

# Drag Race's Chad Michaels, untucked

'All Stars' winner kicks off Purple Party  
Weekend of events benefits local charities

■ COMMUNITY, Page 24



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# ★ ★ ★ YEAR OF THE GAY? ★ ★ ★

3 out candidates in 2 races are vying to become Dallas' 1st openly LGBT City Council member since 2007 ■ ELECTION, Page 6



PLUS: An up-close look at contests in the city's most heavily LGBT districts — including candidates' full responses to our questionnaire

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### The Rev. Jo Hudson steps down as pastor of Cathedral of Hope

The Rev. Jo Hudson is stepping down after nine years as senior pastor of the Cathedral of Hope, according to an email the church sent to its members Sunday afternoon.

Stacia Sims, chair of the Cathedral's Board of Stewards, said in the email that Hudson's resignation was voluntary and that the board will appoint an interim pastoral leader soon.

Hudson, who took over for the Rev. Michael Piazza in 2004, made the announcement during the church's 11 a.m. service April 21, according to Sims. Here's what the pastor told those gathered for what is expected to be her final sermon at COH:

"After prayerful consideration and conversations with colleagues and friends, some of whom are here today, and visiting with my soon-to-be 91-year-old Dad, I am announcing today my resignation as Senior Pastor of the Cathedral of Hope. I am asking that you, the people of Cathedral of Hope who have elected me, will accept my resignation to be effective on or before Pentecost Sunday, May 19.

"I want to be with you in the next few weeks to work with a great staff and a great Board of Stewards to make the transition, and I hope to do that in the next few weeks, taking care of appointments, shifting ministries and cleaning out my desk. I wanted to tell you today, because it is my estimation that today is my last Sunday in this pulpit. Ironically, nine years ago, on the third Sunday in April, 2004, I preached my first sermon at Cathedral of Hope.

"In these nine years with you, I have sought to serve God and this church faithfully. This is all about an opportunity to move forward and into the future both for this church and for me and my family. I love you. I will always love this church.

"I will be grateful for the chance that I had to serve with you and among you.

"And while I can no longer serve you as Senior Pastor, I now do among the hardest things I have ever had to do, but it is the most important thing that I do: I entrust you to God's care, and I know that you will continue as a strong, healthy, great, church making a difference in the life of others.

"I want you to know that you need to be here next Sunday and you need to bring your gifts because that will be the best way to honor me and to honor God. Keep being this church. Keep being a church that changes the lives of people who need hope more than anything else.

"I have prayed for this church just about every day since I became pastor here (well, some days not so much because I wake up late), but I have prayed for this church for its health, for its life, for its leaders and I will continue to pray as I make this transition. If you are able, I humbly request your prayers for me, for Stephanie, for Sydney as we transition, too, to a new place in our lives."

— John Wright

### LGBT advocates continue protest of DART's delay on DP benefits

A small crowd turned out Tuesday to protest DART's delay in offering domestic partner benefits, but the two speakers were passionate enough to get the LGBT community's outrage across.

DART's Board of Directors began receiving information about benefits last July and finally decided to table discussion in March until after the



The Rev. Jo Hudson

U.S. Supreme Court rules in two marriage equality cases in July. LGBT advocates spoke at the board meeting earlier this month and vowed to be back until the board implements the benefits.

Omar Narvaez spoke on behalf of Lambda Legal, listing the agencies that already offer DP benefits and explaining how the agency has failed employees by postponing a vote for months before hiding behind a U.S. Supreme Court decision. He added that there was no legal risk in Texas because "too many other governmental agencies already get it and have for decades."

"Marriage equality? What does that have to do with domestic partner benefits? They are employee benefits. Nothing more," he said. "You are not defining relationship status by offering domestic partner benefits.

"You all should be ashamed that DFW Airport and Parkland get it and got it faster than you all are able to get it. It is time to bring this up, make it happen, we're talking about paper clip money when it comes to the budget. When it comes to the employees of this organization, you are spitting in their faces."

Daniel Cates, regional GetEQUAL TX coordinator, said the extended delay shows members don't care about the agency's employees and makes its inclusive nondiscrimination policy worthless.

"By continuing to delay a vote on domestic partner benefits, this board has proven that the words written in that nondiscrimination policy mean nothing. By continuing to delay a vote on domestic partner benefits, this board is sending a clear message to all DART employees that they have little concern for the real families that are impacted by the decision they make," Cates said.

"By continuing to delay a vote on domestic partner benefits, this board has not chosen to be blatantly hateful. They have not chosen to add to long list of discrimination that LGBT people experience on a daily basis, they have not chosen to blatantly condemn nontraditional families. Instead, they have chosen to do something much worse. They have chosen to remain silent."

Resource Center Dallas' Rafael McDonnell said several Dallas appointees on the DART board and one new appointee were interviewed for the position during Monday's Transportation and Environment Committee. He said they were all asked if they supported offering DP benefits and they all said they did.

DART's board meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. GetEQUAL TX plans to have speakers or action at every meeting. The next meeting is May 14 at 6:30 p.m.

— Anna Waugh

A muscular man with dark hair is shown from the waist up, holding a thick red horizontal bar with both hands. He is wearing white briefs with a blue waistband that has the brand name '2(X)IST' printed on it. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The overall aesthetic is clean and athletic.

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# Out candidates aim to end drought

After having at least 1 openly LGBT council member for 14 years, Dallas hasn't had an out representative at the horseshoe for the last 6

**JOHN WRIGHT** | Senior Editor  
wright@dallasvoice.com

When Ed Oakley stepped down to run for mayor in 2007, it left the Dallas City Council without an openly LGBT member for the first time since 1993.

Oakley lost to Tom Leppert in a runoff in the mayor's race, and gay candidate Joseph Hernandez was narrowly defeated by Dave Neumann in the race to replace Oakley on the council in District 3.

Since then, the nation's ninth-largest city has gone six years — and three election cycles — without an openly LGBT person on its 15-member governing body.

But with three openly gay candidates running in two districts this year, some observers say 2013 marks the best chance since Oakley's departure for an out candidate to return to the horseshoe.

Oakley said he thinks gay candidate Leland Burk — who faces Jennifer Staubach Gates in District 13 — has a “decent chance” of victory May 11. But he said Herschel Weisfeld, a gay candidate in District 2, faces an “uphill battle” against frontrunner Adam Medrano.

Another out candidate in District 2, Vernon Franko, is considered a longshot.

