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Chris Pittman and Scott Lindsey each had 2 young kids when they met 11 years ago after coming out and getting divorced. And that's the way they all became ...



The GAY BRADY BUNCH



Also in our Family Life special section:
A lesbian couple fights to get both names on a birth certificate; 2 longtime foster moms are finally able to adopt; and a widow continues her battle to keep her home after her partner of 23 years dies

■ FAMILY LIFE, Page 6





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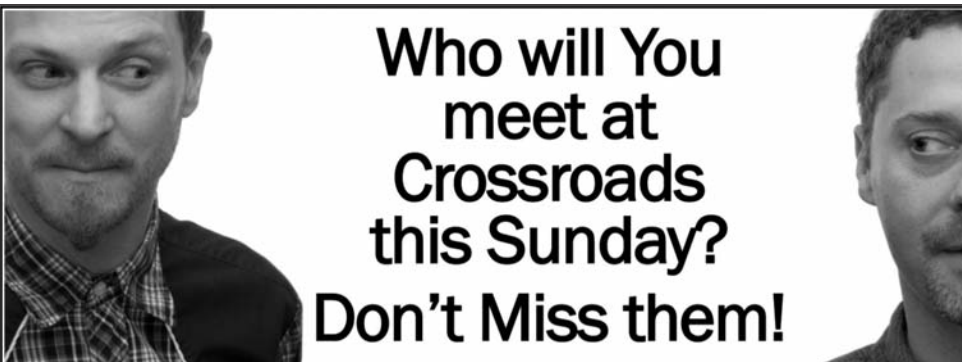
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Black Tie Dinner taps Chaz Bono for Elizabeth Birch Equality Award

Chaz Bono will receive this year's Elizabeth Birch Equality Award, co-chairs of the 2012 Black Tie Dinner announced Thursday, July 26.

"While Chaz has found fulfillment in his work as a national activist, one of his greatest values in the GLBT community lies in reaching out and raising awareness on a grassroots level among young minds," said Black Tie Dinner Co-Chair Chris Kouvelis. "Via his high national profile, Chaz continues to create visibility, increase awareness and impact change for transgender issues."

Bono is an LGBT rights advocate, author and speaker. Most recently, Bono received the GLAAD Media Award and was honored for his OWN documentary, *Becoming Chaz*, which chronicled the struggles of his gender reassignment journey. He also received the Stephen F. Kolzak Award, which is given by GLAAD to an LGBT entertainer for promoting equality. Chaz embarked on uncharted territory last fall when he appeared on *Dancing With The Stars*.

Born Chastity, to Sonny and Cher Bono, Chaz came out as a lesbian to his parents at 18 in 1987. He did not come out publicly until April 1995 in an interview with *The Advocate*, and he spoke about

it on the air for the first time on *Lambda Weekly* when he was in Dallas for National Coming Out Day.

Chaz has contributed as a writer-at-large to *The Advocate* and became spokesperson for the HRC, promoting National Coming Out Day. Chaz also served as Entertainment Media Director for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD).

The Elizabeth Birch Equality Award honors national leaders, and is given in recognition of the inspirational leadership of former Human Rights Campaign Executive Director Elizabeth Birch. This award is given to an individual, organization or company that has made a significant contribution of national scope to the LGBT community.

Birch received the first award and last year decorated veteran Eric Alva, the first servicemember injured in the Iraq War received the honor. Other recipients have included Showtime Networks/Robert Greenblatt, Alan Cumming, Sharon Stone, Bishop V. Gene Robinson, Judy Shepard and American Airlines.

The 2012 dinner is set for Saturday, Nov. 3, at the Sheraton Hotel Dallas. For more info including tickets and sponsorship opportunities, go to BlackTie.org.

— David Taffet

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SIX PACK | The Lindsey-Pittmans are, from left, Christopher Pittman, Madeleine Pittman, Olivia Lindsey, Caroline Pittman, Brian Lindsey and Scott Lindsey. (John Wright/Dallas Voice)

The gay Brady Bunch

Chris Pittman and Scott Lindsey each had 2 kids under 10 when they met after coming out and getting divorced. Now they're one big happy family, but it hasn't always been easy— and sometimes it still isn't

JOHN WRIGHT | Senior Editor
wright@dallasvoice.com

Fifteen-year-old Madeleine Pittman chokes back tears as she explains what it's like having two gay dads in the small town of Italy, Texas, where her mom is pastor of the local Methodist church.

Sitting on the sofa in the living room of her dads' spacious home in Dallas' Oak Lawn neighborhood, Madeleine says she's lost friends over it.

When she tells people, they often judge her because it goes against their religious beliefs, she says. So now she waits a long time before sharing her secret with anyone, hoping to make sure she can trust them first.

"It kills me because I don't have many friends because of it, and even my mom isn't the nicest person about it," Madeleine says, her voice wavering. "She says stuff all the time, and people say stuff all the time, and I defend it as much as possible, and I get so angry and I cry about it, but I can't

do anything to make people understand it, and that's probably what hurts the most."

Madeleine's difficulties in Italy are just the latest example of the adversity this unusual, blended LGBT family has faced since her dad, Christopher Pittman, met his husband, Scott Lindsey, 11 years ago.

Pittman and Lindsey, who married in Canada in 2006, each had two children from previous marriages to women.

When they met, the kids were 1, 4, 7 and 8.

Lindsey's Olivia and Brian are now 20 and 18, respectively, while Pittman's Madeline and Caroline are 15 and 12.

The children often refer to their family as "the gay Brady Bunch."

"Right now I don't see them as stepsisters," Brian Lindsey, who'll be a freshman at Texas State in the fall, says of Madeleine and Caroline. "They seem like my blood sisters, my straight-up sisters.

"Chris is my dad, and Scott's my dad," Brian

adds. "They're both the equivalent ... and I mean it, too."

'We wanted them all to be together'

Lindsey and Pittman both grew up in conservative evangelical demonstrations: Pittman in the Southern Baptist Church in Tulsa; and Lindsey in the Church of Christ in Irving.

Pittman married his high school sweetheart at 19 in 1990.

"That was legal somehow, which it probably shouldn't have been," he says.

The same year, Lindsey married a Catholic girl and converted.

Pittman and his wife moved to Dallas so he could attend seminary at SMU, but soon both he and Lindsey would come out as gay and divorce their wives.

"The older I got, you couldn't hold those kinds of feelings in," Lindsey says.

He met Pittman on Gay.com in 2001, and six months later they moved in together. Ever since, they've made a point to maintain the same visitation schedule for both pairs of kids — every other weekend, and every Wednesday night.

"We wanted them all to be together, from the very beginning," Lindsey says.

It was trying at first, particularly with Lindsey's ex-wife, who would get angry, for example, if Pittman came to pick up Olivia and Brian.

"There were some not-very-nice words said sometimes," Lindsey says. "What we always called it was, my kids had to get back into daddy mode when they came back over to our place. Since their mom thought it was wrong, she didn't really want to be around it, so she sometimes said some things to them like: 'Daddy doesn't love you anymore. Daddy loves Chris, and you don't have to love the girls [Madeleine and Caroline].'"

In the last five years, Lindsey's ex-wife's posi-

■ **BRADY BUNCH**, Page 11



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localbriefs

RCD changes food pantry hours

Resource Center Dallas' food pantry will begin extended client shopping hours on Mondays and will have new closing times the rest of the week beginning Aug. 1.

Shopping hours are currently noon to 7 p.m. on Monday and noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. The new hours will be 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday through Thursday. The pantry will remain closed Friday through Sunday.

Donation drop-off hours are not changing. They will remain 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Monday and 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. The pantry is at 5450 Denton Dr. Cut Off. For more info, call 214-521-3390 or email food@rcdallas.org.

LEAP Scholarship deadline nears

The deadline to apply for a LEAP scholarship offered by the North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce is Aug. 3.

Created in 2009, LEAP — Leadership Education & Advocacy Program — scholarships support youth and nurture the development of leaders in the LGBT community. LGBT students, members of LGBT families and allies who have worked closely with the LGBT community are encouraged to apply.

Applicants must be Texas residents, be LGBT or members of LGBT families or allies, and show a

commitment to civil and human rights. Applicants should exhibit leadership potential, demonstrate strong academic abilities and be actively involved in school and community organizations. The application can be found online at GLBTLeap.org.

Bowling for Justice is Saturday

Youth First Texas Collin County presents Bowling for Justice to raise money for Crime Stoppers for information leading to an arrest in the shooting of teen lesbian couple Mollie Olgin and Kristene Chapa in Portland, Texas, last month. The group hopes to raise at least \$1,000 for the reward.

The fundraiser will be at 8 p.m. July 28 at Plano Superbowl, 2521 K Ave. in Plano. The cost is \$25. Tickets are available at CCGLA.org/bowling-for-justice.

Brainstorm at the Belmont Aug. 3

The West Dallas Chamber of Commerce presents Brainstorm at the Belmont on Aug. 3.

Two questions will be answered at the luncheon: What resources are there to help me get started? And are there small, no-interest start-up loans available?

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Birth certificates become signature battle

Lesbian Frisco couple among those seeking both names on document; Equality Texas pushes state bill after high court refuses to hear La. case

ANNA WAUGH | Staff Writer
waugh@dallasvoice.com

FRISCO — As 2-month-old Kambryn fusses after a feeding in mother Kristin Ransom's arms, her other mother, Kami, rushes in to comfort her with a pacifier.

The darling child's face softens as she welcomes the soothing toy, cooing as she rocks back peacefully in Kristin's lap.

After her feeding, both Kristin and Kami Ransom move about their Frisco home, bypassing baby toys and safety contraptions to play with Kambryn in her nursery.

But their family is not complete yet because the state of Texas doesn't offer both mothers legal rights to the daughter they share.

Kristin and Kami Ransom married four years ago in Key West.

They started insemination attempts last June and began looking into the legal process when they became pregnant, filing the paperwork for a second-parent adoption in October.

But only Kristin, as the biological mother, was allowed to sign the birth certificate when their daughter Kambryn was born May 15.

"We're in the hospital celebrating the birth of our daughter, and they bring in the paper to sign and Kami's not able to sign," she said. "It was a little bit of a slap in the face."

The couple began the official adoption process after Kambryn was born with social worker visits and more paperwork. While the process is just finishing up, Kristin said the ultimate goal would be for Kami to sign the birth certificate one day.

"It's very clear to everyone around us and to our family that we are a family so we wanted to make sure that it was as recognized to the world as it could be," Kristin said. "We aren't just going to sit around and wait for Texas to catch up with our family. We wanted to make sure we had our bases covered for our daughter now."

Having the option to go to court in San Antonio or Austin, they'll travel to Austin in August to finalize the adoption.

Even after the adoption is complete, Kami still won't be allowed to sign the birth certificate, despite being Kambryn's other parent from before her birth.

"We knew all along that I wouldn't be able to sign the birth certificate, but we wanted to make sure we both have equal rights as parents," Kami Ransom said.

Parents of the same-sex cannot both sign a birth certificate in Texas because the state's Health and Safety Code outlines that only a man, as the father, and a woman, as the mother, may sign it.



MEET THE PARENTS | Kami Ransom, left, and Kristin Ransom couldn't both sign Kambryn's birth certificate after she was born in May because Texas' Health and Safety Code outlines that only a man, as the father, and a woman, as the mother, may do so. (Anna Waugh/Dallas Voice)

Ken Upton, a Dallas-based senior staff attorney for Lambda Legal, defended a gay couple in 2007 after Louisiana refused to issue a new birth certificate for their son they adopted in New York because Louisiana doesn't recognize adoption by unmarried parents.

Upton won the case but later lost on appeal. The Supreme Court declined to hear the case last year, leaving the decision up to states on whether to issue new birth certificates.

Equality Texas has pushed to change the requirements in the state Legislature to allow same-sex parents who are a couple — as well as others who may be family members — to have their names on birth certificates, Executive Director Dennis Coleman said.

A bill has been proposed the last three sessions

but never made it to debate. Coleman said he hopes the bill will move forward next year so families can have greater legal protections.

"We will advocate again and hopefully we can get this done," he said.

A second-parent adoption legally provides the same benefits as signing a birth certificate. However, Coleman said a second-parent adoption requires more paperwork to prove that the other parent can legally enroll a child in school or take them on a trip, when many times just the certificate would be needed.

"You have children who are missing part of their parental unit when you can only have one parent on the birth certificate," he said. "If we're advocating for children to have both parents, then why would we put up anything to block that?"

Coleman said the extra legal work for gay couples is more than opposite-sex couples who are allowed to sign the birth certificate even without marrying. And the cost of the adoption for the Ransoms at about \$5,000 in legal fees is also a byproduct of the biased law.

"If everyone was allowed to marry, you would not have to go through all of these hoops to make sure that your family is legally protected," he said.

The Ransom family agrees, but finds worth in the legal chaos they've nearly completed because of the protections they'll have for their family.

"Bringing a child into the world is an incredible miracle and it should be celebrated, but the cost and all of the loops you have to jump through are just a tiny little piece of the big picture," Kristin Ransom said. "It's totally worth every second." ■

■ **BRADY BUNCH**, From Page 6

tion has become more neutral, and earlier this year there was a breakthrough.

Olivia Lindsey, now a 20-year-old junior at Texas Tech, broke her leg during a ski trip with friends in Angel Fire, N.M., in February.

Because the nearest hospital was an hour away, she was given a splint and some painkillers, and told to go to the doctor when she got back to Lubbock.

Olivia said she was having a major meltdown by the time she called her biological mom and dad, who couldn't meet her in Lubbock because both were working.

So Pittman flew out, rented a car, picked her up from her dorm, took her to the hospital and stayed there with her overnight and all the next day.

When she was released, they got a hotel room so she wouldn't have to go back to the dorm.

