

Leslie Jordan takes on mama's boys

No longer full of 'gin and regret,' 'Will & Grace' star recalls gay upbringing

'Fruit Fly' plays limited engagement this week at Contemporary Theatre of Dallas

■ COMEDY, Page 28



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FREE | Friday, April 6, 2012



RESURRECTED!

A year after Easter in the Park nearly fell victim to alleged homophobia, Cedar Springs Merchants Association breathes new life into the event.

■ Page 14

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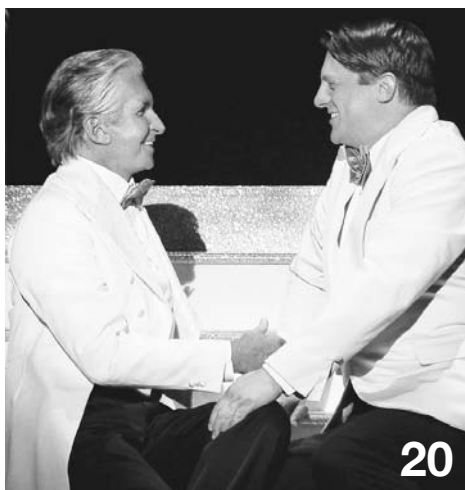
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NO JACKET REQUIRED | Models strut their stuff at DIFFA Dallas on March 31 at the Hilton Anatole. For more DIFFA photos, go to DallasVoice.com/Category/Photos (Chuck Dube/Dallas Voice)

New DISD superintendent backed ENDA, opposed federal marriage amendment

The sole finalist to become the new superintendent of the Dallas Independent School District is a supporter of LGBT equality, according to positions he took during his unsuccessful U.S. Senate campaign in 2004.

Mike Miles, a former Army Ranger who currently serves as superintendent of a school district in Colorado Springs, Colo., was named the sole finalist for the DISD job on Monday, April 2. He is expected to be formally hired April 26 after a 21-day waiting period, and would begin work in July.

Last month, Resource Center Dallas sent a letter to DISD trustees urging them to keep LGBT issues in mind as they selected a new superintendent to replace Michael Hinojosa. In the last few years, DISD has enacted a fully LGBT-inclusive anti-bullying policy, and amended other policies to include transgender protections.

Information about Miles' record on LGBT issues as a superintendent wasn't immediately available. But in 2004, Miles ran for U.S. Senate as a Democrat in Colorado, losing in the primary to Ken Salazar, who eventually won the seat. According to excerpts taken from Miles' campaign website in 2004, he supported the Employment Non-Discrimination Act — which would ban anti-gay job bias — and opposed a federal constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

According to the excerpts, Miles served on a Human Relations Commission in Colorado Springs in the mid-1990s, when he was part of an effort to add sexual orientation to the city's nondiscrimination ordinance.

"Everyone should enjoy equal and fair treatment in the workplace," Miles wrote on his campaign website, indicating his support for ENDA. "A person's employment should be based on qualifications and ability to do the job. A person's sexual orientation should not be a hiring consideration nor should it bear any weight in determinations of job performance."

On the issue of marriage, Miles wrote: "Equal

rights means equal rights for everyone — that includes people who are gay or lesbian. Thus, I oppose the Federal Marriage Amendment."

Look for an interview with Miles in an upcoming edition of Dallas Voice.

— John Wright

Flour Bluff teen commits suicide; family blames school district for not addressing bullying

A year after the Flour Bluff Independent School District received national attention for refusing to allow students to form a Gay Straight Alliance, the district is accused of not handling bullying that led to a former student's suicide on Sunday, April 1.

Ted Molina, 16, faced bullying since fifth grade from a group of boys who used racial epithets and threatened to fight him. Molina's mother is Asian. The family blames the school district for not handling the bullying properly, his aunt told the Corpus Christi Caller-Times.

Molina played football in middle school, but quit his freshman year hoping the taunting would stop. When it continued, he withdrew from Flour Bluff High School on March 5. While he seemed to improve, he posted several grim photos of himself on Facebook hours before he killed himself in his bedroom. He did not leave a note.

From the Caller-Times:

Sophomore Ashley Stover, 16, said Ted was a good student who smiled, did his school work, got to class on time and had few absences.

Ted, whom she knew since at least middle school, never showed signs of wanting to commit suicide.

"He was just smiling and happy," Ashley said.

In the hours before he killed himself, Ted posted three, sullen pictures of himself on Facebook that family and friends say look nothing like the happy-go-lucky boy they knew who always liked to make people laugh.

"I don't think he was trying to hurt anyone else or cause anyone else pain," his friend Kyle Stewart said. "He just wanted his pain to end."

— Anna Waugh



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Gays to have 'huge say-so' in District 33

New N. Texas congressional seat covers heavily LGBT areas, and race draws several allies, but who would be the strongest advocate?

ANNA WAUGH | Staff Writer
waugh@dallasvoice.com

The first representative North Texas sends to Congress in the new District 33 seat will most likely be a Democrat and an ally of the LGBT community.

One of four new Texas congressional seats, District 33 has drawn three Republican and 11 Democrat candidates. The district begins in Fort Worth near the Rainbow Lounge and narrows to include parts of Arlington and Irving before widening to end in North Oak Cliff.

Human Rights Campaign spokesman Michael Cole-Schwartz said the District 33 race highlights the need to increase LGBT support in Congress in order to "actually move forward proactively" with repealing the Defense of Marriage Act and passing LGBT-inclusive employment and student nondiscrimination acts.

Cole-Schwartz said the new seat is an opportunity to elect someone who is supportive and will impact positive change.

"In a crowded field of candidates, I think it's going to be to these folks' benefit to appeal to LGBT voters who in a close race could really make a decisive margin," Cole-Schwartz said.

Stonewall Democrats of Dallas President Omar Narvaez said LGBT voters will have a "huge say-so" because about five of the most heavily gay voting precincts in Oak Cliff and Irving are in the district.

"It's very important that we have not just an ally but an advocate as well in Congress, especially for the North Texas area because this area has the most same-sex couples in the state of Texas," he said.

Any of the Democrats could end up in a runoff, Narvaez said, adding that the top candidates are state Rep. Marc Veasey, former state Rep. Domingo Garcia, Fort Worth Councilwoman Kathleen Hicks and former Dallas Councilman Steve Salazar.

Veasey, who represents state House District 95 that encompasses one-third of District 33, has proved to be an LGBT ally since his freshman year in the state House in 2005, when he voted against an amendment to the Texas Constitution banning same-sex marriage and civil unions. He also voted against an amendment banning gays from being foster parents.

Thinking about the "legacy that I would leave behind when I left the Texas Legislature," Veasey said he voted against the anti-gay legislation because it was the right thing to do.

Among the Democrats who was outspoken last



STRONG SUPPORTERS | Domingo Garcia, clockwise from top left, Kathleen Hicks, Jason Roberts and Marc Veasey are among the LGBT allies seeking the Congressional District 33 seat.

year against a bill to ban LGBT resource centers on college campuses, Veasey also has authored a bill to study the effectiveness of the James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act — which has been rarely used since it passed 10 years ago.

If elected, Veasey said the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit anti-LGBT job bias, and the Student Non-Discrimination Act, which would ban harassment of LGBT students in public schools, would be priorities.

"Ever since I've been in the Legislature I've always had a 100 percent voting record on issues that affect the gay and lesbian community," he said.

Veasey also hired openly gay Kirk McPike as his chief of staff during two legislative sessions. McPike, who now works on the campaigns of other politicians, said Veasey was "someone who can be an advocate to parts of the Democratic community who might not necessarily be as sympathetic to LGBT issues."

Regardless of who ends up in a runoff, McPike said strong support for the LGBT community is something voters should be looking for in the first District 33 representative.

"In District 33, it's going to come down to the primary," he said. "The LGBT community will have an outside voice in this election and they can have a real influence on who represents North

Texas in Congress for years to come."

Garcia also has a record of LGBT support. While serving on the Dallas City Council from 1991-95, he was a strong proponent of the Dallas police lifting a ban on hiring gays and lesbians and supported adding sexual orientation to the city's policy protecting employees against discrimination. When he went on to serve in the Texas House in 1996 until 2002, he voted for an LGBT-inclusive hate crime bill in 2001.

While his efforts on behalf of the LGBT community have had "proven results," he said his focus if elected would be the Domestic Partner Benefits and Obligations Act, which would give domestic partner benefits to government employees. He said he thinks it is the next step in achieving LGBT legislation because it could gain bipartisan support, whereas repealing DOMA won't happen for years.

"The repeal of DOMA is something you bring up and you fight, knowing that can't win but hoping to get it defeated in four or six years," he said.

Hicks is another frontrunner from Tarrant County. The youngest woman ever elected to the council, Hicks' District 8 seat contains the area where the Rainbow Lounge is situated. She became outspoken for the LGBT community after the 2009 raid of the gay bar, calling it "a learning time for Tarrant County."

She later voted in favor of a fully LGBT-inclusive,

Forum features full field

A forum hosted by West Dallas Chamber of Commerce and Dallas County Young Democrats will include all 11 Democratic candidates, according to a press release. The forum is Monday, April 9, from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Salon Las Americas, at 1004 Fort Worth Ave. For more information or to R.S.V.P., visit WestDallasChamber.com.

citywide anti-discrimination ordinance in 2010. A strong supporter of ENDA and SNDA, Hicks said she would first tackle repealing DOMA if elected, adding that she also wants to bring domestic partner benefits to government employees because she has heard her district voice concerns for benefits, especially with the economy.

However, she said repealing DOMA is the first step to opening the door to more progress and would be her first priority because she thinks it can be done in the next two years.

Openly gay Fort Worth Councilman Joel Burns lives in District 33. He clarified in November that he is not running and endorsed Veasey.

The lesser-known candidates are even supportive of LGBT bills and are vocal about their focus on equality.

Dallas attorney Chrysta Castañeda said that while she has not served as an elected official, her law practice has made her value diversity when she assembles trial teams.

Repealing DOMA is her main priority because she thinks "it's possible" to repeal DOMA in the next four years.

Her next "high priority" would be ENDA and SDNA because she has defended Dallas County employees in the past who faced sexual harassment allegations because they were gay.

Local activist and business owner Jason Roberts started the national program, The Better Block, in his Oak Cliff neighborhood. He said when the new seat was announced, his national project inspired him to make a larger change.

His progressive upbringing made him an LGBT supporter and he thinks "it's unfathomable for me to even think that we're even questioning equal rights for lesbians, gays or anybody" and wants to help change that as a congressman.

Former Dallas Councilman Steve Salazar served on the council from 1995-2001 and then again from 2003-11. He was not on the council for votes on anti-discrimination measures in 1995 and 2002, but he voted in favor of a budget in 2004 that included domestic partner benefits. He was endorsed by the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance in 2009.

Dallas dentist and businessman David Alameel is also running for the seat after building his company into a healthcare group with a network of dental centers called Jefferson Dental Clinics.

Neither Salazar nor Alameel could be reached for an interview.



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localbriefs

Red Party kickoff Saturday at ilume

Red Party Foundation Inc. announced that ilume and Dish Restaurant will be presenting sponsors for the fourth annual Red Party. Proceeds from the Red Party benefit Legacy Counseling and Founders Cottage.

Ignite, the kickoff for the Red Party, is from 7 to 10 p.m. Saturday, April 7, in the Great Room and poolside bar at ilume. DJ Parker Lawson will provide the music.

The first Red Party was held in 2009 to raise money for Legacy. Jared Pearce and JT Williams formed a nonprofit organization and hosted the third annual Red Party, which raised \$18,000 for the counseling center. For more info, visit RedPartyDallas.org.

Razzle Dazzle presents casino trip

Razzle Dazzle Dallas is offering a day trip to WinStar Casino on Saturday, April 14.

A \$100 donation buys a round-trip bus pass, complimentary cocktails, entertainment on the bus and \$20 in gaming money. Monday, April 9, is the last day to sign up.

Proceeds help underwrite the cost of Razzle Dazzle Days in June.

Buy tickets online at RazzleDazzleDallas.org.

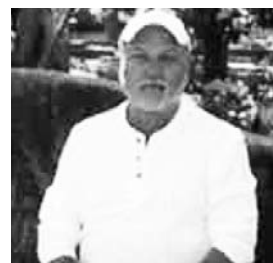
Vendor booth applications for the June 6-9 event are due May 20.

Beth El Binah holds Passover seder

Congregation Beth El Binah holds its annual community seder at 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 7, at Resource Center Dallas. The price is \$40 for members and \$60 for non-members. The catered dinner follows Passover dietary rules. The service will be conducted by song leader Max Jared. To attend, email diane@bethelbinah.info.

Death

Robert Joseph Bohlman was born on Sept. 30, 1951, in Covington, Ky., and passed March 28, 2012, in Dallas due to heart failure. He is deeply mourned by his family and friends.



Robert was also known as Bob. His friends called him Bob or Cousin Bob. Bob retired as an accountant several years ago and enjoyed his life. He spent a lot of time taking walks, going to the theater and volunteering for different charities, and he enjoyed the company of his family and friends.

He will be missed by all who loved him. ■

pet of the week / Cocoa

Cocoa is a 6-month-old pointer-Lab puppy. She's a happy girl who's great with other dogs and loves to play. Cocoa is a little shy when first meeting new people but warms up quickly. She's a real sweetheart!