“It's always important that we have a seat at the table and we're represented,” said Oakley, who called the six-year absence of an LGBT council member “unfortunate” and compared gay representation to African-American, Hispanic or female representation.

“I cannot walk in someone else's shoes to understand that community better than a person from that community,” he said. “We represent people based on our life experiences, and that's true for every minority group.”

All of Dallas' major LGBT legislative victories — from its nondiscrimination ordinance to domestic partner benefits for city employees — were achieved with at least one openly LGBT person on the council. And without an LGBT council member, the city appears to have lost pace on equality — receiving a mediocre score of 76 on the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index last year.

Denis Dison, a spokesman for the Washington, D.C.-based Victory Fund, which backs openly LGBT candidates nationwide, said the benefit of having a seat at the table is essentially two-fold.

One, openly LGBT people make the most indefatigable champions for pro-equality legislation.



**TRIPLE THREAT** | Openly gay former Dallas City Councilman Ed Oakley said out candidate Leland Burk, left, has a ‘decent chance’ of winning in District 13. Oakley said Herschel Weisfeld, right, has “an uphill battle” in District 2. Vernon Franko, center, is considered a longshot.

For example, Dison said states with the highest number of openly LGBT legislators are the ones who've passed marriage equality.

He pointed to the case of Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, who became the first Republican senator to back marriage equality after his son came out as gay.

“That dynamic plays out not just with parents and their kids, but with colleagues and the people they sit next to on a City Council,” Dison said.

The other principle benefit of having openly LGBT elected officials is that they serve as role models, Dison said.

“Having an elected official helping to run your city or your town who is openly LGBT sends an incredible message to kids who are hoping to be able to live an authentic life and succeed,” Dison said.

Openly gay former Dallas City Councilman Chris Luna said ideally, young LGBT people in Dallas would never be without such a role model.

“In a perfect world, we would have an LGBT councilperson at all times, and I am a big advocate that while allies do a great job, nothing can replace having a seat at the table and being able to speak firsthand about your experience and background and history,” Luna said.

Luna, who is “cautiously optimistic” Burk will win, said politics is cyclical so he doesn't view the six-year absence of an out councilmember as a “calamity.” But Luna said the drought does raise questions about whether City Hall, or perhaps the mayor's office, should have a permanent LGBT liaison staff position.

“I think that takes the pressure off during the times when we don't have an LGBT councilperson that the community can go to,” Luna said. “Maybe this [Councilwoman Delia Jasso's LGBT] Task

## Getting your vote out

Early voting in the May 11 Municipal Election begins Monday, April 29, and runs through Tuesday, May 7. For a full list of early voting dates, times and locations, visit [DallasCountyVotes.org](http://DallasCountyVotes.org).

Force helps fulfill that role, but that person could be staff liaison to the Task Force.”

Luna also said there's a possibility Medrano, who has refused to answer questions about his sexual orientation, will come out as gay if he is elected.

Luna said for political reasons, he did not run as openly gay in his first campaign for council 22 years ago.

Luna met with LGBT leaders, who said it was OK for him not to run as openly gay as long as he didn't deny it.

Luna would eventually come out during his second term after Craig McDaniel became the first openly gay person elected to the council in 1993.

“From personal experience, once you are elected, it's somewhat freeing,” Luna said. “If people were going to hold it against you, they can't. At that point, you've got two years to prove yourself.”

McDaniel said he believes having an openly LGBT person on the council is “less important” than it once was, because there's no longer a threat of anti-LGBT legislation. But McDaniel said a win for Burk in conservative District 13, which covers all of Preston Hollow, would make “interesting bookends to the 20-year era started when I got elected.”

When McDaniel represented District 14, the council member from District 13 was Donna

Blumer, who was then president of the anti-gay Eagle Forum.

“It would be interesting to have an openly gay person elected there, to replace a legacy of people who've usually been identified as our main enemy,” McDaniel said.

In District 2, Weisfeld has made an issue of the fact that Medrano refuses to answer questions about his sexual orientation, declaring at a recent candidate forum: “I don't lie, I don't hide. I answer the question and I say I am proudly a gay American.”

Weisfeld said he's not running because he's gay and added that the lack of an openly LGBT person on the council is “one small piece of the value of my candidacy.” But he vowed that if elected, he would be the champion the LGBT community has been missing at the horseshoe, including working to dramatically improve the city's score on the Municipal Equality Index; standing up to the board of Dallas Area Rapid Transit, which has repeatedly delayed offering domestic partner benefits; and confronting Mayor Mike Rawlings about his refusal to sign a pledge in support of marriage equality, which Weisfeld called “reprehensible.”

“An out advocate is a much stronger advocate for our community than our closest ally,” Weisfeld said. “I believe that one who can speak honestly and truthfully with openness and integrity is going to be able to carry a stronger message.”

Burk didn't return a phone call seeking comment for this story.

Franko agreed with Oakley, Luna and Weisfeld that it's important to have an openly LGBT person on the council.

“At least we do have three members of the community running,” Franko said. “I think that's encouraging.” ■



Philip Kingston and Angela Hunt

**“Philip Kingston is the only candidate I trust to represent our interests and continue my fight for good governance and accountability at City Hall.”**

**- Angela Hunt**

“I am supporting Philip Kingston because he is an advocate for all in the City of Dallas. Philip is the first candidate running for an elected position in the city to have specifically asked me about the needs and concerns of the Trans community in terms of city services and municipal representation. He is likely one of only a few candidates to have ever reached out to the Trans community for input during a campaign. This tells me that Philip's representation in District 14 and of the city as a whole will be responsive not only to his base demographic, but to all persons who deserve a fair and equal voice in our municipal government.”

**Nell Gaither**

**President, Trans Pride Initiative**



Supporters Steve Atkinson and Pam Gerber

“With six other good options, Philip Kingston is a candidate in a league of his own. I have been a resident of District 14 for 13 years and believe that his knowledge of the issues are unparalleled. He cares about what is important to our community, our district and our city, and will make sure to build our case and the consensus to get things done.”

**-Pam Gerber**

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**Honorable Angela Hunt**

**Honorable John Loza**

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**Nell Gaither**

**Michael Lo Vuolo**

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## DGLA backs Jasso, Medrano, Rogers

The Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance's PAC issued its endorsements this week after candidates submitted written questionnaires, had private and confidential interviews, and participated in a public forum.

Endorsements were made in seven races.

Two incumbents are vying for District 1. Both Scott Griggs and Delia Jasso were endorsed by DGLA in previous races in different districts. Redistricting put both in the same district and the organization endorsed Jasso because of her "unwavering and aggressive advocacy for issues important to the LGBT community."

