Trump was elected in 2016, he said that he would hire "the best people." He continued to claim that he only hired the best people throughout his disastrous four-year term, during which he fired people and people quit left and right. It was obvious to anyone paying attention that Trump did not, in fact, hire the best people.

Imagine, now, what a second Trump term would look like. The people in his administration will be people like Loomer — people who are first and foremost loyal to Trump; who, secondly, hate the same people he does and who, thirdly, are willing to do whatever it takes to hurt those people.

And guess what? If you're reading this, chances are good you're one of those people. We cannot give this man and his "best people" another four years (or more, considering he wants to be a dictator) in the White House. The result will be bad blood that we won't be able to shake off. ■

D'Anne Witkowski is a writer living in Michigan with her wife and son. She has been writing about LGBTQ politics for nearly two decades. Follow her on Twitter @MamaDWitkowski.

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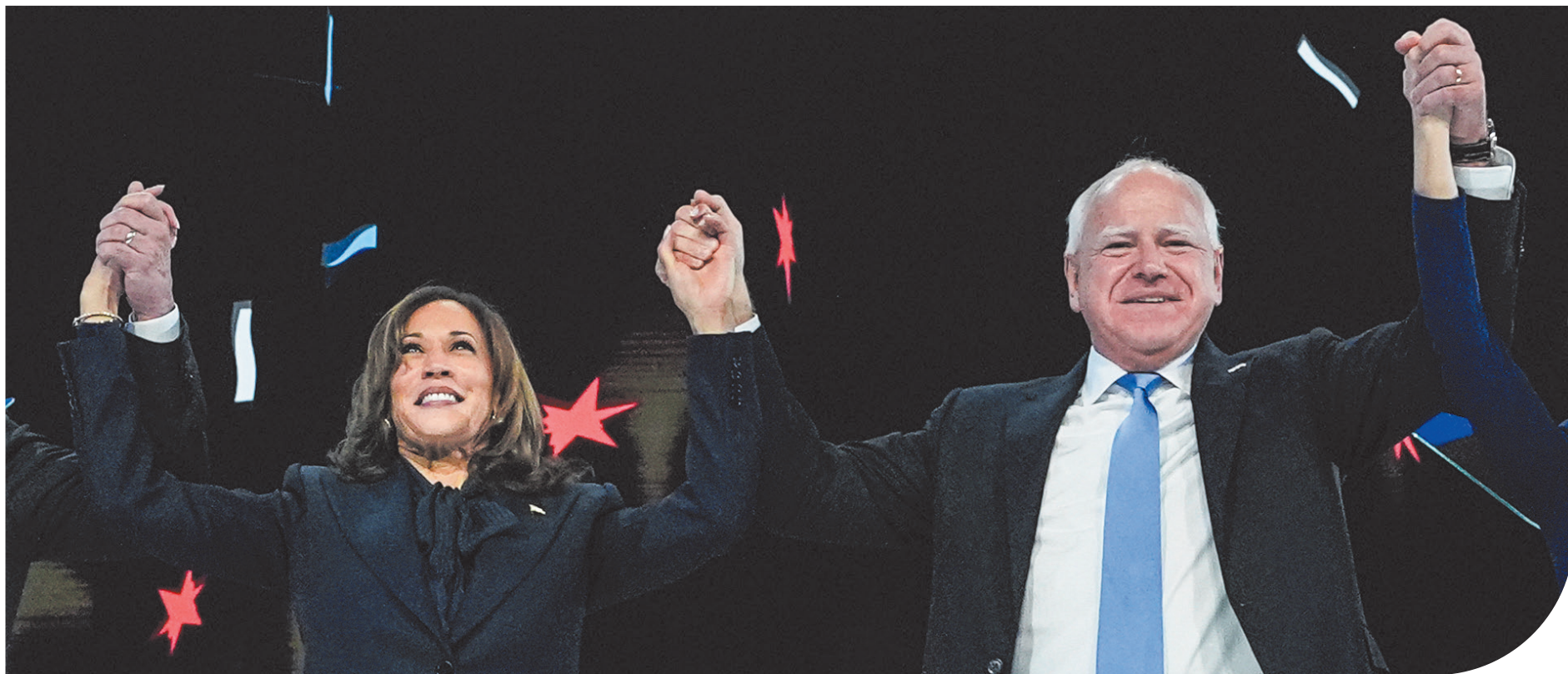
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2 paths diverge

ELECTIONS 2024



Vice President Kamala Harris and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, the Democratic nominees for president and vice president, offer a path to a brighter future rather than a doom-and-gloom dystopia. (AP Photo/Paul Sancya)

Dallas Voice endorses Kamala Harris and Tim Walz

Tammye Nash | Managing Editor
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There is no doubt that this has been a most unusual election year. There is no doubt that the partisan divide in our country grows ever deeper, ever wider. And few would argue that the 2024 presidential election could — likely will — irrevocably change this nation, for better or for worse.

It depends on which side of that partisan chasm you stand, on which outcome — Harris or Trump — would be for the better, and which would be for the worse.

What if you are watching this presidential race from across the LGBTQ rainbow, as we are here at Dallas Voice?

Which candidate would be our best bet? No candidate is perfect, of course. But which would be the best president for the LGBTQ community?

Let's take a look at each candidate's record, starting with Donald Trump.

As president, Trump opposed The Equality Act, which would have guaranteed critical non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people among other crucial rights. He also appointed a frightening number of anti-LGBTQ judges to the bench at every level of the judicial system — including the U.S. Supreme Court, which is now ruled by right-wing justices who have already snatched away women's right to control their own bodies and are just salivating over the chance to reverse landmark rulings on LGBTQ civil rights, including marriage equality.

The Trump administration submitted amicus briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court supporting discrimination against LGBTQ people. Trump's administration banned transgender people from service

in the U.S. military and enacted a rule that forced HIV-positive servicepeople out of the military. He also rolled back nondiscrimination policies enacted under President Barack Obama and issued numerous rules and policies allowing "religious exemptions" to be carved out of other nondiscrimination laws.

Transgender Americans were a favorite target for Trump and his government. In addition to banning trans people from the military, rules enacted under Trump allowed emergency shelters to turn away trans and gender-nonconforming people, and he placed incarcerated trans people in the wrong prison facilities.

And in the schools, the Trump administration eliminated Department of Education guidances protecting trans students and requiring schools to treat trans students consistently with their gender identities.

There is more — so very much more — on list of Trump administration attacks on our community during his four years in the White House. But, you say,

surely Trump did something for our community? Well, he did appoint the first gay man — Richard Grennell — to an ambassadorship. And ... well, I am sure there is something else, but I don't know what it is.

But what about Vice President Kamala Harris? Where does she stand?

Harris has a history of supporting LGBTQ equality that goes back at least 20 years, to her days as San Francisco's district attorney, when she officiated at some of the first legal same-sex weddings in the U.S. While those marriages were later nullified by a California Supreme Court ruling, when the U.S. Supreme Court issued its Obergefell marriage equality ruling, then state Attorney General Harris was once again in the forefront, officiating at weddings and calling clerks who balked at issuing the licenses to let them know they were legally required to do so.

Also as California AG, Harris led efforts to ban "gay panic" and "trans pan-

DIVERGE, Page 26

Declaring a safe haven

EQUALITY IN THE COUNTY



Saya Clarke

Trans activist says getting County Commissioners to pass a resolution rebuking discrimination is just the first step

CAROLINE SAVOIE | Contributing Writer
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On Tuesday, Sept. 17, the Dallas County Commissioners Court passed a resolution acknowledging and rebuking discrimination against transgender people. “Trans Safe Haven” resolution author Saya Clarke, a 33-year-old transgender activist, organizer and leader of the Democratic Socialists of America North Texas chapter, said she’s taking a similar resolution to the city of Dallas next.