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TAKING IT IN STRIDE | Members of Youth First Texas accept a beneficiary check from Black Tie Dinner in 2008. For the first time in several years, YFT won't receive funds from the dinner in 2012. However, YFT board chair Chris-James Cogna insists the organization is financially strong and says it will contribute volunteer hours to the dinner anyway. (Dallas Voice file photo)

Black Tie Dinner names 18 local beneficiaries

Youth First Texas won't receive funds for 1st time in several years; Samaritan House, Home for the Holidays added to list from 2011

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Black Tie Dinner announced its 18 local beneficiaries that will split proceeds from the November fundraising event with the Human Rights Campaign.

For the first time in a number of years, Youth First Texas isn't among the beneficiaries. One first-time and one past beneficiary join 16 others that participated in the event last year.

"We are excited to have a new beneficiary join us this year, Samaritan House, as well as a returning beneficiary, Home for the Holidays," BTDC co-chair Chris Couvelis said. "They join a great list of organizations that do so much for our community and are the very reason that Black Tie Dinner exists."

Samaritan House President and CEO Steve Dutton said he was excited to be selected as a first-time beneficiary.

"The programs at Samaritan House have been providing lifesaving and life-changing benefits to men and women in the GLBT community for 20 years," Dutton said. "We look forward to sharing our story with those who will be attending the event this fall and we hope to add many more ta-

bles with our friends from Fort Worth and Tarrant County."

Youth First Texas board chair Chris-James Cogna was gracious about the loss of funding for his organization. Money from the dinner accounted for less than 20 percent of the organization's annual budget.

"We have endured shortfalls far greater than this and weathered many a storm in the 13-year history of our organization," Cogna said. "We are financially strong, our programming is rich and our attendance is up."

He promised to remain involved in Black Tie events through this year. The organization, which teaches good sportsmanship, he said, will use this as a lesson in humility.

"Youth First Texas will continue to support Black Tie Dinner 31, through volunteer hours and supporting their efforts right up to the close of the event," he said. "Through this exercise, the youth will learn that in life there is certainly disappointment."

But he called it a challenge.

"Sustained giving is our priority," he said.

Youth First Texas had already kicked off a fundraising challenge to its board and donors to raise \$10,000 by June 1. Within the first two weeks of the campaign, about \$4,000 had been pledged.

In addition to its two signature events — Gaytona 500 and Hall Street Journal — there are tentative plans for a late fall stage event at the Eisemann Center in Richardson.

Dallas Bears has been a major donor to YFT and

■ **BLACK TIE**, Page 11

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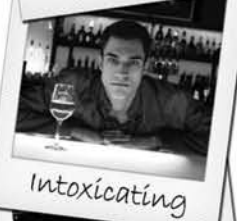
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Equality Ride to make Dallas pitstop

Barred from schools in Oklahoma, New Orleans, Soulforce bus tour of conservative colleges should get warmer welcome here next week

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

As part of its two-month cross-country trip to preach safety for LGBT students on Christian college campuses, the Soulforce Equality Ride will be in Dallas on April 10-13. Rider J.D. Melendez, 30, organized the Dallas stops.

Melendez is the oldest of the 17 riders and said he decided to join the Equality Ride to reconcile his religious faith with his sexual orientation.

When he was 13, a youth pastor outed Melendez to his parents, who threw him out of the house.

"I grew up in a fundamentalist, born-again family in the Bronx," Melendez said. "I spent years as a homeless teen in New York City."

But Melendez was resourceful and received help from an organization in Greenwich Village. He got his high school equivalency diploma earlier than his classmates and the agency helped him get into college.

J.D. Melendez

He said they wouldn't ever let him give up.

He applied for and won a James Baldwin Scholarship for talented students from underserved communities at Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass. After graduating, he returned to New York to work with homeless LGBT youth.

This trip marks the first time in his life, other than his four years in college, he's been out of the New York City area.

The Equality Ride left Philadelphia on March 3 and will arrive in San Francisco on May 3. This is the fifth Equality Ride since 2006 sponsored by Abilene-based Soulforce.

Last week, the riders stopped at Oklahoma Baptist University. In 2006, riders were arrested at the school for trying to attend a service in the chapel. This year, they were asked to leave the campus.

The week before, they visited Lipscomb University in Nashville.

"They invited us for a 2½ -day conversation," Melendez said. "My host had never met an LGBT person."

He said they spent the time together sharing stories.

"He looked me in the eye and saw I'm not a danger," he said. "We're never going to learn if we don't stand in front of each other and talk."

From there, the ride headed to New Orleans.



LONESOME ROAD | Equality Riders Zachary Pullin of Spokane, Wash., left, and Crystal Cheatham of Philadelphia demonstrate at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Okla., recently after the group was banned from the campus. (Photo courtesy of Makenzie Marineau)

"New Orleans Theological Seminary did not let us on campus," he said.

Equality Ride will spend three days in Dallas next week. The highlight of the week is a visit to Dallas Baptist University, a school with 3,500 students on its Mountain Creek Lake location west of Oak Cliff.

DBU Dean of Students and Spiritual Life Jay Harley said that they have had Equality Riders on campus before and looked forward to the afternoon.

"They posed a lot of questions," Harley said. "We don't shy away from that."

Riders will have lunch with administrators and staff followed by a session with faculty and administrators. Then students will join a two-hour discussion.

"We're looking forward to meeting and having a positive discussion," Harley said.

The DBU stop is not open to the public, but other stops are.

On Monday, riders meet at Southern Methodist University. At Perkins School of Theology, they will meet with Randy Roberts Potts, gay grandson of Oral Roberts, followed by a screening of *Love Free or Die*, a film about Bishop Gene Robinson that ran at this year's Sundance Film Festival. The

address for the event is 5915 Bishop Blvd.

On Tuesday, the group meets at Metropolitan Community Church of Greater Dallas at 6:30 p.m. Later that evening, they will share a Bible study with three area branches of United Methodist Campus Ministry.

On Wednesday evening, riders will have dinner and attend a service at Cathedral of Hope beginning at 5 p.m.

After leaving DBU on Thursday, riders will go to Midway Hills Christian Church for dinner and a service that begins at 5:30 p.m.

On Friday, the bus leaves for Abilene, where Soulforce Executive Director the Rev. Cindi Love lives.

This year, 17 riders are traveling across the country on the Equality Ride ranging in age from 18 to 30. Several are college students incorporating the experience into their semester and receiving credit for the experience.

Melendez isn't sure what he will do once the ride ends.

He's enjoying exploring the country and weighing his opportunities. But he said he's sure of one thing.

"After the ride, I want to stay involved with Soulforce," he said.

2012 Black Tie beneficiaries

AIDS Arms Inc.
 AIDS Interfaith Network
 AIDS Outreach Center
 AIDS Services of Dallas
 Celebration Community Church
 Congregation Beth El Binah
 Equality Texas Foundation
 Health Services of North Texas
 Home for the Holidays
 Lambda Legal Defense/Education Fund
 Legacy Counseling Center
 Legal Hospice of Texas
 Northaven United Methodist Church
 Resource Center Dallas
 Tarrant County Samaritan House
 Women's Chorus of Dallas
 Turtle Creek Chorale
 White Rock Friends
 Human Rights Campaign Foundation

■ BLACK TIE, From Page 9

the youth group is a major beneficiary of the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade.

"Although selecting beneficiaries is one of the most important things we do, it is also one of the toughest decisions we make as a board," said BTDC co-chair Mitzi Lemons. "Every beneficiary candidate application is reviewed each year and not all are or can be accepted. But that certainly should not reflect on their great work. We want to continue to work with those who make a difference and hopefully see them return to that list in the future."

Youth First Texas serves more than 1,200 individual youth each year. The organization operates with only one part-time staff member.

Rodd Gray, also known as Patti le Plae Safe, serves on the Black Tie Dinner board of directors and is a founder and president of Home for the Holidays. The group arranges and pays for transportation home for people with AIDS. When the organization began in the early 1990s, most people were sent home over Christmas for a last visit with family before they died.

"What we do is give a ray of hope," Gray said. "Without Black Tie Dinner support, that ray wouldn't shine as bright. An affair of the heart, this year's theme, is what we do. We're so happy to be chosen again."

Beneficiaries of Black Tie Dinner must be North Texas nonprofit organizations that provide significant service to the area's LGBT community and use a majority of its funds for direct programs, services or activities.

Once accepted, beneficiaries must fulfill a number of requirements including filling at least five tables of 10, purchasing an \$800 Dinner Journal ad, selling at least 25 raffle tickets at \$100 each and providing at least 50 volunteer hours.

Half of proceeds from Black Tie go to local beneficiaries, while the other half goes to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

Each of the 17 local beneficiaries of the 2011 dinner received between \$21,500 and \$63,000. The number of seats and tables sold as well as other participation levels determines the return. In its 30 years, the dinner has distributed more than \$16 million.

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NTTA weighs LGBT protections

Toll authority would be 6th agency in Dallas County to amend its policy in recent years; one board member calls proposal 'absolutely ridiculous'

ANNA WAUGH | Staff Writer
waugh@dallasvoice.com

The North Texas Tollway Authority approved an amendment in a 2-1 vote Thursday, April 5, to add sexual orientation and gender identity to its equal employment opportunity policy.

The amendment was approved after a briefing during a meeting of NTTA's administration committee, which handles diversity issues. The amendment includes adding the protections to the EEO policy in addition to the employee handbook.

Only three of the five committee members were present, and they spent only minutes deciding after the briefing. Committee member George "Tex" Quesada strongly supported the amendment and recommended the Board of Directors vote in favor of it. Committee Chairwoman Jane Willard voted yes as well. David Denison called the amendment "absolutely ridiculous" before voting no.

The amendment now moves on for consideration and a vote by the Board of Directors April 18.

The decision to add the terms came from a recent review of the policy in addition to encouragement from Resource Center Dallas and Fairness Fort Worth, which partnered on the issue.

NTTA is now the sixth agency in Dallas County to consider adding gay and/or transgender employment protections in the last few years. The other agencies that have updated their policies are Dallas County, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas County Community College District, DFW International Airport and Dallas Area Rapid Transit.

In addition, Tarrant County College District, Fort Worth Independent School District and the city of Fort Worth have added protections.

Although TCCD added sexual orientation before being asked, FFW President Tom Anable said he's sent letters asking that they add gender identity.

Rafael McDonnell, communications and advocacy manager for RCD, said he and FFW have been seeking out agencies to discuss the possibility of them updating their policies in an effort to improve equality.

"I think we're all kind of working toward making an inclusive policies the norm at the local level with some of these governmental agencies," he said.

NTTA was asked to change its policy because of the their operations in multiple areas of the DFW metroplex, McDonnell said, adding that two other undisclosed agencies are working with RCD and FFW to change their policies.



MAKING CHANGE | The NTTA's administration committee discusses the proposal Thursday, April 5, before voting 2-1 to advance it to the full board. (Anna Waugh/Dallas Voice)

When an agency is approached, McDonnell said its leaders are informed on the benefits of the update and educated about the growing number of agencies whose polices are becoming inclusive.

"It sets a marker down for the culture that every employee is valued regardless of who they are," McDonnell said. "It goes to the broader question of equality. If people are valued at work, they can bring their authentic selves to work and they do a better job."

NTTA is considered a political subdivision of the state of Texas under the Transportation Code. It has tollroads and bridges spanning Dallas, Tarrant, Denton and Collin counties including the Dallas North Tollway, George Bush Turnpike, Sam Rayburn Tollway and Chisholm Trail Parkway, which is under construction.

Ken Upton, senior staff attorney for Lambda Legal, said governmental agencies that add LGBT protections are still liable for discrimination complaints, though having the protections makes it a little easier for someone to prove discrimination.

"Generally speaking, if they're considered a political subdivision, somebody would be liable with or without the policy if they discriminate on that basis [of sexual orientation] without some legitimate governmental basis," Upton said. "What the policy adds is a public statement that they recognize that it's an important way to evaluate their

employees."

NTTA spokesman Michael Rey said the EEO policy was recently reviewed after reviewing it last in 2009. This time, he said the NTTA compared its practices to other companies in Austin, Houston and other cities and found that "his was a change the staff felt confident they could bring to the board."

"I think it's just kind of a common-sense prioritization of ranking job performance over things that are non-job related," he said. "And it kind of brings us in line with other companies that we feel are doing a good job in the field."

Aside from aligning NTTA with other agencies, Rey said the current EEO policy is "strictly" followed, but the update would make the policy stronger by making sure it "reflects our ethics and reflects our quest to avoid discrimination at all costs."

Anable said he and McDonnell are looking at all governmental agencies and larger employers to work with to help them value diversity, which makes the companies attractive to potential LGBT employees and helps make the area ideal for other businesses to relocate to.

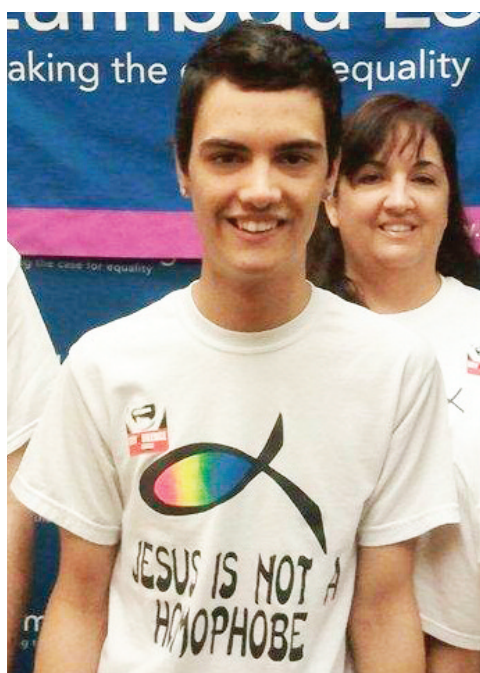
"Working together between Dallas and Fort Worth organizations really gives us a strong voice because they realize we're speaking on behalf of a much larger constituency," Anable said.