"Delia's assertive perseverance in making LGBT issues a top priority in her service at Dallas City Hall has yielded an LGBT Task Force that gets measurable things done for our community, including a direct ongoing working relationship with City Manager Mary Suhm and others empowered to make needed change," DGLA-PAC wrote in its endorsement.

The PAC chose Adam Medrano in District 2.

"Adam's experience on the school board has given him special knowledge of LGBT-specific issues, particularly as it relates to LGBT youth," DGLA-PAC wrote. "He is a proven advocate for our community and has the sort of coalition-building skills required to make him an effective councilmember."

Claudia Meyer is the choice for District 3 to replace incumbent Vonciel Jones Hill, who is hostile

to the LGBT community. Hill, who was redistricted into District 3, did not seek the endorsement.

"Claudia is a 20-year resident of District 3 and has long been involved in citizen advocacy work benefiting the district and the city as a whole," the PAC wrote. "As a medical social worker and former director of an assisted living facility, Claudia is strongly positioned to advocate for our aging LGBT community."

DGLA-PAC endorsed two unopposed candidates — Sheffie Kadane, Jr. in District 9 and Jerry Allen in District 10 — because, the group wrote, both have become reliable allies.

In District 13, DGLA-PAC endorsed openly gay candidate Leland Burk.

Opponent Jennifer Gates did not seek the endorsement.

In addition to his business experience, DGLA noted, "Leland is a supporter of LGBT equality and has demonstrated that he will work with the community on the council."

Jim Rogers is the PAC's choice in District 14.

Citing his experience as a CPA and an attorney and a strong record of volunteer service, the PAC added, "Jim came to the DGLA-PAC endorsement process with an articulate grasp and depth of knowledge on LGBT issues we had specifically identified, and offered creative ideas on some we had not."

— David Taffet

## Death

Donald Wayne Cottingame, 75, passed away at his home in Dallas on Monday, April 22, 2013.

Don received his undergraduate degree from Texas Christian University in 1960 and his master's degree from Harvard Business School in 1964.

He was the founder of the Cottingame Co., which provided business consulting services for more than 40 years.

He was a member of the Cathedral of Hope, serving as an usher and active in the Legacy

Group.

He is predeceased by his father, mother, and daughter, Katherine Cottingame.

He is survived by his partner, Austin Fortenberry of Dallas; his sons Kelly Cottingame, Dallas; John Cottingame, Dallas and Chip Cottingame, Little Rock, Ark.

Memorials may be made to any group supporting Alzheimer's research.

A memorial will be held Saturday, April 27, at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.




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# Jasso, Griggs both allies but differ on LGBT issues

In addition to fracking and the Trinity toll road, District 1 hopefuls disagree about transgender health benefits, need for human rights commission

JOHN WRIGHT | Senior Editor  
editor@dallasvoice.com

No matter who wins the District 1 Dallas City Council race on May 11, the LGBT community will lose a straight ally at the horseshoe.

Delia Jasso, 58, a two-term incumbent who currently represents District 1, launched the city's LGBT Task Force shortly after she first took office in 2009.

Scott Griggs, 38, a one-term incumbent who currently represents District 3, is the author of a proposed City Council resolution backing marriage equality and statewide LGBT employment protections.

Jasso and Griggs were placed in the same North Oak Cliff district — the new District 1 — when council maps were redrawn in 2011.

But while Jasso and Griggs are both generally supportive of the community, they disagree about how the city should address key LGBT issues.

For example, Griggs said he supports establishing a standing human relations commission to address complaints filed under the city's LGBT nondiscrimination ordinance. The city has never prosecuted a complaint under the ordinance despite more than 60 that have been filed since it was enacted in 2002.

But Jasso said her LGBT Task Force, made up of citizens and city officials, has been reviewing the complaints and a commission is not needed.

Griggs also said he supports offering comprehensive transgender health benefits, including coverage for gender reassignment surgery, to city employees.

"We should not discriminate against transgender people by denying them medically necessary healthcare," Griggs wrote on Dallas Voice's candidate questionnaire.

But Jasso said although the city shouldn't discriminate, more education is needed on trans healthcare, and members of her LGBT task force have not reached a consensus about whether the city should cover gender reassignment surgery.

"I think we're all wanting more information," Jasso said. "The Task Force is wanting more information."

Asked whether she would support comprehensive trans health benefits if the Task Force endorses them, Jasso said: "That's a what-if. I don't answer what-ifs. We've just got to figure out where the Task Force is on it."

Griggs and Jasso also disagree about hot-but-ton non-LGBT issues, including the Trinity River



Delia Jasso



Scott Griggs

toll road and gas drilling.

Griggs said he opposes construction of the toll road between the levees, because it would be too expensive and lack connections to Interstates 30 and 35.

"Completing Project Pegasus by improving the I-30 Canyon and I-35 Lower Stemmons Corridor will move more cars, relieve more congestion, and cost less than the Trinity Tollroad," Griggs said.

Jasso said she supports construction of the toll road between the levees because it represents the will of the voters, who've signed off on the project twice.

"If they don't agree with it," Jasso said of toll road opponents, "they can begin another campaign like the last one we had, but I am very much for what the citizens wanted."

Griggs also opposes gas drilling, and he has joined Councilwoman Angela Hunt in calling for an up-or-down council vote on permits for Trinity East.

Jasso declined to take a position on the permits, citing a possible lawsuit by the company.

"Now it becomes a legal issue, and if I say I'm for or against it ... I could be liable for making Trinity East lose money," Jasso said.

Jasso said her biggest accomplishment on the council has been "working with the neighbors and the merchants to make Bishop Arts a go-to venue." She said the biggest issue facing District 1 going forward will be bridging the gap between areas like Kessler Park and Stevens Park to the north, and lower-income areas to the south. She wants to focus on improving schools to attract more residents, including building partnerships between schools and neighborhoods.

Griggs said his biggest accomplishment was passage of an ordinance he authored regulating the city's more than 200 group homes for the mentally ill, disabled and elderly — many of which are in Oak Cliff. He said the biggest challenge facing District 1 is managing growth while maintaining Oak Cliff's authenticity and character. He advocates form-based zoning that allows developers to determine uses for buildings while the city focuses on amenities like bike lanes, plazas, parks and trails.