"I was laying on one bed and he was laying on the other," Olivia recalls. "He said, 'Your mom just sent me a text.'"

"I was so confused," Olivia recalls. "I was like, she has his number? How did she even get that?"

"It was just a text thanking him for being able to come out there, and just saying thank you for all he'd done over the years," she says. "I think she finally realized that we're a family, and we'll do what we have to for each other."

While Lindsey's ex-wife's attitude has evolved from anger to acceptance, Pittman says his ex-wife began at the other extreme — "trying too hard to be cool."

After school plays, she would insist that Lindsey and Pittman go to dinner with her and her new husband.

"It was just awkward ... and I don't think he cared for it," Pittman says. "Eventually I was like, we don't really have to do this much to prove we're OK."

At one point, Pittman's ex-wife even hired Lindsey's mom to be the kids' nanny.

"So we have Scott's mom at my ex-wife's house taking care of my kids and her foster kids and his kids, and their mom who didn't want to know I existed," Pittman says. "It was very awkward at times."

Unfortunately, Pittman's ex-wife's attitude has become less accepting, partly due to the conservative congregations at her new churches in Italy and nearby Frost. Madeleine, regaining her composure after Olivia comforts her with a hug, says that as the preacher's daughter she's very active in her church youth group. This leads people to be shocked when they find out she loves her gay dads, and they tell her she shouldn't.

"God loves everybody," she says she tells those people. "He wouldn't send you to hell for loving someone. Why would he do that? It makes no sense."

"My dad's an ordained pastor," Madeleine says. "How could he go to hell for loving somebody? ... It doesn't add up."

'I am married to a man'

Pittman says ironically, attending Methodist

seminary is what "allowed him to be theological enough to realize that I could come out and be OK."

After getting ordained, he served as associate pastor for five years at the UMC church in downtown Dallas. But he decided he wanted to be authentic, and the UMC doesn't allow openly gay clergy, so he became a chaplain at Children's Medical Center.

He eventually switched his credentials to the United Church of Christ and ministered part-time at the Cathedral of Hope, where the family still attends church.

Lindsey, meanwhile, is a pharmacist who worked for years at Tom Thumb. But after the couple met, Pittman pushed Lindsey toward his dream of owning his own pharmacy.

In 2004, that dream became a reality when he bought an independent pharmacy in Irving.

Pittman went to school to become a pharmacy technician, and he now works part-time at the business. His other job is flying all over the world writing reviews of airlines for Airways Magazine.

The couple was married in January 2006 at the base of Whistler Mountain in British Columbia, in a surprise wedding orchestrated by Lindsey.

"It was amazing because it was 10 minutes at the max," Lindsey said of the ceremony. "But people were congregating and people were starting to watch, but I didn't really notice them until the very end when everybody was clapping."

But the newlyweds got "a splash of cold water," Pittman says, when they landed back in Texas and tried to complete a joint Customs form.

He says they weren't trying to make a statement, but were merely filling out "one form per household" as they had in the past. This time, the Customs officer in Dallas asked whether they were brothers. When they responded that they were partners, the official told them it was one form per household only for those who are related.

"He immediately was like: 'Look, you're not recognized by the U.S. government. Step back, get two forms and try this again,'" Pittman recalls. "He was very rude."

It's moments like those that motivate Pittman and Lindsey to remain heavily involved with the Human Rights Campaign, for which Pittman sits on the governing committee and serves as recruiting chair for the DFW Federal Club.

"I stay involved because the six of us are a real family," Pittman said during a recent Federal Club luncheon, where he addressed the group just prior to new HRC President Chad Griffin. "I am married to a man. Damn the government and anyone who thinks otherwise."

And it would appear as though their dads' advocacy is rubbing off on the kids. Olivia Lindsey says at last year's HRC Black Tie Dinner, where she sat at the pharmacy's table, she remembers watching Jesse Tyler Ferguson's speech and wishing it was her on stage. Asked whether she'll grow up to be an advocate, Madeleine, who'll attend this year's dinner, responds that she already is.

"I already have that dream of being up on stage and telling people my story," Madeleine says. "If you asked me right now, I'd do it tomorrow morning." ■



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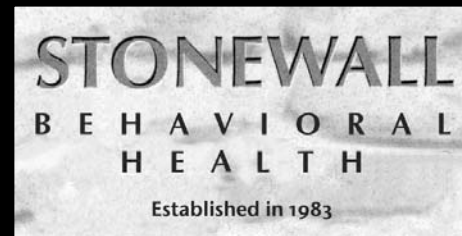
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13 is lesbian foster moms' lucky number

After taking in kids a dozen times over the years only to lose them, Stephanie Acosta and Micki Stokes were finally able to adopt Josie

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

A dozen times over the last 12 years, Stephanie Acosta and Micki Stokes have gotten a phone call to take one, two or three children into their home.

And each time, they responded by taking the children no matter what time of day or night.

But each time those children were taken back from them. Usually relatives were found who agreed to raise the children. One child they were in the process of adopting was reunited with a sibling in another adoptive family at the last minute.

Then came Josie.

"She's one hot mess," Stokes said.

And she was lucky number 13.

The couple picked up Josie from the hospital, where she'd been abandoned by her mother, and brought her home at four days old.

From the beginning they knew Josie would have problems. She was born with a drug addiction and other problems stemming from the birth mother's lack of prenatal care. She's mildly autistic with slight cerebral palsy. As an infant, she had trouble holding her head up. Breathing problems were caused by narrow passages that tonsils blocked. A problem in the vertebrae formation may cause headaches later on.

But Stokes and Acosta and their daughter Madisson, now 16, welcomed Josie into their family by taking her to pediatric specialists, geneticists and speech therapists — and they began adoption proceedings as fast as they could.

The couple first began working with the foster system a year after their 1999 civil union.

They became certified for respite care in 2000 to help a friend who was fostering three or four children at a time. Fully certifying as foster par-



FOSTERING HOPE | Stephanie Acosta, far left, and Micki Stokes, far right, with their daughters, Madisson and Josie. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

ents took a year.

They said that a lot of what they learned in their classes had to do with how foster kids can't be treated like other children because of a variety of psychological issues.

"As punishment, normally, you would send

your child to their bedroom," Acosta said. "You can't do that to a foster child. They're psychologically different."

She said because of the abuse that many foster children have endured, locking them in a room could be seen as imprisonment. She said you can't

send a child away from the table without eating. Many come into foster care after being starved. Spanking is forbidden because of the severe beatings many foster children have suffered.

Acosta said she always wanted to be a mother. Stokes already had a daughter, but knew she

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wanted more children. Madisson has been an important part of caring for the foster children they've taken into their house. She said she felt the loss of each child as deeply as her moms did.

Giving up the first foster child in their care was emotionally exhausting, Stokes said.

"We missed school and work," she said. "Our families were distraught."

The Texas foster system, which the couple calls among the best in the country, doesn't allow children to languish. During the first six months of placement, Child Protective Services searches for relatives to take the child. The goal is to keep family, or at least siblings, together.

The first child in their care had been with them six months, so Acosta and Stokes began the adoption process. Although no adult family members were found to take the child, a couple in Fort Worth who had adopted a sibling was found. The child was placed there to keep family together.

Devastated, Acosta and Stokes took a short break and reassessed what they were doing.

"After the pain subsided, we realized that's not why we're doing this," Stokes said.

They realized they were fostering to help children, not to fulfill their own needs.

"In Texas, it's not about the parents," Stokes said. "It's about the best interests of the child."

It's unusual for Texas to rank above other states, especially on issues related to healthcare or LGBT equality. But Acosta and Stokes tell everyone who will listen that Texas is a great place for gay and lesbian singles and couples to foster children.

"And if you have a child with a disability, the state of Texas is the best place to be," Stokes said, because of the services offered and the assistance given to foster and adoptive parents.

After Josie's adoption was final, Stokes decided to go back to law school. She spent a year at OU but couldn't find any services for Josie in Oklahoma. Scottish Rite Hospital in Oak Lawn accepted her as a patient and the couple moved to Irving, across the street from Stokes' parents.

"Throughout the process, CASA held our hand," she said.

CASA is Court Appointed Special Advocates, volunteers who represent the interests of abused and neglected children in custody cases so they don't get lost in the legal system.

More than 700,000 children go through the foster system each year so CASA volunteers are only appointed to the most difficult cases.

"Every child deserves to be safe," CASA Dallas spokesman Katy Seitzler said.

And safe doesn't mean placement only with heterosexually married couples in Texas.

Seitzler said Texas has no problem with single parent fostering and adoptions, or with gay and lesbian parents.

"We're just looking for good parents," she said.

She said they're also looking for more CASA volunteers.

Volunteers are asked to commit one year, because that's generally the jurisdiction the court has in foster cases. By the end of a year, a child should have either been placed with other family members or into the adoption process.

CASA volunteers attend court hearings and

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To become a CASA volunteer, go to Dallas-CASA.org, click on "volunteer" for a list of information sessions. Call 214-827-9603 ext. 228 to register.

- **Texas Child Protective Services**

To become a foster parent through CPS or a private agency, go to tinyurl.com/cdrqdzk. On this Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website, download an information packet, find a schedule of information meetings and a list of private agencies that work in conjunction with DFPS. Dallas and Fort Worth are in Region 3.

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monitor the process to make recommendations that are in the best interests of the child.

CASA program director Mary Timmons said, "We're looking for people who love kids and want to make a permanent home for kids."

She said the sexual orientation of the parents is not something CPS looks at.

"The law is clear," she said. "You can't do that. And anyone who wants what's best for kids shouldn't do that."

She said that CASA is also looking for volunteers who want to make a difference in a child's life.

That requires 30 hours of training and then volunteers work with a staff supervisor. During a year's assignment, a volunteer works more than 10 hours a month for the first few months and then about five hours a month until the child is permanently placed.

While not all children placed by CPS have physical problems, many do have emotional problems. CPS knows that gays and lesbians are more likely to take children with a variety of problems and encourages LGBT people who would like to become parents to contact them.

Medicaid and other resources are available to help defray the costs of caring for these children, but Stokes and Acosta warned that despite all the resources, and the stipend received while fostering, no one should go into foster parenting thinking they'll make money.

Doctors warned them Josie might never talk or walk — or even develop teeth.

At 4, Josie not only walks, but runs and plays. She also has teeth and is beginning to talk, all with the help of an array of specialists.

Despite the problems, Acosta and Stokes would have it no other way.

"I grew up Catholic and always wanted a traditional family," Acosta said. "We're a very traditional family. Both of our families are very involved."

And now the couple is thinking of getting recertified for foster care and opening their home to more children.

Seitzler said she can't think of a better home to place another child. ■



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Finding a way without a will

Woman continues 3-year fight to keep E. Dallas home after lesbian partner of 23 years died, estranged family members stepped in

ANNA WAUGH | Staff Writer
waugh@dallasvoice.com

After losing her partner of more than two decades and surviving terminal cancer, one East Dallas woman is fighting to hold onto the life the couple built together.

Gina, who asked that her full name not be used because of pending legal action, lost her partner Michelle in 2009. Michelle suffered a rupture in her stomach that caused a massive bleed. She died in the couple's bed.

The next morning, Michelle's estranged mother was asking about the couple's mortgage payments. Gina described Michelle's relationship with her mother as "very strained," with rare visits on holidays.

But the mother had every right to the house, which was refinanced in 2003. During the refinance, the home that Michelle and Gina purchased together in 1991 was put in Michelle's name only — a decision made to protect Michelle after Gina was diagnosed with Stage 4 cervical cancer earlier that year.

Gina beat the odds and survived the cancer. But she found herself facing eviction in 2009 when her partner's mother and brother came for their estate, because Michelle died suddenly without a will.

In the absence of a will, the estate would have passed to children, but the couple didn't have any. Instead, it would be split between Michelle's mother and son, who Gina said "came crawling out of the woodwork."

Gina said civility during occasional visits with Michelle's family only seemed to make the situation worse. During litigation, Michelle's family members told Gina they missed and loved her but the property rightly should go to them.

"It's pretty unbelievable to have people tell you how much they love you and miss you and still want to take your home and have you supposed to be OK with it," she said. "Because they can, because it's the law. That's what was told to me."

Three months after the funeral, Gina continued to mourn her partner of 23 years as she filed a lawsuit to try to fight the family's claim on the home.

"I cannot explain what this felt like when you're in the beginning of grief," she said. "To have people asking you personal questions about your finances, looking at your things. You feel so violated."

Gina's attorney, John McCall, placed a lean on the home, so if Michelle's family members tried to sell it, they'd have to reach a monetary agreement with Gina before the lean was removed. But Gina said she doesn't want money, even after mediation last year failed and she's back in probate court.

"I wanted my whole home. I feel like I'm entitled to my home. I spent 23 years with my partner. We bought the home together," she said. "I put my home in my partner's name at the encouragement of her mother to protect my partner from any possible thing that could happen with my family."

The story took a twist in March when Michelle's mother died. Gina, who said Michelle's relationship with her brother was even more strained, thought he would walk away from the legal battle. But he didn't.

McCall said the brother recently offered to drop the lawsuit if he could collect family heirlooms and have his legal fees covered.

McCall said he hopes the brother, who lives in Houston and is emotionally and physically removed from Gina's grief, will see the life Gina and Michelle made together amid pictures and memories in the house and continue with his decision.

"For the brother, this is all business and it's very distant because he obviously hasn't seen his sister in years," McCall said. "I think once he's in that setting, it becomes much more emotional, much more personal and hopefully much more painful for him, and he'll understand the pain of my client."

The best option, McCall said, would have been for Michelle to name Gina as the sole heir in a will. If Gina had never signed over her ownership of the home, McCall said she would still be an owner. Or if she could show a paper trail detailing her financial contributions to the estate, she would be compensated.

