

Being a gay U.S. attorney in Texas

Fort Worth native Pitman makes history
Top federal prosecutor was nominated by anti-LGBT senators

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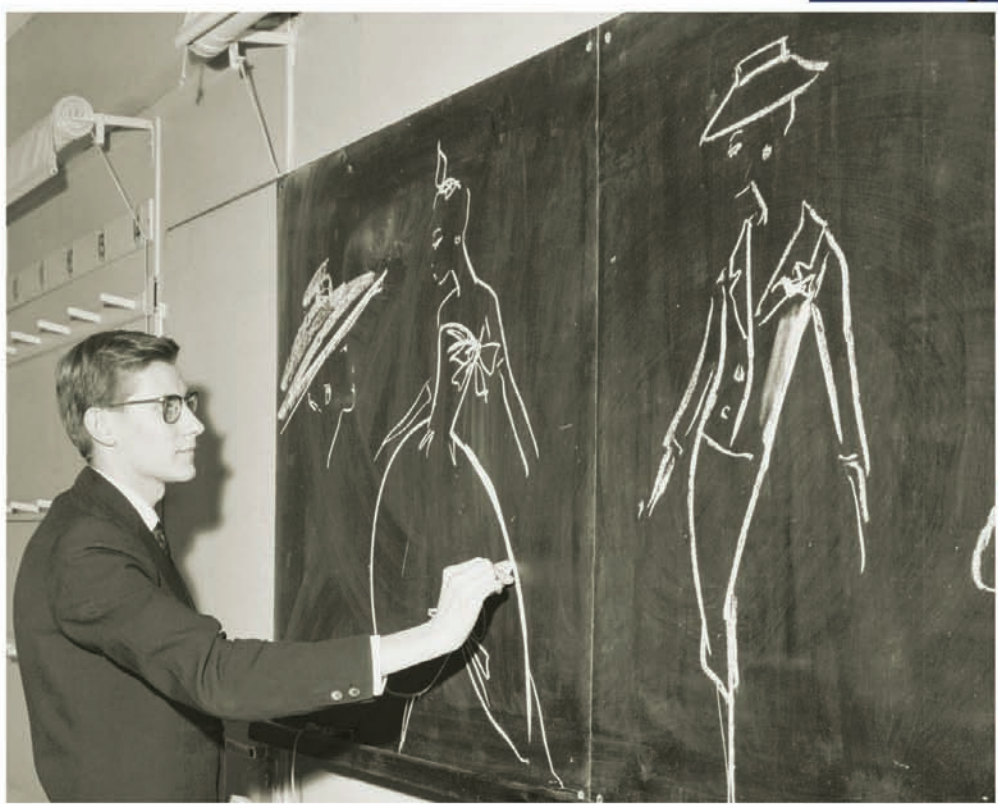
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Tammy Baldwin stumps in Dallas

Having a seat at the table has never mattered more for the LGBT community than in the 2012 election cycle, according to Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, D-Wisc., who's vying to become the first openly gay U.S. senator.

Baldwin, who in 1998 became the first out non-incumbent elected to Congress, was in Texas last weekend to raise money from LGBT donors for her Senate campaign. She attended a private gathering Friday night, March 23, in Dallas before speaking Saturday at the Human Rights Campaign's Dallas/Fort Worth Federal Club's Spring 2012 Luncheon. Baldwin traveled to Houston for a brunch hosted by the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund on Sunday. Baldwin is endorsed by both HRC and the Victory Fund.

"Whether the objective is large or small, whether the arena is public or private, whether you are a lone voice or a chorus of thousands, having a seat at the table matters, and this election season, I would argue that it has never mattered more," Baldwin told the group of some 200 at the HRC luncheon.

Baldwin said when two lesbian sailors kissed at Norfolk harbor in December after one returned home aboard the USS Oak Hill — in a photo that symbolized the end of the military's ban on open service — they "kissed decades of discrimination good riddance."

"Even the very fact that I'm the presumptive Democratic nominee for a U.S. Senate seat in Wisconsin speaks volumes about the progress we've made and continue to make," she said.

But on the flip side, Baldwin said "civility is hard to find" in the current political climate, and she said LGBT equality is "proceeding at an uneven pace."

"Nevertheless, I share the frustration of those who feel our quest for equality has not come far enough or fast enough," said Baldwin, who called the so-called Defense of Marriage Act unfair, discriminatory, unconstitutional and un-American.

Prior to the dinner, Baldwin told Instant Tea she supports the effort to add marriage equality to the Democratic Party's platform. Baldwin served on the platform committee in 2008.

"I certainly hope we do that," she said of the marriage equality plank. "I would say that I hope the platform in its entirety is very strong on LGBT equality. I don't expect to be on the platform writing committee this time given my other engagements. I certainly hope that that will be a focus of those who participate in the process."

Baldwin said President Barack Obama has done more for LGBT equality than any president in history, from signing LGBT-inclusive hate crimes legislation and the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" to choosing not to defend the Defense of Marriage Act against federal court challenges. But she noted that House Speaker John Boehner has spent \$1.5 million in taxpayer money defending DOMA because the Obama administration refuses to do so.

"We celebrate the increasing number of same-sex marriages, but we continue to fight a well-organized and well-financed opposition to equal marriage rights," Baldwin said. "We celebrate every Gay Straight Alliance and anti-bullying campaign in our schools, but we continue to fight tragic cruelty that occurs to our children. We are on the right path, but clearly we have far still to go."

And that's why Baldwin said she chose to give up a "safe" House seat to run for what will be a hotly contested Wisconsin Senate seat. Baldwin



Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin

said the Tea Party wave of 2010 led to the defeat of Wisconsin Democratic Sen. Russ Feingold, whom she called a friend and "a great ally of the LGBT community." Feingold was replaced by Republican Ron Johnson.

"Instead of that wonderful progressive voice we used to have, Wisconsin is represented by a senator who just votes no," Baldwin said. "He is happy to block any and every effort to confront the great challenges that our nation faces right now, and that's not the Wisconsin way. Our state's motto is 'Forward,' and we need a senator who will lead us in that direction."

Baldwin is vying for the state's other Senate seat, which is currently held by Democrat Herb Kohl, who's retiring at the end of this year. Baldwin is opposed in the Democratic primary, but there are four Republicans in the race, including former Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson.

"Independent polls show me in a dead heat with the leading Republican contender, a former governor of our state who is known to nearly 95 percent of all voters in Wisconsin, while I'm known to slightly more than 50 percent of all voters in the state, so I have room to grow as my message gets out. He doesn't," Baldwin said.

Baldwin said she's polling ahead of the other three Republican candidates. Wisconsin doesn't hold its primaries until August. "So, like Romney and Gingrich and Santorum, I expect the four Republicans in the Wisconsin Senate primary to kind of tear each other up, while they're exposing their extreme agenda," Baldwin said.

Earlier, Baldwin told Instant Tea she thinks it would be to the Republican nominee's "electoral detriment" to bring up her sexual orientation in the general election.

"This race isn't going to be about me; it's going to be about having a champion for the middle class," she said. "But with so many outside groups in politics these days, these super PACs that have been unleashed by Citizens United, we need to be prepared for any eventuality."

Baldwin said it's going to be "a tough race" because Wisconsin is "deeply and evenly divided." But she said HRC has been with her every step of the way, just as they were when she first ran for Congress in 1998. She also said the LGBT community played an important role in her decision to get in the race, as well as her ability to clear the Democratic field without a primary.

"They looked at the support that I'm getting from the LGBT community and what that meant, and they wisely decided I was the strongest contender," Baldwin said of the other candidates. "I am very grateful for that incredible support."

— John Wright

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Is this the year ExxonMobil changes its anti-gay ways?

NY comptroller argues Irving-based company is violating marriage law

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
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IRVING — Since the merger of Exxon and Mobil in 1999, shareholders have offered resolutions every year to add sexual orientation to the company's employment nondiscrimination policy.

This year, New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli wants the company to not only amend the policy but also to begin offering health benefits to the spouses of employees married in the Empire State.

He said by not doing so Exxon is violating New York's new marriage equality law.

DiNapoli has submitted the resolution for several years on behalf of the ExxonMobil shares the state holds in its employee pension funds. DiNapoli's proposal has been voted down at the shareholders meeting held each year at the Meyerson Symphony Center in downtown Dallas. However, the percentage of shareholders voting for the nondiscrimination amendment has steadily risen and topped 30 percent last year. This year's shareholders meeting is set for May 30.

"ExxonMobil claims it does not have discriminatory policies, but it continues to deny health benefits to same-sex couples who are married in New York State that are automatically given to married couples," DiNapoli said.

Mobil was one of the earliest Fortune 500 companies to include sexual orientation in its nondiscrimination policy and offer partner health benefits. But after Exxon and Mobil merged, those rights and benefits were taken away, one of the only times that's happened at a Fortune 500 company. This year, rather than allowing the resolution to be introduced at the meeting, recommending a no vote and expecting a majority of shareholders to sink the proposition, ExxonMobil went to the Securities and Exchange Commission to try to block it.

ExxonMobil based its complaint to the SEC on a statement added to its Corporate Careers publication. The company added a statement to its Employee Policies and Practices page in the publication that reads: "Any form of discrimination by or toward employees, contractors, suppliers, and customers in any ExxonMobil workplace is strictly prohibited. Our global, zero-tolerance policy applies to all forms of discrimination, includ-

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SURPRISING NOMINATION | Despite his sexual orientation, Robert Pitman was nominated for U.S. attorney by anti-gay Texas Republican Sens. Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn. (Shea Carley/The Daily Texan)

The law west of the Pecos

How Fort Worth's Robert Pitman went from student body president at Abilene Christian to openly gay U.S. attorney for Texas' Western District

ANNA WAUGH | Staff Writer
waugh@dallasvoice.com

AUSTIN — Although Robert Pitman found the freedom to be himself while attending law school and eventually came out publicly while a federal prosecutor, he never thought his list of accomplishments would include becoming the first openly gay man to be appointed U.S. attorney.

Pitman was named U.S. attorney for the Western District of Texas in June 2011 by President Barack Obama after being nominated by Republican Texas Sens. John Cornyn and Kay Bailey Hutchison. He took office in October after serving as a U.S. magistrate judge since October 2003.

As U.S. attorney, Pitman is among the four Texas U.S. attorneys and 93 U.S. attorneys nationally that serve as chief federal law enforcement officer in their districts.

Growing up in Fort Worth in a Christian household, Pitman was the youngest of five children. His father, a pharmaceutical salesman, and his

stay-at-home mother raised him in the Church of Christ, and he later attended Abilene Christian University.

"I was aware of my sexual orientation from early in life, but because of the culture in which I was raised, it took me a bit longer than it would otherwise have for me to come out," he said.

Although he thrived at Abilene Christian, eventually serving as student body president, he said it wasn't until he attended law school at the University of Texas in Austin that he truly found widespread acceptance for his sexuality.

"I really had a wonderful experience there," Pitman said. "Unfortunately, it [Abilene Christian] was not a place that welcomed gay and lesbian people, and so it wasn't until I went to law school at the University of Texas that I was really able to feel safe in coming out."

Attending UT was "an easy choice," for Pitman because of the law school's reputation and his love for Austin, but the first spark of passion for law was in high school.

Pitman joined the Youth and Government organization in high school and won a state competition, sending him to compete nationally. The excitement drove him toward the profession, giving him the "first indication that I was interested in law and was pretty focused on that from that time on."

At UT he found himself surrounded by open-minded people, but his upbringing made him hesitate to come out.

After law school, Pitman returned to Fort Worth to work for U.S. District Judge David O. Belew Jr. A year later, he went back to Austin to work at a law firm, but he still holds onto "part of my Fort Worth heritage." He has a small farm outside of Austin where he escapes on weekends to ride his two horses.

Pitman joined the U.S. attorney's office in 1990 as assistant U.S. attorney, serving as deputy U.S. attorney before his appointment to U.S. magistrate judge in 2003.

During his first stint as a federal prosecutor, Pitman said he valued the cases that brought justice to the victims. He enjoyed his work and thrived. But his sexuality, which he tried to keep separate from his work, eventually became something he needed to address.

"I never went out of the way to be closeted," he said. "I think I simply regarded it as something that didn't really have anything to do with my job, so early on I sort of kept the two separate, and then I realized it was more effort to do that than to simply be open about it."

