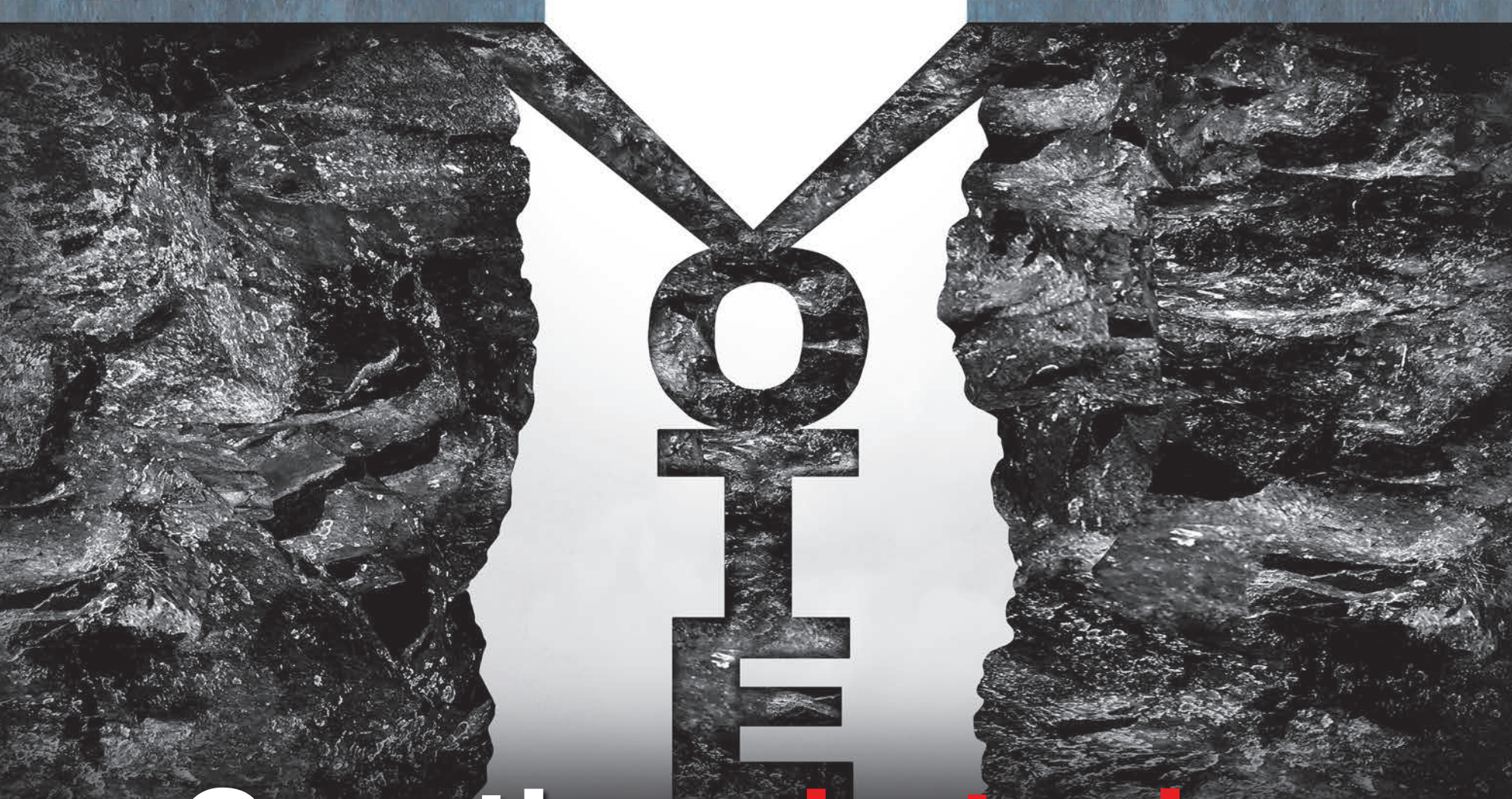


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Creating obstacles

Rowlett mayor questions choice of church
as early voting location; Paxton continues voter intimidation efforts

By Caroline Savoie, page 8

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PUBLISHER Leo Cusimano, leo@dallasvoice.com

MANAGING EDITOR Tammye Nash, nash@dallasvoice.com

SENIOR STAFF WRITER David Taffet, taffet@dallasvoice.com

STAFF WRITER Rich Lopez, rich@dallasvoice.com

NBCU FELLOW Melissa Whitler

PROOF READER Philip Burton

CONTRIBUTORS Chris Azzopardi, Sean Baugh, Gary Bellomy, Jenny Block, Jesus Chairez, Lawrence Ferber, Kamila Gonzalez, Hardy Haberman, Scott Huffman, Lisa Keen, Mark Lowry, Jonathon McClellan, Cassie Nova, Dr. Josh, Josh Robbins, Gilberto Rodriguez, James Russell, Howard Lewis Russell, Terri Schlichenmeyer, Caroline Savoie, Gregg Shapiro, Casey Williams

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Chad Mantooth, mantooth@dallasvoice.com

CONTENT MARKETING SPECIALIST Mathew Dominguez, mathew@dallasvoice.com

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE National Advertising Representative
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ART DIRECTOR Kevin Thomas, thomas@dallasvoice.com

MULTIMEDIA Jimmy Bartlett, Website Management; Israel Luna, DVtv Executive Producer; Tom Roma, DVtv Producer; Joseph Herrera, Producer

DVtv Hosts Regina Lyn, Larry The Fairy, Corry Williams

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Linda DePriter, distribution@dallasvoice.com

FOUNDERS Robert Moore | Don Ritz | William Marberry

AFFILIATIONS | MEMBERSHIPS

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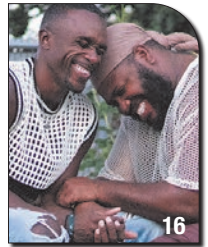
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Bites from our blog

WHAT'S THE TEA: DallasVoice.com



Masked cowboy Orville Peck brought his show to The House of Blues Dallas in an energetic performance that kept the crowd on its feet and engaged. Read Melissa Whitler's recap of the concert and see more photos at DallasVoice.com. (Photo by Melissa Whitler)

Fifth Circuit court will hear drag ban arguments

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments on *The Woodlands Pride et al vs. Paxton et al* regarding SB 12, better known as the drag ban. The plaintiffs are asking the appeals court to uphold the ruling of the federal district court that found the law to be unconstitutional.

SB 12 was to take effect Sept. 1, 2023, but was blocked by a federal district court judge who ruled the law unconstitutionally restricts the freedom of expression of the five plaintiffs in the case: The Woodlands Pride, Abilene Pride Alliance, Extragrams, 360 Queen Entertainment and Brigitte Bandit.

The court granted a permanent injunction blocking the law's enforcement, and Attorney General Paxton and other defendants appealed that decision.