"We're responsible for everything between the buildings. We're responsible for creating life between the buildings and a place where people

■ DISTRICT 1, Page 11

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## ■ election2013

# District 2 race pits out candidates against allies

Candidates for heavily LGBT seat all oppose gas drilling, but views differ on transgender healthcare, Trinity River toll road and other issues

ANNA WAUGH | News Editor  
[waugh@dallasvoice.com](mailto:waugh@dallasvoice.com)



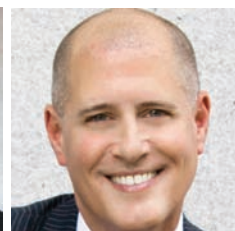
Ricky Gonzales



Vernon Franko



Adam Medrano



Herschel Weisfeld

The new District 2 Dallas city council member will be either be an openly gay representative or an LGBT ally.

The race in the heavily LGBT district has drawn two gay candidates, as well as one who won't discuss his sexual orientation and a community activist for the seat being vacated by term-limited Mayor Pro Tem Pauline Medrano, who has been a staunch LGBT ally during her time in office.

District 2 encompasses most of Oak Lawn and parts of downtown and East Dallas. Candidates differ in experience, approaches to LGBT issues at City Hall and non-LGBT issues.

Openly gay real estate developer Herschel Weisfeld is in favor of the city offering comprehensive transgender healthcare.

"I think we're at a point in time where everyone needs to be included," he said.

He is also more outspoken on LGBT initiatives, including the need for a Human Rights Commission, the addition of a domestic partner registry, increased HIV/AIDS funding, and the creation of LGBT senior and youth programs.

"I've always been engaged in a very open way with my time and with my talent," Weisfeld said. "I will be very comfortable being [the LGBT community's] voice and being their ear at City Council."

DISD Trustee Adam Medrano, Pauline Medrano's nephew, didn't return calls seeking a comment for this story.

But in response to a Dallas Voice questionnaire, Medrano said he supports trans healthcare but would want to know more about the costs. He also suggested the city should take a more active role in LGBT Pride events, adding that he's ridden in the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade the past six years as a DISD representative.

Medrano, 37, has served on the DISD school board since 2006 and was board president twice.

He refused to discuss his sexual orientation with Dallas Voice in March, but he was arrested in connection to homosexual conduct in a public restroom inside NorthPark Center in 2000.

Weisfeld, 52, has served on several boards and commissions over the years, dealing with historical prevention, business development, crime prevention and homelessness.

As an adaptive reuse developer, he said he has

the business sense to bring about citizen-led change in the district's diverse neighborhoods.

On hot-button issues, Weisfeld opposes gas drilling in urban areas and on parkland. He supports the Trinity River project's flood control and recreational facilities, but questions whether a proposed high-speed toll road between the levees is the most effective plan, adding that he doesn't have an alternative.

Medrano addressed his opposition to gas drilling during a Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance candidate forum recently, saying he was completely against drilling in urban areas.

Medrano and Weisfeld are the frontrunners in the race. Medrano has raised more than \$15,000 for his campaign. He is endorsed by Stonewall Democrats of Dallas and the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance.

Weisfeld's contributions totaled \$25,000.

Insurance agent Vernon Franko is also openly gay and has not raised any money because he's funding his own campaign. Franko supports covering trans healthcare but would want the city to research the benefits further. He also wants to look into allowing same-sex partners to receive investment and retirement benefits in addition to domestic partner benefits already offered by the city.

Franko, 48, is against gas drilling and the Trinity River toll road. His solution for the toll road is to build it outside the levees or underground.

As the other gay candidate in the race, Franko said he could speak openly about LGBT issues at City Hall.

"I think I would be more sensitive than other council members because of my experience in the community," he said.

Community activist and general contractor Ricky Gonzales, 50, is the fourth candidate in the race and has raised a little more than \$1,000. He is

against gas drilling in the city and on parkland, but doesn't oppose the toll road in the Trinity River Project because he supports the measure to end congestion in the city.

Gonzales said he plans to be an advocate for equality and would fight for the LGBT police and fire liaisons, as well as the city's domestic partner benefits for city employees.

Luke Crosland, ilume developer, is supporting Weisfeld because he wants a council member who backs neighborhood improvements. He said Councilwoman Angela Hunt, not Pauline Medrano, pushed for the \$1.2 million bond package that will bring improvement to the Cedar Springs strip.

He said he hasn't heard Medrano's stances on the issues, but is supporting Weisfeld because he's "an outstanding person" willing to address economic issues.

Gay activist Jesus Chairez said Medrano and his family "has a history of supporting our community." He cited Medrano's resignation from his city job in the parks department to run for office as commitment to service, as well as his support for the DISD LGBT-inclusive anti-bullying policy, which passed unanimously.

"He has a track record of public service," he said. "He's always voted on our side." ■

■ DISTRICT 1, From Page 9

want to be," Griggs said.

Griggs has outpaced Jasso in fundraising, bringing in \$52,162 to her \$39,200. Both have their share of high-profile LGBT supporters. Jasso is endorsed by Stonewall Democrats and the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance. Her individual backers include gay former Dallas City Councilmen Craig Holcomb, Chris Luna, Ed Oakley and Craig McDaniel.

"He's more concerned about fracking and drilling and that than he is the things that are really important in North Oak Cliff," Oakley said of Griggs, whom he endorsed for his old seat two years ago. "She [Jasso] formed the GLBT Task Force when she went on the council and took that mantle on and helped us be represented at City Hall. She's working on things that are important to the quality of life of the citizens of Oak Cliff, and Scott's forgotten why he was elected."

Griggs' LGBT supporters include attorney Chad West, longtime bar and club proprietor Kathy Jack, real estate agent Susan Melnick and Democratic party activist Jeff Strater.

"Scott is one of the only city council members (in addition to Angela Hunt) who is not currently supported heavily by the Citizens Council, which has nothing but North Dallas interests in mind in their exploitation of South Dallas," West said in an email. "Also, Scott has the city as a whole in mind in every decision he makes. He doesn't just look at what's good for District 1, although he certainly does that, but he also looks at what is good for the city of Dallas as a whole. Scott has been the driving force behind the expansion of the walking-running trails in Dallas and understands the issues affecting the LGBT community, and advocates for us." ■

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# Burk has faced gay-baiting — but not from Gates

Out businessman wasn't well known in LGBT community before he launched bid to represent 1 of city's most conservative districts

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

In an area where LGBT issues are rarely at the forefront, the candidacy of Leland Burk has placed the gay community squarely into the District 13 race.