"She doesn't want money," he said. "She wants to remain in her home."

Even after three years, Texas would recognize a common law marriage and would allow a heterosexual spouse to get a life estate, allowing them to stay as long as they maintained the house. But Gina's 23-year relationship with a woman is not even considered.

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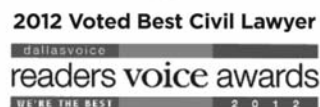
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Doc breaks fundraising record

A documentary detailing the importance of marriage rights and wills in the absence of them recently broke a fundraising record. *BRIDEGROOM: An American Love Story* will chronicle Shane Bitney Crone and Tom Bridegroom's six-year relationship and Bridegroom's sudden death.

Crone was left to mourn without a will, no access to medical records and was unable to attend his partner's funeral after Bridegroom's family threatened violence if he attended. On the one-year anniversary of his death in May, Crone posted a YouTube video, *It Could Happen to You*, encouraging couples to take legal action to protect themselves.

Donations began on Kickstarter.com to create the documentary. In four weeks, \$384,375 was raised to make the film, a record for the website, which has funded 7,400 films, according to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. The film was expected to cost a minimum of \$300,000, but the extra funds will go toward better music and wider release, GLAAD released on its website.

The film is scheduled to be complete in the fall. For more, visit TinyURL.com/7vojuzx.

— Anna Waugh

"This law needs to be thrown away. We surpassed anything for a common law marriage," Gina said. "I am being horribly discriminated against [by the state] because I am female and my partner was female."

Although "the worst has already happened to me because my partner is gone," Gina said she still wants to remain in the house she made a home with Michelle, because leaving the memories would be even more painful.

"Of course it was [hard after she died]. Of course it was. But it's our home, so I'm OK with staying in my home," she said.

Now, Gina plans to have McCall write her a will.

And she'll continue to share her story with others, so they can avoid similar problems.

"You can lose everything you ever owned — by law under the state of Texas to people that you've rarely seen," she said. ■

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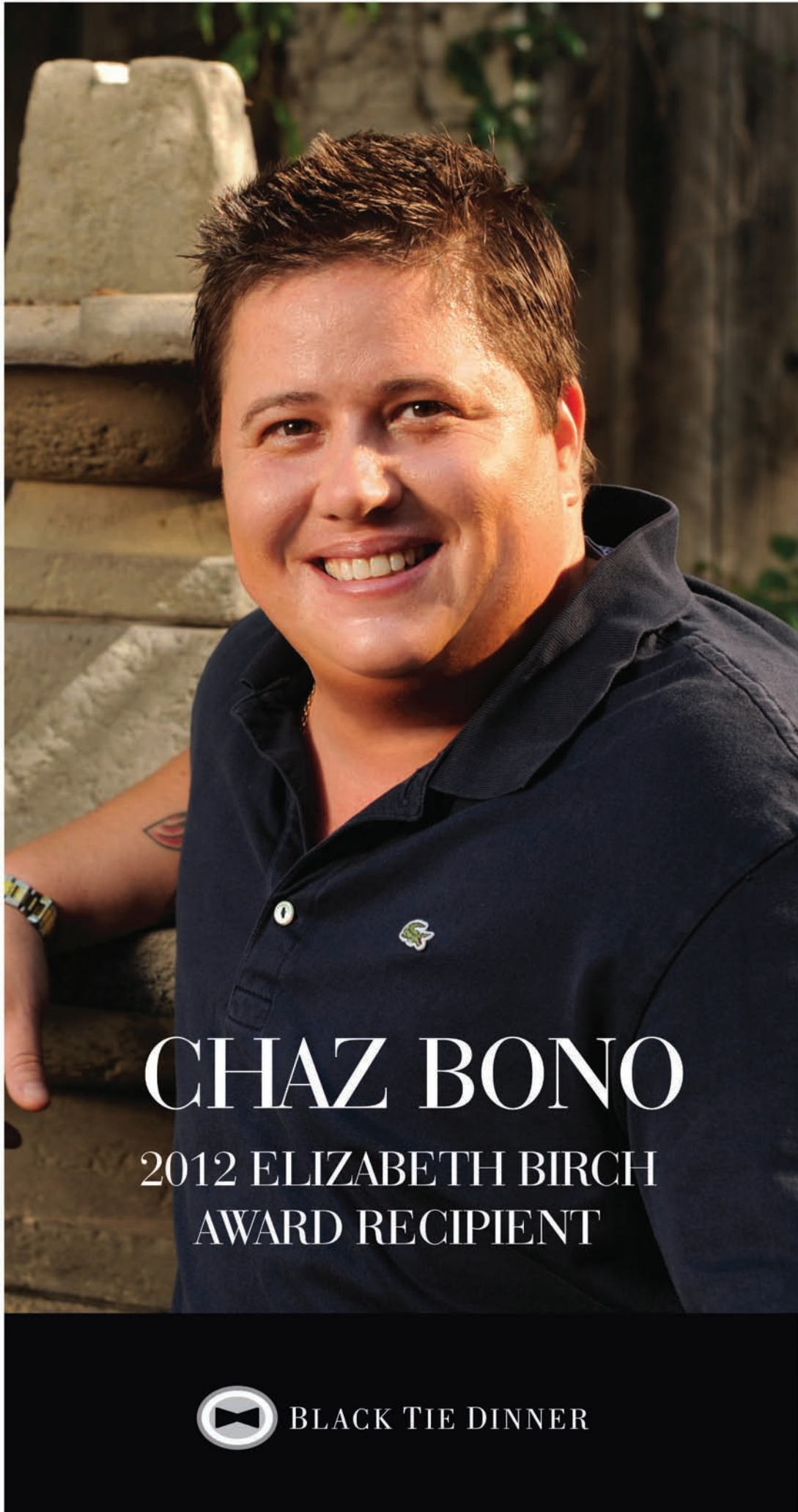
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Partners, in business

Couples say communication is key to successfully running a company together, but attorney recommends having paperwork in order, too

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Before becoming president and CEO of the North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce, Tony Vedda started a small business with his partner.

"Communication is the key," Vedda said. "Have clearly defined roles. Know who's responsible for what parts of the business. Be both supportive and receptive."

He added that if the business is structured as a corporation with a hierarchy, leave those roles at work.

Other local gay couples who are in business together had similar advice.

Michael Brown and Christian Hamilton moved to Dallas to purchase Goodsense Deli on McKinney Avenue at Howell Street in Uptown. The business had been failing and the couple made an

offer. Brown had been working as training manager with the company in Kansas City.

He said it took them a year to turn the location around, but in year-to-year sales, they are up 88 percent, ranking them first in the company that has 92 locations in nine states.

He said working with his partner is an anomaly, adding that none of their friends do so.

"But we get along well," he said.

When they occasionally have a power struggle, the resolution is simple, he said.

"I get my way."

But as Hamilton laughed, Brown changed his answer.

"I get my way at the restaurant," he said. "He gets his way at home."

Brown said having clearly defined roles is a way for a couple to manage working together.

Hamilton handles marketing and social media, and they have a general manager.

"Operationally the GM does everything," Brown said.

He said that working together involves compromise and a sense of humor. Often they take turns giving in to each other.

■ PARTNERS, Page 23



WELL PROTECTED | Chris Watts and Todd Fisher, owners of The Petropolitan, incorporated to protect each other's shares in the business in case something happens to one of them. Shares would transfer to a surviving partner, and they have a strategic plan if one wants to leave the business. (Amy Price/Dallas Voice)



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Together we'll go far



'Just because we're gay doesn't mean we can't have a family'

Mark Doyle and Jeremy Pryor's adoption went so well that Doyle went to work helping other gay couples navigate the process

ANNA WAUGH | Staff Writer
waugh@dallasvoice.com

PLANO — For Mark Doyle and Jeremy Pryor, finding a baby to adopt took only a day.

The couple had discussed starting a family for a year and how they would go about it.

One night in October of last year, Doyle searched online for gay-friendly adoption agencies.

He found Lifelong Adoptions and completed an application without telling Pryor.

"I was very nervous," Doyle recalls, adding that he didn't want to get his hopes up. "We were more worried about getting heartbroken through an agency declining us because we're gay and not being accepted for who we are."

The next day, Doyle received an email from the agency informing him that a baby had been found for him and Pryor.

Thinking it was too good to be true, he deleted it.

After more emails and phone calls, Doyle finally told Pryor, and the two looked into the future the agency promised.

It turned out that the birth mother, a young woman in Tennessee, had requested that a gay



GAY DADS IN DEMAND | Jeremy Pryor, left, and Mark Doyle adopted Emma Kate from a birth mother in Tennessee who requested that a gay couple adopt her baby because she had a friend who was a gay dad and wanted to help a gay couple have a child. (Anna Waugh/Dallas Voice)

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FRONT OF THE LINE | When the baby was a girl, three gay couples ahead of them declined. Doyle hadn't filled out a preferred gender on the application, and the couple decided they just wanted a baby. 'I think any child is a blessing,' Pryor said. (Anna Waugh/Dallas Voice)

couple adopt her baby because she had a friend who was gay. He'd had a baby with a friend and the mother wanted to help a gay couple have a child.

"She always said that he just made the best parent and him and his little girl were so connected, so she wanted to give another family that opportunity," Pryor said.

The baby was a girl, a fact that made the three gay couples ahead of them decline, because they wanted a boy instead.

Doyle hadn't filled out a preferred gender on the application. And the two decided they just wanted a baby.

"I think any child is a blessing," Pryor said.

So, the two of them signed the paperwork within two days of the initial email, deciding to finally give their family a plus-one.

"We knew that those things are time sensitive and if we were to drag our feet that someone else wouldn't," Pryor said. "There was no need to belabor the conversations any further because we'd already had so many of them."

The birth mother liked them immediately after phone calls, agreeing to let them be involved in the birth and kept them informed of doctor appointments.

Having already planned a trip to Nashville for New Year's, they planned to meet the birth mother in person before the birth of their daughter.

Although the baby was due in April, complications with the pregnancy led to an early delivery. Doyle got the call March 6 while packing for a business trip. The baby was on her way.

That afternoon, Doyle and Pryor were on the road and arrived at the hospital at 4:30 a.m. after the 14-hour drive.

Nervous about how the hospital would react to them, Pryor said the hospital welcomed them, taking them immediately to the neonatal intensive care unit and preparing a room for them.

"Even being in a different state I wasn't sure

how people would take two gay males coming in to take care of a baby, but they had their arms open wide for us," he said.

At only 3 1/2 pounds, little Emma Kate had to remain in the NICU for 11 days. Doyle and Pryor had to stay for at least seven days for interstate compact clearance for the adoption between Tennessee and Texas.

But she was soon healthy and able to travel home. Before leaving the hospital, Pryor signed the birth certificate. The couple is planning to begin a second-parent adoption, but just need the certificate to be sent to them to begin the process.

Thankful for the little miracle that gave them a family, Doyle approached the agency in June about working for them. He said Lifelong hired him immediately to help relate to other gay couples wanting to adopt.

Although the agency had helped gay couples adopt in the past, Doyle said they didn't have any gay staff members.

"This is what I enjoy doing is talking to somebody about building their family because they're in the same situation that Jeremy and I were in," Doyle said. "They just need someone to encourage them to go ahead and go forward and let them know that it can be done. Just because we're gay doesn't mean we can't have a family or can't adopt."

When asked if they want more children in the future, they both answer "most definitely."

"We haven't narrowed it down yet, but we definitely want another one for her," Pryor said.

Doyle said he's thrilled to help other couples find the children they long for and walk them through the process. And Pryor said he's grateful to have their story shared with couples who see adoption as daunting.

"It is a daunting process, but we're just everyday people. We were able to make it work and it's been a great experience and one we're obviously willing to do again," Pryor said. "I think that that's good for other people to see that as well." ■

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Gay couples must prepare to protect estates

DEAR LEGAL VOICE: My partner and I have been together for almost 17 years. We own several homes together, we have joint bank accounts and investments, and we also own separate life insurance policies with each other as beneficiaries so that in the event of an untimely death, the surviving partner is protected and financially secure. I continually read the horror stories about biological families trying to intervene after the death of a partner. What other documents do we need to be sure we are protected under all circumstances?

Mr. S.

MR. S.: Your question falls under estate planning and is a very sensitive matter for same-sex couples. The Texas Probate Code is not amicable to us and as a result, individuals such as you and your partner have a great deal to lose if legal protections are not perfectly in place.

When I consult clients about these affairs, I remind them there is no guarantee documents I draft will not be challenged by another family member. The code allows for challenges based on different criteria. It is my job to make sure those criteria are never met.

The best legal protection for one's estate is to have your will, power of attorney and medical di-

rective all drafted by an attorney who not only practices, but also litigates. Once you have been in court arguing over inheritance, it becomes very clear what wins and loses in court. There is a priority of tests the court makes in determining whether a challenge is granted or denied.

The first test that must be addressed is, who has the "standing" to challenge inheritance in Texas? Since Texas does not recognize same-sex marriage, we can presume that your partner does not have the capacity to hold himself out as a spouse. Likewise, if you were previously legally married, an ex-spouse cannot challenge. Those who can and normally do challenge are biological children, siblings or living parents of the deceased.

The next test is, are the documents being challenged the originals? There is a code provision for copies, but chances are those challenging will proclaim that an original was subsequently destroyed after the copy was made, and the deceased would then be presumed to have died "intestate" and/or without legal medical documents granting power to the partner.

If the documents are original, have they been witnessed and notarized? I cannot emphasize the importance of these components and how they can impact the finding on any challenge. Most challenges are made under the pretense that the individual signing the legal document "lacked capacity." In layman's terms, this means the signature was made while under the influence of others, medication or alcohol. To overcome that challenge, the witnesses and/or notary are the ones who testify to the condition of the individual at the time of signature.