Both McDonnell and Anable said they're confident the NTTA board will vote in favor of the amendment, especially since former Fort Worth Mayor Kenneth Barr is chairman of the Board of Directors.

Anable said Barr was supportive in 2000 when Fort Worth added sexual orientation protections for housing, public accommodations and employment, so "we know he's supportive of LGBT rights."



David Denison



Maverick Couch

Gay Ohio student will be allowed to wear T-shirt 1 day

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — A gay student who sued his public high school for prohibiting him from wearing a T-shirt designed to urge tolerance of gays will be allowed to wear the shirt for at least one day.

The southwest Ohio school district agreed in a conference between attorneys and the judge Thursday, April 5 to let 16-year-old Maverick Couch wear the shirt bearing the message "Jesus Is Not A Homophobe" on April 20, according to federal court records. But Couch's lawsuit charging that Waynesville High School and the Wayne Local School District are violating his freedom of expression rights is proceeding.

Officials at the southwest Ohio public school had told Couch he couldn't wear the shirt because it was "sexual in nature," indecent and inappropriate at school, the lawsuit says.

April 20 is the Day of Silence, an annual event protesting the bullying and harassment of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students. Couch had said he wanted to wear the shirt to "promote respect for all students, gay or straight."

"We're glad that Maverick is able to wear his shirt on April 20," Couch's attorney, Christopher Clark, said. "However, a student's First Amendment rights are not restricted to one day of the year - we will continue to fight until Maverick is allowed to express who he is on any day he chooses."

Clark is an attorney with the LGBT civil rights group Lambda Legal, which is assisting Couch in the lawsuit against the school, situated 35 miles northeast of Cincinnati.

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coverstory



HAIR OF THE DOG | In addition to the beloved Pooch Parade, shown last year, Easter in the Park 2012 will for the first time include the sale of mimosas and wine. (Chuck Dube/Dallas Voice)

Resurrected!

One year after Easter in the Park almost fell victim to alleged homophobia, Cedar Springs Merchants Association breathes new life into annual event

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Easter in the Park is Dallas' celebration of spring.

Mark Howard, an openly gay marketing manager who lives a few blocks from Lee Park, said he's attended the event for 16 years.

"Lee Park this time of year is gorgeous," Howard said. "Azaleas, tulips, red buds, white dogwood blooms."

Combine the colors of nature with colorful bonnets and costumed pets, he said, and it represents the best of Dallas.

"The park becomes a melting pot of people —

grandparents, babies, the gay community — all mixing together for a joyous occasion," he said.

This year, a year after the Cedar Springs Merchants Association stepped in to resurrect an event that its former sponsor almost destroyed, the annual celebration will get a makeover.

In other years, rain has kept the Dallas Symphony Orchestra away. But for the first time since 1966, the orchestra will not perform in Lee Park on Sunday, April 8, due to budget cuts.

Instead, bands will perform throughout the afternoon, and the Kroger Pooch Parade will take place as usual.

"Bring picnic lunches," said CSMA Executive

■ **RESURRECTED**, Page 17

THE STORY

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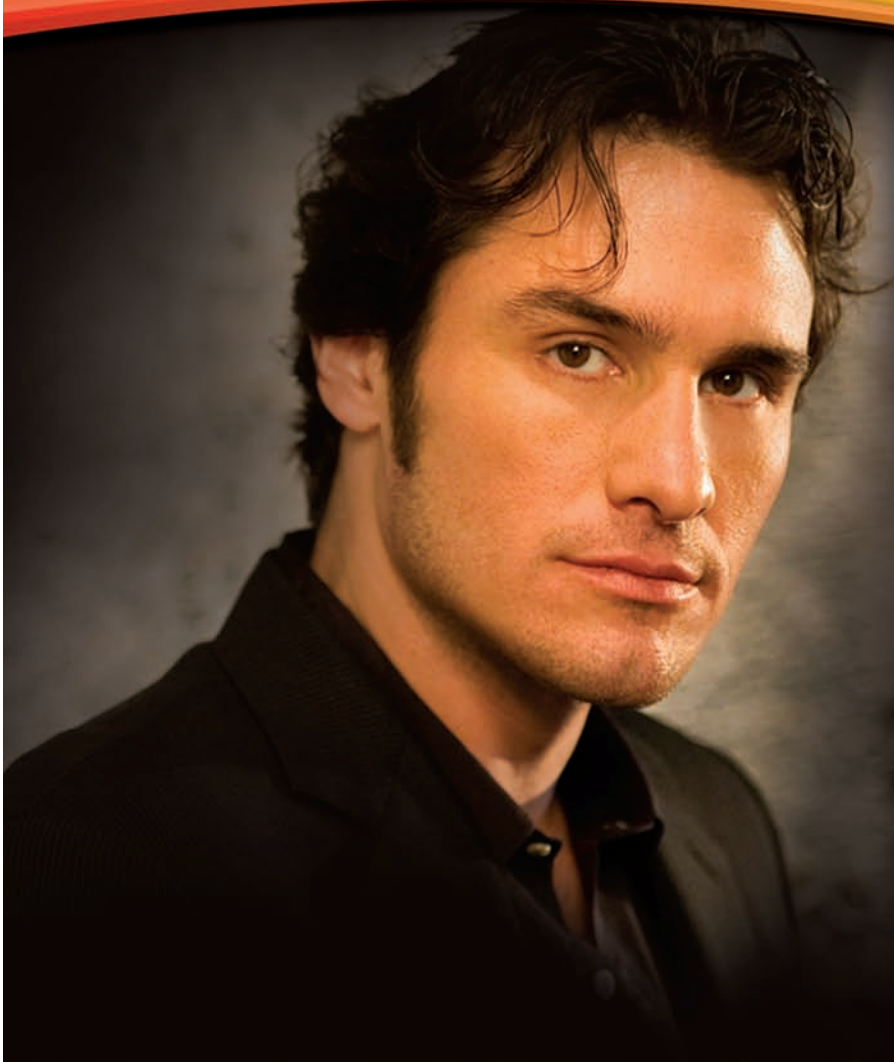
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Worship Service 9am and 11am

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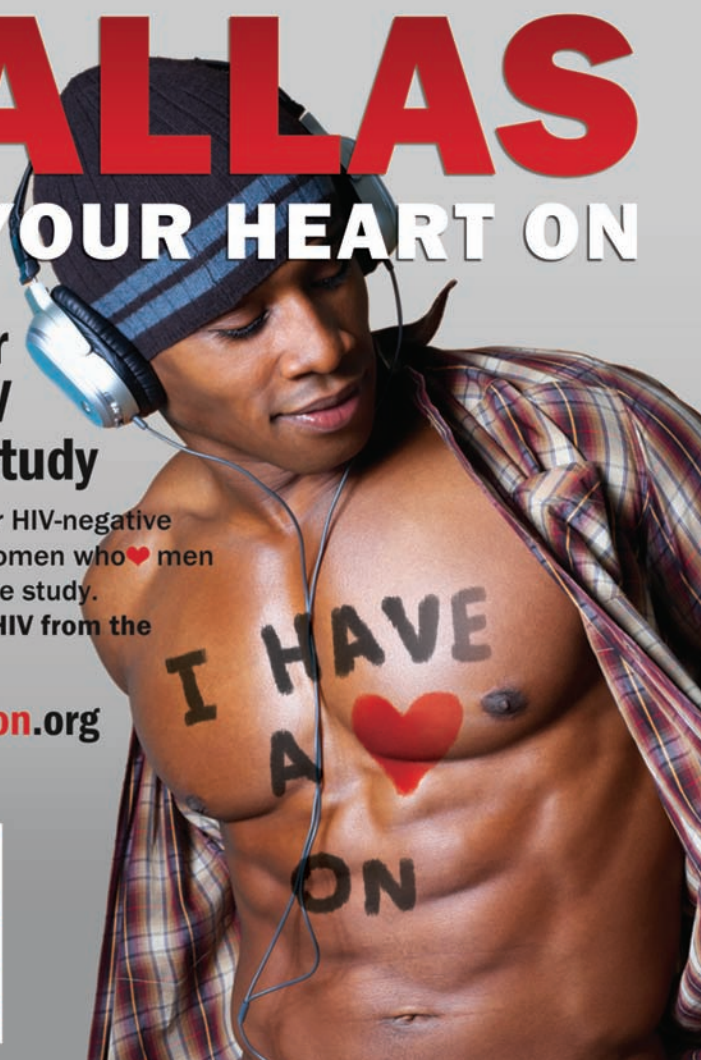
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coverstory

Concert in Lee Park on Easter Sunday was a hit from the beginning — in 1966

Easter in the Park has a colorful 45-year history that began before hippies invaded Lee Park or the gay community revitalized Oak Lawn.

In a Monday, April 11, 1966 front-page story, Dallas Morning News writer Kent Biffle recounted the first Easter in the Park event under the headline, “Open-air ‘Bravo’ Won By Lee Park Concert.”

Biffle wrote that people sat “spellbound amid the blooming azaleas and Houston-like humidity.”

Later that night, golf-ball-sized hail and tornadoes ripped through the area, according to another front page story that day. But the concert was an overwhelming success.

Biffle wrote that no “jetliners roared overhead” during the performance. “Love Field pilots chose to use a different runway rather than disturb the concert that lay below their favorite route.”

Love Field was the city’s main airport at the time. DFW Airport wouldn’t open for almost another decade.

Dallas police blocked off Turtle Creek Boulevard in front of the park at 2:30 p.m., and that first concert was disturbed only by a freight train that passed on the M-K-T tracks at 3:15 p.m. Those railroad tracks a block from Lee Park followed the route that is now the Katy Trail.

Under the direction of Conductor Donald Jahanos, the orchestra performed Rosenkavalier for the first Lee Park concert in a new \$10,000 bandshell set up in front of the then-much-smaller Arlington Hall. The park’s landmark structure, built in 1931 as a replica of General Robert E. Lee’s home in Arlington, Va., was renovated to more than double its size in the late 1980s.

The \$3,000 cost of the concert was underwritten by local businessmen. With overtime pay for a holiday performance, the price tag for the annual performance has risen to more than \$70,000.

In 1967, Biffle covered the second annual Easter concert, too. Orchestra members worried about the threat of rain and the possibility of no one wanting to sit in wet grass, he reported. But more than 5,000 did attend, many wearing Easter bonnets. Oak Lawn Merchants Association sponsored the concert, and Dr. Pepper paid the bill.

In April 1968, *Hair* opened on Broadway, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, and huge protests against the Vietnam War shut down Columbia University and a number of other schools. Dallas was quieter but not immune to changes going on around the country.

The DMN description of Easter in the Park that year was written by a colorful young writer named Marlyn Schwartz, who later became one of the paper’s best-loved columnists. Her writing contrasted with Biffle’s rather stiff accounts as she depicted a rapidly changing Oak Lawn.

“The scene at Lee Park wasn’t exactly the Easter Parade Irving Berlin had in mind,” Schwartz wrote.

One hippie pointed out a man in a black costume and said, “Neat,” according to Schwartz’s account. The hippie’s boyfriend, exasperated, explained that it wasn’t a costume. That was a

Rains, Planes Stay Away

Open-Air ‘Bravo’ Won By Lee Park Concert

By KENT BIFFLE

Spellbound amid the blooming azaleas and Houston-like humidity of Lee Park Sunday were about 4,000 people who came to hear the first outdoor Easter concert by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. It looked like rain. Musicians carried umbrellas and a first violinist wore a rain-

No traffic across reached the park. At 2:30 p.m., Dallas police blocked off the stretch of Turtle Creek Boulevard that skirts the park. At 3:15 p.m., a freight train rumbled along the M-K-T tracks a block away and fought briefly with a chunk of “Rosen-

policeman.

“Mama Cass-looking individuals ran trippingly along Turtle Creek in their mumus,” Schwartz continued. “A bunch of hippies held a tree-shinying contest up the tallest tree in the park.”

People played a game — trying to pick out which of the “long-hairs” were boys and which were girls.

While the actual Pooch Parade — with costumes and judges awarding prizes — didn’t become a formal part of Oak Lawn’s Easter tradition until the 1980s, dogs had become a fixture of Easter in the Park by 1968.

Schwartz wrote that “just about everybody and his dog stretched out on the grass” to listen to the DSO concert while a “giggling Guru” walked his Pekingese.

The next year, Schwartz returned to Lee Park where she described the scene: “Cameras were almost as plentiful as the azaleas and everyone seemed intent upon being snapped as a flower child.”

In 1970, the newspaper reported that the DSO missed its park date for the first time because of cold weather. The concert moved to Memorial Auditorium Theatre, which is now part of the Dallas Convention Center.

The following year, older attendees complained about Conductor Anshel Brusilow’s choice of music, which included the Beatles’ “My Sweet Lord” and selections from *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

“The preconcert took on the aspect of a pet parade as many of the audience brought along their pets to soak up a little of the low-80s-temperatures.”

Brusilow also taught at Southern Methodist University and has been conductor of the Richardson Symphony Orchestra for the last 20 years.

By 1973, Easter in the Park had become a tradition that merited nothing more than a mention in another story about the holiday. The 1974 story centered on Mayor Wes Wise coming on stage in the middle of the free concert, berating Dallas businesses for not contributing to the arts and asking concertgoers to make a \$5 or \$10 contribution to the virtually bankrupt orchestra whose members had not been paid for five weeks.