“This [resolution] is a response to yet another wave of escalation in attacks on trans people across the country and specifically in Texas,” Clarke explained.

She cited new Department of Public Safety and Vital Statistics guidelines that don’t allow transgender people to put their preferred gender identity on their licenses and birth certificates, even if they have a court order to do so.

“[These guidelines] denigrate trans life by denying us the basic dignity of identifying ourselves properly on our documents,” Clarke said. “But there’s a gray area around these guidelines. They’re not laws, and we’re looking to challenge them. There’s room to change them.”

Clarke said she wrote the resolution in July and presented it to the court during public comment at one of its bi-weekly meetings. After she presented her ideas, she said, two commissioners approached her to work on the resolution with her.

HAVEN, Page 23



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Finding justice

IN THE COURTS

A former city manager will go to prison for filing false charges against a gay couple

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
Taffet@DallasVoice.com

Former Aurora City Manager Toni Wheeler was sentenced to 15 years in prison for embezzlement and 15 months in prison for filing a false CPS complaint against a gay couple.

Other charges against her including arson, additional embezzlement cases and three more false CPS complaints have been dropped according to Gary Garcia, the target of the one complaint



that was pressed. He said the sentences will be served concurrently.

One of the dropped CPS reports Wheeler filed was against her own nephew who worked for Garcia.

"All the DA wanted to do was have her convicted," Garcia said, frustrated that so many charges against her were dropped. The arson case involved burning down Aurora's city hall building. The additional embezzlement charges were harder to prove. And the other families she falsely charged with abuse just wanted their cases to go away.

But Garcia and his husband Chad Pritchett wanted to clear their names and make it clear to the community that they were fit parents. So they pressed the county to pursue those charges.

Garcia said the cases never went to trial but were decided in plea deal that went before a Wise County judge.



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Garcia's dealings with Wheeler went far beyond the child abuse charges Wheeler threw at his family.

ATOMIC TACO

After working in corporate America for a number of years, Garcia decided to follow a family tradition and open a restaurant. His family has owned restaurants in Colorado since 1960.

He and his husband looked for a location near their Wise County house and found a new food truck yard opening. But they wanted something more permanent and found a developer putting together food sheds built around a common seating area.

One thing worried Garcia — they'd be on a septic system. But Pritchett assured him that was common in rural America. So they built their shed and worked with the city of Aurora to make sure they were compliant.

Atomic Taco opened in January 2020, and within two weeks, the septic alarm went off. The entire area smelled like sewage.

They called the city and that's when

they learned the septic system was buried under the patio.

The septic system was temporarily fixed. Business took off and they even got a write-up in Texas Monthly.

But the septic system quickly backed up again.

The Texas Commission of Environmental Quality came out and said the system wasn't legal. So the landlord — Toni Wheeler — installed sprayers that sprayed the building and the customers with sewage.

Other shed owners blamed Garcia for causing trouble by calling the state environmental agency and began telling customers to avoid Atomic Taco because it was run by "fags."

By July, sewage was coming up from the ground so Garcia called a lawyer. But he wanted to continue doing business there and offered to help pay to fix the septic system.

That's when he had his first indication something was up with the landlord. He received an email saying the property was sold to a company in Aurora, Colorado, and the monthly rent was increasing from \$400 to \$6,000.

Garcia asked some of the other shed owners whether they received a rent increase; they told him they did and were just going to pay it. Knowing it was economically unfeasible, he tried to get in touch with the new landlord but was told the contact information wasn't legitimate.

He concluded the other shed owners were in on the scam and by October vacated the premises.

CONVICTION

CPS contacted Garcia and Pritchett that a report had been filed, but she believed it was filed with malicious intent.

Garcia said his six-year-old son was taken from class "and asked if your daddies touch you." Wheeler claimed the boy was bruised so CPS had him remove his shirt. There was no evidence of bruising.

And Wheeler charged "these two men are sex trafficking their son from Atomic Taco," Garcia said. Again there was no evidence of anything being sold out of the restaurant other than tacos.

Within a month, they were cleared of

any wrong-doing, and they filed a complaint against Wheeler.

State Rep. Jessica Gonzalez worked with Garcia on a bill that was eventually filed by state Rep Jon Rosenthal.

"We got part of the bill passed," Garcia said.

Had it passed, the bill would have made filing a false CPS report a harsher crime. What passed was a provision that filing reports is no longer done anonymously.

Meanwhile, Wheeler also pleaded guilty to embezzlement of \$300,000 from the city of Aurora. She charged trips, purchases from Amazon for equipment for her own restaurant and a truck used by a contractor to help build out the food shed yard including Atomic Taco.

But all evidence of any criminal activity disappeared when Aurora's city hall suddenly burned down. Before an investigation took place, city officials announced it was an electrical fire and all city documents were destroyed.

The amount Wheeler was charged with embezzling was what was charged

JUSTICE, Page 24



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An ally fights back

LEGAL MATTERS

Former employee sues Plano company for unlawful retaliation, claiming he was fired for reporting anti-LGBTQ behavior

CAROLINE SAVOIE | Contributing Writer
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After Shawn Cody, a 40-year-old McKinney resident, reported that his supervisor at Ferguson Enterprises made racist and homophobic comments, a representative from the company's Human Resources department fired him. Now Cody is alleging in a recently-filed lawsuit that he was unlawfully fired as

retaliation for reporting his boss's anti-LGBTQ comments and behavior.

"This is always on my mind," said Cody, who has a 12-year-old daughter with a heart condition. "When I was getting fired, I told them I was going to lose my health insurance."

He said he told the company representatives, "You may have just killed my daughter." He said HR representative Sandy Tinkham told him to get temporary health insurance, and he had to pay \$1,200 a month for it.

"We had to have insurance on her," Cody said. "Her medicine was between \$500 and \$600 out of pocket without insurance. I needed health insurance. I needed that job."

Cody was a warehouse manager at Ferguson Enterprises' waterworks division in McKinney which sells under-

ground construction equipment. He worked at the branch from December 2018 to May 2023. He said he was promoted twice a year, every year, and that he won an award for associate of the year in September 2021.

On Aug. 27 this year, Cody filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division. According to his lawyer Ellen Johnston, Cody charges that he was fired after reporting his supervisor, Scott Nichols, to the HR department in March 2023.

"During his employment, he witnessed Nichols, the branch manager, making derogatory remarks about employees and customers based on their race and sexual orientation," according to a press release announcing the lawsuit.



Shawn Cody

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Cody said that Nichols, who became the branch manager in February 2022, called customers “fucking faggots” and said that a Black employee should be “targeted” the same way as another Black employee who Nichols had recently fired.

“When the management changed, the culture changed,” Cody said. “He was the manager for several months before I started picking up on things. If he ever said anything in front of anyone else, they never said anything about it.”

Cody, who is a straight white man, reported these comments to the HR department in a five-page ethics complaint on March 20.

“I could feel the tension after making the report,” Cody said. “I knew I might face retaliation for filing a complaint, but I had to report it. I had filed an ethics complaint to protect myself once, and I was the direct manager to these guys [Nichols was targeting]. If I could do it for myself, I had to be able to do it to protect other people.”

Cody said Tinkham told him that “Nichols, as branch manager, can handle the branch however he wants,” the



Ellen Johnston

press release said. “Tinkham also told Cody that he does not get to complain.”