While some people draft or sign wills in the hospital, it does not automatically mean they were under the influence of medication at the time they signed. Likewise, the individual in the hospital may quickly go under the influence, but so long as they were not at the time of signature, the challenge for "lacked capacity" is more than likely denied.

Even though a challenge to estate planning documents is ultimately denied, most challenges in court last for months and sometimes years. These challenges must be handled through a licensed at-

torney; Dallas County does not allow any pro se parties. Likewise, legal fees can run into the thousands of dollars, which normally comes out of the estate.

To circumvent these expenses, I advise clients to seriously consider who is the likely heir that might challenge a will. Chances are you already know who that person is and if they have "standing."

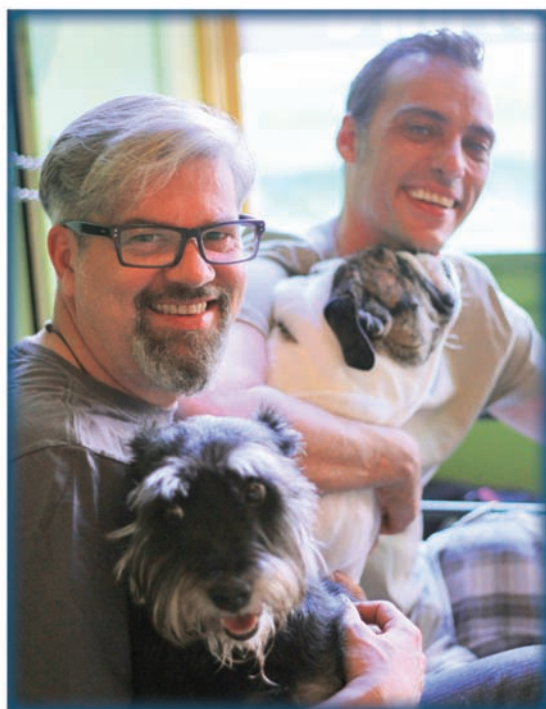
Remember, it cannot be an in-law, it has to be a legal heir as mentioned above. With that being said, once said individual is identified, it is probably advisable to bequeath a token of one's estate to them with the disclaimer that any challenge forfeits the inheritance.

My clients will always ask how much of a token should the potential challenger receive. The answer is normally 5 percent of your entire estate. Since none of you know your potential net wealth years from now, we can only speculate on what size your estate will be and forecast accordingly. While the exact percent is not critical, what is critical is what motivates the challenger and what amount would give them pause before dragging your partner through the courts.

Got an LGBT-related legal question? Email Legal Voice at Editor@DallasVoice.com.



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CouplesMetroDallas.com

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RCDallas.org

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KindCompanions.com

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York, NY 10001
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• **WITECK COMBS COMMUNICATIONS**
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■ **PARTNERS**, From Page 17

Although Brown has had 15 years of restaurant experience and Hamilton only four, if Hamilton feels strongly about doing something one way, Brown will sometimes concede, even if he knows the idea won't work. And when it doesn't work, he won't make too big a fuss.

But they enjoy having the business together so much that they're looking for a second location.

• Henry Ramirez echoed the idea of open communication. He not only works with his partner but with other family members as well.

After five years at Resource Center Dallas, Ramirez left the agency to work with his partner at Mocha Bakery, a business started by several of Ramirez's family members. Ramirez said his family has been baking since he was a kid and decided to make it a business.

The bakery specializes in designer cakes, cheese cakes, kolaches and recently began baking bread and rolls. They have no storefront, instead catering large events and weddings.

Ramirez said he was working at the bakery whenever he was not at the center and as demand grew, he decided to come on full time.

Before going into business together, he said he and partner Tony Gipson talked about problems they knew other couples faced.

"We talk and work things out," he said. "We're open about finances, distributing work and creating a good work environment," Ramirez said.

• Chris Watts and Todd Fisher spent quite a bit of time planning before opening The Petropolitan, a dog grooming and spa services provider.

Watts said they sold some assets to make sure they wouldn't be overwhelmed in debt if the business didn't succeed. He said he knows working together isn't for every couple but works well for them.

"We can be a sounding board for each other," he said. "We both know on a daily basis what we're going through."

He said they built their business plan backwards by starting with what they knew didn't work for similar businesses and then located in an unlikely place.

When they opened downtown six years ago, they were at the beginning of the boom in repurposing old office buildings into new living space.

They wanted to encourage urban core dwellers to have animals.

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And their partnership has worked because they respect each other's strengths and weaknesses.

"Talk honestly," Watts said. "Listen. Realize what your partners fears are."

He said that a couple that argues about everything at home shouldn't think about going into business together.

"But if your partner energizes you and gives you strength, if you have have similar passions," he said, that could translate into a great business partnership.

Watts and Fisher have also put paperwork in place to protect themselves and the business.

"We're incorporated to protect each other's shares in the business in case something happens to us," Watts said.

Shares would transfer to a surviving partner and they have a strategic plan in case one wanted to leave the business.

Attorney Rebecca Covell said that just as gay and lesbian couples need special paperwork to protect themselves, businesses run by same-sex couples need special protection.

"Exactly what they need depends on the structure of the business," she said.

She suggested a business partnership agreement. Or if a business has a more formal structure such as a corporation or LLC, the protection might be built into the corporate documents.

She said couples need to protect themselves against the three Ds — death, divorce and disability. Divorce, she said, covers divorce from each other or divorce from the business.

In case of the death of one of the partners, families could become involved.

With the proper paperwork in place, the family might get some money, but without it, they'd get half the business. Covell said proper documents should simply leave the surviving partner full ownership.

Covell said that partners who go into business with each other should be very careful to have all of their paperwork in order.

"You can't be overprotected when it comes to your business" she said. ■

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viewpoints

Are we out enough?

How a Facebook status update raised questions about my marriage

During a lazy day last weekend, my partner, Traci, and I were Google surfing in bed, one laptop between us. Every once in a while, Traci would switch windows, check Facebook, and then return to our search.

Who knows what we were searching for, but I won't forget what we uncovered.

During one of those Facebook breaks, I saw that Traci had yet to confirm the fact that she and I were married.

If you're unfamiliar with Facebook, this is how they try to assure that a member can't randomly make public assertions about another member. In this case, many months ago I happily told Facebook that I was married to Traci.

Traci was supposed to assure Facebook that I was not insane in thinking this and then both our Facebook friends would immediately see the updated info. But as of last weekend, she hadn't done this.

So I, figuring she had merely forgotten, impulsively reached over and clicked "Confirm," at which point the now very old update hit Traci's newsfeed and congratulations poured in almost instantly. Never mind that we married in 2008.

I have big rules about respecting other people's personal space and I knew I'd broken one of them.

It's the Internet version of reaching over from the passenger seat and honking someone's horn because the car in front of you is stopped at a green light. While understandable, it's still rude. It's not your car.

Traci was ticked off, but I soon realized that it wasn't so much about my commandeering her Facebook account as it was about broadcasting our marriage status.

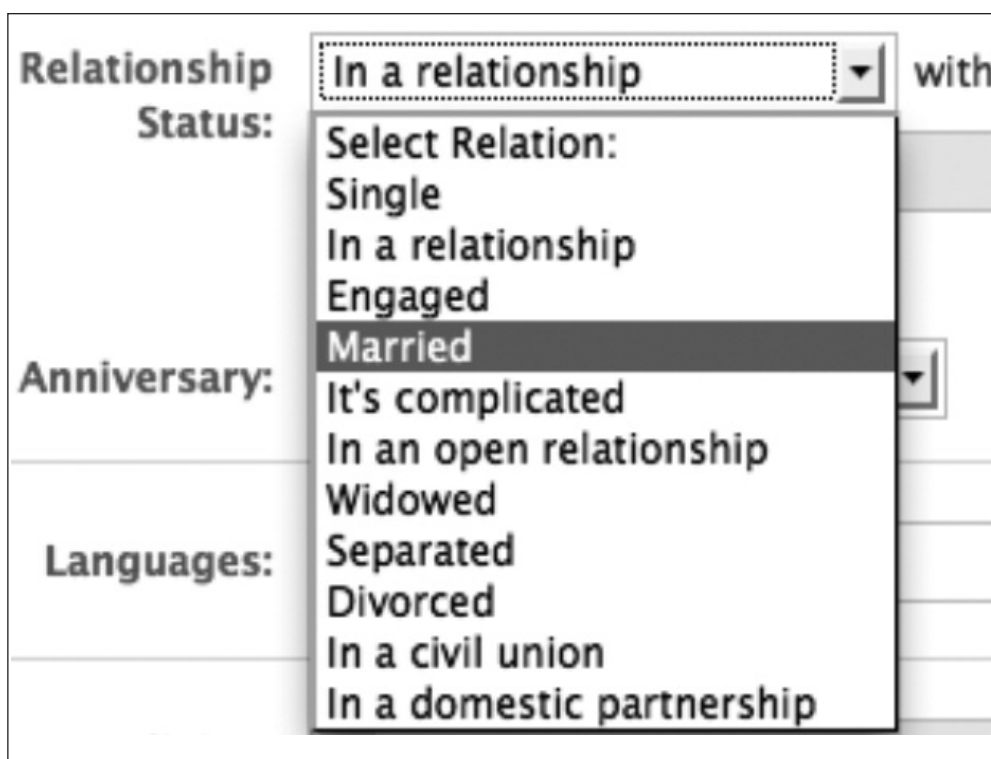
The first thing she said was that it could upset her parents. Her folks have embraced me completely as Traci's partner.

They have come a long, long way in their understanding and acceptance of their lesbian daughter. While deserving a thumbs-up, they haven't exactly joined PFLAG.

I am still Traci's "friend" when they talk to their neighbors and extended family. My response was, "You can't keep protecting them from themselves. It's time for their next step."

She said, yes, maybe. But I could see that wasn't totally it.

Traci herself was uncomfortable advertising the fact that she was married to me, her spouse — and a very out "professional gay," as I often



call myself. She has always listed her status as "married," and posts endless pictures of the two of us here and there, sampling weird food, on vacation, or asleep and drooling. She said it wasn't that she wasn't "out" or that she was ashamed of me, but that my level of outness was more "in your face."

She doesn't like to be defined by her gayness, and it could turn off the conservative folks back home who hadn't had much exposure to the idea yet. She felt she'd accomplish more in the long run by simply being herself and changing minds by example.

I understood all of this, but got stuck — and am still stuck — on the fact that she wanted to distance herself from me, even just a little bit. I do know she is proud of me, happy that I'm writing and talking about important LGBT issues.

I would be disingenuous to accuse her of being ashamed of me, yet I can't find peace with her discomfort. I know that if we were straight, she wouldn't have hesitated to click "confirm" those many months ago. She disagrees. It's about being more private in general, she insists.

The first big irony here is that my whole public platform is about being patient with everyone's process and applauding our loved ones' baby steps toward understanding.

I'm both irritated and hurt by her disassociation from me considering that my whole public

persona is as a cuddly, user-friendly, not-scary lesbian. I'm hardly a porn star or a Fox commentator. And then there's the other irony (you were probably here before me): I preach about patience, yet I'm having a hell of a time finding that patience in myself.

After the deed, and a brief argument, we stopped talking about it. We heard each other, and we both felt icky.

But she didn't delete her update either. I wish I could be happier about it.

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



Abby Dees
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Family jewels

Stepsiblings Kim Burgan and Darin Kunz aren't related by blood, but the bond forged by their blended family is stronger than diamonds

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

Darin Kunz is so excited just talking about jewelry, his fingers twitch a little when he reaches for a favorite piece. "The style on this one is called intaglio — it's an engraving on gemstones," he says, grabbing a piece out of the glass-top display case of his Uptown office. His eyes sparkle like sapphires as he shares his enthusiasm for the line.

Sure, you could dismiss Kunz's intensity as the pitch of a salesman, but in person, it doesn't come across that way. He has a passion for every piece in his office.

And there's good reason. Jewelry isn't just a job, or even career, for Kunz; it's in his bones.

Kunz is not the only one who gets giddy about discovering new jewelers and their dazzling creations; his stepsister and business partner, Kim Burgan, is equally jazzed. Maybe that's because their entire family was born of diamonds.

Well, diamonds and wedding rings and even some sterling silver bangles. Kunz's dad and Burgan's mom met in a jewelry store in 1974, when their children were young. The parents married less than two years later, uniting their families. With Brady Bunch-like harmony, Kunz and Burgan became stepsiblings in name only — they, along with Kunz's biological brother David, are as close as if they were related by blood. (In conversation, they drop the "step" entirely most of the time.) They even named their business, Nine-Eighteen, after the anniversary of their parents' marriage — Sept. 18, 1976.

The senior Kunz opened several jewelry stores with his wife; Kunz even recently served as business development director for his dad's showroom in the World Trade Center. (Kunz was also co-chair of the DIFFA "Smoking Haute" jacket collection earlier this year.)

"We grew up in the business," Kunz explains. "We both would walk away from it for years at a time, but we always knew we'd come back. In college, I was even selling engagement rings to my fraternity brothers."

While both worked in the family stores, opening Nine-Eighteen is the culmination of a lifelong ambition.

"We always dreamed of it as children," Burgan says, "but we



PUT A RING ON IT | Burgan, standing, and Kunz keep their jewelry business all in the family.

started the high-level "what-if" conversations in October 2010." They had a soft opening of the business over the holidays late last year, but are only now letting more people know about it.

Nine-Eighteen isn't a typical jewelry store. For one, it's not in a retail facility but in a gayborhood high-rise. For another, it doesn't have the traditional counter and display case separating the client from the product. The setting is more living room than showroom.

In part, they made that decision in order to get people closer to the jewelry, so that they can interact on a more personal level.