Burk, 50, who is openly gay, touts his business experience as a real estate and oil and gas investor, founder of a bank and volunteer experience on boards such as UT Southwestern's Medical Foundation. Most of the anti-gay campaigning in the race has come from Rich Sheridan, who is not considered a serious candidate.

"I do not object to Burk being gay and a candidate, I object to Burks candidacy as being part of Dallas' GAY AGENDA," Sheridan wrote in an email to media and elected officials.

Jennifer Staubach Gates, 46, Burk's main opponent in the race, has made her stance on the issue

clear. "Sexual orientation is not an issue in this race," Gates said.

In April, Gates spoke to the LGBT group Metroplex Republicans and said it was important to address anti-gay bigotry.

"I thought she did fine," said Rob Schlein, president of Metroplex Republicans.

Gates was asked about an incident at a tea party campaign event, in which copies of a Dallas Voice article about Burk were placed at every seat. Gates told the group she was as offended by that as they were.

Mark Shekter has worked with Burk on the Oak Lawn Committee, which deals with zoning issues.

"He's professional, intelligent, open-minded and knowledgeable," Shekter said. "He's concerned with the whole city."

Attorney Bob Stoller said he thinks Burk will pull the council toward a focus on serious issues. Stoller said he had retired from participating in political campaigns.

"Leland gave me a reason to return," he said. The District 13 race has become the most expensive council race in Dallas with the top two candidates each raising more than twice as much



Leland Burk



Jennifer Staubach Gates

as the next highest fundraiser in the city.

The district includes Preston Hollow, one of the wealthiest areas of the city, but also Five Points, one of the poorest and most crime-ridden. With redistricting, the district includes a small neighborhood in Oak Lawn near Love Field.

Although many former and current gay elected officials have endorsed Burk, none said they knew him before he announced his candidacy. Neither did leaders of gay organizations.

But Burk is openly gay and introduces his partner, Thomas Feulmer, an artist and director of educational programming at The Rachofsky House, when he attends campaign events. But he hasn't been active in the LGBT community.

Among the issues of concern throughout the district are roads. Despite being one of the wealth-

iest neighborhoods, Preston Hollow has no curbs and many streets have ditches rather than storm sewers.

Both Gates and Burk generally oppose fracking.

"I oppose fracking anywhere in the city of Dallas," Burk said. "Signing a lease doesn't give a company the right to drill."

He said as an oil and gas investor himself, there can be big rewards, but no guarantees.

Gates said the city needs to adopt stricter ordinances. She pointed to regulations proposed by former City Councilwoman Lois Finkelman.

"There are limited areas in the city that we should look at on a case-by-case basis," she said.

A big issue in the district has been putting lights on the Ursuline Academy field. Immediate neighbors are concerned with late night traffic and lights in their homes.

Margolin asked Burk to remain neutral on the issue as she decides what's best for the district.

Gates said there's been some false information circulated about the issue.

"I support the girls having a field," Gates said.

The fourth candidate in the race is 18-year-old Jacob King, who described himself as "a nerdy kid doing something cool." ■

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— former City Council Member Veletta Lill,  
Hollywood/Santa Monica

# 7 vie for seat vacated by staunch LGBT ally Hunt

Runoff likely in District 14, where frontrunners Abtahi, Kingston and Rogers have all expressed strong support for the LGBT community

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

With a crowded field of seven candidates in the District 14 race, three have emerged as frontrunners, but a runoff is expected.

All of the candidates were contacted twice, but only four returned questionnaires to Dallas Voice. Three of those — Bobby Abtahi, Philip Kingston and Jim Rogers — also sought the endorsements of both Stonewall Democrats and the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance.

Judy Liimatainen also returned a Dallas Voice questionnaire. David Blewett, Kevin Curley and Chuck Kobdich did not, although Curley sought DGLA's nod.

Stonewall Democrats Political Chair Jeff Strater said he was disturbed that four candidates for the seat did not seek the Stonewall endorsement.

"The last time there was an open seat, all participated," he said.

Of the three remaining candidates, Strater supports Abtahi.

"I know his experience on the city planning and zoning commission, and he did a great job," Strater said.

Abtahi, 31, earned a law degree from University of Texas and is a community prosecutor who worked with police, fire and neighborhood groups on code and zoning cases. He's a member of Preservation Dallas, Dallas Historical Society, Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program, the Mayor's Southern Dallas Task Force and Alpha Kappa Psi Alumni Association and is a board member of Friends of Fair Park.

"He contacted me and others early on to make sure what he knew about the LGBT community was correct and to learn more about us," Strater said.

He called Abtahi a coalition builder and authentic. Abtahi received the Stonewall endorsement.

Rogers, 65, is also an attorney but said his degree as an accountant makes him more valuable to the City Council. He's a member of the Love Field Citizens Action Committee and has served on the Dallas Urban Rehabilitation Standards Board and the Dallas Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee.

Gay former Plan Commissioner Neil Emmons said he's worked with Rogers on neighborhood issues for 15 years and called him the candidate with depth.

"He's the most truthful, trustworthy and trans-



Bobby Abtahi



Philip Kingston



Jim Rogers

parent person I know," Emmons said. "He'll be one of the few elected officials who will remain the same person after the election as before Election Day."

Emmons believes Rogers, who has a 30-year history of voting Democratic, deserved the Stonewall endorsement.

He described Rogers' grasp of figures in talking about a \$1 billion shortfall in funding the Trinity Toll Road project.

"He has numbers at his fingertips," Emmons said. "So smart."

Rogers received DGLA's endorsement.

Kingston, 40, is a litigation attorney who has received the Outstanding Clinic Attorney Award three times from the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program.

In his East Dallas neighborhood, he's known for creating the Belmont Addition Conservation District. He's been a member of the Greater Dallas Planning Council and has served on ForwardDallas!, a task force devoted to promoting comprehensive planning across Dallas.

Trans activist Nell Gaither endorsed Kingston after he approached her at a Stonewall meeting. She said he asked to meet with her about her work on transgender insurance coverage for city employees.

"He's the first candidate who sought someone out to find out about trans issues and get their input," she said.

She said they spoke for three hours and was impressed by his interest in the issue.

Kingston is backed by incumbent Angela Hunt as well as former District 2 Councilman John Loza. Former state Reps. Harryette Ehrhardt and John Bryant support Rogers. Abtahi has the backing of former Council members Craig McDaniel, Craig Holcomb, Chris Luna, Ed Oakley and Veletta Lill, as well as District Clerk Gary Fitzsimmons. Outside of the District 13 race, Abtahi was the biggest fundraiser citywide with \$159,000 before the April filing deadline. Curley had \$68,000 but almost of that he lent to the campaign himself. Kingston was next with \$52,000, and Rogers brought in \$27,500.