On May 2 of last year, Tinkham fired Cody, saying that he failed to wear a safety vest. Cody insists he was wearing his bright yellow, high-visibility shirt like the other employees at the branch. Cody’s complaint alleges that this reason for termination was a “manufactured pretext” to fire Cody for re-

porting Nichols.

When he was called into the meeting during which he was fired, “I was led to believe that we were just going to talk about the ethics complaint,” Cody said. “[Tinkham] was the only one who spoke, and she said, ‘This just isn’t working out.’ Scott was in the room, and Sandy was on a [Microsoft] Teams call.”

“Finding a job after this was awful,” Cody said. “I applied to so many places I couldn’t keep up with it. I applied to four dozen places, at least. I ended up finding a job at EGW in Carrollton.”

Cody’s lawsuit said that “Ferguson’s actions violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 42 U.S.C. § 198, which prohibit discrimination and retaliation based on sexual orientation, race and color.

“Cody seeks compensatory and punitive damages, as well as injunctive relief to prevent Ferguson from engaging in further unlawful practices,” according to the press release.

Cody is represented by Ellen Johnston and Rob Wiley of Rob Wiley, P.C.

“Shawn Cody stood up for what is right and paid a heavy price for it,” Johnston said. “He was fired for doing his duty as a responsible employee and a decent human being. We intend to hold Ferguson accountable for its unlawful and reprehensible behavior.”

When contacted for comment, a representative of Ferguson Enterprises told Dallas Voice, “It our policy not to comment on pending litigation.”

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ELECTIONS 2024

Project 2025's probable impact on libraries, LGBTQ equality and intellectual freedom

GARY L. DAY | Contributing Writer
garydaylight@gmail.com

Project 2025 has been much in the news lately. It is a 900-plus-page manifesto put out by the hyper-conservative Heritage Foundation laying out a detailed plan for the right-wing to take over the government and implement severely regressive policies in the event that Trump wins the general election in November.

The EveryLibrary Institute, a nonprof-

it advocacy group whose purpose is to protect libraries from right-wing assaults, has put out a report titled *Project 2025 and Its Consequences for Libraries*. What the report has uncovered is a dire future indeed for both public libraries and school libraries, should Project 2025 be enacted.

For more than a decade, libraries have been facing increasingly aggressive attacks from right-wing activists and organizations like Moms for Liberty. The attacks start with school libraries, pushing for the removal or outright banning of LGBTQ materials. But then the attacks expand to defining anything LGBTQ-re-



lated as pornographic, calling for the dismissal and/or prosecution of librarians and teachers as pornographers attempting to sexualize children.

The activists then move on to public libraries, threatening — sometimes successfully — facilities and staffs with budget cuts and outright closure.

Project 2025 dives deep and early into the anti-LGBTQ agenda. In its very first

section, the manifesto points to schools and libraries, among other things, as sources of a moral rot threatening the existence of America. On Page 1, the manifesto claims that “children suffer the toxic normalization of transgenderism with drag queens and pornography invading their school libraries.”

It goes on to say that “educators and public librarians who purvey [so-called

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A graphic with a rainbow flag background and an American flag border. It contains the text 'LET'S MAKE SURE OUR VOICES ARE HEARD THIS NOVEMBER!' and 'SCAN TO CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION!' with a QR code and a 'SCAN ME' button.

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pornography] should be classed as registered sex offenders.”

EveryLibrary’s report explains how Project 2025 puts LGBTQ students — and educators who support them — at extreme risk. “Project 2025 would make public schools even more dangerous for LGBTQIA+ students,” the report says, “allowing them to be discriminated against and marginalized by insisting on a strict definition of one’s ‘sex.’”

“Amendments to Title IX would define ‘sex’ under Title IX to mean only biological sex recognized at birth and strengthen protections for faith-based educational institutions, programs and activities [based on] biological sex assigned at birth while rescinding the Biden administration’s expansion of Title IX protections.”

Further, the report says, “By suggesting schools and public libraries are purveyors of pornography, the Heritage Foundation uses the word pornography’s fear factor to vilify respected members of communities, spreading distrust, anxiety and outrage. Book bans, censoring lessons, self-censoring library and classroom materials, mandated cur-

ricular changes and vague legislative language outlawing topics and teaching styles are causing exhausted librarians and teachers to leave their jobs and often their professions as well.”

Libraries are particularly vulnerable to budget cuts. The Heritage Foundation knows this well.

The report points out that Project 2025, in addition to eliminating the Department of Education, would dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The IMLS is an independent agency that administers federal funds to libraries and museums. The loss of federal funding would end a wide range of programs, including library workforce development, technology upgrades and community outreach initiatives.

Libraries, particularly those in underserved and rural areas, would struggle to maintain current levels of service without federal support. This could lead to reduced hours, staff layoffs and the elimination of important programs and services.

The loss of federal funding would disproportionately affect low-income and marginalized populations who rely on

library services for access to information and opportunities for lifelong learning. Tribal libraries, in particular, would face challenges in preserving cultural heritage and providing educational resources.

The proposed dissolution of the Department of Education would also seriously impinge on the federal government’s ability to enforce civil rights laws in schools, which would be significantly reduced, moving enforcement to the Justice Department and limiting investigations. Reduced civil rights enforcement could lead to increased discrimination and inequity in schools. School libraries, as inclusive spaces that support diverse student populations, would struggle to maintain a safe and equitable environment for all students.

The report also points out the danger in the Heritage Foundation’s alliance with other far right-wing groups like Moms for Liberty. Policies promoted by Moms for Liberty often lead to the censorship of LGBTQ-inclusive materials, limiting access to diverse and critical information.

Project 2025’s proposed changes, cou-

pled with the influence of anti-LGBTQ and “parental rights” groups, present significant challenges for the quality of education and the role of public libraries in providing safe spaces and much-needed information for LGBTQ students.

EveryLibrary’s report wraps up its overview of the dangers Project 2025 poses to libraries, to intellectual freedom in general and to inclusivity and civil rights for marginalized communities with a call for action. It says:

“The Project 2025 proposals must be taken seriously. The Heritage Foundation has tremendous influence in certain political circles. We have seen the impact of the alignments between Heritage and like-minded movements like Moms for Liberty about censorship, the Koch Brothers network about anti-tax movements, and the Trump administration’s repeated proposals to defund IMLS.

Voters who care about libraries — and the people they serve — need to understand the impact that implementing Project 2025 will have on society and libraries.”

Visit EveryLibraryInstitute.org to see the full report and for more information.

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BEYOND THE STAGE

Playing a panicky gay groom was in the cards for Matt Rodin's part in 'Company'

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
Rich@DallasVoice.com

The 2021 revival of the musical *Company*, which switched up the characters' genders, has garnered raves. Instead of bride-to-be Amy, Matt Rodin (he/she/they) plays Jamie, a groom-to-be with a big show-stopping number.

Now, after the tour stops in Texas, Rodin gets to head back home.

"I've been with the show since October, and that's a long time to be away

from home," he said. "I have a husband and a dog, and it's been so long since I've been with them."

Company will hit its final stop of its tour on Oct. 1, as part of the Broadway at the Bass series. The show runs through Oct. 6 at Bass Hall, marking its last performance of the North American Tour.


For the year that Rodin's been with the company of ... um ... *Company*, the actor said the experience has been nothing but a good time — even during its long stretches on the road.

"This really has been the full spectrum of an experience. Sure, it's a long time working and on the road and sitting with Sondheim, but I've gotten to tour all over the country and visit cities I'd never have gone to. I got to meet so many people and see family and friends I don't often get to see.