"We spent the last year-and-a-half researching different designers who we *wanted* to do business with," Kunz says. "We work closely with these people, so some collaboration does go on," he says.

"They are really open to [customization]," adds Burgan. One line, for instance, can be made in sterling silver, white gold, yellow gold, brass, bronze and rose gold — a wide range of colors, weights and price-points — "everything from a \$10,000 ring to a

\$200 necklace," Kunz says.

Something else Kunz and Burgan are pleased with is the scope of their men's lines. They offer more cuff links than many department stores, and are especially proud of a new line of men's necklaces.

And they are definitely interested in exposing their gay clients to greater choices in jewelry. One set of rings at Nine-Eighteen snake together like a caduceus but also pull apart and can be worn separately — a perfect symbol of unity for same-sex couples looking for unique commitment bands, observes Kunz, who is gay.

"There's lots of meaning," in many of their designs, he says.

And if there's anything Kunz and Burgan understand, it's the symbolism of how a ring can turn a relationship into a family. After all, their own family owes its entire existence to jewelry, and the bond they have formed is stronger than diamonds. ■

Nine-Eighteen, 3131 Turtle Creek Blvd., Ste. 915. Clients by appointment Monday–Saturday. 214-252-1918. Nine-Eighteen.com.

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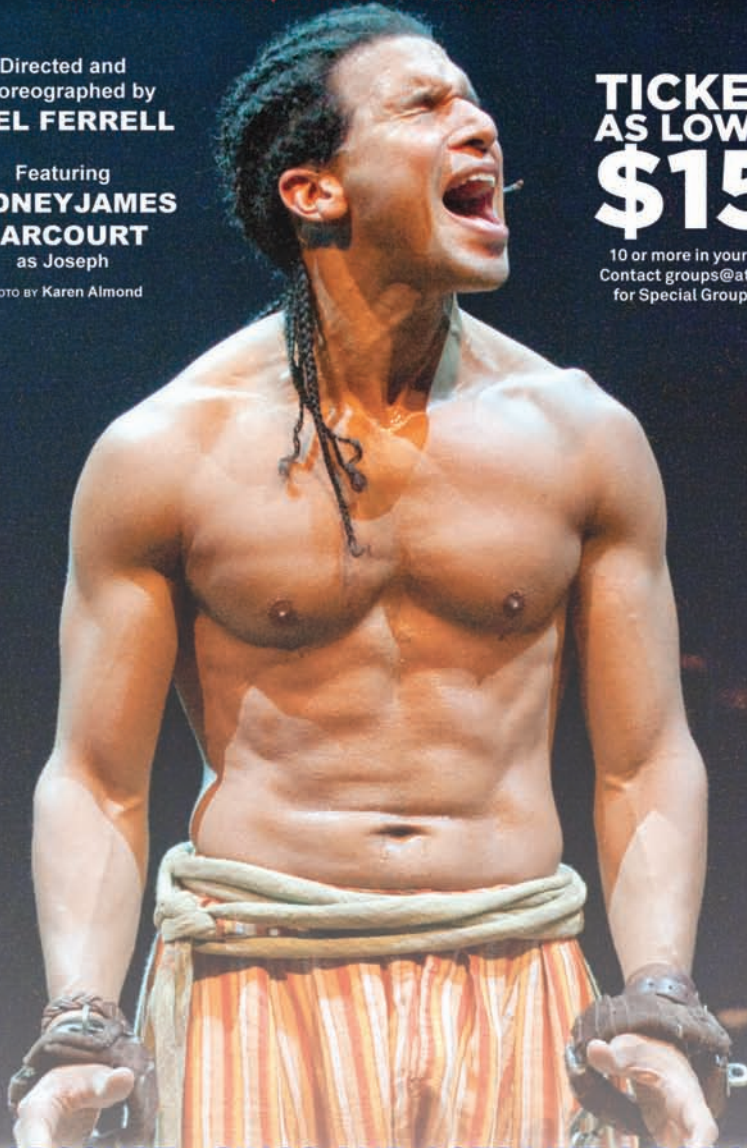
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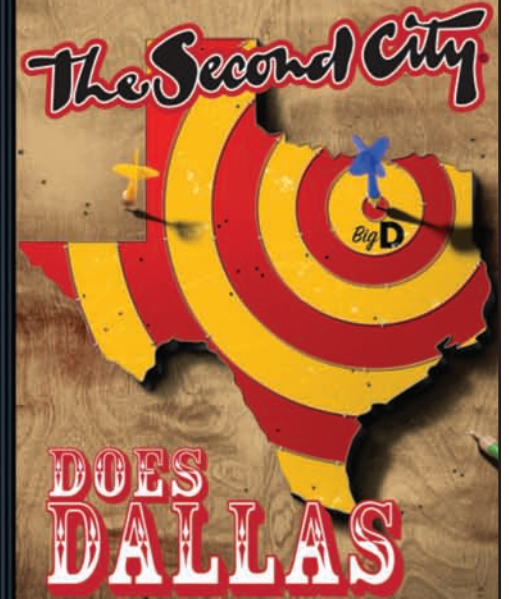
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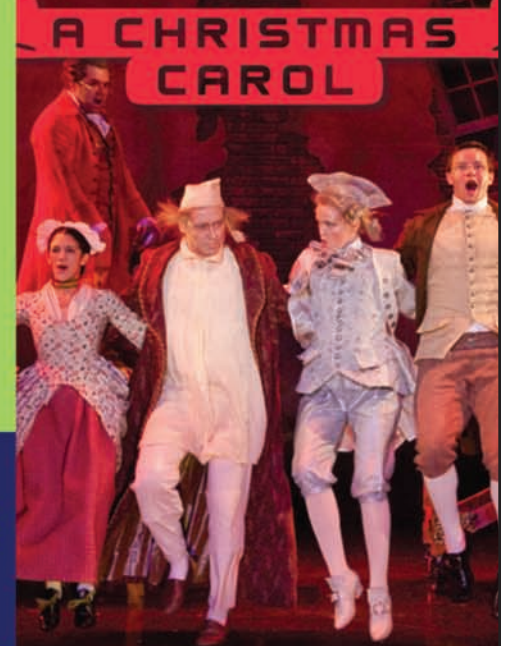
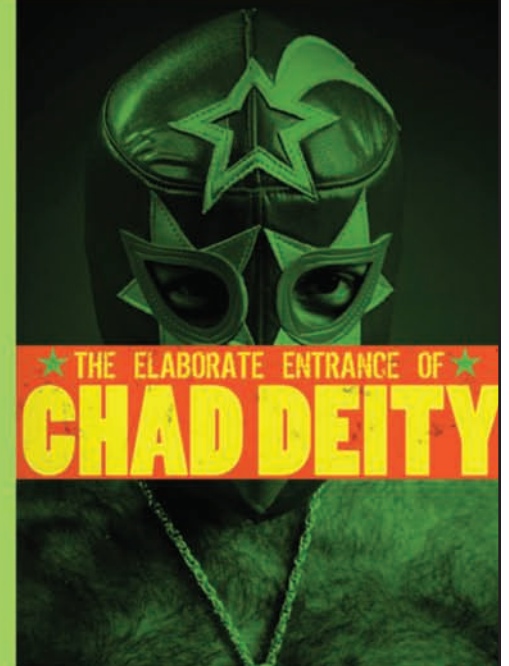
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L+S community

'The Wall,' resurrected



NEVER FORGET | Randy Culbreth took it upon himself to restore memorials to those fallen to AIDS inside Lucky's Cafe. Culbreth's painstaking efforts, above, have significantly brightened the wall as it recently looked, opposite. He hopes others will volunteer to assist in the project. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)



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SMART STARTS HERE.

When Randy Culbreth saw a bit of AIDS history fading away in plain sight, he took it upon himself to save it

HOWARD LEWIS RUSSELL | Special Contributor
hewisrussell@aol.com

Hiding in plain sight at the Dallas gay community's home-cookin' landmark is a vaunted, albeit often overlooked, "Memorial Wall," a catalogue of faded graffiti running, full-length, above its interior windows' curved perimeter.

Many diners at Lucky's Café scarcely notice "The Wall's" existence overhead, or have become so accustomed to seeing it, they forget it's even there. Newcomers may give passing thought to *why* it's there — except, possibly, to consider it an eyesore in desperate need of a good sand-blasting and a fresh coat of paint. Or maybe they wonder why management ever permitted its walls be vandalized with now-dingy scribbles above where people are — *gasp!* — eating:

**Dream as if you'll live forever,
Live as if you'll die tomorrow
— B 'N' L**

Few of Lucky's diners today probably realize that this scribed-upon hallowed arc documents the Oak Lawn community's brave sacrifice during the "death-sentence years" of the AIDS crisis: From dreams lost, to nightmares found; from futures unrealized and pasts turned rigor mortis, "The Wall" at Lucky's was originally conceived in the mid-1980s so we'd "never forget," paying homage to those who did not make it through to the tunnel's end of protease inhibitors' incandescent new dawn.

**GARY DURAN
LOVE BOO-BOO 2-14-97**

Unfortunately, decades of neglect threatened "The Wall's" very existence — and certainly its status as a monument to the brutal toll taken on Dallas' gay community. Even many longtime employees and patrons of Lucky's couldn't pre-

cisely recall how it started, except some vague recollection that its inception was the brainchild of someone at the Resource Center way back in the Jurassic era. The earliest dated scribbled seems to corroborate as much:

**Rick G.
9-13-86**

But one person recognized its significance, and decided Lucky's "Wall" must *not* be allowed to fade away further into oblivion.

That's why Randy Culbreth, with a sparse crew of volunteers, has magnanimously spearheaded Lucky's resurrection.

"Any 'in memoriam' restoration effort to respect former victims of AIDS in our holy era of The Kardashians' being kept up with, resonates more fantastically quaint to someone, say, under the age of 35, than if we were attempting here to memorialize victims of The Middle Ages' Black Plague," Culbreth angrily observes.

Determining Lucky's Wall *deserved* rescue from the brink of being lobbed into the doomed dustbin of our present living history's ephemera, Culbreth began to restore the memorial. Rather than merely trace over old epigrams, Culbreth — who's own partner he memorialized in 1992, both on The Wall and an AIDS quilt panel — is adding embellishments and color.

"These were friends of mine, and they certainly weren't in black and white," he says, "they were all very colorful."

**John & James
I will love you forever ...
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To contribute to Culbreth's project — or to volunteer your time in the restoration — contact him at RCulbreth35222@gmail.com. ■



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Singapore swing

Although being gay is still a crime on the island nation of Singapore, the gay community there has made huge strides toward gaining acceptance



"Majulah Singapura" means "Onward, Singapore" in Malay — a motto the local LGBT community is truly living. Homosexuality is still illegal in this island city-state, but in recent years, gays and lesbians have made great strides toward not just tolerance, but acceptance.

You couldn't ask for a more beautiful city to visit. Singapore is clean and easy to navigate. It's also culturally diverse, with several official languages: Citizens speak English, Indian, Malay, Chinese and Indonesian. A cosmopolitan city, there are many exquisite museums, parks, cafes and restaurants to explore and enjoy. If you love to get your shop on, the world-class malls (featuring high-end retailers) won't disappoint.

A sightseer's delight, gay Singapore offers several unique tourist attractions. Jurong Bird Park is a fabulous, romantic spot, a quick subway and connector bus trip outside of the city center, and you're sure to love it. It's a great opportunity to see thousands of colorful, exotic birds flying in their natural environment. Singapore's Botanical Garden is also a beautiful refuge for lovers of flora and fauna. Scientists working on-site breed orchards for the gardens and name their blooming creations after famous dignitaries like Nelson Mandela and Laura Bush.

For foodies, Singapore is heavenly — its melting pot of cultures is reflected in the cuisine. Banana Leaf Apolo is always packed, but while it lacks elbow room, it makes that up in its dishes.

If you're a fan of curry and North Indian dishes, the portion sizes are huge, the price point excellent and the flavors satisfying.

Mexican cuisine lovers and gringos alike will adore Cafe Iguana, known for its delectable burritos and margaritas (the bar serves a variety of blue agave tequilas). The restaurant is located on Singapore River, offering a breathtaking view.

Although it's a chain, seafood fanatics will adore Jumbo! Chili crab, their signature dish, is out of this world. Other recommended dishes are fried pawns with cereal, bamboo clams with minced garlic and donuts with seafood paste.

Along with a growing tolerance of homosexuality has come an influx of gay bars, clubs and other LGBT venues. That said, there are still no protections to keep the queer community and travelers safe against homophobic attacks, so enjoy with caution. Still, tourism is huge and many businesses are vying for the pink dollar. The amazing nightlife, cruisy gay beaches and impressive infrastructure make Singapore a wildly popular gay destination.

You'll find many of the popular gay clubs are in Chinatown, easily accessible by public transportation. Backstage Bar is one of the hottest clubs catering to queer patrons, with classic movie-themed décor, from *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* to *Oklahoma*. Sweat to the beats or head outside to cruise or light up. The house is packed each weekend and it's a great place to

ONCE ON THIS ISLAND | A beautiful and cosmopolitan city, Singapore is also a sightseer's delight with a thriving nightlife ... though gay travelers should exercise discretion.



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INSIDE AND OUT | Whether you enjoy wandering outdoors or exploring the museums and temples — or wanna sunbathe on a popular gay beach — Singapore provides a diverse experience.

meet hot locals and other out of towners.

DYMK (Does Your Mother Know) — a double-story retro bar with an S&M night every Thursday — is another place to get your dance on. You'll find a common theme with the naming of a lot of the venues. DYMK, Taboo and other clubs are named to reflect the "don't ask, don't tell" atmosphere.