Coming out to colleagues was difficult for Pitman because law enforcement officials tend to

■ PITMAN, Page 12

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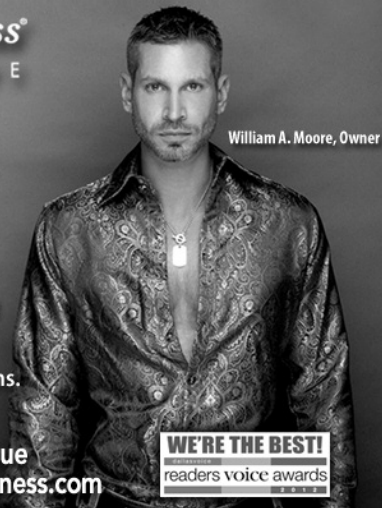
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localbriefs

Trans group marks 6 years at RCD

GEAR (Gender Education, Advocacy & Resources) will mark six years of partnership with Resource Center Dallas on Saturday, April 14, with a celebration from 7 to 9 p.m. at Youth First Texas, 3981 Harry Hines Blvd. The event is free and open to the public and presented with support from Transgender Education Network of Texas (TENT), Youth First Texas and Wells Fargo.

Distinguished individuals in the community who have contributed in making GEAR a valued resource to the transgender community will be honored.

Guest speakers will include GEAR's original coordinator Marla Compton and Omar Narvaez from Lambda Legal. Catered food and music will be provided.

GEAR, the first transgender program sponsored by a major LGBT organization in North Texas, is dedicated to empowering transgender men and women through education, social occasions, outreach and medical services. It focuses on increasing the well-being of all transgender people, their families and their friends, and is a program of Resource Center Dallas.

Spanke's Toilet Paper Party goes on

In 22 years, Spanke's Toilet Paper Party raised more than \$250,000 in personal hygiene products for AIDS Services Dallas. Although Spanke Studer

died last year, the party continues.

Spanke's invitations to his semi-annual party began, "Dear Friends, acquaintances and that cute guy I met at Kroger ..."

The ASD wish list includes: toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash, shampoo, conditioner, ethnic hair care products, combs, brushes, bar soap, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, razors, shaving cream, lotion, baby oil, powder, kleenex, cotton balls, Q-tips and cleaning products.

This year the party will be held at the home of Scott Ewing, 3955 Hawthorne Ave. in Oak Lawn from 4 to 8 p.m. on April 8 after Easter in the Park.

"Please join us to continue Spanke's tradition of generosity and hospitality," wrote Ewing. "Bring all of your friends, the more the merrier! Most importantly bring LOTS OF TP!"

Correction

DeHaro-Saldivar Health Center, 1400 N. Westmoreland Road in Dallas, continues to offer adolescent HIV services, although intake is now done at Parkland hospital's Amelia Court.

Also, drug trials are still being conducted at Amelia Court and at community clinics offering HIV services, but those trials are administered by UT Southwestern Medical Center.

An article in the Jan. 12 edition of Dallas Voice indicated otherwise.

pet of the week / Bailey

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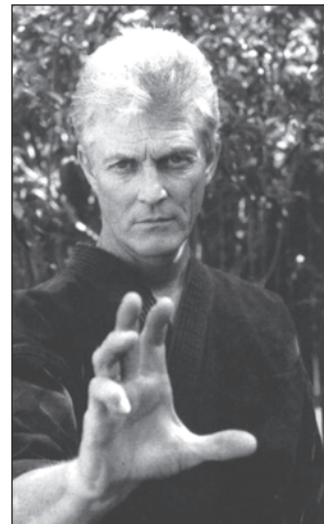
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LGBT Friendly



Gay-rights 'champion' Eddie Bernice Johnson draws 2 challengers

Attorney Taj Clayton says he also supports full LGBT equality, including ENDA, repeal of DOMA

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
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Two candidates are challenging 10-term Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson for the District 30 Democratic nomination for Congress.

For the 76-year-old Johnson, a staunch LGBT ally and North Texas' only Democrat in Congress, it represents her first serious election challenge in years.

Taj Clayton is a Harvard-educated attorney who served on the Obama Texas Campaign Finance Committee in 2008. In the last reporting quarter, the 35-year-old Clayton raised more money than either of his two opponents.

The third candidate, Barbara Mallory Caraway, served four terms on the Dallas City Council from 1993-2001. She was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 2006 and is in her third term as a state legislator.

At least five bills of interest to the LGBT community were submitted in the current Congress.

Johnson is a co-sponsor of two of them — the Respect for Marriage Act and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act — and she supports the other three. Johnson has consistently maintained a score of 100 percent on the Human Rights Cam-

paign's Congressional Scorecard.

"Eddie Bernice Johnson has been a real champion for the community," HRC spokesman Michael Cole-Schwartz said. "Up and down, she's been a real champion for us."

Johnson wasn't immediately available for a phone interview this week, but her staff said she'd be willing to conduct an in-person interview with the newspaper when she's in Dallas.

Clayton said he would also support for the Respect for Marriage Act, ENDA and other pro-LGBT legislation. The Respect for Marriage Act would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibits federal recognition of same-sex marriage, and ENDA would ban anti-LGBT employment discrimination.

"Gays and lesbians should have all the same rights as everyone else and not be subject to harassment or discrimination," Clayton said.

Clayton described himself as a product of public schools and the first generation in his family to attend college. He said he worked his way through Harvard as an undergrad cleaning dorm bathrooms. He graduated with honors and then went on to Harvard Law School.

Clayton called support for anti-bullying legislation a "no-brainer."

"Gays and lesbians have a right to not be harassed," he said.

He called education a priority and said that all children deserves to learn in a safe environment.

■ CHAMPION, Next Page

2012 ELECTIONS

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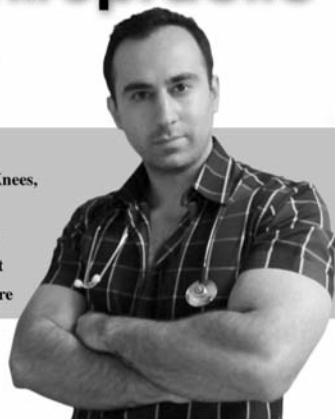
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HIGH MARKS | Democratic Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, shown above in her district office in Dallas in 2010, has consistently received a perfect score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's biennial Congressional Scorecard. Johnson faces a rare primary challenge this year from attorney Taj Clayton and state Rep. Barbara Mallory Caraway, who are shown below. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

■ **CHAMPION**, From Previous Page

Clayton said if he's elected, sexual orientation and gender identity would be part of his office's nondiscrimination policy.

"I'm in this race because I want to see everyone in my community have opportunities," he said. "I've been frustrated because many in my community haven't had the opportunities I've had."

Clayton said his goal is to get into a runoff, and his biggest challenge is building name recognition before the primary. Last weekend he participated in the South Dallas AIDS Walk and he's gone to recent Stonewall Democrats of Dallas meetings.

Mallory Caraway, 55, is the wife of Dwaine Caraway, a City Council member who served as acting mayor after Tom Leppert resigned in 2011. "I am running because I believe it's time for fresh, energetic leadership," Mallory Caraway said.

On support for ENDA, Mallory Caraway said, "I would sign on as a supporter of nondiscrimination against anyone."

On the Dallas City Council, Mallory Caraway voted in favor of a policy that protects gay city employees against discrimination.

On the repeal of DOMA, Mallory Caraway said, "I haven't heard from my constituents on that," but she added that she is open to the idea. "I would certainly have to look at that."

In the last session of the Legislature, Mallory Caraway voted for an anti-bullying bill and a suicide prevention bill backed by Equality Texas.

Equality Texas Deputy Executive Director Chuck Smith said Mallory-Caraway has never been a primary author of any legislation supported by the organization and has never signed on as a joint or co-author.

"Will she vote the right way? Yes," Smith said. "Will she take the leadership role? No."

District 30 includes parts of Oak Lawn, southern Oak Cliff, Downtown, East Dallas, and most of South Dallas and southern Dallas County.

The primary is May 29. ■



WEDDING



SIGLER-THOMAS | Dr. Martin T. Sigler and Mr. Timothy T. Thomas are to be married April 14, 2012, at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City. Martin, 38, is a radiologist in private practice in Dallas. He graduated cum laude from Georgetown University and received his medical degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is the son of Mr. Glenn Sigler and Mrs. Wanda Sigler of Mobile, Ala. Tim, 32, is an attorney in private practice in Dallas. He graduated from Southern Methodist University and received his law degree from SMU Dedman School of Law. He is the son of Linda S. Thomas of Katy. Martin's best man is his twin brother, Andy Sigler. Tim's best man is his friend, Jay Przyborski. Martin and Tim met in November 2008. Exactly one year later Martin surprised Tim and asked him to marry him at a romantic evening at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Dallas. They chose New York City for their wedding after New York State passed marriage equality. They are active in the marriage equality movement with the Human Rights Campaign in Dallas.

Death

Lucas James Spickard was sent from God and welcomed into this world on Sept. 12, 1975, in Detroit Lakes, Minn. Spickard returned to God on March 11, 2012, at the age of 36 in Dallas. He is deeply mourned by his family and the many friends that loved him.



Spickard is survived by his mother, Aliceann Donaldson (Michael) of Panama City, Fla.; father, Gene Spickard (Chris) of Detroit Lakes, Minn.; six brothers, Paul Spickard (Tara) of Alabama, Mark Spickard (Renee) of Colorado, Michael Donaldson (Charlotte) of Germany, Timothy Donaldson (Darlene) of North Dakota, Benjamin Donaldson of Florida, and Robert Donaldson of Florida; sister, Sarah Eckberg (Ron) of Minnesota; 13 nieces and nephews; maternal grandmother, Jeanette Scheeringa; eight uncles; three aunts; numerous cousins; his partner, Donald Dupler; and his close and longtime friend Jack Polachek.

Spickard spent most of his adult life in Texas and had many close friends in the Dallas area. A celebration of his life will be at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 31, at the Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. A reception will follow at the home of Jack Polachek, 4212 Cochran Chapel Road.

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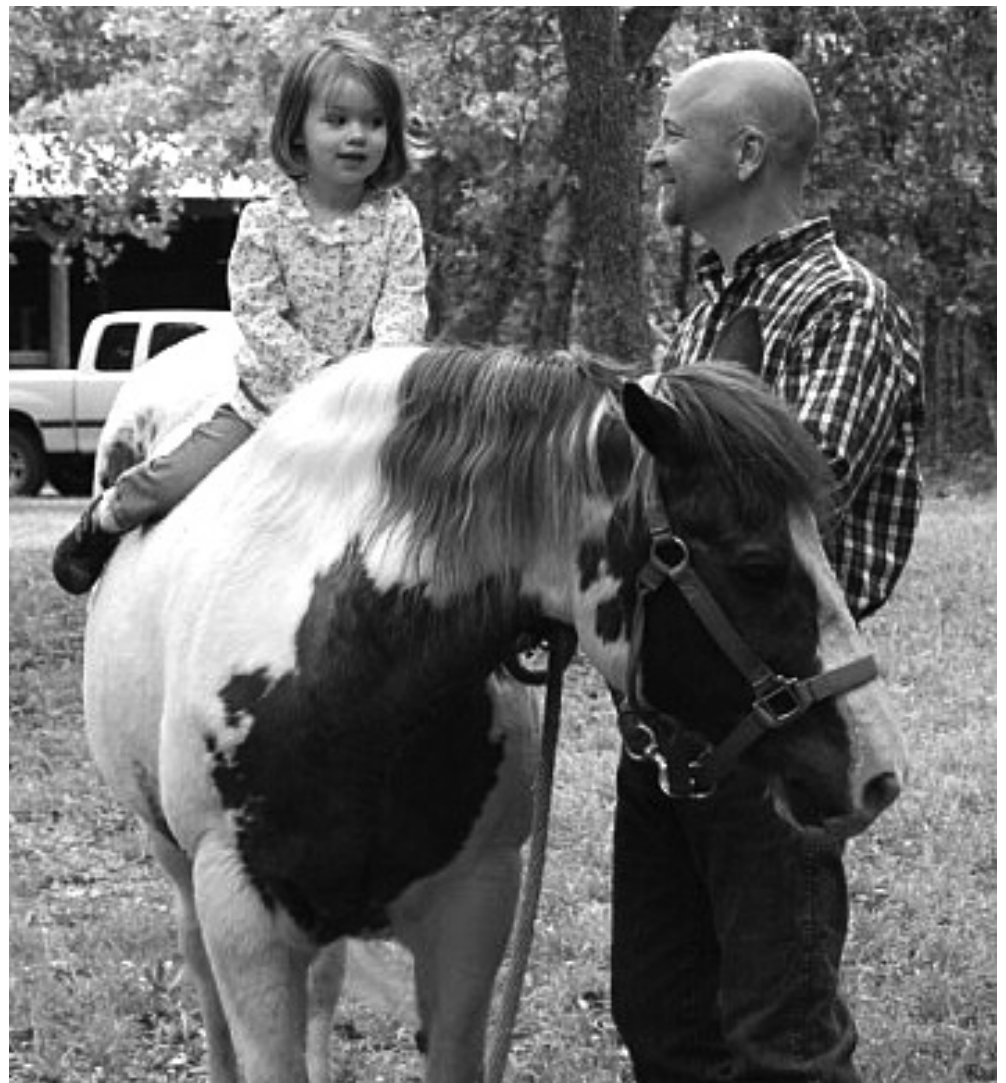


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COWTOWN ROOTS | Pitman, shown with a friend's daughter, says he holds onto 'part of my Fort Worth heritage.' He has a small farm outside of Austin where he escapes on weekends to ride his two horses.