The drag ban law threatens the livelihood and free expression of many Texans, including drag performers, by targeting any performance that could be perceived as "sexual" on public

property and anywhere minors may be present. The law also proposes criminal penalties, including up to a year in jail, for artists, business owners and others who support them.

— David Taffet

Black Tie offering new Pearl sponsorships.

Black Tie Dinner is offering Pearl sponsorships for "couples with premium taste."

Pearl sponsorships include two tickets with premium seating to the 2024 Black Tie Dinner on Saturday, Nov. 16 at Sheraton Dallas Hotel, two tickets to the invitation only B4Black pre-dinner reception, an invitation to the sponsor appreciation event and concierge table service with a wine upgrade.

Pearl sponsorships are \$3,000 and are only available to individuals. Get more information, request individual dinner tickets and purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win \$45,000 toward a new Mercedes Benz underwritten by Park Place Motorcars Dallas at BlackTie.org.

— Tammye Nash



Gay Senate candidate Curtis Bashaw of New Jersey

Log Cabin endorses gay candidate for U.S. Senate

Log Cabin Republicans officials this week announced that the organization is endorsing Curtis Bashaw, a married gay man, to represent New Jersey in the U.S. Senate.

Bashaw faces Democrat Andy Kim to fill a seat vacated by Democrat Bob Menendez, who was convicted on federal corruption charges. Bashaw is not endorsed by LGBTQ Victory Fund.

In announcing the endorsement, Log Cabin President Charles Moran wrote: At Log Cabin Republicans, we believe in supporting leaders who stand up for freedom, economic opportunity and the principles that make America great. That's why we are proud to support Curtis Bashaw as he runs for the United States Senate in New Jersey.

"Curtis is a trailblazer — he is a conservative Republican, a successful businessman, and a married gay man who is ready to represent the diverse voices of New Jersey in Washington. We are proud to support one of our own in his bid to be elected to the U.S. Senate!"

—David Taffet

Texas Cultural Trust opens its grant application

The Texas Cultural Trust — a nonprofit increasing awareness, access and support for the arts, arts education, artists and the arts and culture industry in Texas — has announced the opening of its Texas Women for the Arts Grant application.

Texas Women for the Arts is a membership program driven by a network of more than 200 Texas women that aims to awaken and nurture the artist in every Texas child and provides critical funding to support arts education programs throughout the state.

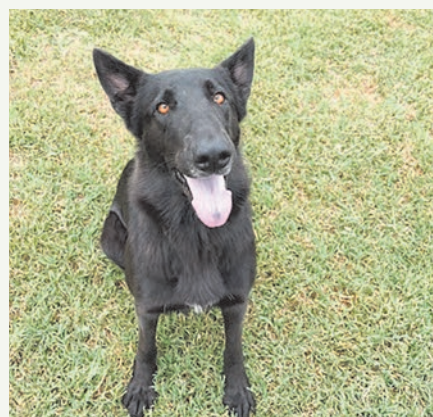
Since its inception in 2005, the organization has awarded more than 400 grants, totaling more than \$4.3 million and impacting the lives of more than 3.6 million children.

Applicants must have a 501(c)(3) designation with the following exceptions: religious organizations and city/county/state historical agencies.

To learn more about the grant program and apply, visit TxCulturalTrust.org / or email info@txculturaltrust.org.

—David Taffet

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Meet **Bellatrix**, a people-loving dog who thrives on companionship. She is great on a leash, loves learning new tricks and will do well with kids and other pets. She is a sweet and friendly 1 1/2-year-old shepherd weighing 60 pounds and with a long, soft black coat and sparkling brown eyes. Bellatrix has a heart full of love and is always eager to please. Her playful spirit is balanced with a calm, affectionate side, making her the perfect companion for both fun outings and cozy evenings. Like all pets from the SPCA of Texas, Bellatrix has been spayed and microchipped and is up to date on all her vaccinations. She is housed at the Russell E. Dealey Animal Rescue Center, so you'll need an appointment to meet her. To do that, just find her profile at SPCA.org/Dogs and click on the button to make an appointment.

Animals are available for adoption at both the SPCA Dallas Animal Care Center, 2400 Lone Star Drive, and the Ellis County Animal Care Center, 2570 FM 878 in Waxahachie. The Bissell Empty the Shelters event runs through Oct. 15, with free adoptions for all available animals at our Dallas Animal Care Center and Ellis County Animal Care Center.

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Which do you serve?

HIV work is about fulfilling the mission, not your ego

As I shut my laptop a few Fridays ago, I let out a big sigh. I'd just finished reading an email from an individual whose focus was clearly self-interest, despite writing to me — a person living with HIV and the senior advisor on community engagement at the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care.

A million thoughts ran through my mind. Most of them revolved around how exhausted I was from receiving emails like this, as well as doubts concerning how much longer I could stand working in a field that was supposedly about improving the quality of life of people living with HIV and “ending the epidemic” but that increasingly feels overrun by individuals who are preoccupied with delivering vapid speeches, claiming credit for work completed by others and posing for selfies.

“How did we lose our way?” I asked myself. “Have we forgotten the point? Can we find our way back to the missions we've reduced to empty buzzwords? Is this who we are now?”

It's no secret to anyone in our field that times are tough. Many organizations are struggling to secure funding, as primary funders of our work are taking their foot off the gas even as we approach the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030. Governments have conflated our field with culture wars, therefore making it ripe for defunding. And the silos we have often spoken against have become cavernous trenches, dividing us further from each other and from what we claim to be our purpose.

Was it always this way? No.

It didn't feel this way when I started working in this field seven years ago. I'd just been diagnosed the year before. During those first 12 months, I struggled like many other people living with HIV do after suddenly finding themselves in an unfamiliar health care environment: making endless appointments, endur-



Calvin Pugh
Positive Thoughts

ing blood draws and learning to navigate disclosure and stigma outside the HIV world as well as within.

One day, the nurse

practitioner who served as my first HIV provider asked how I was handling everything and then noted that despite the personal challenges, I seemed to keep a positive outlook. Being raised by my mother and Dolly Parton, I have always tried to find the silver lining. That silver lining came in the form of a loving thought: “Something good will come of this.”

That thought reminded me of the incredible providers, nurses and social workers I had met over the course of that year — wonderful human beings who served as points of light during a dark time and who were now inspiring me to work alongside them in support of people living with HIV.

I started as a cover for the front desk

of a local AIDS service organization. Providing a friendly face and being of service to those coming in felt good. Soon, one of the ASO's case managers told me I would make a good peer educator and there was an opening at one of the ASOs down the street. I applied and got the job.

I loved it. I felt excited to jump out of bed every morning, to provide education and support to newly-diagnosed individuals, as well as those who struggled with their treatment.

Now, I'm not so sure.

On a weekly basis, I interact with individuals and organizations that obsess over whose name goes first or who gets credit for what. While I certainly understand the challenges that accompany needing to be recognized for delivering work, I cannot wrap my head around losing focus on the actual work of serving people living with and affected by HIV.