"This has been all the things."




The cast of the North American tour of *Company*.





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Matt Rodin, left, plays Jamie, the groom with a showstopper in the national tour of *Company*. (Photos by Murphy Made)

Onstage as Jamie, Rodin is getting married that day, and his big number is one of *Company*'s signature songs. Toward the end of Act I as the panicked groom, Rodin gets to belt out "Getting Married Today."

And although he's been singing that for about a year now, the song does have a special place in his heart — and not even because he gets a big audience reaction to the number every time.

Rodin probably has one of the best audition stories to tell: "My final callback for this show was on my wedding day," he said. "In the morning, I was getting married at 11 a.m. in Central Park. At 2 p.m., I had to sing 'Getting Married Today.'"

"I didn't even have to change. I went straight there wearing my groom's clothes," he continued. "So now, when I sing that, I wear my own wedding band, and I can relive part of my wedding day at every show."

Clearly, Rodin got the part.

The actor said he was thinking not that long ago about the significance of playing this part. For him, playing a queer character is a privilege.

"I've been gay for a long time, but this

has allowed me to sink into my queerness in a new way," he said. "Jamie is unique and anxious and fun-loving. He's more femme than I may present, but that's been fun for me, too."

"Seriously, I get to show up to work every night and not necessarily have to put anything on," he said. "That's been a little lost on me at how lucky I am that I get to be queer every night and share this gay story with people."

He said he's received mostly positive feedback in this new version, but he has also heard some of the less-than-kind words being said about the show's "agenda."

"It's been really interesting — and overwhelmingly wonderful. There have been a handful of cities where people were offended. I brushed it off, but then I didn't feel so good about it," Rodin said. "That hit me in a way it didn't expect it to."

Then he remembered: "The show is so gay. I mean, come on. You're at a musical, first. Then you're at a Stephen Sondheim musical. Do your research!" he quipped.

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Big D reality

TELEVISION

TV producer Jenny Feterovich talks filming the new season of 'Start Up' here in DFW with her wife

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
Rich@DallasVoice.com

The five-time Emmy-nominated series *Start Up* premieres its 12th season Saturday, Sept. 28. But this time out, the show has some Big D flair.

The show profiles area entrepreneurs with compelling stories who have reshaped or created industries and, in doing so, have had an impact on their

communities. Other seasons have been spread across large areas like the West Coast, but for season 12, it's all Dallas-Fort Worth.

"Choosing to produce an entire season in one location is a decision we don't take lightly, and when it came to selecting Dallas-Fort Worth, the choice was clear," producer Jenny Feterovich said in the season announcement.

"The region offers a unique blend of big-city resources and a strong sense of community, which is exactly the kind of environment we want to highlight on *Start Up*," she said. "DFW's rich tapestry of cultures, industries and people makes it the perfect backdrop for sharing diverse business journeys. Whether it's a cutting-edge startup or a family-owned business with deep roots in the area, DFW has it all."

As the show took shape here in North

Texas, Feterovich and the *Start Up* team discovered they had an embarrassment of riches. To focus on one area turned out to be the right decision. The producer said she found it easy to see why DFW is in a boomtown way.

"The amount of entrepreneurs here made it hard to choose. The city has attracted a lot of that, and we found a wealth of quality stories here," she said. "So we decided to dive in. I could film two seasons here easily if I could."

The show travels across the country to highlight diverse stories of entrepreneurs who are building their businesses from scratch. But the show isn't just a showcase of those people. *Start Up* has become something far bigger in its tenure.

The show, for instance, has become an educational tool in schools, universities and prisons.

"Our mission is to inspire and educate the next generation of entrepreneurs who are starting a business," Feterovich said. "Our stories are about representation. If you decide to do anything from watching our show, we've done our job."

"I want viewers to walk away seeing themselves a bit and to follow those dreams," she continued. "But they see the show and see the steps people take to make those dreams happen. Everything is attainable and reverse-engineerable."

Feterovich adds that during the pandemic, with both access to and an increase in information, people reflected on what they were doing and what they wanted to do. People also looked at business differently.

She remembers that applications for small businesses after the pandemic numbered in the millions.

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Jenny Feterovich, right, and her wife, Raisa, with their sons on the beach. The two women are the producer/director team behind *Start Up* (Courtesy photo)

the cut this season, but Feterovich was happy that in episode three, the owner of Just Elope — which specializes in intimate, creative micro weddings — discussed her first wedding, which was for a same-sex couple.

“She talked about it in such a beautiful way,” Feterovich said. “In our very first episode of the show, we had a same-sex couple featured. I want to represent as many different people as possible.”

Start Up is also a family affair for Feterovich. While she serves as producer, her wife Raisa is the show’s director.

In the beginning, it wasn’t the easiest situation to navigate. Feterovich owns up to that.

“Working with her is great now, but it was quite hard in the beginning,” she said. “We had a rocky start, and I had to recognize I was not the best during all that.”

Feterovich said she learned to trust the process. She grew to recognize the strengths Raisa brought to the show and to give the director her on lane.

It’s an approach Feterovich says has worked well not just with her wife, but the team as a whole.

“That taught me a lot and it’s been wonderful ever since. Plus, I stay in Detroit with our three children to work while she’s on the road, so we’ve got it figured out.”

The two celebrated 10 years this year. And now they are starting the 12th season of *Start Up*.

“We’re very lucky to do this for a living as an independent show and inspire people. And we’re always transparent about who we are, and we’ve been able to accomplish so much.”

Start Up will air locally on KERA at 6 p.m. beginning Sept. 28.



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To Ani and beyond

Q-MUSIC

A look at new music from LGBTQ women

GREGG SHAPIRO | Contributing Writer
GreggShapiro@AOL.com

Singer/songwriter and indie music mogul **Ani DiFranco** released her eponymous debut album on her own record label almost 25 years ago. After releasing — almost — an album a year until around 2008, DiFranco, who maintained a rigorous tour schedule, began taking her time between records.



Her latest, *Unprecedented Sh!t* (Righteous Babe), arrives a little over three years after its predecessor. While DiFranco maintains her reputation as a singular lyricist (see “Virus,” “New Bible,” “Spinning Room,” “You Forgot To Speak,” “The Think At Hand”), it’s her approach to the audio component that offers listeners a revolutionary change. Sonically experimental (and exciting), with some songs clocking in at under three minutes, and a couple just over five, the “unprecedented” sound (listen to title cut) matches some of the “unprecedented” subject matter she addresses.

Ani DiFranco performs Jan. 18 at the Granada Theater.



As soon as you hear **Sophie Gault**’s voice on “Kick The Devil Away,” the opening track to her second album *Baltic Street Hotel* (Strong Place Music), you’ll understand why she was

featured as a backing vocalist on Lucinda Williams’ 2023 album *Stories From a Rock ‘n’ Roll Heart*. The similarities in their voices are so striking!

Gault also has Williams’ knack for balancing rockers (“Christmas in the Psych Ward,” “Fixin Things,” “Jealousy,” “Poet In A Buick”) with breathtaking ballads (“Lately,” “Lights,” “Over and Out”). Gault’s cover of Patty Griffin’s “Every Little Bit” deserves to be heard by everyone.



Speaking of Patty Griffin, you can hear her influence, as well as that of Kacey Musgraves on singer/songwriter

Madi Diaz’s amazing new album *Weird Faith* (Anti-). Musgraves even joins Diaz on “Don’t Do Me Good.”