If you're looking for a break from all of the hustle (and modern conveniences), head to Tanjong Beach in Sentosa, one of Singapore's most popular gay beaches. Tanjong is the furthest beach from Beach Station opposite of Siloso Beach. You'll find a range of sun seekers here from young twinks to bronzed older gents donning Speedos. Unlike many other gay beaches, you'll find some shops, bars and cafes. This beach is also close to Palawan, a stretch of coast where you'll find a lot of straight families and teens but

it's still a great place to get some rays.

In 2005, Singapore hosted their first LGBT Pride festival, sponsored by IndigNation. This year marked the sixth season. Unlike most Pride festivals, you won't find the local queer community participating in parades or other flamboyant events because organizers cannot get permits from the government. Typically the schedule includes LGBT lectures and film festivals but few if any outdoor celebrations.

Despite efforts to quiet Singapore's gay and lesbian community, it's easy to hear the roar of The Lion City's 'mos. Gay travelers will revel in the city's modern appeal and queer scene that's not just growing but bursting at the seams.

— Jon Fairbanks

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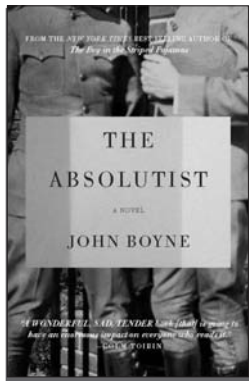
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The long-awaited U.S. release of John Boyle's 'The Absolutist' lives up to, even exceeds, the hype



For some reason, Tristan Sadler just can't seem to let it go. It happened so many years before. He was a child, really: old enough to know better, but not old enough to resist his impulses; old enough to act, but not old enough to understand that the consequences of his action would be carried as pain for decades.

Everyone tells him to forgive himself, that it's OK to move on.

What they don't know is, while the years pass, the regret he feels never does.

Tristan hoped his memories of battle would eventually fade. He hoped that nobody would ever know what he'd seen. And in *The Absolutist* — a new, exciting novel by gay author John Boyle — he hoped they'd never know what he did.

Marian Bancroft lived quite far away from London. It wouldn't be easy to get there; nonetheless, Tristan made the journey. He wasn't sure why he needed to give her the letters but somehow, it seemed important.

Not long before, he'd written to Marian, telling her about the letters, knowing she'd want them. Though she'd answered back that, yes, it would be nice to have some of her brother Will's last possessions, Tristan wasn't sure of the reception he'd get from her. After all, he had survived World War I, and Will had not.

Upon meeting, Tristan thought that Marian was a little addled but,

no, she was just nervous; after a cup of tea, Tristan even believed they might be friends someday. Sometimes, when she scrunched her nose just so, he could see Will in her — they *were* siblings — and a jolt would pass through his heart.

Tristan and Will had been through military training together. Just 17, Tristan had lied about his age so that he might join the army. He supposed it was what he needed to do, especially since he had nowhere else to go. Especially since his father sent him away for kissing another boy.

And Will was handsome. He had a great sense of humor and a deep sense of honor. Throughout their training, Tristan and he became friends. Then more than friends.



Now, there was Tristan, three years after the war's end, holding a bundle of Will's letters. And when Marian asked what happened on the day that Will died, Tristan knew suddenly why he'd brought the letters all the way from London. So he told her...

It would be difficult to overstate just how much I loved *The Absolutist*. I loved it for its grainy black-and-white-movie feel, like an old British film from the '40s. I loved that Boyle teased out just enough information throughout this book to make me think I'd figured out what had happened to Tristan and Will (I didn't!). I loved the mixture of horrific brutality and insanely beautiful prose. And I loved the ending, which made me gasp, gasp, and gasp again.

The Absolutist starts a tad slow, but don't let that deter you from reading this absolutely stellar book. Start it, stick around and you soon won't be able to let it go. That's something I'm absolutely certain of. ■

— Terri Schlichenmeyer



WAR AND REMEMBRANCE | John Irving touted John Boyle's 'The Absolutist' as the best book to come along in ages. Apparently, he was right.



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So you think you can host



Gay dancer Travis Wall leads a cast of reality hotties in predictable 'Moves'

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

I've long since given up believing in the reality of reality TV. Whenever a character — and this happens *every* reality series — says, "I decided to raise money for this fundraiser," you just know the truth is, "the producers pledged a certain budget/donation to put on a fake fundraiser on the condition I invited my enemies and caused a scene."

So when Travis Wall, the gay *You Think You Can Dance* contestant and budding dancepreneur, claims on the new reality show **All the Right Moves** to be "reaching into his own pocket" to pay for a backers' show, what I assume he means is, "I will have to use part of my per diem as a prop to make this scene look authentic." Ugh.

It would probably be unfair to say that this latest queer-skewing fakality series, which premieres on Oxygen, is any faker than the rest. The

premise? Wall and his fellow *SYTYCD* alum (gay Season 1 winner Nick) and two straight buds — Kyle and Teddy — share an apartment (complete with stage lighting and ceiling mounted cameras!) while starting their own dance company in El Lay. Truth is, their enterprise is probably no riskier than what the ratings show it to be; if it gets renewed for a second season, I'm sure they will manage to survive and keep it together. So let's not attack the show for *that* reason.

Then again, what else is there? It's bitchy with artificial tensions arising just in time for commercial breaks; what else is new? Why do they keep making these shows? Why do people keep *watching* them?

Here's one reason: This is one of the queerest peek-a-boo series out there right now, with two of the central figures gay against two straight. But it seems much gayer — in just the opening montage of the season premiere, there is more shirtless man-hugging than most Falcon videos manage in an hour. Even the straight guys are manscaped and guylinered while pirouetting their asses (and shirts) off. Why not be flirty and lightweight? It's not like you're interfering with someone's artistic vision. ■

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
ALL THE RIGHT MOVES
Premiere on Oxygen July 31.
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online exclusive
For a one-on-one interview online with Travis Wall, visit the Instant Tea blog next Monday on DallasVoice.com.

SHOWBOYS | Wall, seated, assembles so many sexy boys for the latest in pandering reality shows, they should have called it 'All the Right 'Mos.' At least they take their shirts off a lot.



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L+S auto

2-prong Charger

Dodge impresses with both the kick-ass SRT8 and the more modest SXT

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
 crwauto@aol.com



Buffalo chicken wings come in shades of spicy that start with just a wake-up call for your taste buds to flaming six-alarm fire.

The same could be said for the re-designed 2012 Dodge Charger. There's no shame in buying the V6-powered SXT; however, the HEMI-powered SRT8 brings wicked pleasures.

Styling on the new Charger is a mix of General Lee and The Terminator. You can see the classic look of 40 years ago in the side scallops, taillamps, fastback roofline and long nose. The theme is updated with a rear wing, low front splitter, and expert body shaping that makes the car aerodynamic without turning out jelly bellies. A blind monk wouldn't miss the 164 LEDs that form the taillamps.

Red Brembo brakes, 20-in. alloys, functional hood air extractor, and aggressive front fascia caused grown men to whimper upon seeing the SRT8. I was even pulled out of a Subway so four guys could pelt me with questions.

Under the skin of both cars is a vehicle architecture derived from the late-'90s Mercedes E-Class. While those components may be little-old-lady among the cur-

rent Autobahn-burners from Bavaria, they are wholly world-class on America's full-size interstates. Stiff body structures are tomb solid and allow the firm independent suspension system to soak up rough pavement or clip through corners when asked.

Better still, an adaptive damping system on SRT8s automatically tunes the suspension for varying driving conditions by monitoring throttle position, vehicle speed, steering angle, steering speed, brake torque and lateral acceleration.

ADS allows the car to waft down the highway with a slight float, but with the touch of the "Sport" mode button, stiffens for aggressive handling. The transformation is near magical. This is a supercar that can be loaded with peeps and driven to Key West without busting a bubble.

Whoever you invite for a drive, they will ride in a cabin worthy of a high-end German but



BIG BRO, LITTLE BRO | The bold HEMI-powered Charger SRT8, top, makes the classic muscle car even more striking, but the familiar lines of the SXT is still impressive — and more affordable.



STYLING GONE WILD | The lush, colorful interior of the SRT8 still is unfussy, with just what you need to cause heads to turn but not to distract you from driving. (Photos courtesy of Dodge)

with enough American flair to domesticate anyone. Both test cars had bright red leather seats, bolstered and ventilated in the SRT8. Aluminum trim on the dashboard and console added a classic touch, as did the acres-wide dashboard with ginormous touchscreen. Large analog gauges, gated gear selector and alloy pedals incited waves of machismo. Rear passengers are nearly as comfortable as in the front and all can take whatever luggage their hearts desire.

Designers cleverly fitted a heap of technology into the Charger's muscle car interior.

Whoever developed the world's easiest-to-use touchscreen should be given a prize. One can select the mode (radio, navigation, climate, etc.) from clearly-marked icons at the bottom of the screen. Once there, all functions are color coded, labeled and segregated in a way that would make Apple envious. Large volume and tuning knobs sit below to make the basics intuitive. Finally an auto company installed a navigation system that is as easy to program as a Garmin.

Beyond touchscreens, Alpine (V6) and Harman Kardon (SRT8) audio systems sounded great. Both of our test cars also came with adaptive cruise control (automatically keeps a safe distance, slowing as necessary). Blind Spot Monitoring, Forward Collision Warning, Rear Cross

Path detection, and SmartBeam headlamps are also available. SRT8 owners can have fun on track days with an information center that monitors 0-60 mph times, quarter-mile performance, 60-0 mph braking distance, and g-forces.

Coaxing digits is SXT's the aluminum "Pentastar" 3.6-liter V6 engine that delivers 292hp and 19/31-MPG city/hwy. That's not quite up to

standards set by Camaro and Mustang, but will strip the socks off your mother. To get things boiling, go full-nuclear and select the SRT8's 6.4-liter V8 that fwumps out 470hp and 470 lb.-ft. of torque. Thanks to variable-

displacement, which shuts down four cylinders at cruise, the super-naught still turns in 14/23-MPG city/hwy. The V6 is paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission while the SRT8 routes its wrath to the rear wheels through a five-speed automatic. Both can be paddle-shifted for a boat of fun.

Even mild wings can make your tongue wiggle, and that's true of the V6-powered Charger SXT. For most drivers, it has all of the performance they can imagine. Order it with all the sauces and you'll be delighted. If your evil self needs to cackle at every crack of the throttle and spicy nugget, blast out with the SRT8.

Our loaded SXT came to \$34,935 while the SRT8 clicked in just under \$50K. ■

'12 CHARGER

Dodge. SXT. As-tested price: \$34,935. SRT8 also available for about \$50,000.



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Ocean's spray

Newly out hip-hopper Frank Ocean's solo debut is an exercise in restraint



A LOT OF BALLS | Ocean's coming-out CD underplays the masculine pronoun to tremendous effect.

With his work in the hip-hop collective Odd Future, or as a producer on high profile projects like Beyoncé's 4 or Jay-Z's and Kanye West's *Watch The Throne*, it's easy to expect a bombastic solo debut from Frank Ocean. His 2011 single "Novacane" even displayed an assertive tone; coupled with his recent coming out, burst-out-of-the-closet jams might be obvious. But Ocean surprises in **Channel Orange** precisely by holding back.

The 24-year-old finds his inner Maxwell by serving up tracks with sexy grooves and quiet storm romanticism but with the perspective of youth. He sings adorably about living at home, and he combines sophisticated slow jams with a brilliant attitude that barely misses.

On "Thinkin' Bout You," he goes from sexy basso into ever sexier falsetto while the beat drifts slowly. He brags about the *fighter jet I don't get to fly*, deftly delivering romance by wrappings up parts of Usher, Barry White and Sade to keep his patience in check. Lyrics like *Since you think I don't love you I just thought you were cute. That's why I kiss you* are wonderfully honest coming from a young love's sensibility.

Ocean also knows chill. "Sierra Leone" initially feels piecemeal, but he ties it together with clever flow. This is a guy who is a voice of the time. In "Sweet Life," he works in *My TV ain't HD / That's too real*—the kind of stuff that brings *Channel Orange* to life. By skipping metaphors and keeping it literal, Ocean makes this album a viable bridge from one music generation to a new one.

He switches gears with "Super Rich Kids," straddling the benefits of *maids come around too much* but throws in how these kids are *searching for a real love* (a subtle homage to Jody Watley).

Ocean does the near impossible: He gives these kids enough humanity that you almost feel sorry for them, pointed out their reality without blasting them for their excesses. Does that make them less desirous for emotional contact while everything else is handed to them?

"Crack Rock" is another blatantly honest track without being preachy or angry. Instead, Ocean takes a puff then doles out some major truthfulness by asking *how's the gutter doing*. He doesn't try to shock, but because it's so subtle, he does. Ocean turns up the volume finally on the album's 10th track, "Pyramids," a nine-minute opus that introduces some dance beats and awe-

some synth action. He directly sings to his Cleopatra. On "Bad Religion," Ocean finally paints the picture all queer fans have been listening for. Organs lay a foundation for the ballad as Ocean laments *if it brings me to my knees / it's a bad religion*. He bares it out with painful honesty—note the masculine pronoun: *I can never make him love me / never make him love / no, no / It's a bad religion to be in love with someone who can never love you*. Ocean doesn't

have to oversell it; the track isn't a grand announcement, but snugly within the album's package; try not to feel a sense of liberation as it plays. He gets more playful about it in the final cutesy "Forrest Gump." Unless he's actually singing to Tom Hanks' character, he flirts by singing how he's *so buff and so strong*.

The interludes remind of Janet Jackson's usual approach adding to a number of tracks, but they accentuate the positive here. This is not the great queer album new gay fans might have hoped for, but that it's a mark in the voice of a new generation is important. Ocean's smart and *Channel Orange* exudes that on all fronts.