It seems that the higher up some individuals get into this field, the further they get from our community, and the greater the divide from our mission.

These days, I am still excited about serving our people, though I am not always excited by interacting with individuals who get in the way of the work. To keep myself centered, as soon as I wake up in the morning, I recite my dai-

ly meditation: “I ask the universe to use me as a force for good in our divided and troubled world.”

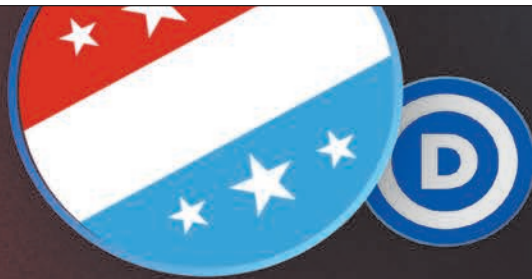
I think that intention should be the bare minimum for all of us.

If we cannot approach this work with the intent to serve humanity and create a better world for everyone, then we have no business shouting slogans, standing on stages or leading marches. And we cannot serve the mission if we refuse to set our egos aside. At some point, each of us must choose between the two: ego or service.

If you feel like you're struggling with either, I suggest you take a step back; remember the empathy, integrity, compassion, humility and purpose that inspired you to join this field. And recommit yourself to making this world a better place for our community.

If you can't, it's time to get out of the way and make the space for someone else who can serve the mission. Otherwise, we may lose everything we've fought for. ■

Kalvin Pugh is an award-winning HIV and human rights advocate who has dedicated his life to improving the lives of people living with HIV. Today, Calvin serves as an independent consultant, writer and public speaker. This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ+ wire service.



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Road(blocks) to the polls

ELECTION 2024



Freedom Place Church in Rowlett does not have enough parking spaces to serve as an early polling location, the Rowlett mayor says

Rowlett mayor questions decision to moving polling place; Paxton continues intimidation efforts

CAROLINE SAVOIE | Contributing Writer
CarolineSavoie@gmail.com

With less than three weeks before early voting starts in Texas, groups on one side of the political divide are accelerating efforts to bring more voters to the polls while some on the other side are fighting to ensure that fewer people are able to vote or to advocate for others to vote.

In Rowlett, Mayor Blake Margolis is concerned about how his residents are

going to get to the polls after the Dallas County Elections Department moved the city's only early voting location from the Rowlett Community Centre to a local church.

Margolis said that in 2020, for the last presidential election, more than 22,150 people voted at the Rowlett Community Centre — the eighth-highest early voter turnout location in the entire county. He said Rowlett offered the community center as an election location for 2024 at no cost to the county.

"The 2024 presidential election is expected to produce an even higher early voting turnout," Margolis said. "Therefore, I am concerned by the Dallas County Elections Department's decision to designate Freedom Place Church as an early voting site."

Rowlett resident Kellie McKee said she is worried about the access voters will have at the church, as it has only nine parking spaces and one handicap parking space. The community center,



Rowlett Mayor Blake Margolis

on the other hand, has several hundred parking spaces.

Margolis said that Texas Election Code dictates that polling places must provide "adequate space and accessibility." He said the church parking situation is "grossly inadequate for the turnout expected."

"This insufficient space and parking directly contradicts the principles of the Texas Election Code," the mayor said.

McKee also mentioned that the church building is much smaller than the community center, which could force voters to line up outdoors. That, she said, poses a risk of voter suppression for those residents who may not be able to handle heat, especially when it comes to elderly and vulnerable people.

Texas Election Code states that "each polling place for early voting by personal appearance must be located inside an accessible building. A public building, if available, shall be used as the early vot-

Don't say **gay**

SETTLING DISPUTES

Arttitude settles dispute over mention of 'LGBTQ' in Mundo Latino State Fair exhibit — but too late for this year

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
Taffet@DallasVoice.com

Arttitude has settled a dispute with Mundo Latino that would have prevented its artists from identifying as LGBTQ at an exhibit in the Women's Building during the State Fair of Texas, according to Arttitude co-founder Jerome Larrez. Unfortunately, the resolution came too late for Arttitude to participate in the State Fair exhibit this year.



Tlaloc Rocio Fierro



Jesse Tafalla's altar

Arttitude is a non-profit LGBTQ arts organization committed to empowering marginalized artists and communities by providing platforms for artistic expression and fostering diversity and inclusion through the arts.

The controversy began after Mundo Latino announced the exhibit at the State Fair would include work by a variety of artists on a specific theme: "Arttitude and Mundo Latino invite artists to explore 'Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent' through a contemporary lens, delving into how this ancient Aztec deity resonates with today's society," the original post read.

Arttitude artist Tlaloc Rocio Fierro said he thought the connection between Quetzalcoatl and the LGBT community was interesting to explore. So he submitted work he completed over

GAY, Page 21

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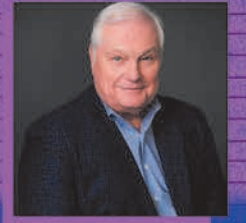
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CAPTAIN MILBOURN AS DRACULA. PHOTO BY JORDAN FRAKER.

LGBTQ **right** on the docket

IN THE COURTS



The Supreme Court

SCOTUS opens session with 2 LGBTQ-related cases on the list of appeals it will hear

LISA KEEN | Keen News Service
lisakeen@mac.com

The U.S. Supreme Court opened its 2024-25 session on Monday, Oct. 7, with at least 10 LGBTQ-related petitions before it. Seven of those petitions involve transgender issues: four asking whether states can limit a minor's access to treatment for gender dysphoria, and three asking whether states can ban transgender females from participating

in female sports competitions.

Of those 10 LGBTQ-related cases, the court so far has agreed to hear two cases and refused to hear two others this session. Six other cases await disposition.

The Supreme Court announced on Oct. 4 that it would review the Sixth Circuit's ruling in a case in which a straight employee challenges lower court rulings that say she cannot sue under a law prohibiting sexual orientation discrimination.

In the other case, the court has taken up a case from Tennessee to decide whether states can ban minors from receiving treatment for gender dysphoria.

In the discrimination against straights case, *Ames v. Ohio*, a straight female employee of the Ohio Department of Youth Services filed a lawsuit after two gay

coworkers were chosen for positions she sought or held and then she was demoted. Marlean Ames' lawsuit said she was the victim of sexual orientation discrimination. Both the district court and a Sixth Circuit panel ruled against her, noting that she offered "no evidence other than her own experience."

In her appeal, Ames' attorneys argue that the Sixth Circuit and four other courts of appeals require majority-group plaintiffs to prove — in addition to the other elements of Title VII — "background circumstances to support the suspicion that the defendant is that unusual employer who discriminates against the majority."

The court in June indicated it would accept the Biden administration's appeal of another Sixth Circuit decision: *U.S. v. Tennessee* (or, more formally, *U.S.*

v. Jonathan Skrmetti, attorney general for Tennessee).