An exceptional set of 12 modern folk-pop tunes, Diaz’s ability to musically slip an arm around our shoulder and pull us into her world makes us want to never leave her orbit — songs such as “Hurting You,” “Girlfriend,” “Same Risk,” “God Person,” “Get To Know Me,” and “KFM.”

This is definitely one of the best albums of the year.

Madi Diaz performs Nov. 9 at The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory.



While we’re on the subject of influences, it’s hard to name another artist who wears the impact of **Lana Del**

Rey more audibly than Suki Waterhouse. That’s meant as a compliment, especially in the way she takes the Del Rey ball and runs with it and makes it her own on her new album *Memoir of a Sparklemuffin* (Sub Pop).

It comes through loud and clear on

"Could Have Been a Star," "Faded," "To Get You," "Legendary," "Lawsuit," "OMG," "Model, Actress, Whatever" and "To Love."

Of course, there's much more to Waterhouse as you can hear on the "Black-out Drunk," "My Fun," and "Big Love."

Suki Waterhouse performs Oct. 19 at The Factory in Deep Ellum.

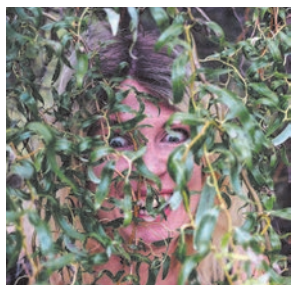


If you don't count the soundtrack to *The United States vs. Billie Holiday* (in which she starred), **Andra Day** took nine years between her lauded debut album and her new one, *Cassandra* (Cherith) (Warner Records).

Beginning with opener "Maybe Next Time," Day comes across as Erykah Badu crossed with Holiday, and the results are compelling. But we must wait until the next song, "Probably," to hear Day stretch out, belting to the sky and beyond.

Other moments of fantastic brilliance include "Midnight," the Amy Winehouse-esque "Bottom of the Bottle," the subtly brassy "More," the deceptive simplicity of "Chasing," and the begging-for-a-remix "Champagne Flutes."

All in all, it was well worth the wait for this Day to come.



When you first hear the timeless "On Tonight," the opening cut on *Bite Down* (Merge) by mono-monikered **Rosali**,

you might think you were listening to a vintage folk-rock tune, but you'd be wrong. To her credit, Rosali (Middleman) has a gift for creating contemporary Americana that sounds deeply rooted in the Laurel Canyon tradition.

Backed by fantastic musicians, that retro energy carries on throughout Rosali's wonderful record, creating a sense of sonic nostalgia, especially on "Rewind," "My Kind," "Slow Pain," "Hopeless," "May It Be On Offer" and the keys on

the title number.



Louisa Stancioff stands out from the pack in interesting ways. First, her soprano lilt is approachable

and pleasing. It's also tricky in the way that, as sweet as it sounds, it belies the darker aspects of her lyrics, as in the case of "Cigarette," "Nobody's Watching," "All Fuck'd Up," and "Quarantine." As if that wasn't enough of a recommendation, she does it all in under 40 minutes on *When We Were Looking*. *Brava!*



Adding some international flair to this column, singer/songwriter **Jana Mila**, an Amsterdammer, has released her

debut album *Chameleon* (New West).

A thoroughly pleasant folk-pop mélange, the album opens with the gorgeous "Like Only Lovers Could" which floats in on stunning harmonies and a stirring cello. "Somebody New" picks up the pace and feels like a hit single. The bare bones "Love Let Go" captures the break-up mood, while "I Wasn't Gonna" builds until it gets its point across. The piano and vocal "In Between" shows another side of Mila.

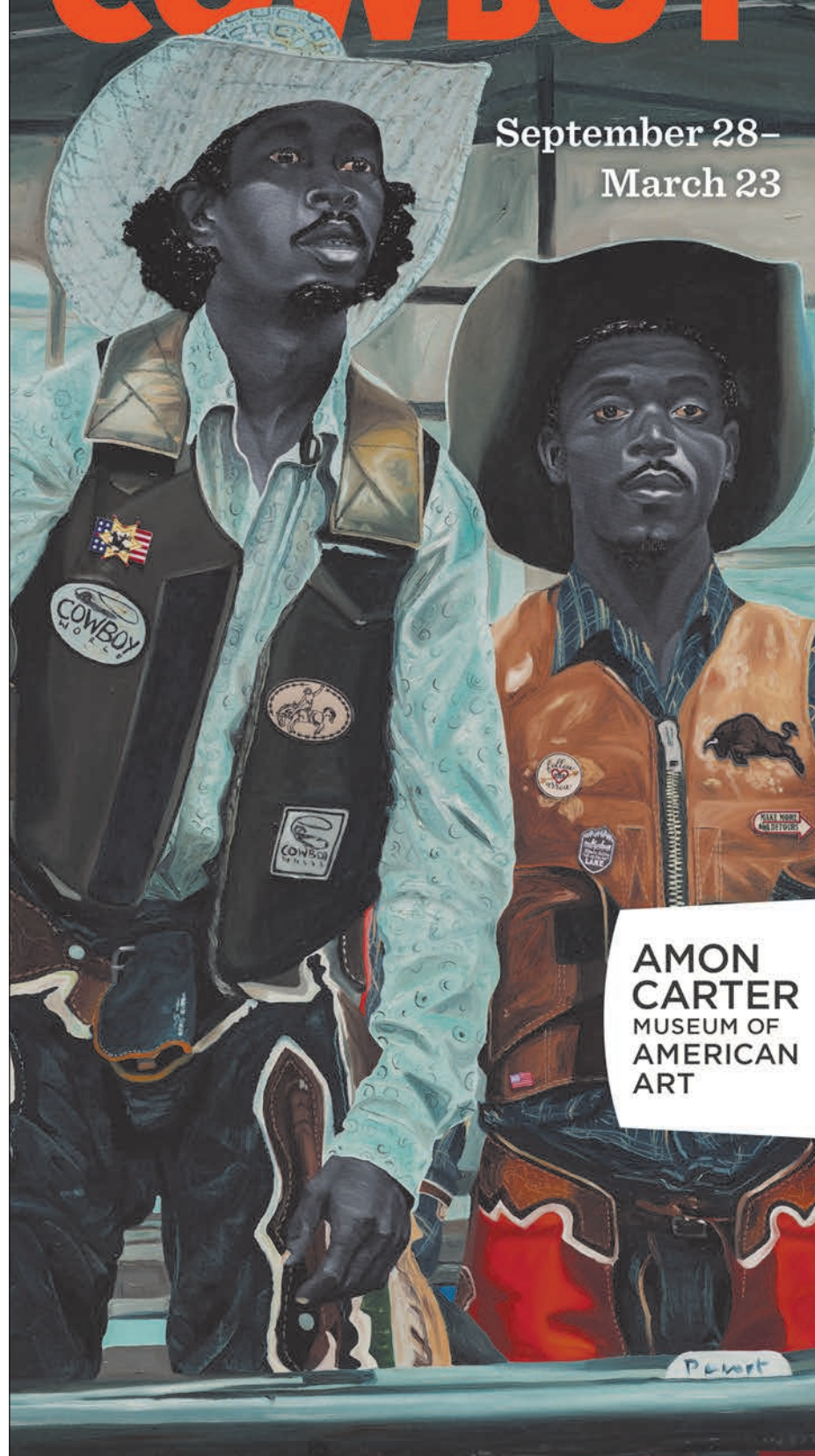


Keeping with the global theme, Australian-born **Ruth Moody**, who made her name as one-third of the

Canadian trio The Wailin' Jennys, has released her latest solo effort *Wanderer* (Blue Muse). Even with that pedigree, Moody has crafted some of the loveliest Americana you're likely to hear. Highlights include "Seventeen," "North Calling," "Comin' Round the Bend," and the incredible "Twilight." ■

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For same-sex couples, starting a family can be an exciting and complicated journey. The organization Men Having Babies offers resources and support for those looking to go through the surrogacy process.