■ PITMAN, From Page 6

have more conservative opinions, he said. However, they also experience many different people and situations on the job, and he's had "very few negative reactions."

Pitman credits his sexuality with making him more independent and stronger, as well as sensitive to people who may have faced discrimination.

"I think that being gay has given me, in the end, helpful perspectives in doing my job," he said.

Pitman's openness about being gay never held him back from advancing in his career.

While serving as deputy U.S. attorney, he was court-appointed as interim U.S. attorney in 2001. One of the main focuses of his job was to detect and protect against issues of national security, and Pitman said he learned a lot from the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

They taught him what to look for in potential future attacks and also spurred his involvement in forming the first anti-terrorism task forces in his district.

The Western District of Texas is one of the largest in the country and includes three of the five largest cities in the state, with 68 counties from El Paso to Austin.

The headquarters is San Antonio, but Pitman lives in Austin, frequenting the branch office there

more often than the other eight.

Pitman is one of four openly gay U.S. attorneys, with lesbians serving in the position in Washington, North Carolina and California.

He is the first gay man to receive the appointment and the first LGBT person in Texas to hold the post, a fact that made his nomination controversial.

The support of Pitman from two Texas senators with anti-gay voting records was a surprise, but Pitman said "they clearly looked at my qualifications" to support him.

The controversy over the nomination spurred both senators to issue statements in support of their decision, commending Pitman as a person, prosecutor and judge aside from his sexuality.

Relying on his hard work and reputation to stand out for himself, Pitman said his strategy has always been to not "give people an opportunity to use [sexuality] against you."

It's a strategy that's carried him forward in life and something he continues to pass on to other LGBT people, finding encouragement in his advancement and how progressive the nation and Texas have become.

"I think the encouraging thing is that we're in a point in history where if you just work hard and show yourself to be reliable and effective, then what used to be limitations, really no longer are," he said. ■

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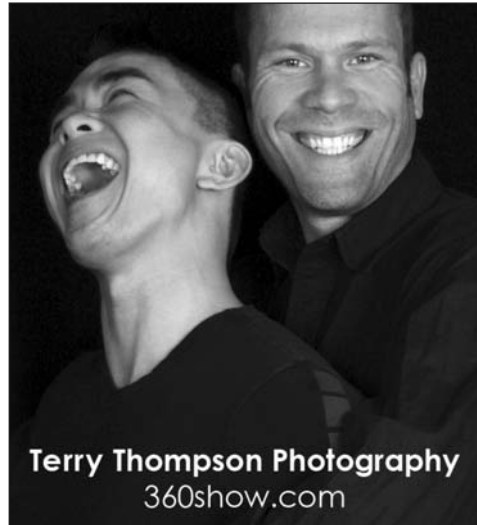
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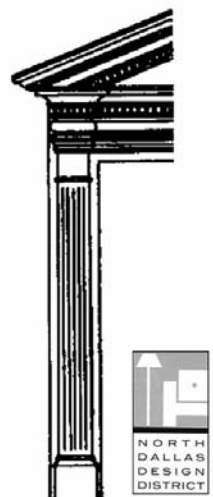
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■ **EXXON**, From Page 6

ing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.”

But the SEC wasn't impressed, saying the publication doesn't carry the same weight as a formal nondiscrimination policy.

The federal agency ruled, “Based on the information you have presented, it appears that ExxonMobil's policies, practices, and procedures do not compare favorably with the guidelines of the proposal and that ExxonMobil has not, therefore, substantially implemented the proposal.”

For three years, DiNapoli has introduced a shareholder proposal, but as a result of the passage of marriage equality in New York last year, his arguments are strengthened.

In countries with marriage equality, ExxonMobil offers benefits to the same-sex partners of employees. In the U.S., it recognizes only heterosexual spouses.

In an email to Dallas Voice, DiNapoli said Exxon's policy is “in conflict with anti-discrimination and marriage equality statutes in New York State.”

“By law we have to have a representative introduce the resolution,” DiNapoli's press secretary Eric Sumberg said, “so there will be a representative of the New York State Common Retirement Fund at the meeting.”

Over the last three years, DiNapoli has been successful in negotiating nondiscrimination policies with 27 other companies. This year, he filed

shareholder resolutions with 12 Fortune 500 companies. Of those, he reached agreement with eight, including Dollar General, Dresser-Rand Group Inc. and Equifax, and withdrew those proposals.

In the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index, ExxonMobil has consistently received a score of zero. This year, for the first time, the company received a negative score.

Exxon Mobil was one of only three companies in the CEI that lost points for actively engaging in activity that undermines LGBT equality, based on the company's decision to rescind Mobil's policies.

Of the ExxonMobil board members who are corporate CEOs, three represent companies with a CEI score of 100 percent, two with a 90 percent and two with an 85 percent. Only one comes from a company — Nestle — with a rating of 45 percent. But all have basic nondiscrimination protections.

HRC spokesman Michael Cole-Schwartz said, “Their intransigence is simply inexplicable.”

Resource Center Dallas' Communications and Advocacy Manager Rafael McDonnell said, “Exxon is going to have to add these protections.”

He said if President Barack Obama signs an executive order mandating federal contractors include sexual orientation and gender identity in their nondiscrimination policies, ExxonMobil would be forced to comply. Exxon has more than \$1 billion in federal contracts annually.

Meanwhile, although ExxonMobil has refused to provide protections for its LGBT employees, its employees have been generous to Dallas AIDS and LGBT organizations.



PUMPED UP | LGBT protesters gathered outside Exxon's shareholder meeting in Dallas in 2010.

During the company's first Employees' Favorite Charities Campaign, employees and retirees raised \$1.6 million for 127 Dallas-Fort Worth non-profit organizations. Among those were AIDS Arms, AIDS Outreach Center and Resource Center Dallas. Other LGBT-friendly organizations that benefited from the employee campaign were Planned Parenthood of North Texas, Hope Cottage, Human Rights Initiative of North Texas and Gilda's Club of North Texas. Vogel Alcove, a day-care facility for children of the homeless, was co-founded by the LGBT Congregation Beth El Binah.

Few anti-LGBT groups were on the list. The notable exception was the Irving-based Boy Scouts of America, which took a case to the Supreme

Court to preserve their right to discriminate. ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson serves on the Boy Scouts board of directors.

So while the company won't cover health benefits for same-sex spouses of its employees, it will be matching funds to HIV/AIDS and LGBT organizations. And those funds will cover health exams for people without other insurance at places like AIDS Arms' Trinity Health and Wellness Clinic and dental exams at the Nelson Tebedo Clinic and gynecological exams at Planned Parenthood. Unless DiNapoli prevails, ExxonMobil's employees' families may have to seek out treatment at these facilities that the company is helping to fund. ■

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SETTING THE PACE | Participants cross the finish line in AIDS Outreach Center's annual fundraising walk in 2011. This year, the event has added a 5K run and hopes to attract an additional 200 participants.

Tarrant AIDS walk turns 20

Fort Worth's AIDS Outreach Center renames event 'Dash for Hope' and adds 5K run to mark anniversary

ANNA WAUGH | Staff Writer
waugh@dallasvoice.com

FORT WORTH — Michelle Barefield has braved freezing temperatures and rain with the AIDS Outreach Center's annual walk for 19 years to bring people one thing: hope.

Director of outreach and prevention services, Barefield has worked for AOC since the late '80s. She started out as a volunteer and became a full-time employee, serving on the planning committee for the annual AIDS walk several times.

This year is the 20th anniversary of the walk, which is an official 5K with the addition of a run this year. The name is also different, Dash for Hope, taking on an encouraging slogan for the future.

Barefield said the walk started small two decades ago. Now, the run has about 600 participants, planning committee co-chair Cheryl McDonald said.

Attendance of about 800 is expected with the addition of the run this year.

"Because we've added the run, that's a different dimension and a different group of people that would come out for that," McDonald said. "That's a whole new arena for us."

The 5K walk and run are Sunday, April 1, at Trinity Park pavilion on West Seventh Street in Fort Worth.

While the planning committee could change the name of the event again next year, McDonald said the positive outlook with the name may make it

stick in the future.

"There's a lot of excitement about the addition of a run that really seems to be generating a lot of enthusiasm, so I think given that we'd probably keep the name," she said.

While AOC wanted to create a way to make the annual walk bigger and draw more participation with the run, McDonald said the change was also in honor of the anniversary.

"We really wanted to sort of celebrate this in a different way because this was the 20th anniversary, and it's always such a great event and we wanted to bring even more energy to it," she said.

Dash to the finish

Dash for Hope is at Trinity Park in Fort Worth from 1-5 p.m. Sunday, April 1. Registration for Dash for Hope is \$30 before the event and \$35 the day of the event. For more information or to register, visit www.firstgiving.com/aocwalk.

The event is the center's largest fundraiser and brings in about \$100,000 each year. However, the proceeds have dwindled about 40 percent since 2006, Develop-

ment and Marketing Director Jim Downing wrote in an email.

Barefield said she thought her job would no longer be needed in 1995 after the advent of anti-retroviral medication. But the need for her and the services of AOC have only increased.

"One of the things that we are seeing is that people are living longer and their life expectancy can be the same as anybody else's if they take the medication," she said, adding that what people really need sometimes is a hopeful outlook. "The thing people needed the most that didn't have was hope. What we do is we help people with hope everyday."

Barefield said she wants the event to attract more walkers and especially runners to remind people that AIDS still impacts many people in their community that need the medication and support AOC provides.

"The difference between people who make it with HIV and those that don't is hope," Barefield said.

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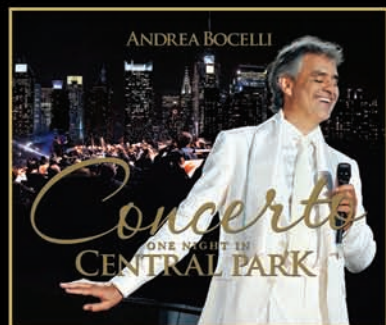


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viewpoints

The dangers of (ocean) cruising

Sodomy charges against gay couple aboard Atlantis ship in Caribbean should serve as warning to all LGBT travelers, regardless of destination

When traveling out of the country it's always a good idea to pack lightly for ease of luggage transport, dress down so as not to attract the attention of pickpockets and other criminals and oh, yes — don't remove your clothing in public view of shocked, conservative natives.

A Palm Springs couple on an all-gay Caribbean cruise apparently forgot to follow one of these simple rules recently when their Celebrity Summit cruise ship chartered by Atlantis Events out of Puerto Rico docked in Roseau, Dominica.

People on the island reportedly observed the two men, who have been partners for 17 years, either naked or engaged in sexual activity on their balcony, depending on the report you read. Local police officers boarded the ship and arrested them on charges of sodomy, or "buggery," which is still highly illegal on several Caribbean islands.

It was one of those *outdoor* relationships, the couple's attorney explained to the court.

"They were struck by the beautiful mountains, the clean and clear fresh air and were having a few cocktails, and so threw caution to the wind," she told an obviously un-amused judge, who called the men "rogues and vagabonds" and fined them \$900 after they pleaded guilty to indecent exposure, according to the Associated Press.