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# CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES' RESPONSES TO DALLAS VOICE QUESTIONNAIRE

	 <b>Delia JASSO</b> (District 1)	 <b>Scott GRIGGS</b> (District 1)	 <b>Vernon FRANKO</b> (District 2)	 <b>Rick GONZALES</b> (District 2)	 <b>Adam MEDRANO</b> (District 2)
If elected, are you willing to attend major LGBT events such as the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade and the Black Tie Dinner?	Yes, I have attended the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade every year since 2008. Since 2009, I have been part of the City of Dallas Float, throwing beads, candy and thoroughly having a great time.	Yes, I will continue to attend and support major LGBT events.	Of course I would ride in the parade, sounds like fun to me. I'm not too big on black tie dinners, though. Usually if I hear Black Tie Dinner, I think of expensive plates and skimpy portions in the company of a bunch of stuffed shirt big whigs; which isn't exactly my style, but I would certainly want to be at any after party with the real people.	Yes. In fact, after a week of volunteering construction services in Slidell, La., we arrived back in Dallas the night before the parade. I had already registered to participate but did not have time to prepare a float so we drove my truck representing Hurricane Katrina victims.	Yes, I have been the only DISD School Board Member to participate in the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade for the last six years.
Would you make an effort to appoint openly LGBT people to city boards and commissions?	I have appointed openly gay people to the Community Development Commission, the Ethics Advisory Commission, the reinvestment zone 15, the LGBT Task Force and my council assistant as well.	Yes, I will continue to appoint openly LGBT people to city boards and commissions. In the past, more than 1/3 of my appointments have been openly LGBT people.	Yes. We all benefit from a diversity of opinions and perspectives. In fact, I've already got a few people in our Dallas LGBT community in mind for board appointments.	I'm not sure I understand the basis of this question unless the goal is to incite discrimination. It's my thought that sexual preference is not a qualification for city boards or commissions, I just believe opportunity applies to anyone that is qualified.	Yes, I will select board members that reflect the diversity of my district.
If they were challenged in court or elsewhere, would you vote to defend and uphold the city's domestic partner health benefits program and its bans on anti-LGBT discrimination?	Yes, definitely.	Yes, I would vote to aggressively defend and uphold the city's domestic partner health benefits program.	Yes, most vigorously. We have fought too long and too hard to obtain these ordinances. Not to defend what we have so far achieved would be a step backwards on the road to equality.	Yes, I would challenge anyone who would deprive citizens or partners of their health benefits and any kind of discrimination is unacceptable.	Yes, I would expect the city attorney's office to vigorously defend both.
Are you committed to maintaining the Dallas Police Department's and Dallas Fire-Rescue's LGBT liaison positions?	Yes, definitely.	Yes, I am committed to maintaining the Dallas Police Department's and Dallas Fire-Rescue's LGBT liaison positions.	Yes. The liaisons serve a very important role.	I am committed to being a responsible representative for all of District 2 and the City of Dallas. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships between the citizens and the city is essential to quality of life.	Yes.
A proposed resolution would express the council's support for marriage equality and statewide LGBT employment protections. Would you vote in favor of these resolutions?	Yes, definitely.	Yes, absolutely. Our elected leaders should speak out and publicly push for change as I am committed to do.	Yes, I would vote in favor of marriage equality resolutions and LGBT employment protections and I support them on every level.	I am unfamiliar with these resolutions and unaware of how the legislation is being drafted so I cannot comment on Councilman Griggs' actions. But make no mistake: I'll be the first in the fight against anyone being mistreated.	Yes.
Do you support amending the city's health plan for employees to cover gender reassignment surgery?	We should not discriminate against anyone. As we've discussed at the LGBT Task Force, there are many of us including LGBT folks who do not know enough about the issue. The Task Force is planning an education and awareness meeting/summit with Nell Gaither to help with education and awareness.	Yes, I support amending the city's health plan for employees to cover gender reassignment surgery. We should not discriminate against transgender people by denying them medically necessary health care.	I do and have always supported equal health care coverage for same-sex partners.	No. The citizens of Dallas are not responsible for sex-change operations.	Yes, I would want to know more about the benefits and costs involved.
Would you support the establishment of a city Human Rights Commission to, among other things, oversee complaints filed under the city's nondiscrimination ordinance?	Delia Jasso has led the LGBT task force for the City of Dallas since 2009. One of our tasks is to monitor the complaints as they arise and we assessed the complaints since 2005. There was not a need for another commission to do this. The staff member who oversees these complaints attends the LGBT Task Force meetings.	Yes, I would support the establishment of a city Human Rights Commission to oversee complaints filed under the city's nondiscrimination ordinance.	Yes.	Based on past articles it took 10 years to top 40 complaints since the ordinance was adopted in May of 2002 and those types of numbers do not warrant a commission.	Yes.
Would you support an ordinance requiring city contractors with contracts over a certain dollar amount to offer health benefits to the same-sex partners of employees?	I would support this type of ordinance if it is within our ethics rules.	Yes, I support an ordinance requiring city contractors with contracts over a certain dollar amount offer benefits to the same-sex partners of employees.	Yes, I would support such a measure but we need to rethink the trigger point. In my experience with contractors in the past, I realize that most contractors have no employees at all, they have sub-contractors. Such an ordinance could be moot on arrival if it's not better thought out.	No. I don't believe city government has the right to dictate how private enterprise chooses to address domestic partner issues.	Yes.
Are you committed to maintaining and/or increasing the city's current funding support for HIV/AIDS-related programs and services?	Yes.	Yes, I am committed to maintaining the city's current funding support for HIV/AIDS-related programs and, as our budget permits, increase funding.	Yes. I believe we need to double the current funding. Those suffering with HIV/AIDS deserve our attention, our compassion and our help in dealing with what can still be a devastating diagnosis.	A fortunate city like Dallas should utilize all the assets available to ensure the future for everyone, and with the continuous growth of the Medical District located here in District 2, I look forward to innovation that will benefit anyone in the country needing assistance.	Yes, I would like to see that funding increase as the budget permits.
Are there other things you believe the city can do to be more supportive and inclusive of its LGBT citizens? If so, list them here.	Continue the LGBT Task Force; support LGBT liaison; support the group that is working to increase the MEI score (Dallas received a 76 without including many positive LGBT items); education and awareness on transgender health benefits; continue to strengthen the June Pride Month at Dallas City Hall that I initiated in 2012.	We should increase transparency and public involvement in the LGBT Task Force by opening meetings to the public and press.	Yes. There are many more things that can and should be done in furtherance of tolerance and inclusion of our LGBT community. If elected, I would be open to community suggestions and I would be supportive of reasonable efforts and ideas to this end.	It's my thought that all citizens of Dallas deserve responsible representation and a government that is accountable. When I'm elected, I will remind my colleagues that it is an honor and privilege to be a civil servant and that we are going to work together in an ethical manner to ensure that the quality of life we provide is second to none.	The city should actively support LGBT Pride Month activities and provide more support to its own LGBT employees. The City Council should make its own "It Gets Better" video and look into ways to more actively support LGBT youth.