In partnership with The Pride Center at Equality Park, Men Having Babies is hosting its sixth annual Florida Surrogacy Conference and Expo Oct. 4-5 in Wilton Manors, Fla. The event will focus on resources in the South.

The Florida Surrogacy Conference will cover the medical, legal, ethical and financial aspects of surrogacy, as well as new resources now available, such as surrogacy advisor cost comparison tools. For many, the financial aspects of surrogacy are the biggest hurdle, and the conference offers firsthand advice and tactics.

There will also be a session on “The Broader Context for Gay Parenting & Surrogacy” that will address the concerns gay men have about raising children in conservative states.

Part of the reason Men Having Babies chose to hold the conference in Florida is to ensure that people from the Latinx community have access to their resources. Because of this, all programming will have Spanish interpretation.

Men Having Babies has been assisting families since 2012 and prides itself on offering unbiased advice, support and financial assistance.

The Gay Parenting Assistance Program helps couples with cash grants, discounts and free services from leading service providers. The organization also offers a comprehensive Surrogacy

Advisor providers directory, including cost comparison tools, ratings and reviews of agencies, clinics and law firms.

There are many dads in the Dallas area who have benefited from Men Having Babies’ services. Mohammed Jaber attended the Chicago conference in 2019 with his partner. He said, “That weekend was so helpful in getting us started and giving us enough information and resources to get the ball rolling.” Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and a couple of miscarriages, the process took longer than the couple expected, but in 2023 their son was born. They opted for a local surrogate in the DFW area so they could be present for doctor appointments and maintain a relationship with their surrogate.

Jaber said that having their son has changed their lives for the better.

“The pure joy and unconditional love that we have towards our son is beyond what we could have imagined,” Jaber responded when asked about the best part of fatherhood. He said it is very rewarding to watch his son growing and thriving.

Those thinking about surrogacy also can greatly benefit from connections to resources as well as other dads who have been through the process, according to a spokesperson for Men Having Babies. The Florida Surrogacy Conference and Expo, they said, is a great opportunity to learn about the options for starting a parenting journey in Texas. ■

For more information and to register for the conference, go to MenHavingBabies.org/Surrogacy-Seminars/south.



HAVEN, From Page 9

"I was over the moon," Clarke said, noting that both District 2 Commissioner Andy Sommerman and District 1 Commissioner Theresa Daniel asked to help push the resolution through. But because Daniel has been on the court for 12 years and has sponsored other pro-LGBTQ resolutions, Clarke decided to work mainly with her.

"This resolution rebukes state legislators' attempts to infringe on our liberties and the subsequent violence and abuse this has fueled, cites professional guidelines for gender affirming care, including youth, recognizes the significant contributions made by trans residents of Dallas County and declares Dallas County to be a safe place for trans people and their families to put down roots," Clarke said.

For Daniel, the main premise is this: "Discrimination anywhere is wrong," she said. "Whether you're old, Hispanic, autistic — we have to figure out ways to be even-handed about how we provide service."

Clarke said Texas Republicans "trafic in the politics of fear, bigotry and intimidation for short term gain, but the people of North Texas are once again choosing to rise above it."

The looming 2025 Texas legislative session is likely to bring more anti-trans legislation to the state, Clarke warned. But, she said, "We're all anticipating it, so we have to be proactive to get people on board to defend our liberties."

"There's a broader environment of hate across the country, so a resolution like this is needed to show we have actual people on record saying that legislation against us is unjust."

Daniel said that if a person believes that discrimination is wrong, they would support a resolution such as this one. She said when the court supports a resolution, it serves as a public education effort and a forum to talk about the issues at hand.

"Our Dallas County commissioners, Judge [Clay] Jenkins and the people they represent overwhelmingly support trans life of all ages and all walks of life," Clarke said. "I know they will keep fighting to keep Dallas County safe for my community, and I look forward to working with them again in the future."

The resolution says: "Dallas County

remains committed to ensuring that all constituents are free from discrimination and harassment of any form" and "Dallas County recognizes the significant contributions made by transgender people and affirms that they are vital members of our community."

The resolution says that trans people face high levels of discrimination, stigma and bias that all fuel abuse against the community. It notes that more than 100 bills were filed in the 88th Texas Legislature attacking the trans community's access to healthcare "despite the fact that gender-affirming healthcare has been proven to be evidence-based, medically necessary, and lifesaving by the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatricians, the Endocrine Society, the American Psychiatric Association, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, amongst other institutions."

The resolution quotes Andrea Segovia, senior field and policy adviser of the Transgender Education Network of Texas, who says that Texas has become one of the most dangerous and hostile places for transgender youth and transgender people and their families in America.

"The Dallas County Commissioners Court is committed to the protections offered under the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution's Equal Protection Clause," the resolution reads. "We recognize that creating a welcoming county for LGBTQ+ individuals and families would encourage LGBTQ+ residents seeking an affirming place to live, and who may be coming from hostile environments, to find safety and put down roots in Dallas County."

It continues by saying the Dallas County Commissioners Court "does hereby reaffirm our commitment to equal protection and freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex, including our commitment to ensuring LGBTQ+ individuals are free from discrimination, whether by individuals, businesses or governments."

The resolution challenges the Texas Legislature to "codify these protections and refrain from restricting these rights," and it calls upon the United States Congress to pass the Equality Act prohibiting discrimination based

HAVEN, Next Page

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JUSTICE

From Page 11

to credit cards. Garcia said they'll never know how much was actually stolen. Because there was never a full investigation into the fire, arson charges were never filed.

Garcia and Pritchett filed a lawsuit against Wheeler and her husband, a friend of the Wheelers and the owner of one of the other restaurants. All colluded to put Atomic Taco out of business, the suit claimed. All are in bankruptcy except the friend of Wheeler's.

The civil court found them liable for about \$7.5 million in damages.

Wheeler is in prison and won't be available to make restitution for several years. Her husband claims to have had a stroke and can't pay but was on a Zoom call for the civil case. He has property in Comanche County, but that's protected under his bankruptcy filing. Another hearing is set for December for Wheeler's friend whose attorney has dropped him as a client. Garcia said he doesn't know how that will affect the case.

The property where the food court development stood was repossessed.



Gary Garcia

While awaiting a final outcome of their civil suit, Garcia is contemplating opening a new travel-related business and has been substitute teaching in his son's school. ■



HAVEN

From Previous Page

on sex, sexual orientation or gender identity with respect to businesses, employment, housing, federally funded programs and other settings."

Clarke said several organizations came out to support the resolution's passing, including Stonewall Democrats, Equality Texas and the Trans Empowerment Coalition.

She said she wasn't worried the Commissioners Court wouldn't pass the resolution because of something County Judge Clay Jenkins said in 2019 after multiple transgender women were murdered in Dallas. According to the Dallas Morning News, Jenkins said that the murders were a result of an "epidemic of violence and hate" against transgender people.

Now with the Commissioners Court having passed this resolution, Clarke said she has set her sights on the Dallas City Council.

"I am going to go to the city to try and pass something even stronger," Clarke said. "And I'm not stopping at the city.