The Los Angeles Times reported the fine amounted to \$4,000, and that the men were held in jail overnight where they were taunted.

After the Dominican judge got through with them, the police drove the two men to the airport for their return to California.

Their cruise ship with 2,000 passengers on board had departed the previous evening without them for St. Barts.

An Atlantis official said he had talked to the two men, and they were in good spirits, but when the two men arrived at LAX International Airport, they were not so upbeat, according to a Los Angeles Times report. The men told the Times reporter they were simply sun bathing nude, not having sex.

The cruise vacation official also claimed the outcome would have been the same had it been a heterosexual couple.

Well, so much for that vacation, the couple might be saying now, although it could make for good cocktail conversation in certain social set-



MISSING THE BOAT | John Hart, left, and Dennis Jay Mayer, shown in booking photos provided by the Dominica Police Department, had to fly back to California because their cruise ship set sail without them after they were arrested on sodomy charges in Dominica. (Associated Press)

tings in the future.

After all, the men's names and indiscretion have now been circulated around the globe, so it's not like they can keep it a secret.

I can just hear it now around the family dinner table at Christmas, "And did you take a lot of pictures?"

The fact is, homosexuality is still condemned in much of the Caribbean, especially in Jamaica, Barbados and the Cayman Islands. Still, all-gay Caribbean cruises are popular and welcomed by tourist officials when the tourists respect local laws and social conventions.

On Grand Cayman Island, there are signs on the beach advising men and women to wear cover-ups over their bathing suits when walking from their hotels and condos to the

beach. Just a little over a decade ago, a cruise ship carrying an all-gay passenger list was denied docking privileges in the Cayman Islands, but that apparently has not happened again.

In other parts of the world the attitudes regarding homosexuality vary, but for the most part LGBT travelers are welcomed if they observe the basic standards of conduct they would ordinarily practice in their cities of residence. I understand it is rare today to come across a hotel that would prohibit a male couple or a female couple from

sharing a room, although I'm sure that can still happen in some places.

As it happens, I will be going on my first cruise this summer.

It will be an all-gay cruise Mediterranean from Barcelona, Spain, to Morocco and back. One thing is for sure, I'm not about to ruin my first cruise by doing something stupid like getting naked in public view of people I know frown on it, no matter how exhilarating and refreshing the breeze and scenery might be.

I'm sure the Moroccans would look a little askance at such behavior.

I'm not shocked by nudity, and I have been to nude beaches.

So if that is the scene on the cruise ship while at sea, I won't be hiding in my stateroom. But at my age I think I will remain clothed, and I'm sure the other passengers and crew will appreciate that.

Still, I would hope other people who might be more daring would not risk getting arrested and ruining their vacation when the ship is anchored near a port.

And it might not be such a bad idea for cruise ship officials to warn the passengers what could happen if they do act out inappropriately. ■

David Webb is a veteran journalist who has covered LGBT issues for the mainstream and alternative media for three decades. Contact him at davidwaynewebb@yahoo.com.



David Webb
The Rare Reporter

Why reproductive rights should matter to the LGBT community

Just because social conservatives have gone retro by focusing on abortion and contraception doesn't mean gays can let down their guard

If you're like me, you don't think a whole lot about birth control. You probably don't have much heterosexual sex, though I shouldn't assume, and you likely believed that we'd come to a grudging truce around a woman's right to control her reproductive life.

In the '80s and '90s, of course, abortion was the battleground of the culture wars; nowadays we all know that it's about the gays.

Which is why I have this queasy feeling that I've time-traveled back about 30 years. Abortion is the hot topic, and I notice that plastic jewelry and jumpsuits are back at Macy's. No one's talking about gay marriage, and women are on TV explaining why having sex for pleasure doesn't make them sluts.

Has the far right (and by that I also mean the 2012 Republican presidential candidates) given up on the gays? Are fundamentalists going retro? It would be nice to imagine they've gotten tired

of us. Maybe we can worry about other things now, like whether Martina Navratilova has had some work done.

But don't relax just yet.

The far right still has its sites on us. Today's crusade against women's sexual autonomy is only a redecorated version of the same moral outrage that has always given them such good political traction. There's good reason for LGBT people to pay close attention to what's happening to reproductive rights.

Consider the new breed of abortion laws, such as the Texas law that forces women seeking an abortion to endure an internal ultrasound, a detailed description of the fetus, audio of its heartbeat and a 24-hour waiting period.

This isn't about any health concerns, just morality. In fact, women report that the experience is degrading, complicated and, in essence, medical rape. They're being put through the wringer for making personal choices about their bodies. Sound familiar?

Women can exempt themselves from part of

the requirement by signing a sworn affidavit that they got pregnant through rape or incest. In other words, they didn't mean to have sex; someone made them.

If the real issue here were the sanctity of life, I don't see why rape should let anyone off the hook. But proponents of these laws say they exist to "protect women." I'm wary of this word, "protect," when I see the harm done to LGBT people in order to "protect" the family.

A bill recently passed the Arizona House that would force doctors to lie about the breast cancer risks associated with abortion (there aren't any, by the way) to scare women out of terminating their pregnancies. This protects women from the truth, evidently. Hiding the facts has been a frequent anti-gay tactic too.

For example, the Prop 8 people successfully sued to permanently seal the video record of the federal Prop 8 trial, a record that beautifully demonstrates the importance of LGBT rights. In Tennessee, legislators are trying to forbid any discussion about LGBT lives in school, as if igno-



Abby Dees
Thinking Out Loud

“
All of this shows how quickly issues that we thought were settled ages ago suddenly become debatable again. History proves that progress can turn on a dime, but I don't really think that's happened yet. Still, we're far from being able to sit back and chill, assured that anyone's freedoms are here to stay.
”

rance were a moral virtue.

Almost all of this moral hypocrisy is wrapped in the mantle of religious freedom, as in, "Your laws about equality and respect for people trample on our religious rights." The far right howled when Obama pushed for contraception coverage in businesses run by religious institutions. If you heard any Rush Limbaugh last month, you heard some of the story. What you might have missed amid all the outrage about Rush's "slut" and "prostitute" language is how he reframed the debate so that people who are restricting women's freedoms were presented as the real victims — victims of religious persecution. This is a continuing trope also used against LGBT people for ostensibly forcing our lifestyles on God-fearing folks, in violation of their First Amendment rights. It's a clever trick.

All of this shows how quickly issues that we thought were settled ages ago suddenly become debatable again. History proves that progress can turn on a dime, but I don't really think that's happened yet. Still, we're far from being able to sit back and chill, assured that anyone's freedoms are here to stay.

California-based writer Abby Dees is the author of 'Queer Questions Straight Talk.' She can be contacted via her website QueerQuestionsStraightTalk.com.



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DIFFA takes a DRAG

After years of denim designs, DIFFA mixes it up with a new concept: Smoking jackets inspired by Yves St. Laurent

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Life+Style Editor

jones@dallasvoice.com

Ever since the design community came together more than 25 years ago to do something — *anything* — to combat AIDS, DIFFA Dallas has made fashion a front-and-center part of its fundraising ... and the gala dinner and runway show that has come to be known as The Dallas Collection has been the centerpiece of that effort. And while the signature jean jacket was not the couture-of-choice at the beginning (“At the very first [one], we made dresses,” recalled John Ahrens, a former producer of the runway show, in 2009), for 20 years, the iconic denim jacket has been a focus for DIFFA.

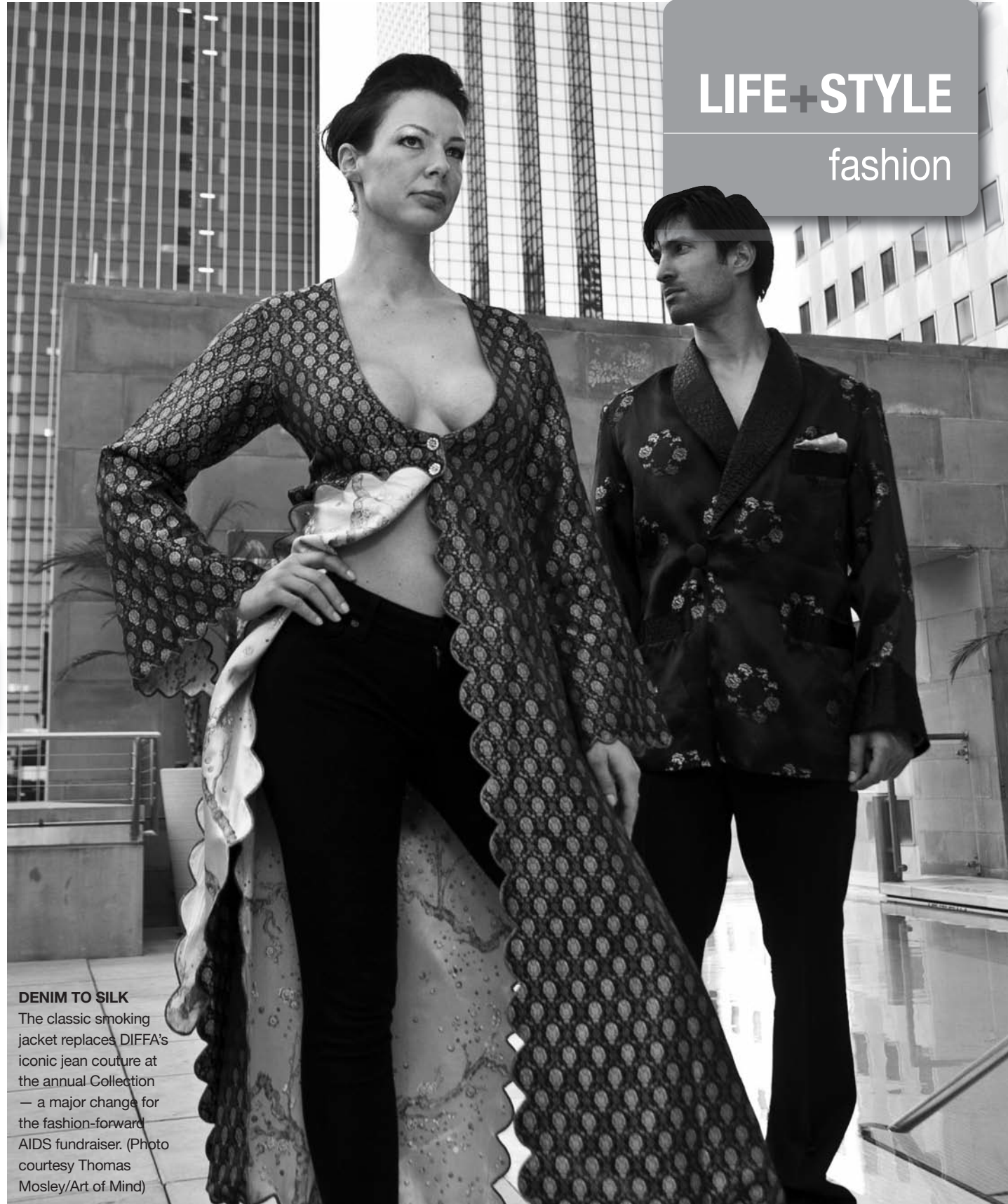
But all things must change.

After a rebuilding period for the past two years, DIFFA is back with a vengeance, and this time, they have decided to shake things up. Denim is out, replaced by another classic American silhouette: The smoking jacket.

“We have done the denim jacket forever and we wanted to elevate it to a little more sophistication,” says Darin Kunz, a local jeweler and co-chair of this year’s Collection. “We wanted to pay homage to our tradition of jackets but in a really sexy way so that people would want to put them on and wear out. It’s kind of exciting.”

Smoking Haute — the theme for the Dallas Collection, which takes to the runway Saturday at the Hilton Anatole — owes its concept to the radically androgynous show created by Yves St. Laurent in 1966, *Le Smoking*. Combining the fine, minimalistic tailoring of menswear with the glamorous fashion sense of female couture, YSL freed women to be both feminine and forceful: It was the beginning of the power suit, and its influence continues today.

The smoking jacket has been a staple for men since at least the middle of the 19th century, undergoing a resurgence in the 1950s



DENIM TO SILK

The classic smoking jacket replaces DIFFA's iconic jean couture at the annual Collection — a major change for the fashion-forward AIDS fundraiser. (Photo courtesy Thomas Mosley/Art of Mind)

when Hugh Hefner popularized it as the look of Playboy. But even in an era when public smoking is on the downswing (don't try to light up at the Anatole Saturday night!), the look and appeal of the smoking jacket is as strong as ever: Casual but classy, elegant yet comfortable — a perfect symbol for what DIFFA tries to create.