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**Adam Medrano is proud to be endorsed by:**

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# CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES' RESPONSES TO DALLAS VOICE QUESTIONNAIRE

	 <b>Herschel WEISFELD</b> (District 2)	 <b>Claudia MEYER</b> (District 3)	 <b>Ricky CALLAHAN</b> (District 5)	 <b>Monica ALONZO</b> (District 6)	 <b>Leland BURK</b> (District 13)
If elected, are you willing to attend major LGBT events such as the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade and the Black Tie Dinner?	Yes, absolutely. But know that these plus many, many more activities are regular community events that I have supported and participated in proudly my entire life and will continue.	Yes, I would be willing to attend the gay Pride parade and other events that support the LGBT community.	Yes, if invited and schedule permitting.	Yes. I plan on continuing my attendance to major LGBT events.	Yes.
Would you make an effort to appoint openly LGBT people to city boards and commissions?	Yes, I would recruit appointees from across the city and from all demographic groups so as to be representative of the diversity of the district, which would certainly include members of the LGBT community.	Yes, I would make an effort to appoint openly LGBT people to city boards and commissions. I would appoint GLBT persons in my district, as well as seek their input on issues that can and do impact us all as citizens.	I will appoint the most qualified people, regardless of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital or socioeconomic status.	I already do make the effort. I shall continue to appoint openly LGBT members who are residents of Dallas as some of my appointees to our city's boards and commissions.	I will base all my appointment decisions upon the qualifications of the individual regardless of race, gender or orientation.
If they were challenged in court or elsewhere, would you vote to defend and uphold the city's domestic partner health benefits program and its bans on anti-LGBT discrimination?	Yes. I would vote to uphold the existing ordinances and business practices that protect the city's LGBT employees and citizens as well as the health care benefits. I would see this as a basic responsibility as a member of the LGBT community and an elected official for the City of Dallas.	Yes, the city has made great strides in support of the LGBT community and these actions need to be upheld.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Are you committed to maintaining the Dallas Police Department's and Dallas Fire-Rescue's LGBT liaison positions?	Yes. From my personal experience and from individual conversations with the members of the Dallas Police Department, the officers have clearly expressed to me that these positions are very helpful in understanding the unique public safety concerns facing the LGBT community.	Yes, a liaison is a necessary part of communication and coordination.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes, I think it is important to continue direct lines of communication between the DPD/FD and the LGBT community.
A proposed resolution would express the council's support for marriage equality and statewide LGBT employment protections. Would you vote in favor of these resolutions?	Yes. This would be a strong referendum statement from the Council and the City of Dallas that equality should be granted to all the citizens of our city. This is also in line with the progressive corporate climate of many in making Dallas a safe and equal opportunity work environment.	Yes.	I do not support gay marriage, but do support the concept of gay unions, with benefits to gay partners and equal protection under the law.	Yes.	While I personally support both marriage equality and bans on any type of discrimination, I believe the Dallas City Council needs to concentrate its' time and energy on governing and moving our city forward.
Do you support amending the city's health plan for employees to cover gender reassignment surgery?	Yes, if we expect to make the City of Dallas a progressive, socially conscious and competitive workplace, gender reassignment health care is a major statement and as the ninth-largest city in America we would be following other cities such as Portland and San Francisco.	Knowing what the fiscal responsibilities would be, need to be determined before any new program of any kind is proposed.	No. I believe the procedure to be elective surgery. I would also not be in favor of tummy tucks, face lifts or breast augmentation surgery.	Yes.	I have followed the conversations with CM Mary Suhm and the LGBT community closely on this issue. I honestly believe we won't see this covered until the Affordable Health-care Act is fully enacted in 2014.
Would you support the establishment of a city Human Rights Commission to, among other things, oversee complaints filed under the city's nondiscrimination ordinance?	Yes. I would support a Human Rights Commission with the understanding that human rights goes well beyond the LGBT community. I would hold town hall meetings and have discussions in order to determine the specific needs, authority and scope of the commission.	Yes, I would support a commission to oversee complaints filed under the city's nondiscrimination ordinance.	If there is not a current vehicle in place to oversee complaints, then I would be open-minded to creating one as long as it was fair and inclusive for all persons.	Yes.	I feel the current review process is working without adding a new oversight commission. I will not tolerate discrimination of any kind as a councilmember.
Would you support an ordinance requiring city contractors with contracts over a certain dollar amount to offer health benefits to the same-sex partners of employees?	Yes. The City of Dallas should require its contractors to share the same values in regards to employment equality and have business practices in line with those beliefs.	Yes, and as with all proposed programs, the fiscal responsibility needs to be determined for all partners of employees.	No. It would be intrusive, unfair and discriminatory to place restrictions on private businesses and would most likely be struck down constitutionally.	I would welcome the opportunity for further discussion concerning this particular question.	I would like to learn more about this issue and what the implications would be on purchasing decisions from city staff.
Are you committed to maintaining and/or increasing the city's current funding support for HIV/AIDS-related programs and services?	Yes. I would be focused on making sure that funding in this critical healthcare area is maintained and that further funding is applied where needs are clearly substantiated.	The programs and services related to HIV/AIDS has been woefully inadequate and in need of increased support.	Absolutely. This is an ongoing health concern for all citizens and we must be vigilant to support it.	Yes.	Most of these funds come through community block grants from the U.S. government. I will work with city staff and Dallas County health officials to insure we are doing everything possible in getting our share of federal funding.
Are there other things you believe the city can do to be more supportive and inclusive of its LGBT citizens? If so, list them here.	Consider the LGBT aging population in regards to housing, healthcare and other issues, evaluate establishing a Domestic Partnership Registry, publicize the existing sensitivity training we are using with the public safety employees and offer it publicly to other areas of the North Texas region governments.	The GLBT community would be an equal and critical partner in my approach to how City Hall should and must move forward during my term in office.	All citizens should be treated fairly, equal access and opportunity regardless of their age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital or socioeconomic status.	We need to educate about Dallas' nondiscrimination ordinance. We must invite others to continue participating with us in informing and educating. As a Dallas City Council member, I have an open door policy. I would welcome the opportunity for dialogue and being kept informed.	One of the premier strengths of Dallas is its diversity. I believe an inclusive society benefits us all and I will carry that message as a member of the Dallas City Council. I was delighted by the release of the "It Gets Better" video.