"I grew up here. It's offensive that



Dallas County Commissioner Theresa Daniel

the state could single us out when I'm fully Texan in my blood," Clarke said. "They think that because I'm a queer person I'm not as proud of my liberties and freedoms. But I love my freedoms as much as any other American." ■



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ic” defenses in criminal cases. As a U.S. senator, she has supported efforts to enact protections for the LGBTQ community, including the Equality Act and the Respect for Marriage Act.

And of course, as President Joe Biden’s vice president, Harris has been second in command in what is widely considered the most pro-LGBTQ administration in U.S. history. And she has given every indication that she would work not just to

protect those rights already in place, but to expand them.

Harris has, however, been criticized on some issues, including her refusal, as attorney general, to give a transgender inmate permission to undergo gender-affirming surgery while incarcerated.

What about the presidential candidates’ respective vice presidential running mates?

Democrat Tim Walz, during his time

as a high school teacher and football coach, was the faculty advisor for his school’s gay-straight alliance, and the students there remember him fondly as a staunch ally who was supportive and accepting of everyone.

Republican J.D. Vance has made no bones about his opposition to LGBTQ rights, condemning “childless cat ladies” and even opposing in vitro fertilization, the method through which

many LGBTQ couples create their families.

Of course, I have just barely scratched the surface on both sides. As I said, no candidate is perfect — neither perfectly good nor perfectly bad. But when it comes the Harris/Walz ticket and the Trump/Vance ticket, the choice — whichever choice you make — is very clear cut.

On the right wing, you have a candidate who describes the U.S. as a dystopian wasteland teetering on the verge of collapse and chaos, which can only be saved if he steps in and strong-arms everyone into his ideal of “law and order.” That ideal looks frighteningly like Putin’s Russia or even Kim Jong Un’s North Korea, where the rich get richer, the poor get poorer and anyone who disagrees or just doesn’t fit in conveniently disappears.

On the other hand, you have a candidate campaigning with joy, promising a better future, one in which everyone is accepted and respected, rather than just a select few.

The choice is clear: A Trump presidency that threatens doom and gloom and wants to push us backward, or a Harris presidency that promises to lead us forward into a brighter day for everyone.

For most of our 40 years in publication, Dallas Voice has deliberately chosen not to endorse political candidates. We left that to the students of policy and politics.

But in 2016 and again in 2020, after much debate and careful consideration, Dallas Voice issued endorsements in the presidential race — first for Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump and then for Joe Biden over Donald Trump.

In both of those elections, we felt the danger Trump posed to our community and our country was far too great not to speak up.

And now in 2024, we once again believe that the stakes are far too high to stay silent on the sidelines. So once again, Dallas Voice is endorsing a presidential candidate.

In doing so, we choose the path forward. We choose progress rather than regression. We choose joy over doom-and-gloom.

That is why Dallas Voice is endorsing Kamala Harris for president and Tim Walz for vice president. ■

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The Cedar Springs Wine Walk takes place Thursday, Oct. 3, from 6-9 p.m. on The Strip. Pick up your \$10 glass in front of The Round-Up Saloon, then make the rounds. See listings for details.



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.

Every Monday: The Royal House Monday Night Munch

Bring your kinky self out for a night of kink convos, friends and fun, from 7-10 p.m. at No Frills Grill and Sports Bar, 4914 Little Road in Arlington, in the private room near entrance. Find more info at fetlife.com/groups/192449.

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.

Bi-Weekly: Hope Cottage Foster Parent Information Meeting

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

'Queer Justice' Exhibit through Oct. 7

The American LGBTQ+ Museum and Lambda Legal present this exhibition highlighting 50 years of LGBTQ rights at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road, from 6-8:30 p.m. Visit

AmericanLGBTQMuseum.org for more information and to RSVP.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 27: WETT: Official Dallas Lesbian Pride

Takes place at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road, at 9 p.m.

Sept. 27: LGBT & Straight Ally Social Mixer

Fern Connections hosts an evening of mixing and mingling at Times Ten Cellar, 6324 Prospect Ave., starting at 6:30 p.m. Visit FernConnections.com for information and tickets.

Sept. 27-29: Love Bizarre Weekend

Dragonfly Campground, County Road 1135, Ravenna, hosts this weekend filled with fascination, curiosity and open-mindedness. Visit DragonflyTexas.com for more information.

OCTOBER

Oct. 1: Classic Chassis Car Club

Classic Chassis Car Club meets 6-8 p.m. for tire kick and dinner meeting at Ojeda's, 4617 Maple Ave. ClassicChassis.com

Oct. 3-26: 'The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity'

Circle Theatre, 230 W. Fourth St., Fort Worth, presents *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*. Tickets and showtimes are available at CircleTheatre.com.

Oct. 3: Cedar Springs Wine Walk

Purchase your \$10 glass in front of Round-Up

Saloon, 3912 Cedar Springs Road, from 6-9 p.m. and join the fun. Purchase benefits the Cedar Springs Merchants Association.

Oct. 4: SPCA of Texas Fur Ball

The Gay & Lesbian Fund for Dallas hosts this annual gala at 6:30 p.m. at the Frontiers of Flight Museum, 6911 Lemmon Ave. Visit SPCA.org for more information and to purchase tickets.

Oct. 4-6: Unleashed LGBTQ 2024

Join LGBTQ professionals, entertainers and brands for a weekend of networking and connecting at Round Up Saloon, 3912 Cedar Springs Road. Visit UnleashedLGBTQ.com for information and to register.

Oct. 5: Lambda Legal Landmark Dinner

Visit LambdaLegal.org/Events/Landmark-Dinner for details.

Oct. 6: Pride Frisco Festival 2024

Celebrate Pride in Frisco at Toyota Stadium, 9200 World Cup Way, Frisco, from 1-5 p.m. Accessible. Affirming. Safe. All ages welcome. Free admission and parking with ticket registration. Visit PrideFrisco.org.

Oct. 6: DMA First Free Sundays

Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 N. Harwood St., offers FREE admission on the first Sunday of each month from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Visit DMA.org for more information.

Oct. 6: Miss Big Thickette Pageant

Turtle Creek Chorale presents this drag show fundraiser at Rose Room, 3911 Cedar Springs Road, at 6:30 p.m. Visit Give.TurtleCreekChorale.com for tickets and information.

Oct. 8: Outrageous Oral Volume 33

Join The Dallas Way at The Rose Room, 3911 Cedar Springs Road, at 6 p.m. for a discussion of groundbreaking non-discrimination ordinances passed in the city of Dallas. Visit TheDallasWay.org for more information.

Oct. 10: Burgers and Burgundy

DIFFA Dallas hosts the annual Burgers + Burgundy from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at The Village Lawn, 5630 Village Glen Drive. Visit DIFFADallas.org for more information and tickets.

Oct. 11-Nov. 3: 'Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors'

Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd., presents *Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors*. Information available at DallasTheaterCenter.org.

Oct. 11: Kehlani – Crash World Tour

Kehlani brings her world tour to The Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory, 300 W. Las Colinas Blvd., Irving at 8 p.m. Visit Ticketmaster.com for tickets.

Oct. 12: East Texas Rainbow Market

Join Tyler Area Gays the second Saturday of every month for the Rainbow Market from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Bergfeld Park, 1501 S. Broadway Ave. in Tyler. For more information visit TylerAreaGays.com.

Oct. 12: North Texas Pride: Come As You Are

Plans are underway for North Texas Pride. This family-friendly event will take place at the Art Center of Plano, 902 E. 16th St., from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Visit NorthTexasPride.com.

Oct. 12: Score at Dallas Eagle

Purple Foundation presents this sports themed dance event at 8 p.m. at Dallas Eagle, 525 S. Riverfront Blvd. Visit PurpleFoundation.org for information and tickets.