— Rich Lopez



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Photo by: Matt Hoyle

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L+S advice

Ask Howard

How to do what's
wrong right

HOWARD LEWIS RUSSELL | Special Contributor
askhoward@dallasvoice.com

Dear Howard,

My Grindr profile features my body shot, but no face. Someone else (also without a face pic) started flirting with me. We exchanged some *private* images; then, he sent me his face. My God, Howard, it's my boss! I don't know how to respond: Block him? Ignore it? Tell him in person who I am? He was totally nice to chat with and kinda hot — my type, even, though I wouldn't have guessed he had either sexual charm, or seductiveness, in him based upon our workplace interactions at the office. Howard, is this something I should pursue? — **Awkward Flirt**

Dear Awkward Flirt,

OK, Awk, here's the deal: You say your boss (unbeknownst to him) has been flirted with by you, his employee, on Grindr, correct? Slick, unless you're either currently employed in the porn industry or working for an escort agency, then you're treading dangerously here on pink-slip territory. On the other hand, the boss who marries his secretary isn't, of course, a total cliché for nothing. Bottom line, Awkster: How important is keeping your job, should you not be able to ultimately bewitch your boss into marriage?

Dear Howard,

Recently, I've struck up a platonic friendship with a hot guy in my apartment building, but I'm strangely nervous to tell my live-in boyfriend. I've got nothing to hide, and don't even know if the guy is "gay curious" or just a friendly straight. My gaydar hasn't gone off at all; still, it feels like there could be issues. Suggestions, Howard? — **Not Guilty**

Dear Not Guilty,

To quote comedian Chris Rock: "A man is only as faithful as his options." Intuition never lies. If you're "strangely nervous" to tell your spouse about a new *platonic*, same-sex friend whom you've met, then either your gaydar needs a fresh battery replacement, or your current live-in boyfriend is not the man whom you should be shacking up with.

Dear Howard,

My partner is a homebody — which is fine —



but he's so much so that I end up going to special events either alone or with a friend. I don't particularly pressure him, but it bothers me sometimes. Is there a proper balance I should expect, or even lay down the law? — **Table-for-One**

Dear Table-for-One,

Your question is a classic example of "choose your battles carefully:" "Special events" to an extrovert are not at all the same thing as "special events" to an introvert (i.e., your "homebody" partner). Certainly, there is a proper balance to be expected in all relationships; however, balance is found via compromise, *not* through commandment by caveat:

Bottom line:

How important is keeping your job, should you not be able to ultimately bewitch your boss into marriage?

If you "lay down the law" to your partner, you will forever be attending events in the future, special or otherwise, *totally* alone.

Dear Howard,

A colleague refuses to get on Twitter, much less text messaging. Will a knock upside the head with my smartphone help? — **GetWithIt**

Dear GetWithIt,

A knock upside your colleague's head with your smartphone will help *only* were he/she in your own shoes. Not everyone on this planet is advantageous enough to afford a smartphone, nor does everyone on this planet who *can* easily afford one, in fact, necessarily care to.

Do you have a question — about etiquette, love, life or work — that needs an answer? Send your problem to AskHoward@Dallasvoice.com and he may answer it in our new regular feature.

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Saturday 07.28

Get your art on at Gallery Day

The Design District is flush with terrific galleries, and there's never been a better time to explore 12 of them on Gallery Day, with great deals on art and even a free T-shirt and gift bags for the early birds at each.

DEETS: In the Design District, noon–9 p.m. Visit DallasGalleryDay.com for participating galleries and other details.

Saturday 07.28

Jason & deMarco conquer Mabank

So many gay folks struggle with their religious upbringing, which is why having Jason & deMarco — the out gay couple who are also Christian musicians — bring their voices and story of love and acceptance to a small exurb like Mabank warms the heart. They'll perform twice at the gay-friendly Celebration on the Lake Church — once Saturday evening and again for Sunday morning service. Hallelujah!

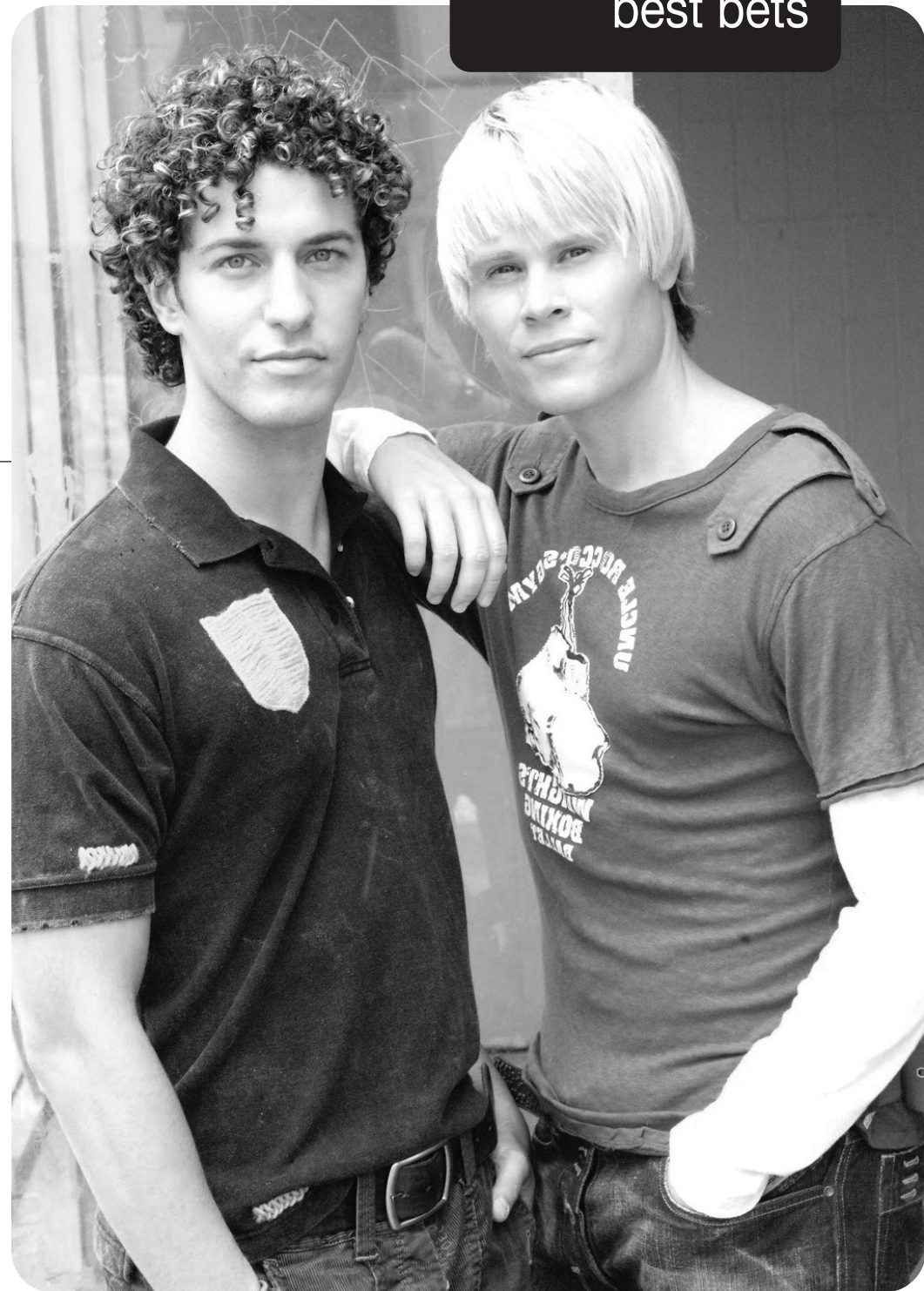
DEETS: Celebration on the Lake Church, 9120 S. Highway 198, Mabank. July 28 at 7:30 p.m., July 29 at 10 a.m. 903-451-2302. COTLChurch.org.

Sunday 07.29

You can Be An Angel for Legacy

Legacy Founders Cottage and Legacy Counseling Center's major annual fundraiser is called "Be An Angel" for a reason — the work they do helping those with HIV/AIDS really can save lives. This year, the gala features the music of Vince Martinez amid the luxurious dining of Bailey's Prime Plus and the hunky bartending of Bar-10, as well as many silent auction items.

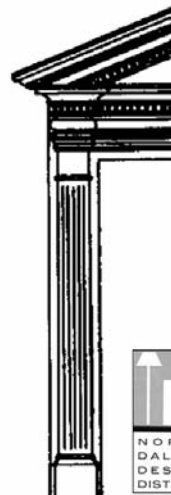
DEETS: Bailey's Prime Plus, 8160 Park Lane. 6–9 p.m. \$40. 214-520-6308. LegacyCounseling.org.



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FRIDAY 07.27

COMMUNITY

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

Congregation Beth El Binah Shabbat service. Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan St. 7:30 p.m. BethElBinah.org.

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

Business Network Collin County luncheon. Fox Sports Grille, 5741 Legacy Drive, Plano. 11:30 a.m. \$20. BusinessNetworkCC.org.

Unwired Dallas. Crystal Meth Anonymous (CMA) meets for those wishing to quit using crystal meth. 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. YouthFirstTexas.org.

ART

Robb Conover. Local gay artist displays his pop and abstract works for this one-night-only exhibit. Oak Lawn Coffee, 2720 Oak Lawn Ave. July 27, 6–8 p.m. RobbConover.zoomshare.com.



COFFEE AND POP (ART) | Gay artist Robb Conover's art is featured at a one-night-only show at Oak Lawn Coffee Friday.

The Art of the Bow Tie featuring works by local artist Jeremy Michael Calhoun. ilum Gallery, 4123 Cedar Springs, Ste. 107. Through Aug. 8. ilumgallery.com.

Vista. A selection of landscapes by Dallas photographers makes up this new show curated by local artist Erica Felicella. Kettle Art Gallery, 2714 Elm St. 7 p.m. Through Aug. 18. KettleArt.com.

Mark Mullino. The local musician displays his art based on music. Granville Arts Center, 300 N. Fifth St., Garland. Through July 30.

Suddenly This Summer exhibit of gallery artists. Vibrant, dramatic works by Ruben Nieto, Charlotte Smith and Isabelle du Toit will be on display. Cris Worley Fine Arts, 2277 Monitor St. Opening reception at 5:30 p.m. Through July 28. CrisWorley.com.

THEATER

The Divine Sister, starring Coy Covington as a singing nun, closes this weekend. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through July 29. UptownPlayers.org.

Avenue Q. The queer-loving puppet play takes the underground space of Theatre 3 in this local production. Theatre Too, 2900 Routh St. Through Sept. 16. Theatre3Dallas.com.

The Importance of Being Lovely. MBS Productions brings back drag queen Lovely Uranus in this new comedic misadventure. Stone Cottage Theater, 15650 Addison Road, Addison. Through Aug. 11. \$18–\$22. MBSProductions.net.

SATURDAY 07.28

COMMUNITY

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.

DFW Prime Timers play bingo at member's residence. 7 p.m. Call 972-504-8866 for details.

D.A.M.N., Dallas Area Men's Naturists, hold their monthly Bare as You Dare event at Dallas Eagle, 2515 Inwood Road, # 117. Keep in mind Texas does mandate a minimum of clothing around the groin!

FUNDRAISER

The 25th Annual Miss Leo Party, which supports clients of The Daire Center and AIN, holds its big event at the Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser St. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY 07.29

COMMUNITY

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

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

Breath of Life Interfaith Mindfulness Fellowship. LGBT-friendly "meditation and more." All faiths welcome. Dallas Meditation Center, 727 S. Floyd Road. 5 p.m. Donations accepted. InterMindful.com.

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

MUSIC

Air Supply performs with the Dallas Pops Orches-

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member's residence. 1 p.m. Call 972-504-8866 for details.

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.

TUESDAY 07.31

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

Lambda Pride Toastmasters. Regular meeting of the national group that works toward improving communication and leadership skills.

Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 6:30 p.m. LambdaPride.FreeToastHost.us.

Miracle Workers (formerly Peace Builder Leadership Team) meets in Fellowship Hall. Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 6:30 p.m. CathedralOfHope.com.

WEDNESDAY 08.01

COMMUNITY

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

Outstanding Beautiful Brothers (O.B.B.) is a support group to enhance the quality of life for young black MSM's (men who have sex with men) living with HIV, by providing a safe and confidential space to offer support, empowerment and education.

Meetings held every first and third Wednesday. Call 214-702-6511 for information and location. 7 p.m.



Candy Marcum

BROADCAST

Lambda Weekly. LGBT radio for North Texas. This week's guest is therapist/counselor Candy Marcum. 89.3 KNON-FM at 7 a.m. LambdaWeekly.com.

THURSDAY 08.02

COMMUNITY

DFW Prime Timers play bridge every week. 1 p.m. Call 972-504-8866 for details.

PFLAG Fort Worth (Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays) meets first Thursdays of each

month. First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1959 Sandy Lane, Fort Worth. 7 p.m. 817-428-2329. Pflagfortworth.org.

The Rotary Club of Dallas-Uptown meets every Thursday with a mission to build good will and encourage peace through leadership. All visitors are welcome. Hully and Mo's, 2800 Routh St. 11:45 - 1:00 p.m. DallasUptownRotary.org

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

this week's solution

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ALL OUT OF LOVE | '80s pop supergroup Air Supply performs Sunday at the Winspear Opera House.

tra. Winspear Opera House, 4103 Flora St. July 29 at 8 p.m. ATPAC.org.

MONDAY 07.30

COMMUNITY

DFW Prime Timers play bridge every week at

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CELEBRITY BIRTHDAY

By Jack Fertig



Yves St. Laurent would have turned 76 on Wednesday; he died in 2008. The gay fashion icon is perhaps best remembered for creating his "tuxedo for women," which also inspired this year's DIFFA Collection of smoking jackets.