The U.S. Department of Justice filed an appeal to the Supreme Court after the Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the state of Tennessee could enforce a ban against medical treatment of gender dysphoria in any minor in the state.

Specifically, noted the DOJ, the Tennessee law prohibits any treatment that would enable a minor to "identify with, or live as, a purported identity inconsistent with the minor's sex...." And the law prohibits any treatment for a minor's "purported discomfort or distress from a discordance between the minor's sex and asserted identity."

Nineteen states — including Texas — have laws that bar treatment of minors for gender dysphoria. More than 50

transgender adults, including actor Elliot Page, filed a brief in support of the administration. And several LGBTQ legal organizations, including GLAD and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, submitted a brief in support of the U.S. government's appeal.

Members of Congress, including 11 senators and 153 members of the House, also submitted a brief in support of the government's case.

The Supreme Court has not yet set the dates for oral arguments in either of the two cases it has accepted.

In June, the court also refused to take up the appeals of two cases — *Department of Education v. Louisiana* and *Department of Education v. Tennessee* — seeking to determine whether states can ban transgender females from participating in women's and girls' sports competitions.

There are many other cases pending.

In *Mahmoud v. Montgomery County*, three sets of parents have appealed a decision from the Fourth Circuit that held public schools did not have to give parents an opportunity to opt out their children from classroom books that dis-



cussed sexuality. The parents said this violated their right to free exercise of religion; the Fourth Circuit panel disagreed, saying the parents were free to exercise their beliefs and teach their

children anything they wanted. The books which prompted the conflict were LGBTQ-inclusive storybooks for elementary school children. (Status: Montgomery County, Maryland, has

until Oct. 16 to file its brief in opposition to the parents' petition that the high court hear their appeal.)

Meanwhile, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has made treatment for gender dysphoria a somewhat common complaint in his remarks to campaign rallies. In his second visit to Butler, Pa., he included the topic while rattling off a mind-numbing list of impossible campaign promises, including making sure everyone can afford "groceries, a beautiful car and a home," "build[ing] a defense shield around our country" and "keep[ing] critical race theory and transgender insanity the hell out of our schools."

After rambling on some more, Trump said, as president he would "keep men out of women's sports" because "it's so demeaning to women."

He has derided Democratic presidential candidate Vice President Kamala Harris for supporting the Equality Act, which would prohibit sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination.

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There will be three rounds, including talent, question and performance segments.

In addition to enjoying the fierce competition, those attending will be able to chat with Prism staff members who will be there to answer questions and supply plenty of information on the organization's services, which include primary care, behavioral health and a currently-expanding women's health and pediatrics program.

"Prism's goal is to bridge the gap and make sure everybody has access to health care," said Kim Burgan, Prism's chief marketing and development officer.

"We would love for everyone to come out and join us," Burgan emphasized. While the event is a fundraiser, Burgan said that really it is more a celebration of all the success Prism has enjoyed in the last year.

The fun and camaraderie extend to the contestants as well. Miss LifeWalk 2022 Betty SiSonnet described the competition as an experience like no other.



Prism Health North Texas staff

"Everyone backstage is there for two reasons. The first is to have fun and celebrate all the work that Prism Health North Texas has done for our community. The second is to spread awareness," she explained. "I was able to pour out myself on stage and the audience returned the love by embracing all that is Betty SiSonnet."

"Competing in Miss LifeWalk allowed me to forge wonderful friendships, for which I am forever grateful," SiSonnet added. To the queens competing this year she said, "The audience is there to cheer you on, creating an atmosphere filled with love and joy."

Aunt Marge, Miss LifeWalk 2023, will be turning over her crown on Sunday. Her advice for those who will be competing is to "Be your best self."

"Don't try to be like any other queen. We need you, and there's no one else in the world like you," she said, adding that her main mission is inspiring others to love themselves, live their truth and find happiness.

For tickets and more information, go to PHNTx.org/LifeWalk.



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BEYOND THE STAGE

Texas playwright brings Black queer love to the stage in 'Patches'

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
Rich@DallasVoice.com

Next week, Bishop Arts Theatre Center (BATC) will launch its 31st Anniversary season with the premiere of *Patches: A Black Gay Man's Journey to the Moon* by Joe Anderson Jr.

This run is a homecoming for Anderson: Although he's based in Austin

Patches: A Black Gay Man's Journey to the Moon


Written and staged by: Joe Anderson Jr.
Cast: Joe Anderson Jr., Phillip Butler
Live band: Jeff Gonzalez, Carlos Hernández, Carlos Jordan
Runs Oct. 18-27.
BishopArtsTheatre.org.


now, the writer/actor/producer hails from just down the street from the theater where his play will open. Bringing *Patches* home is Anderson's full circle Oak Cliff moment.

"Part of the show was written here in Dallas and in Bishop Arts. I used to write this show at a coffee shop just blocks from the theater," Anderson said. "To be able to bring something I wrote here, from where I am now in Austin to




Phillip Butler, left, and Joe Anderson Jr. in *Patches: A Black Gay Man's Journey to the Moon* launches Bishop Arts Theatre Center's new season. (Photos by Frank Washington)





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Bishop Arts, means the world to me.”

Patches runs Oct. 18-27.

The play itself is a mix of poetry, music and storytelling that tells the story of a day-long date between two Black men. Although technically a one-man show, when these two characters meet with no plans, *Patches* takes the audience on the journey with them. Actor Phillip Butler is featured as the date.

Anderson presented the play first in his now-residence in Austin.

“The ‘OG’ *Patches* opened in August of last year at the Carver Theater in Austin,” he said. “It’s something I’m really proud of and glad to bring it to Dallas.

“*Patches* is this artistic gumbo with all these theatrical elements. I love that it’s storytelling rooted in my community but also, expect the unexpected.”

Anderson is a bit coy about personal information, but he does admit that this show is based in real life. He wrote poems about his own day-long date. In those poems, he explored his own vulnerabilities and attraction.

Those writings eventually grew into *Patches*.

He added that his own body positivity is another element that is important



to his show. “I’m a bigger-bodied, gay, Black femme, and I love to show my skin,” he said. “I wanted to curate a story that gives hope to people like me.

“This confident Black man has someone who affirms him,” he continued. “We all want love, and I want people to see this and see that they are deserving; everyone is deserving of love.”

Anderson added that *Patches* was his opportunity to showcase a different type of romance from the ones we are so used to seeing.

“The world tries to tell me that I am not worthy or not sexy or not beautiful, but I have friends and people who affirm me,” he said. “I didn’t always realize my own value or see beauty in myself. Now I know I look good, and I know I am

sexy, and I can give that positive energy to the world.”

Anderson is set on making the world a better place — whether it’s through spreading body positivity or engaging with the community for awareness. When he’s not coming up with a new play or spending time in Dallas, he’s back in Austin serving as the director of community engagement at Texas Health Action. His primary work is focused on reducing HIV disparities, cultivating relationships with community members and developing strategies to reduce stigma surrounding HIV and sexual health.