By the following year, the only jets flying overhead were Southwest’s. The orchestra’s debts were contained and again Easter in the Park only rated a mention when the concert moved from Lee Park to Fair Park Music Hall because of rain.

— David Taffet

Director Scott Whittall. “We’ve expanded the food and beer booths, and we’re selling wine and mimosas for the first time.”

Chris Shull, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra’s manager of publications, said that the symphony’s problem this year was budgeting from the city, and the DSO hopes the funding would be restored so it could return next year.

In its budget-cutting frenzy last summer, the City Council slashed funds to the DSO, allowing the symphony to stage four of the usual six outdoor concerts. Easter in the Park, the most expensive of the outdoor concerts because of holiday overtime costs, was one of two annual performances carved from the orchestra’s schedule this year.

For a number of years, the Turtle Creek Association was the organization that worked with the Lee Park Conservancy, the nonprofit organization that runs the park, to stage the event.

Last year, TCA withdrew from Easter in the Park about a month before the event to stage an alternative “family-friendly” event they called “Creek Craze” a week before.

When charges of homophobia began flying, members of the TCA board said that family meant all families.

TCA tried to move the Pooch Parade to Creek Craze and asked conservative radio personality Jody Dean to emcee.

In a compromise, TCA renamed its animal event “the Pet Costume Contest,” and Easter in the Park kept the Pooch Parade, with comedian Paul Williams as emcee.

Sparsely attended, underfunded and disorganized, Creek Craze was an overwhelming disaster. Lee Park Conservancy director John Williams vowed that was the last of that event.

As soon as the city realized that the DSO was scheduled to perform on Easter, but without its usual community organizer, the mayor’s office approached the Cedar Springs Merchants Association.

Whittall said he received a frantic call from Acting Mayor Dwaine Caraway asking the CSMA to save Easter in the Park.

The DSO had \$70,000 budgeted to cover its appearance, but that didn’t include planning and funding for the Pooch Parade, police protection, city permits, street closings, vendors or cleanup crew.

Dave Berryman, who helps stage the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade and other Oak Lawn events, and the CSMA stepped in. Berryman secured new sources of funding and lined up vendors. Caraway’s office worked with CSMA to facilitate permits.

This year, Berryman and CSMA had the full year to plan Easter in the Park and has known DSO wouldn’t be participating since last summer.

“We got quotes and everything lined up months in advance,” Berryman said. He said there was none of the panic that preceded last year’s Easter event.

Whittall said the symphony has actually played only once or twice in the last five years because of rain or threat of rain, so he sees this as a reinvigorated Easter in the Park.



BRIDGING A GAP | Chris Heinbaugh, the openly gay former chief of staff for Mayor Tom Leppert, is shown at Easter in the Park in 2011, shortly after he helped save the event as an employee in acting Mayor Dwaine Caraway’s office. When the Turtle Creek Association, which had put on Easter in the Park for many years, withdrew to stage an alternative ‘family-friendly’ event called ‘Creek Craze,’ Caraway’s office reached out to the Cedar Springs Merchants Association to take over. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)

“People come rain or shine,” he said, but the symphony actually hasn’t been there much recently.

This year, CSMA secured a covered stage so bands and singers can perform rain or shine. He said he hoped that next year they would find a larger covered stage to accommodate an orchestra, whether the DSO or another performs.

“This year we’ll have a massive pet pavilion — pet rescues, pet adoptions and the SPCA,” Whittall said.

Berryman said the pet rescues will be set up along Turtle Creek Boulevard on the eastbound lanes while the Pooch Parade takes place in the westbound. The judges will have a tent on the street.

The vendors will be in the park.

Berryman said everyone is welcome to bring picnic baskets, “But there are no glass containers in the park.”

Carrie Ivy, a retail store manager, goes to Easter

Easter in the Park

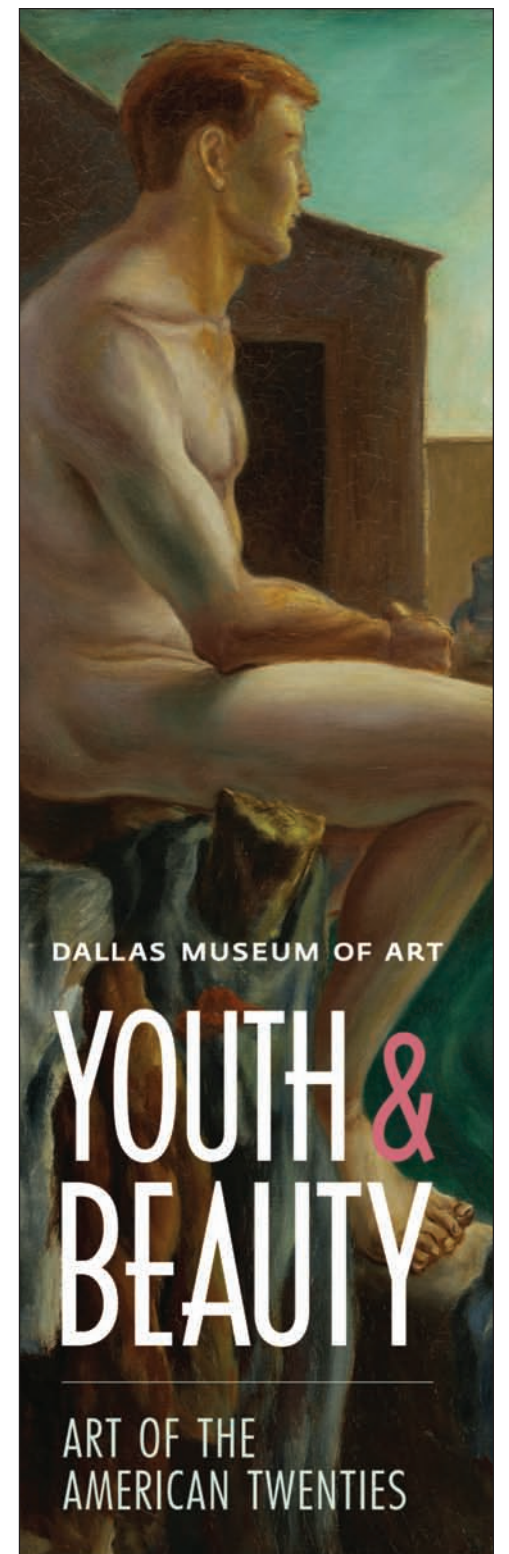
Registration for the Pooch Parade and Bonnet Contest begins at 11 a.m., with the parade at noon. The Oak Lawn Band will perform along the parade route. At 2 p.m., the Gary Floyd Trio performs on the main stage. Ciao Bella and Bad Habits perform at 3 p.m., and Anton Shaw and The Reason at 4 p.m. Food and beverage sales end at 5.

in the Park every year with her partner.

Her favorite part of the day is the animals, but she said that on Easter, rather than going to church, “It’s a less formal way to be in God’s graces.”

She called the event inclusive, casual and her favorite thing to do in the park.

“There’s no better way to spend the holiday,” she said. ■



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GLORY OF THE AGE ART WORKS

Image (detail): John Steuart Curry, *The Bathers*, c. 1928, oil on canvas, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase; Acquired with a donation in memory of George K. Baum II by his family, G. Kenneth Baum, Jonathan Edward Baum, and Jessica Baum Pasmore, and through the bequest of Celestin H. Meuniot, © Estate of John Steuart Curry, photo: Jamison Miller

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Hatred behind a marriage veil

Confidential report detailing National Organization for Marriage's strategy of dividing gays, blacks, Latinos shows just how ugly group really is

The document is titled, "A National Strategy for Winning the Marriage Battle," and its authors are very clear that the battle for marriage in the U.S. will be won or lost in the next two or three years.

The rest of the document reads like a plan for a ground war, with detailed strategic initiatives and moves laid out in detail.

But even though it was made public last week by the Human Rights Campaign, it's not a road map for LGBT marriage rights.

It's a confidential report generated by the National Organization for Marriage, a far right-wing hate group intent on denying basic human rights to LGBT citizens.

Now, lest you think I am being a bit overblown calling NOM a hate group, let me quote a couple of tactics suggested in the "strategy":

"The strategic goal of this project is to drive a wedge between gays and blacks — two key Democratic constituencies. Find, equip, energize and connect African American spokespeople for marriage; develop a media campaign around their objections to gay marriage as a civil right; provoke the gay marriage base into responding by denouncing these spokesmen and women as bigots."

This document is a road map for sowing disension and hatred between the African-American community and the LGBT community. It goes on to detail specific ways to accomplish the goal. But black Americans are not the only targets of their wedge tactics.

"The Latino vote in America is a key swing vote, and will be so even more so in the future, both because of demographic growth and inherent uncertainty: Will the process of assimilation to the dominant Anglo culture lead Hispanics to abandon traditional family values? We must interrupt this process of assimilation by making support for marriage a key badge of Latino identity — a symbol of resistance to inappropriate assimilation."

The National Organization for Marriage wants to open the racial and ethnic divide to slip in their message of intolerance and exclusion. It's called "race baiting," and it's about as sleazy a tactic as I can imagine. But in the minds of the NOM folks, it's all part of the war. Their documents do not talk about same-sex marriage but only "marriage," and you are either for it or against it. By making it an either-or issue, they pound the



CULTURE WARRIOR | Maggie Gallagher, right, co-founder of the National Organization for Marriage, addresses the media March 12 in Huntsville, Ala., at a stop on a bus tour in support of GOP presidential candidate Rick Santorum. Documents uncovered last week by the Human Rights Campaign show that Gallagher's group, NOM, sought to drive a wedge between gays and other minority groups as part of its war against same-sex marriage. (Associated Press)

wedge in further.

Their world is black and white. You are either for marriage or against it. Accepting anything but "one man one woman" as a marriage in their mind destroys the whole institution, or at least that is their rhetoric.

Furthermore, they are working to identify sympathetic voices in the academic and professional communities with their "Expert Witness Project." They are seeking to gain credentials for their bigotry much like the Family Research Council does. Being able to quote a few Ph.D.s always makes your argument seem reasoned, even if those scholars are in your back pocket.

Additionally, the strategy notes that "keeping gay marriage controversial" is a key to rolling back any advances made by LGBT advocates. Their tactic? Create an irrational fear that speaking out against equal rights will have physical consequences. I would call it fostering a "victim mentality." Specifically, they want to document this alleged victimization to prove their point. They are hiring videographers and reporters to collect stories from people who feel they have been harassed as a result of their opposition to gay marriage. Its aim is to create an emotional appeal and show the suffering of the "victims."

I suppose all this should shock me, but it doesn't. These are the tactics the right-wing has been

using for years, just in a new and novel way. The fact that these folks have such a detailed playbook shows they are organized and well prepared. They are not just a bunch of yokels, and the sooner we realize that the better. This campaign is also well funded. Their budget is listed as over \$20 million, and with that kind of financial support they can put a lot of their tactics into the field.

It's time we made a playbook of our own. Not one filled with tricks and phony PR tactics, but one with a clear path toward getting our message out. It will take more than marches and protests. We need people who will not just take the message to lawmakers, but to the public in general.

NOM leaders are very concerned that the next generation of Americans will not be as bigoted and intolerant as they are. They fear children being raised in a society that values all kinds of relationships and not just those they define as worthy. They are willing to get into the trenches and get very dirty to win what they see as a war.

I believe exposing their tactics is a good first step toward showing how little they really value honesty and integrity. Now we need to make sure they can no longer hide behind the mask of being a "pro-marriage" organization. They are just another hate group, trying to masquerade as moral crusaders. We must strip them of their masks and expose how ugly they really are. ■

Hardy Haberman is a longtime local LGBT activist and board member of the Woodhull Freedom Alliance. His blog is at DungeonDiary.blogspot.com.



Hardy Haberman
Flagging Left

An early lesson in the power of LGBT purchasing

Report projecting gay community's buying capacity at \$790 billion in 2012 again confirms what I first discovered at 14 in Wichita Falls

If I had to choose one little phrase that best defines the remarkable advancement of LGBT people in modern society over the past 50 years, it would have to be, "Money talks."

I base that partially on the recent report projecting America's LGBT buying power for 2012 at a whopping \$790 billion, an analysis that is released annually by Bob Witeck, a marketing expert who heads Witeck Communications and has provided the financial information for two decades. He noted this year that about 6.7 percent of the adult U.S. population, an estimated 16 million people 18 and older, self-identify as LGBT.

But I also base it on my personal experience. I first realized this phenomenon when I was about 14 and was still wavering between whether I was or wasn't a homosexual, a word I first spied in an Ann Landers advice column in 1963.

After consulting the giant dictionary at the public library, I realized such people truly did exist in

society, and that when people used the word "queer" or "fag," it wasn't just a joke or an insult. It was for real.

Today, it's hard to imagine a time when LGBT people weren't openly discussed in the newspaper, on television or in group conversations, but that's the way it was a half-century ago.

My discovery put me on alert for any mention of real people in connection with the use of the slurs, and it wasn't long before I hit pay dirt.

At the time my family owned a successful used car lot and salvage auto parts store near Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas. I used to hang around there a lot after school and on Saturdays, partly out of boredom and partly because a fascinating array of people visited the store.

One of the best customers was a well-dressed man in his 40s who wore a black toupee and was forever losing the hubcaps on his car. He apparently drank a lot and spent much of his time during the evenings visiting nightclubs where his hubcaps would get stolen. Either that or he lost them by running into curbs as he drove home

drunk at night. There was a lot of speculation about that.