Oct. 15: Up & Out: LGBTQ Caregiver Support Group

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

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



Shemar, pictured, and Tyrrah RahRah are the hosts and emcees for WETT: Official Dallas Lesbian Pride for 2024, happening Friday night, Sept. 27, at S4. See listings for details.

Cassie Nova

ASK A DRAG QUEEN

On being show director and casting talent

Hello good people of earth. It is officially fall, my favorite time of year. And I cannot tell you how excited I am for cooler weather. I keep walking past my closet with all of my cute sweaters, hoodies and jackets, gently touching the door and whispering, "Soon, my babies. Soon!"

I have been in the drag show business for more than 30 years now, and I have been the show director for the Caven bars for almost nine of those years. And I love my job.

Well, I love my job about 95 percent the time.

I think the hardest part of my job is finding nice ways to tell someone that I will not be booking them for our shows. You'd think that would be easy for a self-proclaimed villain like me, but I actually hate it.

We only have so many guest spots available to work in the Rose Room, and it is hard to find a balance between fan favorites that I KNOW will put on a great show and giving chances to entertainers that MIGHT put on a great show. The struggle is real for newer entertainers looking for a "chance," but there are also a lot of seasoned queens that just are not a good fit for our show.

For me personally, it is a constant battle between "I know" and "I hope."

So much time, energy and thought goes into who I book as a special guest. Some are no brainers — showgirls that I have booked in the past that I know will kill it on stage. Crowd favorites that show up and show out. Queens that are so talented that the crowd feels lucky to have seen them.

But what they do onstage is not the only thing that I consider when booking an entertainer for our show. Work ethic and how you act backstage with other entertainers goes a long way in my decision-making.

If you make the dressing room feel weird because of a bad attitude or being disrespectful of our time or the opportunity you are given, then you probably won't get a second booking. To be completely honest, that has only happened a couple of times in all of my years doing



shows.

My biggest pet peeve is how differently people treat you once they find out that you are the person who does the bookings. Like I said before, I did shows a long time before I was the keeper of the keys, so to speak.

Years ago, if our cast had been a totem pole, I was the one on the bottom. All of the other Rose Room cast members were either state or national titleholders, and many of the special guests that would get booked saw that and gave respect accordingly.

And I totally get that! They worked hard for their crowns and deserved every bit of that respect. My issue, though, was that I became the butt of many of their jokes and reads because, to them, I was a nobody.

Fast forward to all these years later and now it's, "Hey Sis, can I get a booking." I cannot stand being called "SIS" if we ain't ever been friends!

About a year after I became show director, there was a queen at the bar that had recently done an incredible talent number in a pageant. I walked up to her, out of drag, ready to offer her a weekend

in the Rose Room. I started the conversation with hello then told her I saw her talent number and that she was amazing. She turned to me and said "Duh!" then whipped her head away from me, leaving me with a face full of wig and disrespect.

I was like, "Well, never mind." Some choices get made for you.

About 10 minutes later, a mutual friend of ours walked up and introduced me to her, saying, "This is Cassie Nova, the show director here in the Rose Room." Her eyes grew large with excitement, and she goes into a big spiel about how it has always been a dream of hers to work in the Rose Room and how she can't wait for a booking.

She either chose to ignore our previous interaction or didn't remember. She wrote down her number, after snatching an order pad away from the bartender without a bit of acknowledgement to said bartender. She even drew hearts around her name and kissed it, leaving a perfect red lipstick print on it. She handed it to me with such a sense of reverence.

I just nodded, said thank you, sat it on the bar and walked away.

I do not care how talented you are, if you have a stank-ass attitude, in the words of the iconic Nat King Cole: "You're unbookable! In every way, you're unbookable! That's where you'll stay!"

I may be remembering that song wrong.

I will say that I have put my personal feelings aside a few times and booked entertainers that I may not have cared for personally but that I knew would be good in the show — within reason. I take my other castmates' opinions very seriously. They help me decide who to give a chance to and who to tell "Thank you for your interest, but I have nothing for you right now."

That tends to be my go-to answer for someone that I am not going to book in the near future: "Thank you for your interest, but I have nothing available right now." That is my honest answer; I mean, things change; entertainers grow. It's a no for now, but not necessarily forever.

I have had to tell entertainers that push me for more of a "now and why not" answer. If pushed, I will have to be brutally honest and tell someone that they are not Rose Room quality yet. I hate having to do that, but I also don't want to give a false sense of hope where there is none.

I know there are many people that hate that I am the one making those decisions for our show and think that I don't have the credentials to do this job. To those people I say ... nothing. I say nothing.

Everyone has an opinion. I know what I do, and I am crazy proud of the shows we have — not just in the Rose Room but at all of our bars. There is always room to grow and do better. I know the legacy and prestige of the Rose Room, and I don't take that lightly. Our shows and entertainers are of a higher caliber. So are our special guests.

To those who want to get booked in the Rose Room: Let your talent speak for you. We are listening.

Remember to always love more, bitch less and be fabulous! XOXO, Cassie Nova

this week's solution

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64							65					66		
67							68					69		

Solution on Page 28

Across

- 1 Word before "Bear"
6 Mary's pet
10 They're performing, in Fame
14 Ginsberg, who wrote *Howl*
15 *Dancing Queen* band
16 Amanda of *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*
17 Tony Orlando backup singer Hopkins
18 Sailors cruise on them
19 Nautical pole
20 Start of a quote from
62-Across from his DNC speech
22 S, in communications
24 Painter Bonheur
25 Large-scale sea wind
26 Superman
28 Bird in city parks
31 Public loo, in slang
32 Alice portrayer on *The Brady Bunch*
33 More of the quote
35 Backus voice role
37 Uses a rubber
38 Stars that shoot off
40 Folk singer Guthrie
44 End of the quote
50 Organ pleased by Bernstein
51 This way
52 Caesar's 502

Down

- 53 Sine ___ non
54 Org. for Evan Wolfson's peers
55 Deserves
58 Grecian vessel
59 Poet Angelou and namesakes
62 Secretary of Transportation Pete
64 Billie Holiday's *God ___ the Child*
65 Personal lubricant ingredient
66 Composer Thomas
67 Izzard of stand-up
68 Sal Mineo, in *Rebel Without a Cause*
69 Do-overs for Amelie Mauresmo
- 1 Steely Dan's ___ *Lied*
2 Spread out on the breakfast table
3 Like Mae West's smile
4 Jack of *Some Like It Hot*
5 Erotic diarist Nin
6 S&M unit
7 Help with the heist
8 Degree for Andrew Tobias
9 Deep-toned woodwinds
10 Recesses for Rev. Michael Piazza
11 Stick it in again
12 A doily signals this

- 13 Queer, long ago
21 Stare open-mouthed
23 Fetish of a mauve hanky carrier
25 Bucks prefix
26 *Modern Family* family member
27 Latina writer Castillo
29 Arctic tool
30 *The Elements of Bridge* author
33 Tops of houses
34 Half of a Hollywood name
36 Round-buyer's words
39 "Va-va-va-___!"
41 Have to have
42 Part of YSL
43 Fruits with navels, maybe
44 Like a Traci Des Jardins dish on fire
45 Coarsely jocular
46 Gave the thumbs-up
47 Susie Bright, once
48 Word after quick or dim
49 Emphatic affirmative, to Gloria Anzaldua
56 Meir contemporary
57 "Don't ask, don't tell," for one
60 "___ live and breathe!"
61 Dir. for your first mate
63 k. d. lang's *Big Boned* ___

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