Anderson fuses his creativity and his social activism into works that center on Black queer experiences.

When Teresa Coleman Wash, exec-

utive artistic director of BATC, saw the show, she knew this was an ideal story to launch the company’s new season.

“Last year, I had the pleasure of seeing *Patches* at the Carver Museum in Austin,” Coleman Wash said in an email. “There were so many people in that theater that they had to bring in chairs to accommodate everyone. The energy in that place was so electric.

“I made a beeline to Joe after the show to invite him to open our 31st anniversary season,” she continued. “It was a no-brainer for me because Joe was born in Dallas; he grew up in Oak Cliff, and a lot of his material talked about the gentrification of Bishop Arts.”

Anderson said he’s not only thrilled for this homecoming experience, but to also be bringing his story of Pride to this stage in the place he grew up.

“When Teresa came to me, the most important part was that no one changed the story, and I was immensely grateful she saw it and got it,” he said. “I don’t want to be the first of anything, but I’m so grateful, too, that Bishop Arts Theatre Center wanted to amplify my vision of this Black and queer story.”

For tickets, visit BishopArtsTheatre.org.

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ing polling place.”

But, Margolis said, “Dallas County has opted to use a location that clearly lacks the necessary facilities and legal compliance. Given the much better alternative available, I question why Dallas County would make this decision knowing that the Rowlett Community Centre, a superior site, was offered at no cost and in the best interest of our voters.

“It is difficult to understand how such a decision serves the public interest, particularly when it unnecessarily complicates the voting process and risks disenfranchising our residents,” he added.

McKee said that Freedom Place is biased politically, as it serves as the venue for Rowlett Area Republican Women’s Club and Rowlett Republican Men’s monthly meetings.

She said the owner and pastor, Kason Huddleston, is on record as openly Republican and conservative, and as having said, “We don’t build churches; we take cities.”

McKee said Huddleston is also openly anti-LGBTQ.

CBS reported that the Dallas County Commissioners Court has the final say on voting locations, and Margolis is hoping it reconsiders its decision.

“In Rowlett, we have a proud tradition of civic engagement, and it is my priority to ensure that every voter has the opportunity to cast their ballot in a convenient and accessible environment,” Margolis said. “I urge Dallas County to reconsider this decision in light of the possible legal violations, logistical issues and the availability of a far better option.”

McKee, an attorney, said that there are potential legal grounds for an injunction, including voter suppression issues, insufficient parking and facility space, availability of a superior alternative and lack of a valid certificate of occupancy.

She said Freedom Place Church does not have a certificate of occupancy, meaning that it may not be legally used for any purpose, including as a polling location.

“The Elections Department’s selection of this location violates the law, rendering it an improper and unlawful site for



Judge Xavier Rodriguez

Early Voting,” she said. “Allowing voting to proceed at this site would result in the county’s sanctioning of illegal activity, necessitating immediate injunctive relief.”

Huddleston this week has threatened to sue the city for “religious discrimination” for its efforts to convince the county not to use the church as a polling site. Huddleston said that after the county designated his church as Rowlett’s only early voting location, the city retaliated by revoking the church’s occupancy permit.

Paxton’s efforts to suppress votes

Additionally, the new Texas Department of Safety guidelines preventing transgender people from changing gender markers on their state-issued driver licenses and IDs could interfere with trans peoples’ ability to vote. If an election judge decides a person’s gender expression does not match the gender on the person’s ID, the judge could refuse to

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Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton

allow that person to vote.

The Texas Department of Public Safety Driver License Division Chief Sheri Gipson, in an August email, directed staff to ignore court orders allowing individuals to have their gender markers changed on state-issued IDs and driver licenses. She also instructed workers to send the names of anyone requesting such a change to a specific email.

That directive came after Paxton had asked DPS to send him a list of everyone in Texas who had requested a gender marker change, but DPS said no such list was available. Earlier this month, DPS Director Steve McCraw asked Paxton's office for a legal opinion on whether DPS can "voluntarily" change back gender markers on driver licenses and state IDs that went into effect before the "no changes" rule was established in August.

After a federal district court ruled that a portion of Senate Bill 1 was unconstitutional, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton moved to block that ruling. The law, which passed in 2021, allows the AG's office to "investigate vote harvesting schemes," according to a press release from Paxton's office.

The judge, Xavier Rodriguez, said that the controversial piece of legislation interferes with voter canvassing and education efforts, violates the 1st and 14th amendments for burdening protected speech and is unconstitutionally vague.

Rodriguez struck down a section of the law that put criminal penalties on organizers and volunteers who receive "compensation or other benefit" for "vote harvesting services."

Vote harvesting "often refers to illegally collecting and delivering mail ballots on behalf of voters and is often invoked to imply election fraud," a writer for the Brennan Center for Justice wrote. In Senate Bill 1, any activity advocating for candidates in the presence of a mail ballot qualifies as "vote harvesting," but the law did not define what compensation means.

"Plaintiffs are uncertain whether providing volunteers food, beverages, gas cards, bus fare, letters of recommendation or academic credit to volunteers for their advocacy work is unlawful because 'compensation' is not defined in the Election Code, and 'benefit' is merely

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defined by a synonym," the judge wrote in his 78-page ruling.

Under Senate Bill 1, people involved in nonpartisan voter outreach and knowingly engaged in "vote harvesting" could be charged with a third-degree felony and spend up to 10 years in prison or be fined up to \$10,000.

Rodriguez's ruling immediately stops any investigation into alleged "vote harvesting," including those pursued by Paxton and his office.

According to a press release decrying the ruling and announcing Paxton's appeal, "SB 1 increased safeguards to prevent ballot harvesting and instituted additional protections ensuring free and fair elections. The judge also banned the Office of the Attorney General from opening investigations into instances of election fraud under the portion of election code enjoined by the decision."

Paxton claims that Judge Rodriguez's ruling, weeks prior to an election, prevents his office from investigating potential violations, which he finds "deeply troubling."

Paxton also requested voter registration data from the Texas Secretary of State to see if noncitizens are illegally registered. He requested the records of every registered voter without a Texas-issued driver's license or ID to "stop noncitizen voting" and "investigate voter fraud."

In a press release, Paxton said he asked the Secretary of State to request data from the federal government that would allow Texas to determine the citizenship status of registered voters who the state can't verify their eligibility.

"The Secretary of State's Office ultimately sent a request to the federal government that allows for excessive delays, potentially preventing Texas from receiving this critical information before the election," the press release said. "Crucially, the request sent by SOS did not provide any information to the federal government about the individuals whose citizenship status needs to be verified, which defeats the purpose of the letter."

He said the Secretary of State hasn't

sent the list of "potential noncitizen voters" to the federal government, so Paxton requested that she share the list with his office so he can send the list himself. He sent that list to the federal government on Oct. 7.