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

Trying to smooth over differences only causes problems to fester. Deal with issues now. Solutions require original thinking, and you probably will make mistakes, but better to do that and correct them than not to try.

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

You might get to act out some long-hidden desires. Revealing that secret side can cause doubts, especially if word gets out. Hold your head high, dismiss lurid rumors as trashy gossip and let them wonder. The mystique will do you good.

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

However you need to revise plans, stay focused on your goal and clear on your limits. Promising too much can ruin everything. Talk up what you realistically can do; that'll be enough.

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Let people know what you can do that will really make a difference. You may need to work on getting it across diplomatically. Think carefully before speaking, but it's better to risk offending than to say nothing and let opportunity pass you by.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 20

A new adventure will liven up your partnership, or help you build or find one. Be daring and bold. It doesn't have to be expensive. What would get your pulse racing?

CAPRICORN Dec 21-Jan 19

You could be the center of domestic disturbances, a force of change in the community, and/or a dynamo in the bedroom. Any one of these can support another. Thinking of others first will help to keep it all clean and positive.

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

You need to get a grasp of deep worries that are affecting your relationship. Talking with your partner is generally better than talking about your partner, but find a sympathetic and trust-worthy ear where you can.

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 19

Confusion at work can stir a greater range of anxieties. Take a break and think through the problem at hand. It will get crazier before you can solve it, but control the damage.

ARIES Mar 20-Apr 19

Worries about your relationship, or fears of never getting in one, are mostly groundless, but do say something about long-buried wounds or anxieties.

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

Whatever you do with your money or flirtations will come to naught, but there's nothing wrong with feeling flirty and confident. "Wasting" time can for real investments.

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

Humility is your big issue now. Whether you are too cocky or too shy you need to get back to knowing that in the grand scheme you are anyone's equal — no more or less.

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

Be discreet and strategic — which doesn't mean shy. Know your worth, but keep your cards close to your chest. Trust your instincts, be adaptable and know who you can depend on.

THIS WEEK

The sun in Leo aspecting Uranus and Pluto builds confidence, perhaps a bit too much. Sure you can do anything, but not on your own!

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

Kyle's Bed & Breakfast by Greg Fox

339

Panel 1: I HEAR YOU GOT A JOB AT THE STEER BARN. YEAH. I'M REALLY MOVING UP IN THE WORLD.

Panel 2: HEY, IT'S GOTTA BE BETTER THAN THAT JOCK-STRAP HOUSECLEANING GIG YOU WERE DOIN', RIGHT? WHOA. HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?

Panel 3: RICHARD WAS SHOWIN' EVERYONE IN THE HOUSE YOUR AD ON CRAIG'S LIST. EVERYONE??!

Panel 4: SHORTLY... YOU KNEW ABOUT IT, KYLE? UM... YEAH. I DIDN'T WANT TO THROW IT IN YOUR FACE. I FIGURED YOU'D TELL ME WHEN YOU WERE READY. I WAS EMBARRASSED. AND I ONLY HAD ONE CLIENT... WHICH WAS A DISASTER. NOT THAT MY NEW JOB IS MUCH BETTER. WORKING FOR MINIMUM WAGE AT THE LOW-BUDGET VERSION OF BURGER KING.

Panel 5: ARE YOU ANGRY? NO, BUT... ...I WISH YOU HAD TOLD ME. ANYWAY... I'M DONE WITH THAT.

Panel 6: BREYER...DON'T SAY THAT. BUT... WHAT IF I END UP WORKING AT THE STEER BARN FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE, KYLE? THEN I WILL GO THERE AND HAVE DINNER WITH YOU EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT.

Panel 7: BECAUSE I LOVE YOU... AND I BELIEVE IN YOU... AND I COULD NOT BE PROUDER OF YOU FOR BEING A HARD-WORKING MAN OF INTEGRITY. DON'T YOU DARE BE ASHAMED OF THAT, BREYER WATKINS.

Panel 8: I'M A REAL FOOL SOMETIMES, AREN'T I? WE ALL HAVE OUR MOMENTS. HEY, KYLE, UH... ...I DON'T THINK THERE'S MUCH VEGETARIAN STUFF ON THE STEER BARN MENU. WE'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT...

Website - www.kylecomics.com

E-Mail - KylesBnB@aol.com

bitter girl

Whatta Stretch

Panel 1: HEY, ASHLEY, ...WOW, THAT'S A SNAZZY RIDE. HEYYY! LEMME JUST PARK...

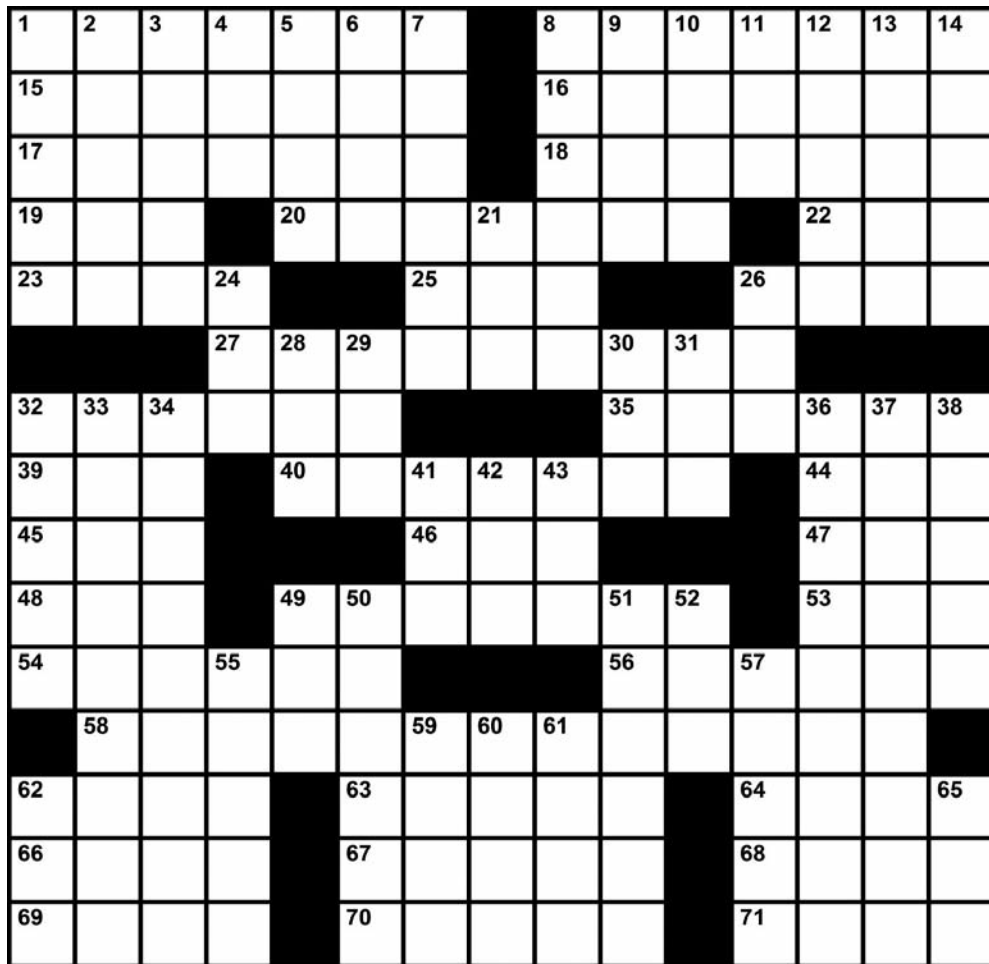
Panel 2: I'M STILL ME!

Panel 3: THAT'S FOR SURE. YOU STILL OWE ME FIVE BUCKS.

email: joan@joanhilty.net

www.joanhilty.net

JOAN HILTY ©2012



Did You Ever See a Lassie Go This Way?

Solution on page 45

Across

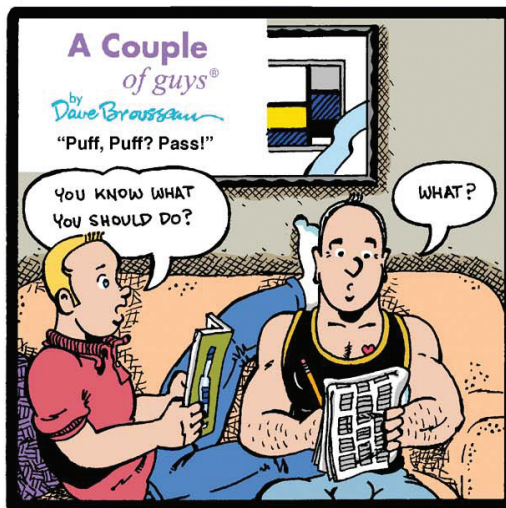
- 1 Ties down
- 8 Japanese escorts
- 15 Part of a Bernstein score
- 16 Madonna album
- 17 Queer, but not necessarily gay
- 18 Aware
- 19 With 20-Across, lesbian TV drama set in Glasgow, Scotland
- 20 See 19-Across
- 22 Beginning of a description of sex with men in 19-Across
- 23 Irrate, with "off"
- 25 Many, many moons
- 26 Midvoyage
- 27 More of the description
- 32 Tool of Emma Stebbins
- 35 Car safety device
- 39 Leibman of Angels in America
- 40 Dairy counter items
- 44 Maugham's Cakes and ____
- 45 What Kahlo put out
- 46 PAC of docs
- 47 Pose for pix
- 48 U-turn from NNW
- 49 More of the description
- 53 Prefix for system

54 Jazzman Fred

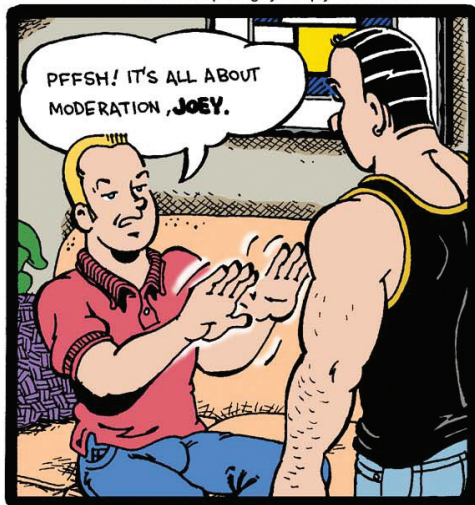
- 56 Thames timer
- 58 End of the description
- 62 Cruising greeting
- 63 River of Marseilles
- 64 Jerusalem server
- 66 Margaret Cho's All-American ____
- 67 Mapplethorpe models, often
- 68 This is one
- 69 Cathedral of Hope area
- 70 Broadway events
- 71 Where to find Munch work

Down

- 1 Enjoyed a cologne queen, old-style
- 2 Frightfully strange
- 3 Caesar's "seize"
- 4 Olympics chant word
- 5 Wheel-worn ways
- 6 Buffalo's lake
- 7 Confidential matter
- 8 Zodiac twosome
- 9 Mabus of Ugly Betty
- 10 Actress Skye
- 11 Possible result of unsafe sex
- 12 Stereos, in Johnny Mathis' day
- 13 Penetrating
- 14 Latin music
- 21 Button you use to turn down REM
- 24 Singles players
- 26 Rhine feeder
- 28 180
- 29 Roadside warning sign
- 30 Cabaret's Kit-__ Klub
- 31 Rilke's ice
- 32 Market bear's fear
- 33 Flog like a stallion
- 34 1978 Woody Allen drama
- 36 Courage in the Major Leagues?
- 37 American suffragist honored with a 1995 stamp
- 38 Invitation to mount
- 41 Long-snouted fish
- 42 Thurman of Even Cowgirls Get the Blues
- 43 Genre for Eazy-E
- 49 Coll. or univ.
- 50 They may prick you in the rose garden
- 51 Be too single-minded
- 52 Coll. basketball competition
- 55 Concern of Todd Oldham
- 57 Spanish painter, with "El"
- 59 "I don't think so"
- 60 Kind of list
- 61 From the top
- 62 Turkish title
- 65 Matthew in The Producers



e-mail: acoupleofguys@qsyndicate.com



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Brandon, Jeff and Rob at TMC: The Mining Company.

The tension is building since the **Voice of Pride** semi-finals took place at the **Round-Up Saloon** on July 22. The finals will be in the **Rose Room** on Aug. 12. Among the semifinalists are **Joel Canales**, **Angie Landers**, **Eric Way**, **Markheaven Tshuma** and **Carlos Saenz**, all of them wonderful performers. Be there and help the judges decide Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. is **Pump!** at the **Dallas Eagle** with live workout demonstrations by the hottest men in Dallas. Food is provided by **Hunky's**, **Thairrific**, **Zeus** and **Anytime Fitness** We thought GCB stood for something else, but according to **Cathedral of Hope**, it's Good Christian Believers. And they'll be at the **Round-Up Saloon** on July 29 presenting the **GCB Show** **Anton Shaw** performs at **Woody's** on Thursdays 8 to 11 p.m. **Jada Fox** follows with special guests weekly **Noelle Bean**, an amazing new pop talent singing her hit "Cops and Robbers" and more in the **Rose Room** on July 27. Then **Guys & Dolls** presents the **Miss LifeWalk** pageant on July 29 **Sue Ellen's** has a hot band schedule this week. **Kathy Corbin** appears on July 27 followed by **Ciao Bella** on July 28. **Anton Shaw** and **the Reason** are at **Sue's** on July 28. Next Friday is the **Mustache Ervy Drag Kings Show**. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREGORY HAYES



Friends' night out at the Drama Room.



Nicole, Brenda, Van and Kyle at Station 4.



Ashton and Tiffani at Pekers.



Jamie at Sue Ellen's.



Going away party at Alexandre's.

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