The idea to change direction with a smoking jacket “was really a collaboration between [co-chair Matt Wilkerson], myself and Jan Strimple, who’s one of the co-directors of the event and instrumental in the concept,” says Kunz. “I was certainly aware that YSL was an expert of the woman’s tuxedo but not until Jan brought it to my attention” did he realize its revolutionary role in fashion.

While the smoking jacket is most identified with men, YSL changed that ... and many of the five dozen designers contributing more than 70 suits to DIFFA this season are happy to flex their

couturier skills in giving women something to wear while taking a puff. That’s even reflected in this year’s Collection.

“I think we have about 26 men’s jackets and the balance are women’s,” Kunz says.

Many high-profile designers, and some celebrities outside the fashion arena, contributed looks. Kiton has contributed a jacket worth about \$7,000, paired with a \$900 pair of jeans, as part of a package; Dallas designer Abi Ferris is back; Jean Paul Gaultier has contributed a piece worn by Rihanna; and Jay Strongwater of Neiman Marcus designed matching men’s and women’s jackets.

“I think it has reinvigorated a lot of designers,” says Kunz. Some have designed not just jackets, but whole tuxedos; JCPenney’s Geoffrey Henning did three women’s suits, complete with footwear.

“The Collection has come together beautifully,” Kunz says.

It just goes to prove that DIFFA’s ability to put on a buzzworthy show is part of its DNA. It’s just not in its jeans. ■

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Sordid laughs

Del Shores' first DVD of his standup act is dishy, real and hilarious

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Life+Style Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

Del Shores really missed his calling.

For decades, he's been known primarily as a writer — of plays from *Daddy's Dyin' ... Who's Got the Will?* to *Southern Baptist Sissies*, and TV shows like *Queer as Folk* — eventually expanding into directing on the series version of *Sordid Lives* and the upcoming feature film *Trials and Tribulations of a Trailer Trash Housewife*. But now that he has begun to spread his wings into performing standup ... well, let's just say it's the perfect marriage of gay subject matter and gay man — and it's legal in all 50 states.

Del Shores: My Sordid Life is the filmed stage show Shores created more than a year ago and performed in Dallas for the first time in January 2011. (This DVD was shot in California; *Sordid Confessions*, his newest standup filmed at the

Rose Room earlier this year, will come out later this spring.) For nearly two hours, Shores delivers a stinging, detailed stream of consciousness rant about his life.

And ohh, the details. Midget sex. How he came out to his family.

What he really thinks of Randy Harrison, Judge Reinhold and Thomas

Haden Church. Because Shores takes a no-holds-barred approach, he's an equal opportunity offender, giving *My Sordid Life* a genuine, dishy quality — not just of the assholes he's worked with, but the gems (Rue McClanahan, Beth Grant, Leslie Jordan).

If the characters of Shores' plays have ever seemed overstated — exaggerating of Southern



STANDUP AND PROUD | After years behind the scenes, Shores steps onstage in his comedy DVD. (Photo courtesy Brian Putnam)

stereotypes — you just may feel he's underplayed the reality. Virtually every character from a Shores play is based on an actual family member or friend, and the way he tells it, a play like *Sordid Lives* might well be more docu-drama than absurdist comedy. Coming out of other actors' mouths, the stories might sound funny, but here they are something more: Astonishingly real.

QUEER CLIP: 'MIRROR, MIRROR'



Ask someone if they are interested in seeing "the Snow White movie," and the reaction will differ: If they think you mean Charlize Theron's *Snow White and the Huntsman* coming in June, the answer is "Yes, yes, 1,000 times yes!" If they think you mean Julia Roberts' *Mirror, Mirror*, you get a shrug.

That's pretty much my feeling about the movie itself. *Mirror* is an animated Disney musical that is not animated, not from Disney and not a musical — in other words, missing all the essential elements that might make it a classic. Not a dark retelling of the Snow White fable (hell, not even a good *telling* of it — it combines bits of Rapunzel, Sleeping Beauty, Beauty and the Beast and other fairy tales), it's merely po-mo cheekiness (references to focus groups, for instance) with a campy sensibility, conveyed through the presence of Nathan Lane (who knows how to make such nonsense work) and the addition of hunky Armie Hammer as the prince.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

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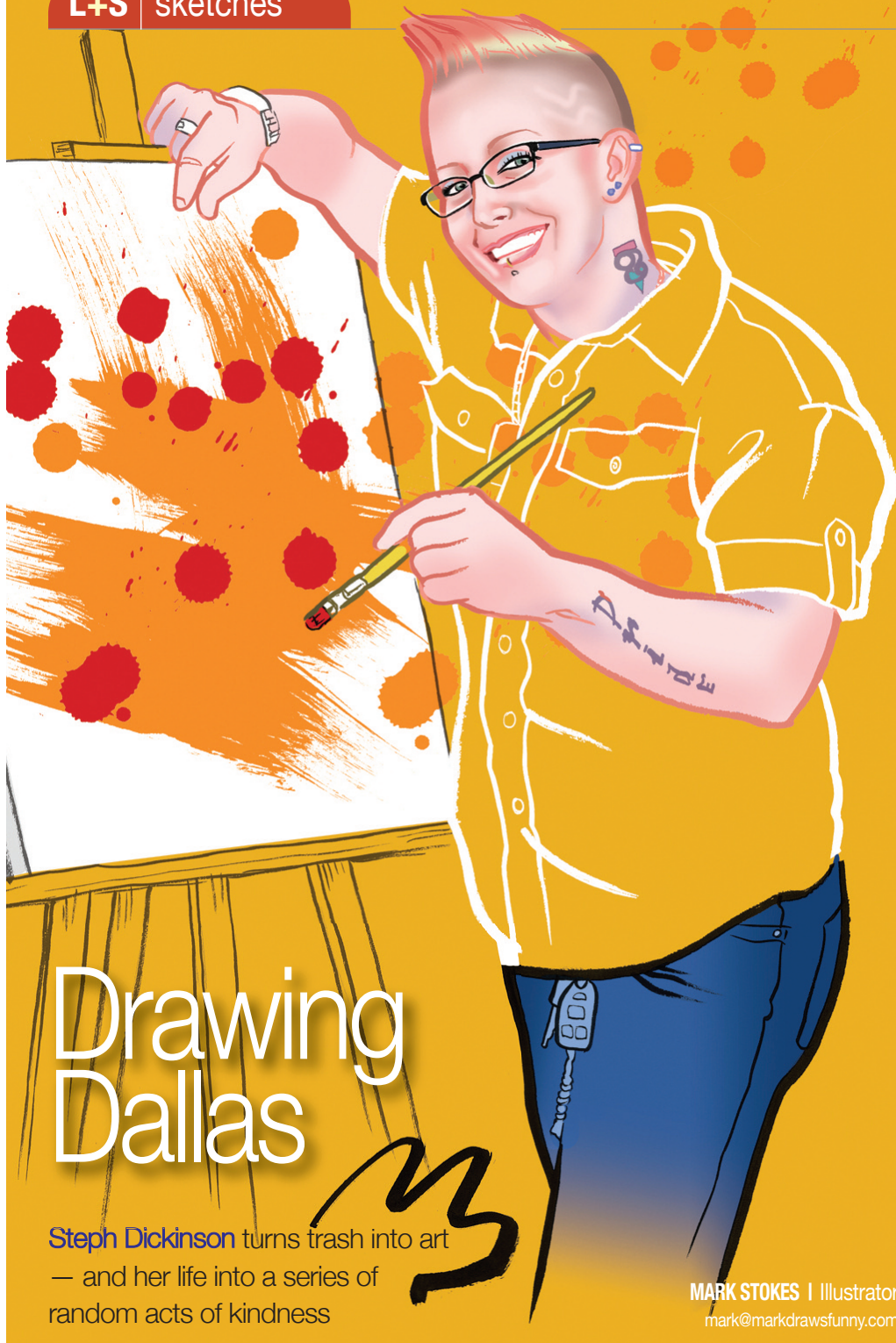
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L+S sketches



Drawing Dallas

Steph Dickinson turns trash into art — and her life into a series of random acts of kindness

MARK STOKES | Illustrator
mark@markdrawsfunny.com

Name and age: Steph Dickinson, 28

Occupation: Artist

Spotted at: Bath House Cultural Center

Steph Dickinson grew up in Fort Luften, Colo., and has spent most of her life in the Centennial State. This vivacious Cancer claims that “randomness” brought her to Dallas — when a friend recommended the Big D to her, she took the chance and migrated here eight years ago.

Steph is pursuing a career as an artist. Some of her work includes abstract compositions consisting of found objects such as bottle caps, metal and the like, which she composites with paint and canvas/Styrofoam board. She describes it as turning trash into fine art. She also combines marker and paint to create a variety of realistic art, and she relies heavily on symbolism to express meaning in all of her pieces.

With her giving heart, Steph and partner Ruth volunteer with Random Acts of Kindness in Deep Ellum each week (making sandwiches for the homeless), at the Fort Worth Food Bank (putting meal packages together) and at the Salvation Army (serving meals to the homeless).

Steph met her partner Ruth more than five years ago where they were both employed at the time. They found that they had a lot in common, not the least of which was the fact that they both had twin siblings: Steph a twin sister, Samme, and Ruth a twin brother, Rolando. They have a diverse group of friends. A life goal for this dynamic duo is to facilitate a shelter to help homeless LGBT teens.

Adventurous Steph loves to cook and sing karaoke. She lives life to the fullest, and wants to make a difference. Favorite quote: “Hell, yeah!”



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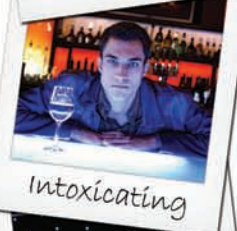
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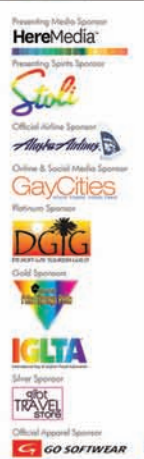
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How Madge got her groove back

'MDNA' lacks the message of classic Madonna albums, but the Material Girl can still lay down a beat

RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
lopez@dallasvoice.com

Thirty years ago, the world was introduced to a scrappy singer in shabby-chic clothes, but there's not much about pop music Madonna hasn't conquered since then. At 53, she's the undisputed queen of pop — which she reminds anyone who may have forgotten with her 12th studio album, **MDNA**.

Since *Hard Candy*, her mid-life crisis project that belly-flopped four years ago, the likes of Lady Gaga and Rihanna have generated more buzz than the Material Girl. Not only does she have to reclaim her place on the iPods of fans who have moved on to <insert any pop princess name here> — that is, to be seen as a pop force to still be reckoned with — Madonna has to compete with Madonna. On *MDNA*, she continually references herself, name-dropping her own catalogue so much here that she seems to have thrown in the towel rather than finding more creative lyrics; maybe she's just being narcissistic. She has shared so much of herself before — singing about motherhood, politics, religion — that the empty message of this album is disconcerting. Being single again, she's embracing her cougar status and can't stop referring to herself as a girl.

Still, the album claims a hefty collection of radio-ready hits, dancefloor beats and a couple of confessionals, allowing *MDNA* to accomplish what it wants to: Show us that Madonna is still in her groove.

Striking quick with an opening prayer on "Girl Gone Wild," she takes us back to *Like A Prayer*'s "Act of Contrition" before launching into the strong track. The beat drops hard and Madge hits the right dance notes we so crave from her. The energy is exciting and reassures us that she's back on her game.

From that high, she goes darker than ever with "Gang Bang," a murder ballad on steroids, but just try to turn your ears away. She expertly navigates her way around the distinct hatred radiating from the lyrics. This is where Madonna-the-singer becomes Madonna-the-actress, playing an ultra-violent character (our Madge could *never* be a killer, even when she asserts *Drive, bitch / Now die, bitch*).