After the man, who was a local divorced businessman, left one day, I overheard another customer tell my older brother that he couldn't believe my family would do business with that "queer."

My brother, who was about 30 and married, replied, "Listen, that man is a good customer. He pays cash. That's all I need to know about him." End of conversation.

Now that intrigued me, and it wasn't long before I was ferreting out more information. As it happened, I also used to hang out at another business down the road that was owned by the parents of a couple of my friends. It was a restaurant, and I knew the mysterious man was a customer there, too.

One evening I was talking to the wife of the prosperous restaurant owner who also liked to hang around supervising the cooks and waitresses, mostly because she tended to tip the bottle herself and it was a convenient setting. After a couple of hours of supervising, I knew she tended to

get talkative, relaxed and it was possible to approach subjects she otherwise might prefer to avoid.

So I asked her about the mysterious man, whom she acknowledged having known for years. From that point, all I really had to do was sit back and listen because the story tumbled out. I learned the man's wife had discovered his proclivity for other men and divorced him even though they had a daughter.

After the divorce and the resulting scandal, the man had decided to hell with it and began to pursue his interest in men with relish. It turned out he was one of many such men living in Wichita Falls, and he was quite popular in the mini-society. The entire group of men frequented the restaurant, and they often entertained airmen from the Air Force base there, she said.

Again, I got the same message from the restaurant owner's wife. "They drink, they spend lots of money, they tip the waitresses well, and they're always nice to everybody," she said. "Their money is as good as everybody else's."

The restaurant owner's wife, whom I always viewed as something of an intellectual who might have been capable of achievements in her own right, went on to tell me that one of society's dirty little secrets was that everybody knew that there always had been and always would be a certain percentage of both men and women who preferred the company of their own sex to the opposite one. She noted her husband shared her views in all respects.

In the space of about an hour's conversation my view of the world had suddenly become more practical and more sophisticated at the same time. And the steady growth of the LGBT community's size and buying power over the years has proved to me that the slightly tipsy restaurant owner's wife knew what she was talking about.

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
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Man in a 'Cage'

Christopher Sieber, Broadway's gay go-to leading man, brings 'La Cage' to Dallas

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

Christopher Sieber is something of a rarity these days: Like Michael Cerveris and Raul Esparza, he's an actor who makes his living on the Broadway stage. You might even call him a gay Sutton Foster. Certainly he doesn't mind.

"Ha! I'm gonna text her that right now — 'Sutton, I'm the gay you.' That's sweet. I think Norbert Leo Butz is another one — people actually want to come see us because we've been around so long."

The analogy is fully warranted. Despite stints as a regular on two short-lived sitcoms — *Two of a Kind* with the Olsen Twins and the gay domestic comedy *It's All Relative* ("It was a good show, we just got killed by *American Idol*," he says) — Sieber's bread-and-butter has been the stage. From *Beauty and the Beast*'s Gaston to the sexy Wolf in Sondheim's *Into the Woods* to a gay Sir Galahad in *Spamalot* (the first of two Tony Award nominations), he's a marquee name who makes musical theater his own.

"I've done it all," Sieber agrees. "I've been lucky enough to help create characters in, like, 11 shows. The things that have fallen in my lap have been theatrical."

And no show fell in his lap quite so dramatically as the revival (and now national tour) of *La Cage aux Folles*, opening this week at the Fair Park Music Hall.

Sieber had wrapped his Tony-nominated role as dwarfish Lord Farquaad in *Shrek: The Musical* ("I joke it was the first time I ever had to be on my knees after I got a job," Sieber jokes) and was about to enter *Chicago* again as Billy Flynn. While he was standing in line about to see a Broadway show, someone tapped him on the shoulder. "You're going to see *La Cage*," they told him.

The musical was enjoying a revival on Broadway, and Harvey Fierstein, who wrote the script, had taken over the role of Albin, the flamboyant drag queen married to stable impresario Georges.



WALK ON THE SANDS | Broadway star Christopher Sieber, right, teams with George Hamilton for the tour of 'La Cage aux Folles,' in which Sieber plays a different role than the one he played opposite Harvey Fierstein.

"I had never seen *La Cage*, though Harvey and I have been friends for 20 years," he says. "I went backstage to see Harvey and offer my congratulations [after the performance]. Then Harvey" — and here, Sieber affects the best Fierstein impersonation you've ever heard — "says, 'Close the door... So, are you gonna do the show?'"

Jeffrey Tambor, who had just begun playing Georges, had to drop out. The producers were desperate for someone to take over the role.

"I said, 'Yes of course I'll do it.' Seven days later, I am *in* the show, name above the title opposite Harvey on Broadway. Finally I thought, 'What just happened?' I had no time to get freaked out."

Sieber spent 10 weeks with the show, so when he was approached about doing the national tour, Sieber jumped at the idea — especially the chance to co-star on the road with Harvey again.

Only Fierstein couldn't do the tour. So the producers made a suggestion: Would Sieber like to take over the role of Albin?

"I had *no* idea I would ever play that part," he says. "I don't know why they thought of me. But I got to see [Harvey] do Albin, and when you write it *and* you perform it, you know this is what he meant." Legendarily tan George Hamilton took over Georges. That alone has been a surreal experience.

"It was really tough at first — it still is — to see Georges from the position of Albin," he says. "I worked with Harvey on that

role ... and now I know everything about Albin! I adore [Hamilton] — who wouldn't? He's so goddamned charming — but playing opposite yourself is like watching someone driving your new Cadillac down a gravel road. You keep wanting to yell 'Slow down! Be careful!'"

Being the only actor ever to play the two leading roles in major Broadway productions of *La Cage* isn't lost on Sieber ... nor are the political implications of the show's message itself.

"When *La Cage* opened in the '80s, gay stuff like this was still pretty edgy. Now, it's almost passé," he says. "But gay marriage was hard to imagine back then — now it's real!"

Sieber, who legally wed his husband last Thanksgiving in their New York living room following legalization of same-sex marriage in 2011, gets animated talking about it.

"I don't know about you, but I don't wanna be a political football anymore," he says. "Those yahoos keep spouting off about gay marriage. Santorum and all that weird stuff he keeps saying? Why is he so obsessed with gay sex? One doth protest too much I think. I am a human, I am a man same as you and for you to call me evil? You can go fuck yourself. I am married now to my husband and we just want to love each other and spend our lives together. We've been together a long time, but once you have found him, never let him go."

Ya know, that sounds like a song from *another* show Sieber might want to tackle.

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Family dysfunction plays out in WaterTower's 'August' and KDT's 'Screw'

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

Combine the pill-popping matriarch from *Long Day's Journey into Night*, the troika of daughters with unclear loyalties from *King Lear*, the prosaic tragedy of *Death of a Salesman*, the incestuousness of Tennessee Williams (take your pick) and the Southern decay of Horton Foote and you approach what's great about Tracy Letts' ambitious epic **August: Osage County**. It's a pastiche in the canniest, most complimentary way: A play that magpies the best bits of great American drama into something entirely new.

That's what marks the best writing, actually — the kind that stands up on its own, its brilliance shining through. As Sidney Bruhl remarks in *Deathtrap*, "It's so good, even a gifted director couldn't ruin it."

Not that director Rene Moreno — or anybody else associated with WaterTower Theatre's deftly executed production of *August* — ruins anything. The acting is exemplary and real. But this play can withstand so much more. "This situation is fraught," observes Mattie Fae (Nancy Sherrard), the blowsy sister of viperfish Violet Weston (Pam Dougherty). That line can be screeched and still feel authentic; this is essential a comedy (a dark one) about a dysfunctional family. Mom is an addict who has driven away her three children and perhaps her husband to suicide. Barbara (Sherry Jo Ward) is separated from her philandering husband (Jim Crawford) but putting on a good face for the others; Mattie Fae has so henpecked Charlie (Tom Lenaghan) he's almost disappeared.

There are so many currents and undercurrents crossing each other, the audience almost expects to be trapped in the whirlpool of sniping. But most of it is simply played as straight drama, not Southern Gothic. Violet may have grown up poor, but she's used to prestige and should have the bearing Mama Rose; Mattie Fae, by contrast, is still middle class. The dichotomy should be palpable — this is Violet's turn — but everyone

seems to be holding back. Go big, guys. We're all Southerners here, we can take it.

But if *August* is constitutionally capable of more *Hot Tin Roof*, less cattiness, the play itself is still massively entertaining, where a lot happens and not much does, in a way difficult to explain. The production is a good one, and even though it clocks in just shy of three and a half hours (what, is this opera?), it never drags.

Ward does something I've not seen in two prior productions I've seen: Make Barbara the can't-take-your-eyes-off role. With straw hair, the butch look of someone on the LPGA tour and a voice that can trumpet a whine like Felicity Huffman, Ward steals the show, tapping into Barbara's flawed humanity. Lenaghan gives the production its stealthiest performance, emerging from his wife's shadow for the best cheerline monologue in the show. And ultimately, Dougherty breaks your heart with her tragic,

misguided Violet. This *August* doesn't take the direct route, but it still gets where it needs to go.

Over at Kitchen Dog Theater, we have the obverse: A crackling 80-minute two-hander that delves into Gothic dysfunction in a much more literal way. **The Turn of the Screw** is the favorite ghost story of the literati, Henry James' moody, opaque tale of a

governess (Jenny Ledel) charged with rearing two orphans. James always kept a mystery about what was *really* happening — are there really ghosts or is the woman's sexual frustration manifesting paranoia?

Kitchen Dog's production doesn't answer that question any more than James did, as director Christina Vela simply blows through the plot with a minimal set and creepy lighting, eerie music and two gangbuster performances: Ledel and the ingénue hardened by her uncertainty, and Cameron Cobb, spectacularly playing the narrator, the children's uncle, the young boy and most deliciously a clucking housekeeper. The intensity of the play is like a flashpot that scorches your retinas, leaving you dazzled.

EVERYTHING'S COMING UP VIOLET | Drug-addicted matriarch Violet (Pam Dougherty) dismisses her philandering son-in-law (James Crawford) in WaterTower's entertaining 'August: Osage County.'



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L+S dining

Who you callin' Sissy?

Celebrity restaurateur Lisa Garza teams with chef Jeffery Hobbs for some good ol' home cookin' at Sissy's Kitchen

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

With her high-collared blouse, black patent leather sensible shoes and knee-length skirt, Lisa Garza moves through the room with purpose and a control-freak determination you might recognize from her stint on *The Next Food Network Star*. Prim but with a welcoming smile, she's more Martha Stewart than Rachael Ray, with a decidedly Southern sensibility. Garza, in other words, wants to be your nana.

Not that she's old enough to be anyone's grandma — she just exudes a kind of hospitality that says, "Please enjoy yourself! ... But no elbows on the

THE MONEY SHOT | Darkly crisped fried chicken and homemade biscuits provide Sissy's signature culinary mission. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)



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table." I bet she makes a mean cookie.

Cookies and milk are indeed one of the dessert options on the menu at Sissy's Southern Kitchen & Bar — named, significantly enough, after Garza's nickname among her younger siblings. (Presumably, were she a man it would be called Bubba's; every good Southern family has a Bubba.) Such a reassuringly familiar treat at the end of a meal keeps with the aesthetic of the restaurant, which took over the old Hector's on Henderson space.

If you'd been to Hector's, you almost won't recognize it. The décor looks like something from a Billy Reid boutique: Porcelain dishes mounted on the back wall surrounding antlered deer trophies like haloes reflecting the glory of the kill; an oak bar manned by bow-tie clad mixologists, and stocked with samovars of high-octane iced teas; wildflowers and doilies adorning the cozy place settings. In the back, a private dining-reception area recalls a gentlemen's smoking lounge; alongside, the shotgun quasi-exposed patio summons memories of clambakes back in Charleston.

None of this is accidental. Sissy's is comfort food in a comforting environment, something Screen Door in One Arts Plaza innovated along the high end and places like Original Market Diner naturally do on the more affordable side.

Sissy's falls between those two concepts; it's down-home, but upscale. A 10-piece bucket — yes, bucket, as in a hammered stainless steel pail — of fried chicken tallies up only 20 bucks. The style is almost daring: Each time I've had it, the chicken (available in white, dark or mixed) has always come out a deep reddish brown — unexpected, but not overcooked. My dining companion on one trip insisted we go back barely a week later. That's how much he craved it.

The best dishes (executed by chef Jeffery Hobbs, who also worked with Garza at Suze) are the ones that tweak classics. The deviled eggs (\$8-\$14), which downplay traditional paprika (you can see hints of it mixed in the yolk) in order to focus on a kiss of crème fraiche and



I DO DECLARE | Garza and exec chef Hobbs have reunited after the success of Suze for Sissy's, which takes over the Hector's on Henderson space. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)

sprinkle of caviar. "Squash puppies" (\$7) are a spin on the hush variety, with a bite from jalapeno jelly.

The "ham and cheese" (\$9) served with so-called angel biscuits which, presumably, are counter-karma to the deviled ham salad. There's not much devil there — it's bland but reassuring as a puppy's hum. But the spiciness from the pimento cheese (honestly, the best I've had) and pickled chow chow make it a winner.

The Low Country gumbo (\$8) needs to be thicker, and the inclusion of blue crab claws merely makes you have to work to get the meat out, but the andouille packs some kick. A "chopped wedge salad" (\$8) seems to defeat the purpose — it stops being a wedge once someone cuts it up for you. No matter, "Grandma's layered salad" (\$8) will delight fans of that Sunday supper staple; it even comes with a dollop of racism. (Kidding.) But one of my favorite items on the entire menu is the baby spinach salad (\$8), where a runny poached egg, a bit of pork belly and shallot crisps highlight a dense bed of fresh greens.