Opponents have said Paxton's efforts are very clearly intended to intimidate voters in certain communities — including people of color and LGBTQ people — to keep them from the polls, or to block their ability to vote completely.

Pushing people to the polls

On the other hand, The Normal Anomaly started an initiative called POWR to the Polls to mobilize Black LGBTQIA Texans to vote. The national nonprofit dedicated to uplifting Black queer communities started the initiative in Dallas and Houston as a nonpartisan effort to provide resources, foster conversations and give Black queer Texans the tools to "vote confidently, knowing their rights and ensuring safe access to the polls."

"Voting is one of the most power-

ful tools we have to create real, lasting change," said Ian L. Haddock, founder and executive director of The Normal Anomaly Initiative. "For Black LGBTQIA+ Texans, the stakes in this election couldn't be higher. Critical issues like safety, healthcare, economic justice, and fundamental human rights are on the ballot.

"We're here to ensure that our community not only shows up but shows out — because our voices matter, and our votes will make a difference," Haddock said.

A press release from the nonprofit said that Texas continues to be a battleground for issues directly impacting Black LGBTQ lives, like trans rights and fights for racial and economic equity.

"We can't wait for others to save us. We have to save ourselves," said Joelle Bayaa-Uzuri Espeut, director of programming at The Normal Anomaly Initiative. "By voting, we're not just shaping policy, we're safeguarding our right to exist, live authentically and thrive with dignity.

"Voting is how we defend ourselves." ■

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the summer, and five of his pieces were selected to exhibit at the fair.

Fierro describes himself as a trans man whose "journey is deeply shaped by his Mexican heritage and his experience as an outsider, both within his family and society at large."

His name comes from the Aztec rain god so participating in this exhibition was particularly meaningful to him.

But Arttitude's and Fierro's plans to participate in the exhibition came to an impasse with Mundo Latino the week before the fair

opened when Mundo Latino announced that artists would be forbidden from referring to themselves in any way as LGBTQ artists.

Since Arttitude is an organization of and for LGBTQ artists, that was impossible.

"After continued discussions with the organizers of Mundo Latino, we have decided to withdraw from the exhibition," Larez wrote to participating Arttitude artists at the time. "Mundo Latino expressed their desire to remove any mention of LGBTQ+ language from their press release, which contradicts Arttitude's mission and values of inclusivity and representation."

"After careful consideration, we feel it is in the best interest of Arttitude and our artists not to affiliate with an organization that seeks to diminish such an integral part of who we are."

Ironically, among the exhibits on display in the Women's Building is an altar dedicated to Jesse Tafalla who died last year. Tafalla is remembered for his work in the LGBTQ and Latinx communities and as a founder of Rainbow LULAC, the first LGBTQ LULAC chapter in the U.S. He also served as

an openly gay board member of Cara Mia Theatre, Tejano Democrats, Teatro Dallas and more. Any description of his life and his work is simply incomplete without "LGBTQ" being included.

But even after Arttitude withdrew from the fair exhibition, Larez continued discussions with Mundo Latino. And on Oct. 4, he announced a continuation of the Arttitude/Mundo Latino partnership.

On Friday, Oct. 4, Larez released a statement that said, "Mundo Latino and Arttitude, an LGBTQ+ arts organization, are excited to announce the continuation of their partnership, bringing together their shared missions of cultural celebration and positive representation. Together, these two organizations will continue to champion the rich heritage of the Latino community and the vibrancy of diverse voices in the City of Dallas, creating spaces where all communities can feel represented and valued."

"For decades, Mundo Latino has been a driving force in elevating the voices of the Latino community through cultural programs, exhibitions and educational initiatives," Larez explained, adding that the two groups' missions closely align in their commitment to amplifying marginalized voices.

"Arttitude is thrilled to continue this important partnership with Mundo Latino," Larez wrote. "This renewed partnership will focus on developing joint programs and events that highlight all intersections of Latino heritage contributions to the arts."

But not this year at the State Fair. ■



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PLAN YOUR WEEK - The Gay Agenda... Our LGBTQ community calendar!



North Texas Pride holds its annual "Come As You Are" Pride festival on Saturday, Oct. 12, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at The Art Center of Plano. See listings for details.

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.

OCTOBER

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's '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. 11: 1st Annual LGBT Online Coming Out Film Festival

The LGBT National Help Center hosts the first Online Coming Out Film Festival, the only festival to focus exclusively on coming out issues. It can be found at ComingOutFilmFest.org.

Oct. 12: Join The Senior Conversation

Residents of City Council Districts 2 and 9 have the chance to meet their city council members and senior affairs commissioners at the Harry Stone Rec Center, 2403 Miller Drive, at 9 a.m. RSVP at 214-670-5227. Make sure LGBT seniors are included. Attend to share your thoughts and learn more about services provided to senior residents by the Office of Community Care Senior Services Program and to make sure LGBTQ seniors are

included in the conversation.

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.

Oct. 16: 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.

Oct. 17-Jan. 12: 'Chivas Clem: Shirttail Kin'

Dallas Contemporary presents *Chivas Clem: Shirttail Kin* at 161 Glass St. Visit DallasContemporary.org for information and to book your visit.

Oct. 18-19: Vignette Art Fair

Texas Vignette hosts their annual art fair at Dallas Market Hall, 220 N. Stemmons Freeway, featuring works by women artists from Texas. Visit TexasVignette.org for more information.

Oct. 19: 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.

Oct. 19: Ghouls, Ghosts, and Glamor

Cedar Creek Lake Pride presents its Halloween party at Sunrise Point at Cedar Creek Lake, 3199 County Road 1708, Malakoff, at 7 p.m. Visit CedarCreekLakePride.com for information and tickets.

Oct. 19: Turn Up The Lights 2024

AT&T Performing Arts Center hosts an unforgettable night of performances at Sammons Park and Wylie Theatre, 2400 Flora St., from 7-11 p.m. Get your tickets at ATTPac.org.

Oct. 19: 'Throwback to the 90s' Prom Night

AIN hosts this throwback prom night at The Satellite, 2137 Butler Road, at 7 p.m. Visit AINDallas.org for information and tickets.

Oct. 21: Early Voting Begins

Dallas County registered voters can vote at any early voting location in the county. Visit DallasCountyVotes.org for voting location hours.

Oct. 24: Taste of Toast

Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road, kicks off their annual gala from 5:30-7:30 p.m. RSVP at the event page on Eventbrite.com.

Through Oct. 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. 26: For the Love of Art

Join the individuals, businesses and others who've contributed to the arts at the ArtCentre of Plano, 902 E. 16th St., at 6 p.m. Visit the event page on Eventbrite.com to reserve a table or purchase individual tickets.

Oct. 30: 'Looking for Chloe'

The Bolton Arts Foundation hosts the premiere of this documentary at the Dallas Holocaust and Human

Rights Museum, 300 N. Houston St., at 6 p.m. For information and to purchase tickets, visit the event page on Eventbrite.com.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 3: 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.