The album shifts into hitmaker, *Like A Virgin* mode with the troika "I'm Addicted," "Turn Up the Radio" and "Give Me All Your Luv'in.'" The beats go gigantic and lush, but the lyrics fade into a less intellectual side, save for the Oprah-esque uplifting "Radio." The hits are there, but in trying to compete with the younger crop of pop acolytes she must come down to their level. These are tunes that could have easily been interchanged with Katy Perry or Ke\$ha on the mike. That doesn't take away from their listenable qualities, but we expect more from the ol' gal. Pop music thrives on innovation and change, and more often than not, Madonna relies on dumbing down to be cool.

That formula does work wonders for the drum-heavy valentine "Superstar." Incorporating a silly chant of "ooh la la" is a slight misstep, but the sweetness of it fits right up there with "Cherish" and "Angel." The song is steeped in pop culture, referencing John Travolta and Michael Jordan (echoing "Vogue") but whimsical couplets like *You can have the keys to my car / I'll play you a song on my guitar* are kind of adorable.

In the album's deluxe edition, it's on the second disc where Madonna triumphs. (She also loses, but I'll get to that in a sec.) The glory in the accompanying tracks is the confessional tone on both "I Fucked Up" and "Best Friend." Lamenting her divorce from director Guy Ritchie, Madge puts the blame on herself. The song is sad as she explores her mistakes out



COUGAR TOWN | With 'MDNA,' the Material Girl explores her new single life — but the safety net of classic Madonna is never far away.

loud (*I'm so ashamed / You're in so much pain / I blamed you when things didn't go my way*), but it never wallows. With its urban beat and a dramatic buildup, she instead gets into an emotionally striking groove. We haven't seen Madonna this fragile since *Prayer*'s "Promise to Try."

"Best Friend" stays on topic with lyrics like *Every man that walks through my door / Will be compared to you forever more*. The dizzying sound effects and her straightforward delivery don't give it the emotional weight of "Fucked," but it's still a fascinating insight as it unfolds.

The second disc opens with "Beautiful Killer," a strong tune with slick grooves that I don't know why is relegated to bonus CD status. In a strange way, it's the serious flipside to "Beautiful Stranger." The disc rounds out with LMFAO's remix of "Give Me All Your Luv'in.'" And then there's "B-Day Song." Whoowee. Where did this dreck come from? By far her worst moment on the album, it's also embarrassing. The *oh yeah, it's my birthday* sounds like it was made up by kids to sing while jumping rope and is far beneath her talents.

In "Some Girls," she dares compare herself to others with *I'm not like all the rest / Some girls are second best / put your loving to the test*, but who would ever think she is. She's Madonna, dammit. But she's also more woman than girl.

While Nicki Minaj and M.I.A.'s performance are fine in "Luv'in,'" Minaj goes stronger in "I Don't Give A." Madonna raps a bit, but Nicki, even in sycophantic worship (*There's only one queen / And that's Madonna / BITCH!*) makes an outstanding presence in the overall forgettable track. M.I.A. is virtually invisible in "B-Day Song" but she should be grateful for that.

The club sounds get a rest with her two ballads "Falling Free" and the Golden Globe-winning "Masterpiece" from *W.E.* (the film she directed and released earlier this year). Both are fine tracks, but pale in comparison to her past ballad work.

MDNA has spirit. Even with flawed tracks and lyrical shortcuts, she shows renewed determination. Madonna gave a flat, uninspired showing her last time out, but here, she appears in complete command. The album has its dynamic moments and while she may always have to deal with the harsh lions of radio, critics and social media, Madonna does mark a return to expressing herself again as only she can do. ■



RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
lopez@dallasvoice.com

Vickie Shaw has great timing — both on and off the stage. Soon after starting her comedy career in 1994, she came out of the closet, eventually giving her standup an entirely new slant. After meeting Lori Patch briefly on an Olivia cruise, she unexpectedly ran into her five months later; they have been partners ever since.

Yes, the luck of the draw has been on Shaw's side for almost 20 years, turning her life into laughter — even during the bumpy times. And sometimes, the bumpier the better.

"I was real good about keeping my emotions down and denied being a lesbian for so long," she says. "Comedy is when I began to open up to my emotions. When I write my jokes, I go to an emotional place of frustration or anger or disappointment. Comedy *does* come from pain."

Not that one of her sets is merely a diatribe of awkward moments or too painful to watch. Shaw's a storyteller with laugh-out-loud tales of her daily life surrounding her partner, children, grandchildren and whatever else strikes her funny bone — which she brings to the Youth Orchestra Hall in Fort Worth on Saturday.

Shaw, 57, describes herself as a late bloomer, coming out at 39, married to a man and mother of three. Shaw is well-known for having been a PTA mom, Republican and devout Christian, but through comedy, she became comfortable with her attraction to women.

"I always know when something is frustrating if I have a strong emotion about it. That's my mechanism. And life was frustrating," she says. "When I came to accept my lesbianism through comedy, it was like 'Oh my God! Everything made sense for me.'"

Although she was already entrenched in her comedy act, her coming out wasn't immediately part of her punchlines. Shaw still had to go through her process of acceptance, and as a spiritual person, she had to resolve her sexual identity with her higher power. Where religion can be a rocky road for gays coming out, Shaw became *more* spiritual, ultimately adding queer shtick to her set.

"I didn't start doing gay comedy for a couple of years, but I also knew that comedy is about truth and life," she says. "I had not only gotten a divorce, I started dating women. How could I not put that in the act? But being a lesbian or a mom or whatever, if I'm not funny and truthful, then I shouldn't be doing comedy. Comedy is truth and I can't have boundaries. It's not a choice."

Although she makes her standup rounds



Serious laughs

Lesbicomick Vickie Shaw thrives on turning her frowns upside-down

VICKIE SHAW

With Big Bad Gina. **Youth Orchestra Hall**, 4401 Trail Lake Drive, Fort Worth. March 31 at 8 p.m. \$25-\$40. OpenDoorProductionsTX.com.

across the country (and even on the water for women-only cruises), Shaw and Patch live a quiet, domestic life outside Houston. When her friend Annise Parker was elected the city's first gay mayor in 2009, Shaw was ecstatic. She used to perform at fundraisers when Parker was on city council, but her ties to the mayor go deeper.

"She owned Inklings, the lesbian bookstore at the time — that was the first place I went to get a book," she recalls. "I walked into this bookstore and just started crying! She and [her business partner]

really helped me at that time. I always thanked her for that. When she won, I was thrilled and proud."

Shaw now finds she has come full circle in her life and career, albeit unintentionally. Shaw herself has received the same kind of gratitude she still gives Parker. All she wanted to do was make people laugh, but some of her fans became better for it along the way. And she's fine with that.

"The main thing I love is that making people laugh can be part of a bigger picture," she says. "I've always believed that God gives everyone gifts and this is mine. When ladies come to me after a show telling me how I helped them to come out, I don't consider that lightly because it's my purpose on here. So I guess yeah, that has come full circle. Which is funny, because I don't do this to be famous or to be *anything*."

Shaw forgets she does this to be funny, but then everyone already knows that. ■

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L+S books

True life

2 nonfiction books explore AIDS in Africa and micro-economics in Utah

The Man Who Quit Money by Mark Sundeen (2012, Riverhead Books). \$15; 272 pp.

About 15 cents — that's all you ever find between the sofa cushions. Maybe a quarter. It's never a huge amount, but for some reason, it makes you inordinately happy. It's the same when you find a fiver stashed in last winter's jacket, or a couple Washingtons in an old forgotten purse or wallet. It's as if you just won the micro-lottery. You feel strangely rich.

Now imagine *never* finding money. Imagine never wanting it at all. In *The Man Who Quit Money*, Mark Sundeen recounts the story of his friend who's penniless on purpose.

In the days before he had a mortgage and a successful career, when most of his possessions fit in the bed of a pickup, Sundeen lived a care-free life as an itinerant river guide, sleeping in his truck and eking out a living in Moab, Utah. He wasn't alone in that unbothered existence. Many people, discouraged by government actions or corporate greed, left the grid to live in Moab.

One of them was Daniel Suelo.

Born into an ultra-conservative fundamentalist family, Suelo was a sensitive child who took his faith extremely seriously. Still, during college, he re-examined his beliefs and began to hypothesize about certain aspects of God. After a stint with the Peace Corps, he started questioning the validity of organized religion. He'd noticed the wide chasm between The Haves and The Have-Nots and how money seemed to change everything. It seemed un-Christian and wrong. Further muddling his deeply introspective thoughts on religion, Suelo realized he was gay.

Finding a community where eccentricity was barely noticed and tolerance expected was a godsend for Suelo. In 2000, after a stay in the Canada wilderness, he left his last \$30 in a phone booth and moved to Moab.

Suelo still lives there with few possessions in whatever shelter he can find. He dines from a Dumpster, volunteers and enjoys an active social life. All with zero money.

Could I do that? That's the question you'll ask yourself over and over as you're reading *The Man Who Quit Money*. It's a tantalizing thought, this chuck-it-all life, and Sundeen lets his readers ponder it.

But this isn't just a run-of-the-mill biography. Sundeen lends his readers a good sense of who Suelo really is while still preserving his enig-

matic aspects. He lets us scoff a little, then he pulls us back into wholeheartedly agreeing with Suelo ... almost to the point of taking up life in a cave, too.

Almost. Sundeen is stingy with romanticism and freely relates hardships while he also examines the morals behind money and why most of us chase it.

If you've ever seriously considered your cash and wondered if you could really live without it, here's your chance to reflect. For you, *The Man Who Quit Money* is a book to take to the sofa.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer

Tinderbox: How the West Sparked the AIDS Epidemic and How the World Can Finally Overcome It by Craig Timberg and David Halperin (2012, Penguin Press). \$30; 421 pp.

At the core of *Tinderbox* are three assertions. First, the strain of HIV that causes AIDS emerged from forested southeastern Cameroon, when an African porter cut himself and became infected while slaughtering an infected chimpanzee for his dinner. Second, HIV took human root in the sprawling city of what is now Kinshasa when porters came from the highlands, traders plied the rivers and prostitutes traded favors with men far from home. These are interesting but not especially controversial.

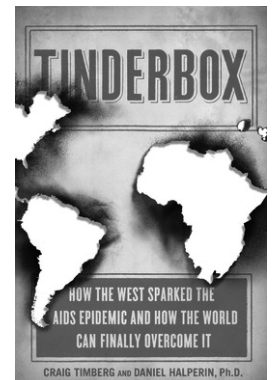
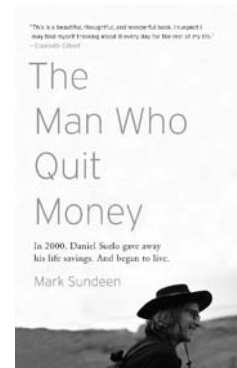
The third is that the West is responsible for the leap from chimp SIV to human HIV because Europeans — seeking Africa's riches — enslaved its people and herded them into cities, and then tried to impose European solutions on African problems. They claim that the Western establishment (through such agencies as UNAIDS, USAID and PEPFAR) has taken the wrong approach to solving the African AIDS crisis.

The authors both have experience with sub-Saharan Africa: Craig Timberg is former Johannesburg bureau chief (now deputy national security editor) for The Washington Post, and Daniel Halperin is an epidemiologist and medical anthropologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Together, they claim their thesis "overturns the conventional wisdom on the origins of this deadly epidemic and the best ways to fight it today."

The solution the authors propose involves working with locals to discourage multiple partners and encouraging mass circumcision to stop the epidemic in its tracks. Instead, agencies have mounted unlikely abstinence campaigns, flooded the continent with condoms, done mass HIV testing and brought in anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) to keep the infections at bay.

Countless narratives and copious reflections support their narrative. All of them would be instructive to a reader coming upon the topic for the first time. But for those of us who saw some friends die, now see others living with AIDS, and already know the epidemic rages in parts of Africa, this book is a source of bemusement. ■

— Phyllis Guest



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TASTING NOTES

Savor Dallas, the annual weekend celebration of food and wine, is back, but this year things are switching up. It still kicks off Friday, March 30, with the Arts District Stroll (\$35), which features dozens of wines and bites from local chefs throughout the area, from the DMA to the Winspear. But this year, the party continues with Sips and Sounds at the Kessler (\$35), an Oak Cliff extension featuring food from **Tillman's Roadhouse**, **Gloria's** and **Hattie's**, plus live music.

It continues on Saturday with luncheons, wine and cheese pairings and even a wine tasting seminar during the day, followed by the big event: The International Grand Tasting, which this year moves from Downtown Dallas to the spectacular Irving Convention Center in Las Colinas. For more information, and to get tickets to any of the events, visit SavorDallas.com.