More Gullah cooking comes in the form of the shrimp and grits (\$18), fast becoming the new dish du jour, and we could eat the Shiner-battered fish and chips (\$14) all day. So far, though, the desserts have been underwhelming.

The drink program is a draw for fans of cocktail culture, with infused teas and classics like the Sazerac and a Rob Roy that will send you reeling.

Service so far has been spotty. At one pre-theater meal, we let our hostess and waitress know we were time-crunched. It still took forever to get served and, more importantly, to get our check. But we were still on time for the curtain and the leftover chicken was just as good the next morning. Typical of the South, they may not do it fast, but they get it done — and with style. ■

OVERALL RATING ★★★★★

Sissy's Southern Kitchen & Bar, 2929 Henderson Ave. Open Monday–Saturday for dinner at 5 p.m. Daily brunch coming soon. SissysSouthernKitchen.com.

A solid concept — Southern comfort food in an elegant shotgun house right off Charleston's Battery — provides an excellent venue for classics cleverly tweaked (like the deviled eggs, pictured), and a well-executed cocktail program.



Food: ★★★★★

Atmosphere: ★★★★★

Service: ★★★★★

Price: Moderate

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Jay pop

Brannan expands his sound on 'Rob Me Blind'

RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
lopez@dallasvoice.com

Does a queer singer have an obligation to sing only from and about the gay perspective? When Jay Brannan beautifully but blatantly sang about wanting to be a housewife in his 2009 debut *god-damned*, he was the Bob Dylan for gay men. But in subtle moments, he defies expectations in his sophomore release of original material, *Rob Me Blind*, but it's still a thrilling listen. And don't worry: He keeps it pretty gay.

Brannan has blasted "the gay label" as confining — that music should speak to *all* people. He backs that up with *Blind*'s first single, "Beautifully," an observation on a jerky boyfriend and needy girlfriend. The guy wants a pretty lady; she just wants a chance. The dynamic is heartbreaking against a plucky sound with some wonderful strings added in.

The song is perfectly suited for radio, which may be some intention behind it, but how more interesting it would have been between two men or women? Brannan has sung about his insecurities before, so why go this route? The decision doesn't take away from the song's strengths, but a whisper of "what if" comes to mind as the song concludes.

We're used to a minimalist Brannan delivering melodies with his voice and guitar only, but working with producer David Kahne,

Brannan explores additional layers of instrumentation: drums, violins, even electric guitars. Together, the team has constructed a smartly balanced album that keeps Brannan's usual feel with a broader sonic scope.

This is prominent in the wonderfully schizophrenic romp "La La La." Starting with the tenderness of Simon and Garfunkel harmonies, a hard rock guitar riff shatters the apparent delicacy only to fade away. Horns reside in the background before a creepy orchestration akin to Bernard Herrmann's *Psycho* score takes the guitar's place in the next chorus. Brannan's experimentation is fun and distracts just enough, but retains the song's intention.

Brannan retreats into familiar territory with "Greatest Hits." The arresting part is one particular stanza when he sings *I don't sing for the rainbow / Cuz I taste the rain / They spit "cheer up" and they scoff / I laugh "cheer down or fuck off" / Then get roughed up against the grain*. The song itself is enigmatic in its message, but gay listeners will likely zero in on this line. There's an unnerving defiance to the lyrics. Is Brannan feeling a pressure from his gay fans and their expectations, or is he really just ruffling feathers?

Perhaps he's leaving those answers for his next album, but Brannan displays major growth in *Blind* and the 10 tracks touch on all spectrums of emotions from the delightful "The Spanglish Song" to the epic title track and even a slight knock at his own industry with "The State of Music" while also thanking his musical heroines Joni Mitchell, The Cranberries' Dolores O'Riordan and Dallasite Lisa Loeb (among others). The album's final track "A Love Story," most mirrors "Housewife" in its emotional truth. Heartbreak may be numbing, but by the end, the song's revelation is that *Now I believe in love / I'll pin love down / I'll make love see / Love better believe in me*.

Rob Me Blind does its job in making us believe in Brannan's growing talents.



GAY FOR JAY | Hard rock guitars and drumbeats show Jay Brannan's musical growth on his newest release, 'Rob Me Blind.'

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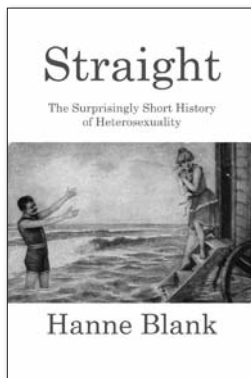
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Deviant history

The distinction between hetero and homo is not as old as you think



When you were born, someone else decided whether you were a boy or a girl (admittedly, based on obvious visual clues). Because of that, they hung a gender-specific moniker on you, dressed you in pink or blue, cuddled you more or less, and gave you certain toys accordingly. Consequently, people presumed your sexuality before you were able to confirm or deny it.

But what is a heterosexual, anyhow? Or a homosexual? Find out in Hanne Blank's *Straight*.

For most of human history, people were just people, un-pigeonholed. There were no so-called "heterosexuals" prior to about 150 years ago, nor were there homosexuals. Love existed, of course, as did various sexual desires and behaviors, but terms and categories describing humans themselves did not.

In 1868, a Victorian-era writer coined the word "heterosexual," and there we are. Those Victorians, says Blank, were a randy bunch who loved to be titillated so we shouldn't be too surprised at their prurient interests, especially that which concerned the maintenance of "manly" virtues and the defining of "deviant" behavior of the lower class. Those "degenerates" were the ones who

needed to be "weeded out."

Suddenly, what others were doing in the bedroom became a really big deal. Serious names for every sexual activity, as well as judgments for them, were topics of hushed conversation, and extreme care had to be taken to remain on the good side of gossip. Anything other than "normal" sexual relationships were considered immoral, though it was extremely common for same-sex couples to share a bed and nobody gave it a thought.

Freud weighed in with his ideas; other "scientists" followed suit, and by the 1950s, heterosexuals were everywhere, Blank says, many ushered into marriage because it was expected of them. After all, wedded bliss was the only respectable allowance for having sex, and sex was only for procreation.

And then came The Pill ...

All of this history begs a modern question: because we know now that there are *way* more than two categories of human sexuality on the spectrum, does anyone's sexual identity really matter to anybody but that individual? Who cares anymore? Blank says it depends on who asks.

Straight is, well, pretty straight, and probably not the kind of book you'd pick up on a lark, although Blank does occasionally employ a sense of the absurd in her accounting of the history of

HOMO GENIUS

Author Hanne Blank tracks the Victorian invention of divided sexuality in 'Straight.'



heterosexuality and everything that it wasn't.

For casual, time-starved readers, though, that might not be enough. What Blank says runs somewhat deep and semi-philosophical, with solidly-based research and biographical examples. These things are tempered by Blank's sharp-as-an-ax wit, but that doesn't lessen the fact that this book begs to be pondered.

Still, if you've ever wondered how we got to this point in our bedrooms, you really can't miss it. If you know a heterosexual, reading *Straight* may point you along the you-know and narrow.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer

★★★★★
STRAIGHT: THE SURPRISINGLY
SHORT HISTORY OF
HETEROSEXUALITY
by Hanne Blank
(Beacon Press, 2012). \$27; 228 pp.

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L+S comedy

Me and Mrs. Jordan

In his new show 'Fruit Fly,' pixieish comic actor Leslie Jordan finally answers the age-old question: Do gay men grow up to be their own mothers?

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

Leslie Jordan has been making his living as an entertainer for so long, something's become patently clear: He just doesn't give a shit.

Not that he ever did. But at 56, the pixieish actor — perhaps best known for his Emmy Award-winning performance as the fey socialite Beverly Leslie on *Will & Grace* — has finally reached a point where he can be up-front about that.

"I've been able to turn everything I was ashamed of as a kid to be an asset," he says from a hotel room in Savannah, Ga., a week before bringing his one-man show, *Fruit Fly*, to Dallas. "I was ashamed of being a sissy. I went on TV and they paid me a lot of money to be one — the bigger the sissy the more money!"

Starting with a bit part on *The Fall Guy* 25 years ago and continuing through guest shots on series like *Lois & Clark*, *Caroline in the City* and *Desperate Housewives*, Jordan has paid his dues. But he really hit the big time last year with a featured role in the Oscar-winning smash *The Help*. It was the culmination of a career bracketed by many brushes with greatness.

"Tate Taylor, the writer and director [of *The Help*], who was in the L.A. production of *Southern Baptist Sissies*, called and offered me the part! No audition or anything. I'm used to low-budget movies and suddenly we have \$35 million on DreamWorks' dime with a two-week rehearsal period. At the read-through, I looked and saw Viola Davis on my right, scribbling on her script. Then I look at Sissy Spacek on the other side, scribbling away. I thought, well, I guess I better start scribbling!"

But the big moment came more than a year

later, when he saw Taylor escorting Octavia Spencer up the steps to receive her Oscar. "I couldn't wrap my mind around that," he admits. "But what I'm really waiting on is, people keep telling me I'm gonna get a check for the DVD sales. I hear it'll be big."

All of which has afforded Jordan the luxury of doing what he wants to do. While best known as an actor, Jordan wrote the dishy memoir *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet*, and has performed in several one-man plays he wrote

FRUIT FLY
Greenville Center for the Arts,
5601 Sears St. April 9-11.
8 p.m. \$40-\$45.
ContemporaryTheatreofDallas.com.

about his experiences in life and show business. After taking his stage version of *Pink Carpet* to London's West End, Jordan decided to concentrate on doing

standup. "I do think of myself as a writer, but I'm not like my friend Del Shores, who is so prolific he can write eight hours at a stretch," he says. "Plus, I can only write for myself. And there's nothing left! I've said it all."


The last year, Jordan got booked in Los Angeles on the condition he perform all-new material. "I started thinking about my mother and how she had this box of slides. My mom was the last of nine and my dad was the baby of his family, too, so when the babies had a baby, I was photographed relentlessly."

That became the basis for *Fruit Fly*, in which Jordan finally answers the age-old question: Do gay men become their mothers?

"On this one, I really concentrated on my mom. My parents were so young we never stayed at home. Mother was always the den mother of the Cub Scouts and real involved in my life," he says. "How wonderful it was. And I have all these pictures of them."


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DON'T TELL MAMA | Leslie Jordan's latest one-man show, 'Fruit Fly,' will be performed for the first time ever outside L.A. during a three-night run at the Contemporary Theatre of Dallas.

The slides, still in pristine condition, provided the launching point for this performance, which has never been performed outside of L.A. He's nervous about that, if excited to be returning to his North Texas. ("I love Dallas, but I will be staying in Fort Worth," he confesses. "I like Fort Worth more because of the cowboys walking around on Sundance Square.")

Fruit Fly is a unique experience for Jordan, in part because he went in knowing what he wanted to accomplish.

"This is the first time I sat down to write a piece where I had a clear idea about a through-line and what it was about. This was very concise. Begins with me and my mother and is very intimate — I talk right to the audience."

As a recovering addict, it's important to Jordan that he share his truth with other people, and a show like this would seem to be the ideal medium for it. But he's the first to admit after years of outrageous Southern storytelling, he's no longer totally sure what the truth is.

"It's all glommed together," he concedes.

"There's always a kernel. But I'll hear something about a friend and I'll make it about me. Del [Shores] will sit there with an open mouth as I recount his stories as my own, but he never calls me out on it."

That of necessity means you have to take what Jordan says with a grain of salt. But that don't-give-a-shit mentality also means when he does say something, it's not softened. Last year, he did a Broadway-bound musical with Varla Jean Merman, *Lucky Guy*, which he describes as "the worst experience of my life" and "a gilded turd."

"That show has been around so long, Faith Prince was the original ingénue," he says. "The lesson learned was I need to write my own stuff."

Even so, his success is still a puzzle to him.

"I just lived the most blessed life. But who wants to hear your own voice, especially when you sound as nelly as I do?" he says. "I have no idea why people want to listen to me."

But we do, Leslie. We do. ■

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What Hyundai's Veloster lacks in power it makes up for in stylish economy



CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
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Hyundai is making a pretty good feast of devouring competitors to the stylish new Accent sub-compact, award-winning Elantra compact, Tucson crossover and Sonata mid-size sedan. While none of those cars are the most powerful or fastest in their classes, they are making rodents quake with their advanced style, handling, warranties, pricing and load of features. They look sexy, even while topping the fuel economy charts and offering value. This carnage continues with the Veloster.

You won't exactly think "raptor" when you step into the standard 138hp 1.6-liter direct-injected four-cylinder engine, whether connected to the six-speed manual or optional six-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission. It may catch a Fiesta or Sonic sleeping, but it better take a big bite and run quickly to survive the skirmish when something barely faster catches it. Properly revved, there's still plenty of pep to step into freeway traffic or slip through town. With gas at four bucks, a fuel economy rating of 28/40-MPG city/hwy is a sweet trade for the power deficit.

Admittedly, most of the reptile hunters who tread into Hyundai showrooms may not be terribly concerned about blowing Cobras into the weeds; they'll be more seduced by the Veloster's funky cool styling. Its most distinguishing feature may be the front-hinged rear passenger-side door, perfect for letting friends and offspring off at the curb, but the car cuts a swath right through the sub-compact scene. You'll know its family by the angry grille, and swept-back headlamps.