Nov. 3: Dallas Mavericks Pride Night

Join the Dallas Mavericks as they take on the Orlando Magic for Pride Night at 6:30 p.m. Visit Mavs.Spinozo.com for tickets.

Nov. 3-5: 2024 Women in Classical Music Symposium

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra presents the 6th Annual Women in Classical Music Symposium at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, 2301 Flora St. For more information, visit WomenInClassicalMusic.com.

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

Look for extended listings online at DallasVoice.com



Kehlani brings her *Crash World Tour* to the Pavilion at Toyota Music Factory on Friday, Oct. 11. See listings for details.

Cassie Nova

ASKA A DRAG QUEEN

Perfecting your Halloween drag

Y'all, Halloween is just around the corner, and, if you are like me, it is starting to stress you out — but in a good way. We, as gay folks, have a reputation to protect. We have to have the best costumes and the best parties. The straighties are looking to us, and we cannot let them down.

For a drag queen, Halloween is an all-year event — although we do use the holiday to get a little experimental. I am super excited for my costume this year; it is an idea I have wanted to do for years, and now, I am finally doing it. I'm exhausted, stressed and excited all at the same time. But that usually means I am really proud of whatever it is I am working on.

It is so hard to get inspired and stay inspired to see a look or an idea through to completion. I suffer severely from not following through; I will talk myself out of doing something I think will be great because of the chance it won't go over well. Sometimes, you pour your heart and soul into an idea, a look, a performance — whatever — only to have it be met with a “meh” from an audience. It can literally hurt your feelings.

Let me give you an example: For Christmas in 2003, I got the original Broadway cast recording of *Wicked* as a gift. I was immediately obsessed. I played it pretty much non-stop for months. Before I actually saw the musical, I tried to piece together the story and mentally picture how each song was performed. This was before YouTube. (God, that sounds weird! Before YouTube! ... Anywho.) This was before you could look up and find videos or clips of whatever you wanted, so I only had a few pictures that I found online from the musical.

I knew I wanted to be Elphaba from *Wicked* on Halloween, and I wanted to perform “No Good Deed” in the show. I got the costume, the make-up, the broom and even made a very cool looking grimoire (her spell book). I was so freakin' excited for the Halloween show!

That night I got to the club extra early to make sure I had plenty of time to do my make-up and get everything perfect. It is a pain in the ass to base your head and hands green. You gotta get in your ears, behind your ears, the back of your



neck, hands up to your elbow (just in case the sleeve is loose) and, of course, every pore on your big ol' man face. Luckily, I had Asia O'Hara and Jenna Skyy backstage to help me cover everything.

The look came together, and I was loving it.

I walk out onstage looking like the perfect *Wicked* Witch, hands manically waving over my spell book, casting a spell over everyone in the room.

“Eleka nahmen nahmen! Ah tum ah tum eleka nahmen!”

“Eleka nahmen nahmen! Ah tum ah tum eleka nahmen!”

I was really getting into it when I finally looked out into the audience. The room was packed, but only a few people were paying attention to what was happening on the stage.

I had made the big mistake that so many drag queens make: Never debut a performance on Halloween. The gays want to be seen in their costumes and are not paying any attention to anybody else. It happens every year; I don't know why I thought it would be different that year.

Looking back, I realize that not enough people knew the music from *Wicked* well enough then to be excited about seeing it

in a drag show. The album/CD had only been out about 10 months at that time, and only my hard-core musical-loving gays even knew that *Wicked* existed.

Hell, Idina Menzel hadn't even performed “Defying Gravity” on *David Letterman* yet! Plus, I probably would have had better luck if I had performed “Defying Gravity.”

I spent the rest of the night heartbroken and pissed off. To top it off, I had to figure out two other songs to perform whilst being painted green. I think I did Evanescence as Medusa and Celine Dion's “River Deep Mountain Wide” for some reason.

Worst Halloween ever!

But I did learn a valuable lesson: I don't have to wait for Halloween to do something fun. I'm a fucking drag queen! I do what I want!

So, this year, I will be debuting my Halloween costume the night of the block party, and I will probably wear it at every show through Halloween and beyond. Who knows: If it goes over well, I might bust it out at the first of every month when bills are due. Drag ain't cheap, and Halloween drag, done right, surely ain't cheap.

Who am I tellin'? If you are reading

this and are a big gay homo, you probably already have your costume picked out and are spending your evenings embellishing the accessories. That's what I love about our community, we are so extra!

And to all of you fine-ass gays that wait until Halloween to dress slutty — Stop it! Dress slutty all year! I promise, if y'all do that for me, I will be more “experimental” throughout the year with my drag for you — Pennywise in February, Slutty Mrs. Clause in August.

Let's get fucking crazy! You go first.

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

word search solution



this week's solution



browse

For a more complete Community Calendar online, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.

submit

To submit an item for inclusion in the Community Calendar, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.

SCENE ● Federal Club Mixer

PEOPLE, PLACES AND FACES



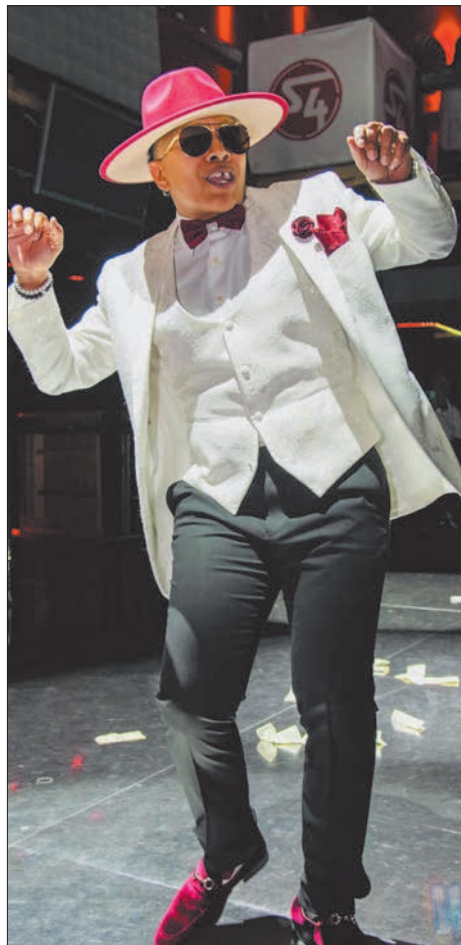
Classic Chassis Car Club



Pride Frisco Pride Fest



WETT



COLOR SPLASH OUT AND PTX DIVERSE PRESENT...