If you can't make it to Savor Dallas, you might wanna check out the **Buffalo Gap Wine and Food Summit** near Abilene next month. Now in its sixth year, the Friday night dinner (prepared as always by **Stephan Pyles**) is already sold out, but you can still get tickets to some of Saturday's events: A Tuscany in Texas wine tasting, a lunch featuring Italian antipasti, a cheese and wine seminar, and the Saturday night gala, Cowboys, Cuisine and Cabernet, with dancing, wine and food from top chefs under the beautiful West Texas sky. For more information, visit BuffaloGapSummit.com.

While the White Party rages in Palm Springs over Easter weekend, Dallas bartenders will strut their stuff for a chance to pour where it rarely rains. For the third consecutive year, the gayest city in the desert is sponsoring its nationwide **Palm Springs Summer Cocktail Challenge**, pictured, seeking the best mix master in the country. On Monday, April 9, local mixologists will convene at the Round-Up Saloon to offer up their unique recipes using Stolichnaya Vodka. The winner gets a chance to go to California and compete against other bartenders nationwide. The mixing begins at 9 p.m.

Sweet Tomatoes, which features soups, salads and baked goods, opens its newest location in the Old Town shopping center at Greenville Avenue



and Lovers Lane, and is offering an introductory \$5 all-you-can eat price all day Friday and for lunch on Saturday.

The arrival of spring means not only new flowers, but new menus. Chef **Andre Natera** at **Pyramid Restaurant** inside the **Fairmont Hotel** rolled out his new menu on March 20, on the eve of spring, but the rich selections could work just as well in the warm days of autumn. As usual, the menu is executed deftly, with simple items like a fennel carrot soup packing a surprising tang (and rich yellow color) with the addition of mustard creme fraiche. Carrots figure in inventive ways on several of the dishes, among them the roasted lamb (highlighted by mint gnocchi) and the lobster entree — a beautiful lobe of meat brightened by a trio of carrot sides: pickled, roasted and pureed with ginger.

At **Breadwinners**, the menu includes something long overdue: Breakfast-for-dinner options, including chicken and waffles, steak and eggs and ham benedict. Even without that change, there are many new items joining some favorites: firecracker chicken (bacon-wrapped jalapeno nuggets), the low-country classic shrimp and grits, and pan-seared sea bass with mango salsa. And, of course, the array of indulgent desserts. Save room.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

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Please Drink Responsibly





Friday 03.30

Making his own A-list

Stillwater may not be the gayest place on earth, but with all the cute boys at the Oklahoma State University campus, John's gotta figure a few things out in *The A-Gays: Stillwater, Oklahoma*. The character finds the clique of college gays who are worse than any mean girl. With a "no uglies allowed" policy, out writer John-Michael explores a different kind of homophobia.

DEETS: Magnolia Lounge, 1121 First Ave. Through April 14. 8 p.m. Pay what you can. Nouveau47.com.

Saturday 03.31

The sweetest day

Dallas Summer Musicals clearly did not save the best for last this weekend. For their 2012 Curtain Call Gala, they bring in star of stage and screen Vanessa Williams. What's more to say beyond that? Dinner, auctions, cocktails and dancing almost seem secondary to her taking the stage to perform, but no doubt will help fill the night with all the right stuff.

DEETS: Music Hall at Fair Park, 909 First Ave. 6 p.m. \$500. CurtainCallGala.org.

Tuesday 04.03

Thank them for the music

Unless you were one of the lucky ones a few decades back, The Music of ABBA tribute show is going to be the closest to hearing the Swedish pop gems live and that's not so bad. This band delivers the goods to astounding perfection.

DEETS: Meyerson Symphony Center. 2301 Flora St. 8 p.m. \$30-\$70. DallasSymphony.com.



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Ali has performed on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno". In 2010, Comedy Central listed Ali Wong as one of 7 "Comics to Watch." This season, you can see Ali as "Olivia" in the new NBC series based on Chelsea Handler's memoir "Are You There Chelsea?"

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SITAR HERO | Anoushka Shankar brings her fusion of traditional Indian music and modern electronica sounds to Dallas this weekend.

FRIDAY 03.30

COMMUNITY

Dallas Blooms. The famous flower festival returns for its 28th anniversary. Dallas Arboretum, 8525 Garland Road. Through April 8. \$15. DallasArboretum.org.

Country and western dance lessons. Line dancing and partner instruction. Promise Worship & Community Center, 2527 W. Colorado Blvd. Through April 27. 7 p.m. \$5 suggested donation.

Stonewall Group of Narcotics Anonymous. Meets daily at noon, 7:30 p.m. 2438 Butler St., Ste. 108.

Oak Lawn Group for Gays meets weekly. St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 6525 Inwood Road. 7 p.m. For more information, call 214-868-7350.

Youth First Texas groups for ages 14 to 22. 3918 Harry Hines Blvd. Fridays-Saturdays and Tuesdays-Wednesdays at 6 p.m., Thursdays at 4 p.m. YouthFirstTexas.org.

SATURDAY 03.31

COMMUNITY

The Turtle Club is an intimate evening of dinner and cabaret recalling the speakeasies of the 1920s and presented by the Turtle Creek Chorale. Only 100 tickets available. Dress is 1920s chic to business casual. Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Drive. \$150. TurtleCreek.org.

Art Spring Fair. More than 30 artists and live music by five bands make up this one-day annual South Dallas art festival. BA Glassworks and Tiki Lounge, 2123 Silverado Drive. Noon. Free. SpringArt.org.

Dallas FrontRunners fun run. Runners and walkers at all levels welcome. Meet under the statue at Lee Park at 8 a.m. They convene after for breakfast in the area. FronrunnersDallas.org.

BROADCAST

Cathedral of Hope worship service. Ch. 8 at 12:35 a.m. (Friday after midnight).

CONCERT

New Texas Symphony Orchestra presents the Sounds of the Seafarers featuring music from Northern Europe. Winspear Opera House Hamon Hall, 2403 Flora St. 7:30 p.m. \$20. ATPAC.org.

Anoushka Shankar. The sitar player and composer fuses Indian music with electronic, jazz and classical music and daughter of the renowned Ravi Shankar. Wyly Theatre, 2401 Flora St. Through Sunday. 8 p.m. \$25-\$65. ATPAC.org.

SUNDAY 04.01

COMMUNITY

Interweave meets for lunch. Community Unitarian Universalist Church, 2875 E. Parker Road, Plano. Noon. 972-248-9343.

Order of St. Francis and St. Clare every first and third Sunday. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 12:30 p.m.

Gaymsters bridge club. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 2 p.m.

Friends Associating and Relating, LGBT social group meets for potluck dinners, game nights, and more. Call 214-328-6749 for details.

Unemployment Support Group meets weekly explores employment search and unemployment concerns and led by a professional career advisor. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 2:30 p.m. CareerAssistanceMinistry@gmail.com.

First Community Church of Dallas worship services. The church is open and affirming. FCC of Dallas, 9120 Ferguson Road. 11 a.m. FCCDFW.org.

Breath of Life Interfaith Mindfulness Fellowship. LGBT-friendly "meditation and more" event. Inspired by Buddhist spirituality, all faiths welcome. Deaf interpretation provided. Dallas Meditation Center, 727 S. Floyd Road. 5 p.m. Donations accepted. InterMindful.com.

Whosoever Dallas Sunday services. 807 Fletcher St. 10:45 a.m. WhosoeverDallas.org.

The ONE Church, 2515 Inwood Road, Ste 213. Services at 11:45 a.m. and 6 p.m. Dallas1Church.org.

Dignity Dallas sponsors Roman Catholic liturgy. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 6 p.m. 214-521-5342 ext. 1732. DignityDallas.org.

Resounding Harmony holds weekly rehearsals at Oak Lawn United Methodist Church, 3014 Oak Lawn Ave. 7 p.m. ResoundingHarmony.org.

30/40Something social group meets weekly. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 10 a.m. CathedralOfHope.com.

MONDAY 04.02

COMMUNITY

United Black Ellument's Hot Topics. A weekly discussion group for black gay and bi men, 18-29. U-BE in Deep Ellum, 3116 Commerce St., Ste. C. 7 p.m. UBEDallas.org.

Leadership Lambda Toastmasters meets to improve public speaking and leadership skills. Oak Lawn Library, 4100 Cedar Springs Road. 6:30-8 p.m. 214-543-5860.

The Women's Chorus of Dallas holds rehearsals. Sammons Center for the Arts, 3630 Harry Hines Blvd. 7-10 p.m. 214-520-7828. TWCD.org.

Mindful Monday Meditation hosted by Fit for Faith. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 7 p.m. CathedralOfHope.com.

TUESDAY 04.03

COMMUNITY

Classic Chassis Car Club. Ojeda's 4617 Maple Ave. 6:30 p.m. 214-446-0606. ClassicChassis.com.

National Leather Association-Dallas meets. Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. 7 p.m. NLA-Dallas.org.

QLive! Open Mike Night for comedy. Percussions Lounge, 426 S. Jennings Ave. 10 p.m. QCinema.com.

Q's Day Potluck. Casual LGBT gathering every Tuesday evening. The Corporate Image, 5418 Brentwood Stair Road, Fort Worth. 7 p.m. 817-446-3395.

Sista to Sista support group provided by AIDS Outreach Center. Meets every first, second and third Tuesday. AIDS Outreach Center, 400 N. Beach St., Fort Worth. 11:30 a.m. AOC.org.

WEDNESDAY 04.04

COMMUNITY

FUSE Activity Nights meets weekly. 7 p.m. Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. 214-540-4435. DFWFuse.com.

El Sol, an AIDS Outreach Center support group meets weekly. AIDS Outreach Center, 400 N. Beach St., Fort Worth. AOC.org.

BROADCAST

Lambda Weekly. LGBT radio for North Texas. 89.3 KNON-FM at 7 a.m. LambdaWeekly.com.

THURSDAY 04.05

COMMUNITY

PFLAG Fort Worth (Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays) meets. First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1959 Sandy Lane, Fort Worth. 7 p.m. 817-428-2329. PFLAGFortWorth.org.

First Thursday Gallery Walk where all showrooms and galleries along Dragon Street in the Design District will remain open until 8 p.m. each month.

F.A.C.E., support group for those impacted by HIV/AIDS in any capacity. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 7 p.m. CathedralOfHope.com.

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CELEBRITY BIRTHDAY

By Jack Fertig



David Hyde Pierce turns 53 on Tuesday. The out actor received four Emmys for his most famous role as Niles in the NBC sitcom *Frasier*. Since the show's end in 2004, Pierce went on to win a Tony for his 2007 Broadway performance in *Curtains*. For his research activism, he will receive the Lifetime Leadership Award at the Alzheimer's Association's gala later this summer.

ARIES Mar 20-Apr 19

Slow down and breathe as mishaps pile into catastrophes. Take it easy and double check everything. Ask those who rush you, "Do you want it done fast or done right?"

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

Feeling fun and flirty is great, but don't let that exuberance eat a hole in your wallet. Dream about being rich and stay mindful of the economies needed to get you there.

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

Start cleaning up the problems you're tripping over. Don't be distracted by fun, frolic and other good f-words. Focus. You need to get work back on track. Fun times will come soon enough.

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

The real world is getting strenuous and the comforts of home beckon. Recharge your batteries, but don't hide from responsibilities. Knowing the difference will just spoil it for you.

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

Offer charity and support. If your ego is involved, people will notice that more. Sloppy, romantic idealism can interfere with your logic, but broaden your appreciation for the arts.

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Clean up relationship problems. List mistakes, misunderstandings and miscommunications and make whatever corrections you can. Before any commitments, get everything in order.

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Your mind is hungry for new ideas like junk food. Indulge in cheap sentiment, nostalgia and sodden clichés. That could open your sympathies to others. Real intellectual stimulation can wait.

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Your frustration with co-workers boils over. Trying to be popular will backfire horribly. A frank exchange of ideas may be rough, but helpful. Let someone else take charge of that.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 20

You can be a healer in your home and/or community. Empathy is the key. It's necessary, but not enough to listen and let others do the talking. Take initiative and work.

CAPRICORN Dec 21-Jan 19

Hard childhood lessons prove helpful now at work even if by negative example. Or maybe the real work is forgiving your parents, even if they were a bit psycho.