The 18-in. alloys with black trim are cool, but the Kamback rear and hunkered stance set it apart. It's both tough and cute. The front is enhanced with LED lighting, foglamps and a chrome grille surrounded by piano-black high-



lights.

Let's be clear: Like the Accent, Veloster is built to a price point. That means lots of hard plastic interiors. Still, the dash has a rubber sheen that makes it feel soft to the touch and doors are padded in all the right places. Silver-painted surfaces on the dash and doors, alloy pedals, leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob dress up the space nicely. I especially like the gray fabric on the seats that reminds me a little of the houndstooth used in '60s Camaros. Our car came with a panoramic sunroof and power headliner cover that make the most of spring days.

The sporty twin-cockpit layout echoes other Hyundais and makes a perfect place for the touchscreen, large gauges and rocket-igniter push button keyless ignition below the radio/climate control stack.

Huge cupholders, 60/40-split/fold rear seats, a wide hatchback and lots of cubbies keep everything in good kit. I would definitely spring for the Dimension premium audio with separate amp and subwoofer, navigation, rear camera and XM satellite radio. Bluetooth hands-free phone connection, auto up/down driver window and heated mirrors add convenience.

For the tech-savvy, Hyundai's Blue Link infotainment system offers incredible connectivity. It

THE LIZARD KING | At about \$20,000 and with impressive fuel economy, the sleek Veloster offers many attractive features, if not a powerful engine.

allows drivers and passengers to access voice text messaging, Point Of Interest Web search downloads, navigation and vehicle diagnostics reporting. Blue Link also enables automatic crash notification and assistance, remote door locking/unlocking, stolen vehicle immobilization and Geofencing to keep children in a prescribed zone.

A concierge might even teach you about dinos if you ask politely. (Subscribers can choose options in packages with varying charges.)

Taming the Veloster from behind the wheel is as easy as scraping scales off a lizard. You have to rev the engine like a chur-nasaurus, but the clutch is easy to modulate and the shifter loves to be handled. Put the car into a corner, and the short suspension turns like a bird chasing a feast while the steering becomes heavy and provides a good picture of the under-skin action.

Veloster shares much of its underpinnings with the redesigned Accent, which is mostly good. The

rear torsion beam suspension chatters over rough pavement, but stays balanced and true. Four-wheel anti-lock disc brakes, stability control and traction control are standard.

Prices for our non-turbo manual transmission-equipped coupe start at \$17,300, but came to \$21,300 loaded to the tails. Of course, that includes Hyundai's famous 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty. Competitors include the Scion tC, Honda CR-Z hybrid, Fiat 500, Mini Cooper and funky-looking reptiles.

While base coupes spew enough venom for most drivers, the more aggressive among us will ask for deeper fangs to go with the Veloster's hiss. A more sinister Turbo model will be available this summer. Driving the front wheels is a 1.6-liter DOHC turbo-four, connected through a six-speed manual transmission. Fuel economy remains impressive at 27/38-MPG city/hwy. Prices will start around \$22K. ■

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Pride ride

If you happen to see a pink and white Fiat zipping around town, you'll be happy to know it's likely on its way to a good deed. As the symbol for the Eye Take Pride campaign, founder Debbie Forth has taken the car above and beyond its cute appeal and into the role of a do-gooder.

"I'll use it to give someone a ride for their chemo appointment or take supplies to an organization if they need it," Forth says. "We use it to help people in the community out and then people see the car and the logo."

Last year, people got to know Forth through *Lez Be Friends*, the web-based reality show she created with her partner Dawn. Intended as a sort of healthy response to the celebrated carousing on the Showtime series *The Real L Word*, they sought to reflect a community of lesbians who live fulfilled lives with healthy relationships, careers and spirituality. The series affected Forth and her partner in ways they hadn't imagined, opening her eyes to a slew of needs not being met in the community.

"Women would call and open up about their situations — if they were being abused or had an un-

healthy childhood — and it just showed me that we had an impact. And it was all kinds of women straight and lesbian," she says.

Eye Take Pride began not only as an LGBT campaign, but a movement to "promote a positive eye in all communities," according to its website — straight, gay, male, female. To spread its message, the campaign is raffling off a 2012 Fiat 500. The drawing will take place on April 21 — a date significant to Forth.

"That's Equality Day and I want us to have this big celebration when we give the car away," she says. "So we're talking with potential sponsors to make that happen."

Forth says the car has a whole lot of zip and gets great gas mileage (a sweet deal considering prices at the pump). For \$25 a pop, someone could easily win a \$16,000 Italian car. And don't worry that you'll have to keep it pink and white with a big logo on it.

"Oh yeah, that's just a wrap around the car," she says. "They can easily take that off."

— Rich Lopez

For more information, visit EyeTakePrideFiat.EventBrite.com

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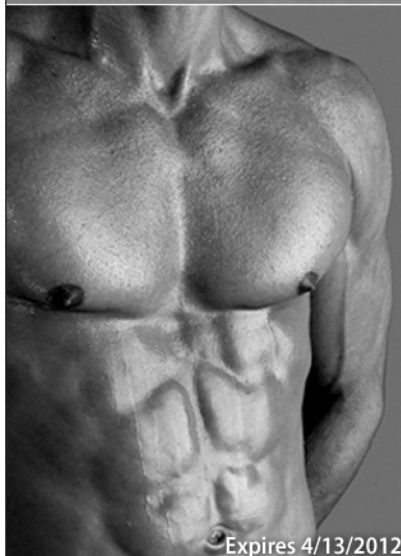
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Couch Potato Adventure Journal returns to go all Jackie Chan on your ass!

RICH LOPEZ | Staff Writer
lopez@dallasvoice.com

I don't get the Chuck Norris thing. I laugh at the jokes about how he's such a badass that he won *American Idol* using only sign language or that ghosts sit around the campfire and tell Chuck Norris stories, and I've imitated his moves from *The Octagon* a time or two in my bedroom. But that was all in fun.

Only now, I — and you — might be able to learn those moves for real ... maybe not fend off 12 ninjas, but with Mickey Fisher's help, I can learn how to kick some butt if the wrong person messes with this.

Fisher has been teaching martial arts "for more than 50 years," he says, and has a ninth-degree black belt in karate.

Holy shitballs. *That's* who Mickey Fisher is. He adds that he was one of the first teenage black belts in the U.S. I'm not gonna challenge him on that.

Fisher has just teamed with Resource Center Dallas to provide free self-defense seminars for the LGBT community. "Free" is my second favorite four-letter F-word, so it got me wondering: Could I earn *some* kind of belt color in a short time? Journalists appreciate getting stuff done quickly.

"No," he says. Fair enough.

The emphasis of Fisher's instruction is one of empowerment. Self-defense shows you not only how to protect yourself, but also instills a sense of confidence. Walk down a dark street with an air of "don't even *think* about it" is half the battle.

"I felt like this would be an opportunity to present the community with a means of recourse," Fisher says. "It's not a punch-and-kick course, but shows how easy it can be to prevent injury, whether it's domestic or street assault. There's psychological technique as well as physical."

CAN'T TOUCH THIS | Black belts go with anything — especially as self-defense in the gay community right now is becoming essential. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)

Fisher has been personally touched by the rampant epidemic of criminal assaults and bullying against queer youth. He feels that the martial arts community could have a stronger relationship with the LGBT community in providing these sorts of classes on a regular basis.

"I had gotten extremely upset over the years hearing about any kind of bashing, but particularly the younger people. When Matthew Shepard was killed, that's when it started getting to me," Fisher admits. "The gay and lesbian community has sort of been overlooked, and unfairly so. I want to bridge that."

Fisher will hold four seminars total on April 10 and 12 and a longer session at Youth First Texas on April 19. While we can dream of throwing stars and flying deathstrikes, he will boil down the instruction to the basics.

While he started teaching in Dallas, he now has schools beyond Texas. But he's returning for the sole reason of educating the LGBT community; if the interest is there, he may initiate regular classes.

"What I've done from the early days of this kind of instruction is concentrate on practical self-defense," he says. "These are going to be easily learned techniques most used against common street assaults. And if there is this need or collective interest, then perhaps we keep the instruction going."

I could be on my way to a belt after all. I really like blue. So who would win in a Chuck Norris versus Mickey Fisher deathmatch? Neither would go on the record. I'd put some money on one, but I am, reminded no one bets against Chuck Norris — or Mickey Fisher. ■

Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. Sessions April 10 and 12 at 7 and 8 p.m. Free. To enroll, call 214-528-0144.

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Friday 04.06

Pike and roll

When bi rocker Patrice Pike comes to town, we can't help but take notice. She grabs our attention whether through her latest CD, the engaging concert release *Of Brushwood Lounge: Live and Then Some!* or just whatever new look she's sporting. Pike is an all-around package of Texas music at some of its finest.

DEETS: With D. Anson Brody. Poor David's Pub, 1313 S. Lamar St. Doors at 7:30 p.m. \$16.50-\$18. PoorDavidsPub.com.

Sunday 04.08

Music for your basket

While the kids are trouncing through lawns gathering colored eggs and melted chocolates, you can kick it on the inside with a drink in hand and your feet on the dance floor. DJ Lydia Prim headlines Easter Sunday with a basketful of BPMs to boogie on down to.

DEETS: The Brick/Joe's, 2525 Wycliff Ave., Ste. 125. Doors at 5 p.m. \$7. BrickDallas.com.

Thursday 04.12

Red carpet ready

The Dallas International Film Festival launches with its Opening Night Gala followed by a screening of *Liberal Arts* starring Zac Efron, Allison Janney and Elizabeth Olson directed by and starring *How I Met Your Mother's* Josh Radnor.

DEETS: Majestic Theatre, 1925 Elm St. 7:30 p.m. \$125. DallasFilm.org.



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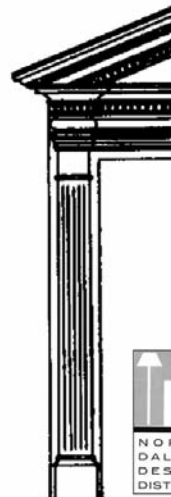
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Due to the holiday weekend, please consider contacting the organizations directly regarding their schedules.

FRIDAY 04.06

COMMUNITY

Dallas Fresh Leather monthly meeting. Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. 7 p.m. NLA-Dallas.org.

Dallas Blooms. The famous flower festival returns for its 28th anniversary. With 500,000 spring blooms including tulips, pansies and violas, the festival has grown into a Dallas tradition. 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.

Unwired Dallas. Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA) meets for those wishing to quit using. New Hope Fellowship Church, 2438 Butler St. 7 p.m. Free. Crystallmeth.org.

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. Youth-FirstTexas.org.

SATURDAY 04.07

COMMUNITY

Easter Eggstravaganza. Oak Lawn UMC hosts its 10th annual giant egg hunt including activities for families and members of the community. The event benefits the Oak Lawn Community Outreach Center. This is the only free egg hunt in the central Dallas area. Oak Lawn UMC, 3014 Oak Lawn Ave. 10 a.m. – noon. Free. OLUMC.org.

Women's Alliance for Leadership meets every first Saturday. The group's mission is to support and positively influence women of the LGBT community with career development through skill building and networking. This month's discussion focuses on resumes. Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. 2 p.m. Find the group on Facebook.

KhushDallas provides a safe and supportive network for LGBT South Asians and meets every first Saturday of every month for social events. Email khushdallas@gmail.com or call 469-454-8741 for location information. KhushTexas.org.

Dallas Gay Roleplayers Club. Gamers meet to play and discuss role-playing games from sci-fi to fantasy. Half Price Books Community Room, 5803 E. Northwest Highway. 3 p.m. 214-360-0833 ext. 222.

Cathedral Couples potluck dinner and social. For location, call 972-252-7124.

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).

SUNDAY 04.08

COMMUNITY

Expressions, a free gender support group for men and women led by volunteers. Sponsored by Dallas Gender Society. Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. 7 p.m. 214-540-4475.

Cowtown Leathermen cookout. Best Friends Club, 2620 East Lancaster Ave., Fort Worth.

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

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.

FAIR

Arlington Psychic Fair. Psychics, aura photographer, massage therapists, jewelry, candles, wellness coach, healers and more. Held the second Sunday of each month at La Quinta Inn, Highway 360 and I-30 (next to Six Flags). Noon–6 p.m. \$7 (\$2 off with can of food donated to AIDS Outreach Food Pantry). 817-727-7882.

MONDAY 04.09

COMMUNITY

DFW Prime Timers play bridge at member's residence. 1 p.m. Call 972-504-8866 for information.

Stonewall Democrats of Tarrant County. Tommy's Hamburger Grill, 3431 W. 7th St., Fort Worth. 7 p.m. 817-913-8743.

PFLAG Mesquite. St. Stephen UMChurch. 2520 Oates Drive, Mesquite. 7 p.m. 972-279-3112.

United Black Ellum's Hot Topics. A weekly discussion group for black gay and bi men, 18-29. UBE 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.

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



FLOWER POWER | Dallas Blooms comes to a close this Sunday at the Arboretum.

TUESDAY 04.10

COMMUNITY

Late Bloomers, social support group for women who came out later in life. La Madeleine, 3906 Lemon Ave. 6 p.m. 903-778-4446.

Lambda Pride Toastmasters. Regular meeting for improving communication and leadership skills. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 6:30 p.m. LambdaPride.FreeToastHost.us.

DFW Prime Timers Prime Diner at Texas Land and Cattle, 812 S. Central Expressway, Richardson. 7 p.m. Call 972-504-8866 to attend.