PRINCETON PRIDE MONSTER MASH

Sunday October 27th, 2024
2pm - 6pm
J.M. Caldwell Sr. Community Park
500 W College Ave, Princeton, TX 75407

AMY MUAH	JAZZI BLEU	CARRIE BJORK	LECHÉ DIAMANTÉ	AUNDRÁ MIKYLES
MISS DALLAS BLACK CONTINENTAL NEWCOMER	MR. PRINCETON PRIDE 23/24	MISS PRINCETON PRIDE 23/24	LOUISIANA'S BEARDED QUEEN 2023	FORMER MR. DALLAS PRIDE 2017

Vendors, Food Trucks, Variety Show, Family Zone, Prizes, Costume Contest, Candy & More!
FREE EVENT! NO TICKETS REQUIRED

DRAG US TO THE POLLS

Sunday Oct. 27
11am - 2pm

Taylor Summers	Krystal Summers	Liyah Alize	Angelique Davenport

Free Brunch!

Emcee Cora Black

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DCDP

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Join us after the show as we walk down Cedar Springs to the Oak Lawn Branch Library & Early Vote together as a group!

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WORD SEARCH

Diversions Word Search - Ariana DeBose

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

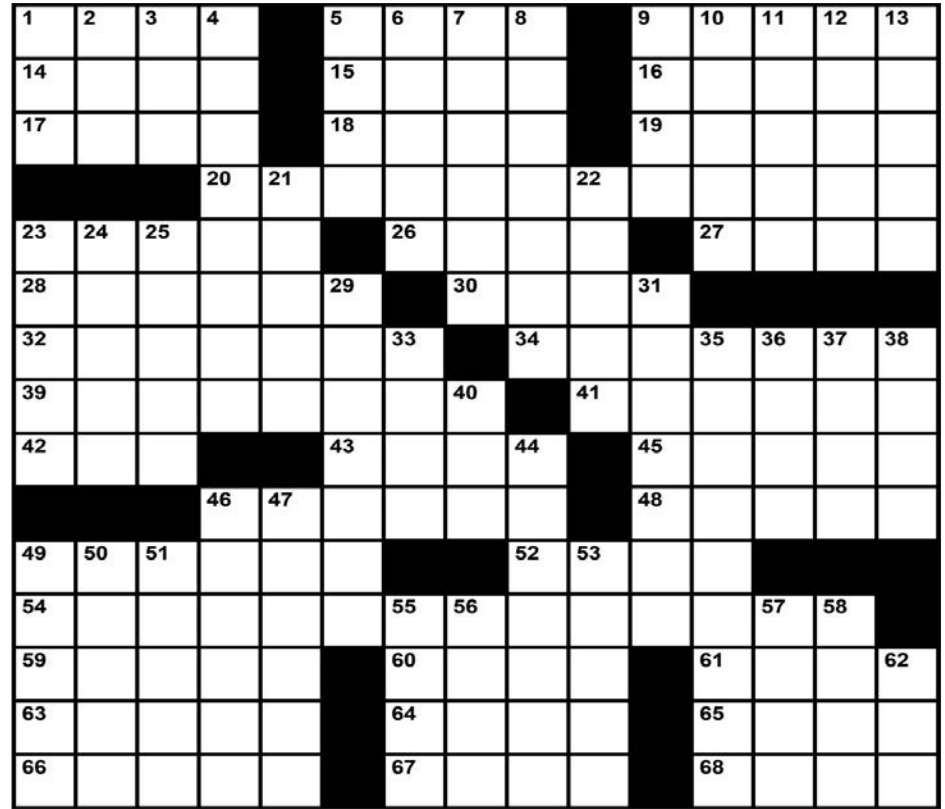


Ariana/DeBose (Born in) Wilmington North/Carolina Actress/Singer/Dancer LGBTQ/Advocate Partner:/Sue Makkoo	So You/Think/You Can (Dance)(2009) One Life/To Live Broadway/Debut Bring It On (2011) Motown/Pippin	Hamilton (2015) (The) Donna/Summer Musical (2017-18) (The) Prom (2020) Schmigadoon (2021) Disney's/Wish (2023)	West/Side/Story (2021)(Won:) Oscar/BAFTA/Golden/Globe Hosted/Tony/Awards (2022-24) Argylle,/House Of/Spoils (2024) Kraven (the)/Hunter (Dec 2024) Launched/Unruly/Hearts (Initiative)
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Visit <https://www.facebook.com/DiversionsPuzzles> for more free puzzles and book info by Kerry Shatzer!

Solution on Page 24

PUZZLE | Wedding Toast



Solution on Page 24

Across

- 1 Bottom
- 5 Moby Dick chaser
- 9 Billie Holiday's
God ___ the Child
- 14 Samurai's continent
- 15 Biggest of three bears
- 16 Good witch Glinda's
compass point
- 17 Seamen
- 18 A Brit soldier may
shoot it off
- 19 Like rival divas
- 20 Start of recently
married Rupert
Everett's quote about
misery in *My Best
Friend's Wedding*
- 23 Colette novel
- 26 ___ ex machina
- 27 De novo
- 28 Making minor
adjustments
- 30 One who looks
into crystal balls
- 32 Supported an org.
for ending AIDS?
- 34 More of the quote
- 39 More of the quote
- 41 Alley cats
- 42 Elton John's title
- 43 Metallic sound
- 45 Antonio Bandera's
meat

46 *This Is Spinal Tap*

- director Rob
- 48 Keyed up
- 49 Half of a pair of balls
- 52 *Glen or Glenda*: ___
Two Lives
- 54 End of the quote
- 59 Some of them are gray
- 60 The 411
- 61 "Va-va-va-___!"
- 63 Former gay men's
lifestyle magazine
- 64 Steed stopper
- 65 *The Music Man* setting
- 66 Petticoat junctions?
- 67 South Beach
mementos
- 68 Discharge

Down

- 1 It feels safe in a hole
- 2 Home o' the brave
- 3 To me, to
Magnus Hirschfeld
- 4 Bear claws and such
- 5 Vaulted area at the
Cathedral of Hope
- 6 Couldn't stomach
- 7 High points
- 8 Formal affair
- 9 Sons of, at Beth
Chayim Chadashim
- 10 Loads of
- 11 Stu of early TV
- 12 Level at which
sodomy is
decriminalized
- 13 Shakespearean *tamee*
- 21 Gandhi, e.g.
- 22 Internet surfers
- 23 Cruises a room
at gay.com
- 24 ___ Minh City,
Vietnam
- 25 Penetrate
- 29 More windy
- 31 Garage tool
- 33 Tylenol target
- 35 Gay-friendly former
governor of California
- 36 Lawman Wyatt
- 37 Unit of force
- 38 River of the country
of the Singing Nun
- 40 U-turn from SSW
- 44 Funny lady Kathy
- 46 Heat up again
- 47 Uses a rubber
- 49 Has sex on a carpet?
- 50 Cole Porter title city
- 51 Whoopi, in
The Lion King
- 53 Companions of
tigers and bears
- 55 Rita Mae Brown's
Pay ___
- 56 Top draft level
- 57 Fruit ___ (gay district)
- 58 Rob of
Brothers & Sisters
- 62 Mother, to Gomer

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