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Be careful not to spend too much time just having fun with people who won't be there when the chips are down. Times are tough. You need a posse you can count on.

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 19

Clean up recent snafus, but don't get cocky. Not everyone shares your priorities and your eagerness to fix things can create more problems than it will solve. Slow down and listen.

THIS WEEK

Venus entering Gemini boosts charm and facilitates communications, but hard aspects to the sun, Neptune and Mars can make her too eager, egotistical and assertive. Real help and empathy require slowing down and paying attention. Fix existing messes before forging ahead.

Jack Fertig can be reached at 415-864-8302 or Starjack.com

JANE'S WORLD



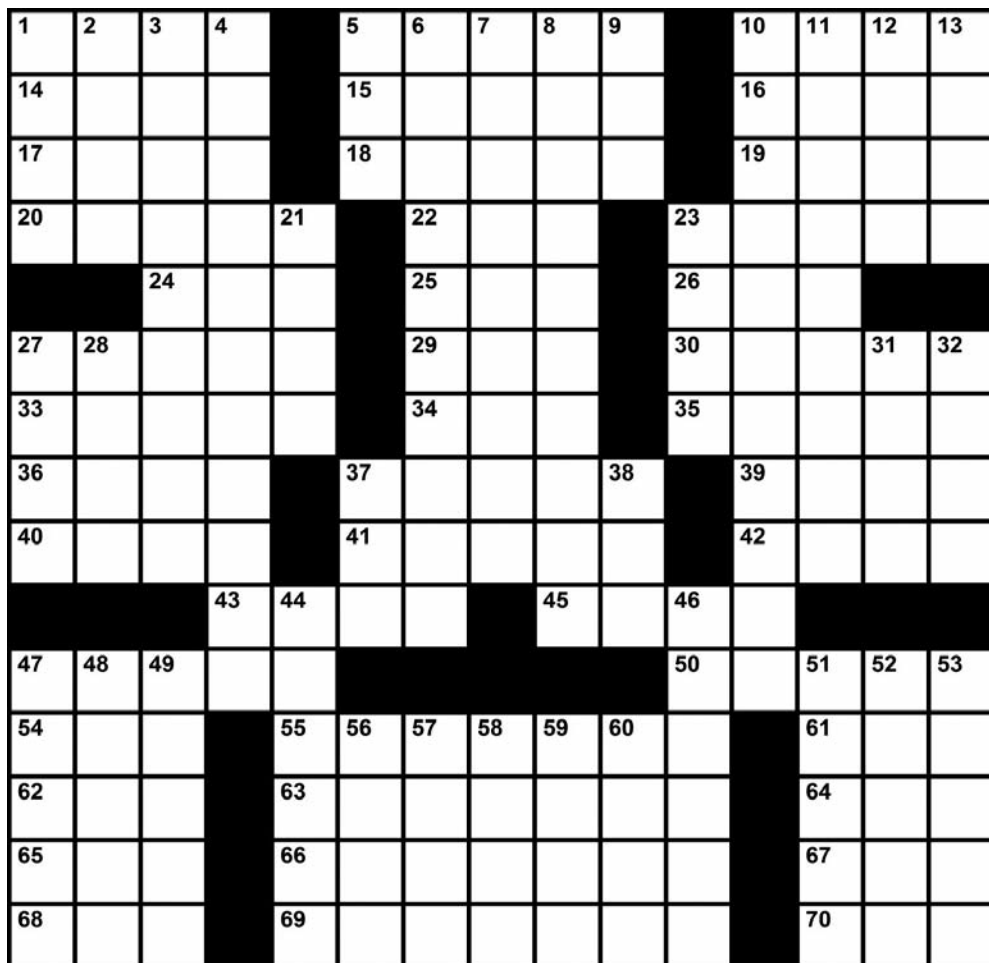
bitter girl THE WALKING DREAD



email: joan@joanhilly.net

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Let's All Act Up

Solution on page 29

Across

- 1 Decide not to swallow
- 5 Lollipop cop
- 10 Lustful one, informally
- 14 Mary topper
- 15 Toughen up
- 16 Gillette razor product
- 17 Bit from Ted Casablanca
- 18 Newsgroup messages
- 19 P's for Socrates
- 20 "Over my dead body!"
- 22 Coins w. Abe images
- 23 How Homo sapiens stands
- 24 Darth, as a boy
- 25 St. Louis clock setting
- 26 Land of Damascus (abbr.)
- 27 Barbecue site
- 29 Nonprofessional sports org.
- 30 Drag queen's mini, e.g.
- 33 Jeremy of "M. Butterfly"
- 34 Barrett or Chaplin
- 35 Do__ situation (crisis)
- 36 Clergyman Bean
- 37 Penalized, as a speeder
- 39 Gomer's "anti"
- 40 On top of that
- 41 Daniel with a coonskin cap

- 42 Manhandle, with "with"
- 43 Fruitless
- 45 Big bag
- 47 Singular men's shorts?
- 50 Exams on sexual technique?
- 54 Ran first
- 55 Novel by 10-Down
- 61 Mama's boy
- 62 Versatile vehicle
- 63 Nocturnal lizards of Tennessee Williams?
- 64 Illegal same-sex vow, in most states
- 65 Pitching stat
- 66 Return to mint condition
- 67 Earlier
- 68 Tchaikovsky's fifth
- 69 Like Shakespeare's writing
- 70 Take home after taxes

Down

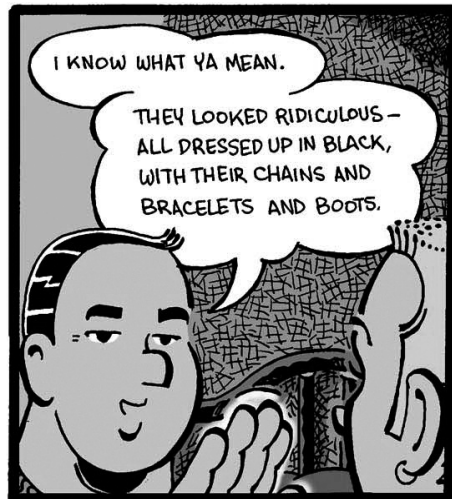
- 1 Climb, as a tree
- 2 Top of the head
- 3 Lots of people go down on them
- 4 D.H. Lawrence novel for which 10-Down wrote a screenplay
- 5 One of TV's "Bosom Buddies"
- 6 Now and again
- 7 Novel by 10-Down
- 8 Young Michelangelo
- 9 Jennifer Lien's "Star Trek: Voyager" role
- 10 Gay Men's Health Crisis cofounder
- 11 Singer Melissa
- 12 "Peter Pan" critter, for short
- 13 Doest own
- 21 Michael Nava's lawyer Henry
- 23 Petrol station choice
- 27 Not elite
- 28 Russian sea
- 31 Park of Queens
- 32 Perfect scores for Caesar?
- 37 G-man employer
- 38 In excelsis __
- 44 Ratify
- 46 Had solo sex, with "off"
- 47 Langston Hughes' "The Weary __"
- 48 Like bell-bottom jeans
- 49 Perfect model
- 51 B.D. Wong, for one
- 52 Gay ski weekend shanty
- 53 Uppity sort
- 56 "The African Queen" author
- 57 Nature's blow job?
- 58 Concert receipts
- 59 __ about
- 60 Container weight

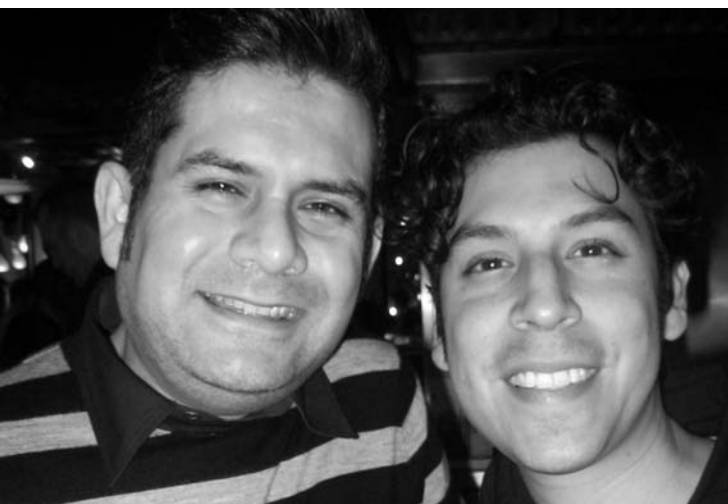


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Steve and James at JR's Bar & Grill.



Dancers at Tin Room.

After you put down the new **Madonna** album, get your dance fix at a few of these spots. ... In fact, **Station 4** will host an **MDNA Album Release Party and Giveaway** on Friday. ... **The Dallas Eagle** turns up the heat with **Pumpl**, a demonstration of live workouts by the "hottest men in Dallas." Hey, they said, we believe it and we have our cameras ready. **DJ Paul Kraft** is your captain for the night when he takes over after we all get pumped. **Blaine Soileau** spins out the tunes Saturday night at his **Release** party. **The United Court of the Lone Star Empire** hosts the **Emperor's Drag Bag** benefiting **Legacy Founders Cottage**. ... **The Kathy Corbin Band** rocks out Friday night at **Sue Ellen's**, **Ciao Bella** follows on Saturday and **Bad Habits** on Sunday. ... **DadaLife** and **Bass-Jackers** headline **Lizard Lounge's** Friday night with **Elliott Poston** and **Johnny Funk** also on the bill. Saturday night is the club's **Violet White Night** with **Myon & Shane 54** headlining and **Neon Tiger** and **Omair Mirza** in the main room. ... **Ella O'Hara Love Jones** and **Nicole O'Hara Munro** tag team the boys at the **Wednesday Strip Off** contest at the **Brick**. **DJ Mickey** spins for the evening. **Olivia Oasis** leads the way at the **Thursday Best Chest Contest**. ... **Rusty Johnson** hosts the **Biggest and Best Show Ever** at **Alexandre's** on Saturday. OK, that's kind of the unofficial name, but with an all-star band featuring, **Rick Grigsby**, **Gino Iglehart**, **Buddy Shanahan** and **Mahogany Miller**, well, he might just be right about it. ... Get spicy at the **Second Annual Round-Up Diesel Chili Cook-Off** Saturday afternoon at the **Round-Up Saloon**. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREGORY HAYES. FOR MORE PHOTOS, VISIT DALLASVOICE.COM



James, Chad, Ryan and David at Joe's/The Brick.



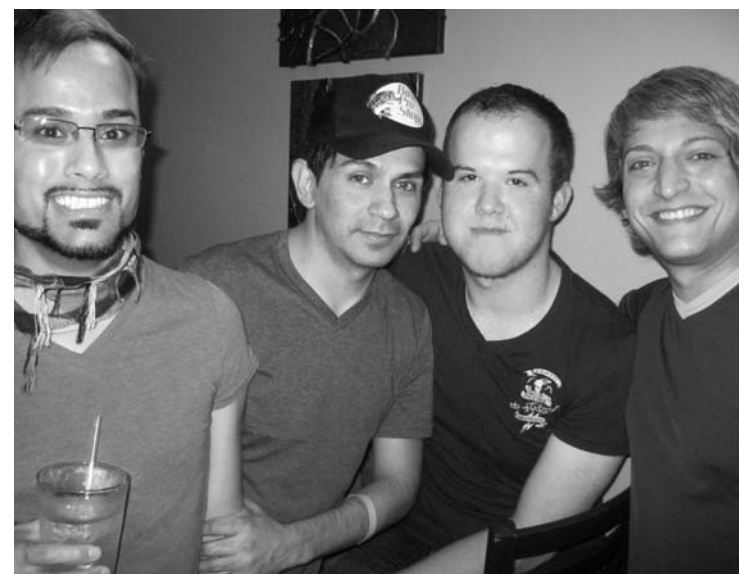
Olivia and Ilene at Grapevine Bar.



Kris and Brittany at Sue Ellen's.



Strain and Danny at Station 4.



Drew, Desi, John and Jimmy at Cherries.

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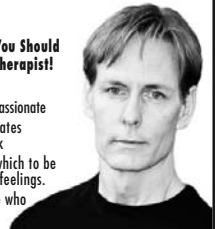
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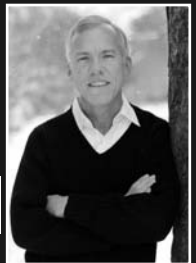


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