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 04.11

COMMUNITY

Cathedral Business Network second Wednesday meeting. Location to be determined. 11:30 a.m. Contact Anity Haddy at Cathedral of Hope for more information. 214-351-1901. CathedralOfHope.com.

American Veterans for Equal Rights North Texas Chapter. Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. 7 p.m. Lone Star Veterans Chapter. BLGT veterans group meets in Fort Worth. 7:30 p.m. Info at LSVCPres@aol.com.

FUSE Activity Nights. The "official FUSE hangout night" with games, food and more meets. 7 p.m. Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. 214-540-4435. DFWFuse.com.

DFW Prime Timers play bridge every week. 7 p.m. Call 972-504-8866 for details.

BROADCAST

Lambda Weekly. LGBT radio for North Texas. This week's guests are Soulforce Equality Riders. 89.3 KNON-FM at 7 a.m. LambdaWeekly.com.

THURSDAY

04.12

COMMUNITY

Hope Cottage Food Truck Extravaganza is a fundraiser with portions of sales going toward Hope Cottage Foster to Adopt Program. Featured trucks include Jack's Chow Hound, Three Men and a Taco, Easy Sliders and Trailercakes. Hope Cottage, 4209 McKinney Ave. 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

Dallas Gay and Lesbian Bar Association monthly luncheon meeting. Belo Mansion, 2101 Ross Ave. Noon. 214-540-4460.

PFLAG Dallas. Northaven United Methodist Church, 12101 Preston Road. 7 p.m. 972-77PFLAG.

The Group. Support group for black men who are HIV-positive. Every second and fourth Thursday of the month. Call 214-455-7316 for more information.

The Rotary Club of Dallas-Uptown meets every Thursday. All visitors welcome. Rotary International is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide. Hully and Mo's, 2800 Routh St. 11:45 –1:00 p.m. DallasUptownRotary.org

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.

Brokeback Dallas. Support group for gay men married to straight women. St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church, 6526 Inwood Road. 7:30 p.m.

Choir and orchestra rehearsals at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 7 p.m. CathedralOfHope.com.

this week's solution

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CELEBRITY BIRTHDAY

By Jack Fertig



Cynthia Nixon turns 46 on Monday. The actress is famous as the neurotic Miranda Hobbes on *Sex and the City*. She told *New York Times* magazine in January that being gay was a choice but later clarified to *The Advocate* that she is bisexual and that she has chosen to be in a gay relationship. She shaved her head for the play *Wit*, where her character battles cancer.

ARIES Mar 20-Apr 19

Pushing yourself too hard invites trouble. Resisting those demons is a huge challenge right now. If you can't be nice, take a long meditative walk.

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

Your financial intuitions are good, but discuss them with your accountant who might improve them. Sexual innovation will help your partnership, but better to consult than act on impulse.

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

Charm wins attention and admirers. Think seriously about where you want to be in 20 years and discuss that with your mate. Your boss' insanity is not your problem; how you respond to it is.

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

Your personal relations are a bigger challenge as you feel pulled between love and work. Right now work has to come first. Your partner will understand.

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

It's too easy to fall into pleasant routines. Take a creative challenge and push for something new and different. If you can wait a week or two to make any financial decisions.

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

It's too easy to blame things on your partner. Even a long, strong marriage needs clear boundaries. Clearing the air can be helpful, but solutions will come later. Be patient.

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Your flirtatious instincts upset your sweetie. Take care of what you already have going. Innovation is necessary to keep a relationship alive, but you have to work together on that.

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Losing friends could be good, but think hard about who you want in your future. A new passion is just a passing fancy, but why pass it up? Just be careful of expectations and prophylaxis.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 20

Throw yourself into your work. Even if you're just running on momentum you can get a lot done. Seeking promotion will backfire. Just keep your shoulder to the wheel. Rewards come later.

CAPRICORN Dec 21-Jan 19

Take time off from work and make time your mate. Work together on changes. Flowers or dinner out are nice surprises. Re-decorating on your own isn't.

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Nothing wrong with flirting as long as you're careful. Getting too witty will undermine caution. Think ahead. Write down those bons mots that are too incendiary for conversation.

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 19

Domestic and professional relationships bolster each other, but prioritize the latter for now. People are pulling you in different directions. Focus. Principles will offer direction.

THIS WEEK

Mars is finally turning direct on the 13th. As he starts moving forward, heal recent blow-ups and resentments. He's opposing Neptune, so over-eagerness and hypersensitivity may aggravate raw wounds. Time is on your side. Easy does it.

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

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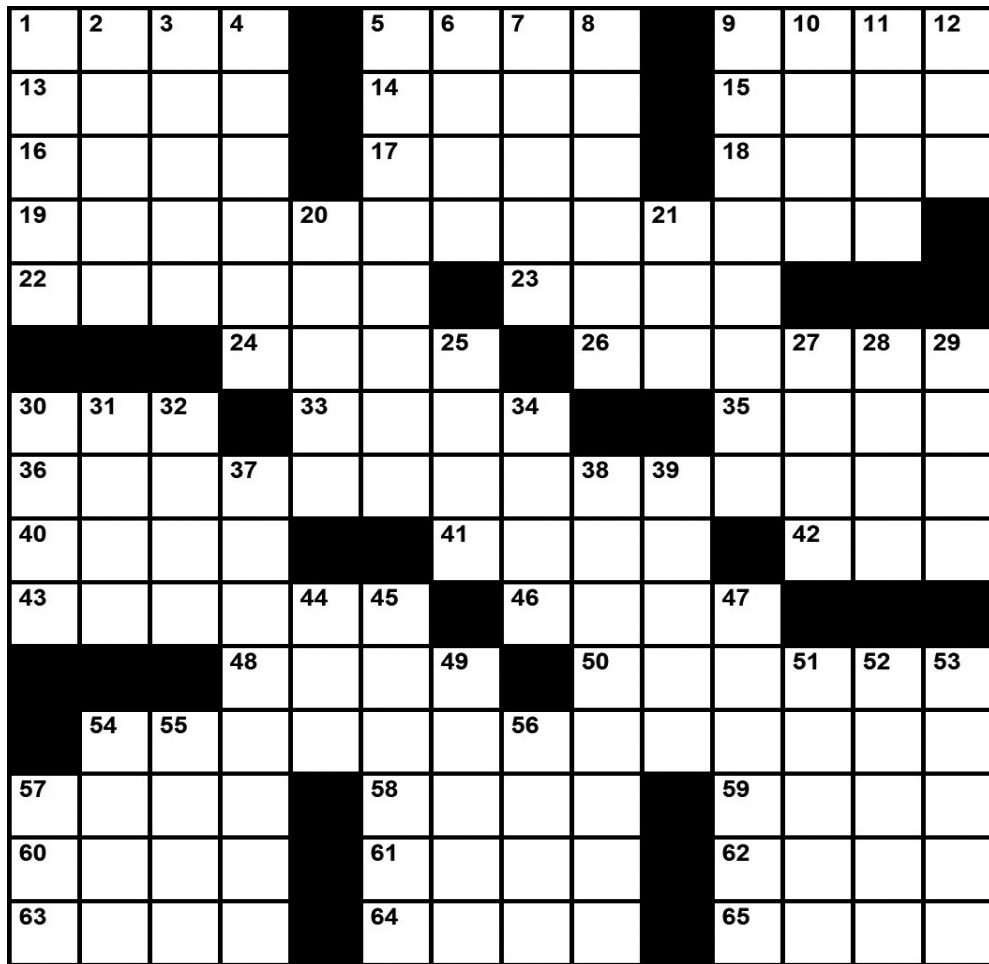
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Mad Women

Solution on page 37

Across

- 1 Where to pull your drawers open
- 5 More, to a minimalist
- 9 Auntie of Broadway
- 13 Jodie Foster's role with the King
- 14 Precollege ed
- 15 Family group
- 16 Lovemaking response
- 17 Walk wearily
- 18 Carvey who cross-dressed as the Church Lady
- 19 Peggy portrayer on Mad Men
- 22 Meat that dangles
- 23 One way to cook fruit
- 24 Swedish automotive import
- 26 Buffy, for one
- 30 J. Edgar org.
- 33 Carpenter's connector
- 35 Like a poor excuse
- 36 Writer of 54-Across
- 40 Type of seaman
- 41 Collette of United States of Tara
- 42 Army N.C.O.
- 43 Lip service?
- 46 P's pronounced like R's
- 48 Excess supply

Down

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- 2 ___ Gay
- 3 One who comes slowly
- 4 Dorothy's home
- 5 Durango dyke
- 6 Couture magazine
- 7 Oral pleasures at a gay bar
- 8 Naked people on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, e.g.
- 9 Roddy, who "went ape" in some movies
- 10 Couture magazine Wistful word
- 11 "The way to a ___ heart ..."
- 12 Bambi doe
- 20 Treasured violin
- 21 Rev. White of Soulforce
- 25 Hit the ball softly
- 27 Targets of a masher?
- 28 Web info source
- 29 Diggs play about leased digs
- 30 Result of shooting off antiaircraft guns
- 31 Netanyahu's nickname
- 32 Woes of the world
- 34 Norse thunder deity
- 37 1957 Cole Porter musical
- 38 With a little help from Viagra
- 39 "___ and tigers and bears ..."
- 44 Conduit bend
- 45 Without warning
- 47 Mysore misters
- 49 Make a swap
- 51 One under a captain
- 52 Really queer
- 53 Jodie Foster and Larry Kramer, to Yale
- 54 Irene of Fame
- 55 Cops, slangily
- 56 Lake traveled by Ohio ferries
- 57 Bottom of the Thames



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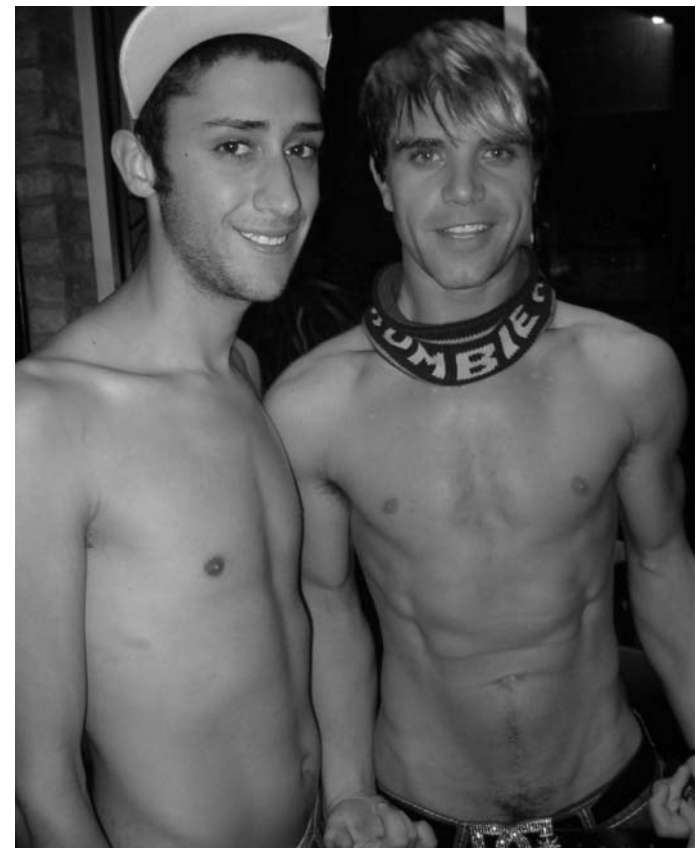
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The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence at TMC: The Mining Company.



Thomas and Uriel at JR's Bar & Grill.



Chris and John at Joe's/The Brick.

Spring is looking good so far this **holiday weekend** as are some of these hot spots for your nighttime adventures. ... The **Mustache Envy Drag Kings** make it a good Friday at **Sue Ellen's**. **Reader's Voice Award** winners **Ciao Bella** play the upstairs **Vixin Lounge** Saturday night. After **Easter in the Park** all day Sunday, celebrate with **Mi Diva Loca** that night at the club. ... **The Brick** wants to fill your basket all weekend. They bring in **DJ Justin Ryan** for Saturday night's party and then follow it up with the one-two punch of **DJ Lydia Prim** in the main room and **Gabriel Marestein** on the patio on Sunday. ... Spend the whole weekend outdoors at the **18th Annual Deep Ellum Arts Festival** Friday through Sunday. ... **The Rainbow Lounge** calls all queens into battle for its weekly **Drag Warz** on Thursday. Imagine *that* carnage. **The Round-Up Saloon** has a big week ahead. The club celebrates with the **Easter Basket Auction** on Sunday benefiting **Resource Center Dallas' Nutrition Center** and the **Texas Gay Rodeo Association**. The night also includes an **Easter Bonnet Contest** for solo and groups. Spend Monday night with several bartenders at the annual **Cocktail Challenge**. The winner goes on to compete in the grande finale in **Palm Springs**. Fix those two left feet at **Beginner Dance Lessons** every Tuesday with **Juanita**. ... **Andrea Dawson** performs on the back patio at **Woody's** Friday night. ... **Lord Byron's Panoptikon** parties down with the **Satyr's Annual Birthday Bash** in the old **Club One** space. ... Got all that? Great. Can't wait to see you out! ■

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



Raymond and Kim at 1851 Club.



David and Larry at the Dallas Eagle.



Patrick at Cherries.



Amber, Justin, M. and Ashley at Reflections.

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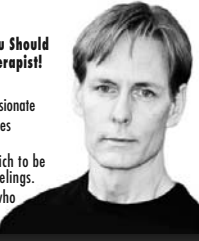
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