	 Rich SHERIDAN (District 13)	 Jennifer STAUBACH (District 13)	 Bobby ABTAHI (District 14)	 Philip KINGSTON (District 14)	 Judy LIIMATAINEN (District 14)	 Jim ROGERS (District 14)
	No. What does a man wearing a G-string and doing pelvic thrusts in front of children in the gay parade have to do with gay rights? Yes. I will attend the dinner.	Yes.	Yes	Yes. I have volunteered for Legacy Counseling at the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade, and I attended Black Tie 2012. Both are definitely on the calendar for next year.	As long as I am available would have no objection.	Yes.
	Yes, as long as it's constitutional.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	I don't know if I would only seek out LGBT, but as long as they were qualified I would have no problem.	Yes. I will seek out and appoint the best qualified people available to boards and commissions, recognizing that LGBT people bring a unique and enriching perspective to the community at large.
	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. Discrimination in any form is wrong.
	Yes.	Yes, if future budgets allow.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. These positions have provided visibility to the LGBT community within the police and fire departments, which is itself significant. Moreover the liaisons have helped facilitate better community relations.
	I am on record concerning the issues of the LGBT community. I listed the LGBT concerns in my top 10 priority items for the City of Dallas delivered to the mayor and City Council on Jan. 16, 2013.	I am not inclined to take positions or spend time on issues or resolutions that do not create any new policies for our city.	I would need to see the actual resolution and legislation but agree with both positions in principle.	Yes. Though the language is not yet final, I have talked with Scott about the likely provisions, and I am confident that I will support them.	Yes.	Yes. I will always stand up for equal rights for everyone and stand against discrimination of any kind.
	No.	I would need to do more research on this issue, but generally speaking I think the city's health plan coverage for employees should be equal with major employers, as we need the ability to attract and retain good employees.	Yes.	Yes. I want all city employees to have access to medically necessary treatment. I am aware that trans activist Nell Gaither has been working with the city manager's office on these issues.	I can't answer this because I haven't any idea how much it would raise the city's premium.	Yes. The transgender community is often overlooked. I will look for ways in which existing policies designed to protect lesbians, gays and bisexual persons should be modified to include transgendered persons.
	Yes. I covered it in my call for a Diversity Commission.	I would support a volunteer commission, as long as it could be managed under an existing budget.	In principle yes, but would need to see the language establishing and empowering the commission before voting.	Yes. The city manager's office has lacked transparency in handling these complaints.	(No response provided)	Yes. Enactment of the ordinance was a critical step toward guaranteeing equality for all LGBT people. The lack of any real oversight or enforcement or monitoring of the ordinance is a problem that should be addressed.
	Yes, as long as it was done constitutionally.	No. The city has a responsibility to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars, and this type of ordinance would only limit competition on city contracts and drive up costs.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes. I would include with other benefits such as bereavement leave be provided to same-sex partners. I would require contractors to adopt LGBT non-discrimination clauses as a condition to contracting with the city.
	No. We must completely revamp all HIV/AIDS healthcare programs. We must stress sexual abstinence and natural remedies. The existing healthcare system is predatory toward both the gays and the general population.	I would be more inclined to work to raise awareness and help raise money for private / non-profit agencies that specialize in these services than to spend taxpayers money on providing these services through the city.	Yes, I am in favor of returning the funding to pre-2009 levels.	Yes.	(No response provided)	Yes. These programs are essential to the survival of persons suffering from HIV, and in hard economic times the need for public support is even greater.
	Yes. We can inform the Dallas community that the gay community fits into the much larger picture of sexual dysfunction, of which the gays represent a small part. We are in a Dallas and national moral dilemma.	I would support additional education and awareness on the issue of anti-bullying and tolerance — specifically targeting younger audiences.	I believe the city must raise our HRC MEI score and as a council member I would always reinforce: 1) homophobia is unacceptable and 2) the LGBT community, are some of the most valuable members of our city.	Violence and the fear of violence are still concerns for our LGBT citizens. I believe that DPD has shown a commitment to protecting the LGBT community, but public education on the issue could be useful in prevention.	Make sure that no one is discriminated against in any dealing with the city.	I support the appointment of an LGBT liaison within the city generally. It is important the LGBT community have a point-person to whom they can relate ideas or concerns who can then take those concerns to the city manager.

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viewpoints

# Incident altered AA's course

20 years ago, flight crew message about changing pillows, blankets due to gay activists on board led airline to rethink its LGBT practices

From 1988 to 2000, I was a radio newsman. I covered hundreds upon hundreds of stories during that time, but it was a story I covered 20 years ago this week for a Dallas station that helped to galvanize change on behalf of the LGBT community. It serves as a good example of how positive developments can come out of one bad incident.

April 27, 1993, was a Tuesday; a week after the end of the Branch Davidian standoff in Waco, and the day after the March on Washington for LGBT Equal Rights and Liberation. It was also my first day back in the newsroom after vacation.

At that time, I produced four hours of newscasts, from 3-7 p.m. The 6 o'clock hour was a special newscast, with longer stories and more in-depth reporting. I was always on the lookout for new stories to feature in the newscast.

About 4:45 that afternoon, the station received a fax that would fit that requirement — and allow me as a journalist to push for change. A quick note here: In 1993, I'd been out for three years. I'd been in a relationship with my first boyfriend. But I wasn't out to my family, nor was I out to my co-workers.

The fax was from David Taffet, now a reporter for Dallas Voice but then vice president of the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance. It included an inter-airline communication between crew for American Airlines at DFW International Airport.

The communication read, in all caps: "INBD CREW REQ COMPLETE CHANGE OF ALL PILLOWS BLANKETS ON AIRCRAFT DUE GAY RIGHTS ACTIVISTS GROUP ONBRD OUTBOUND CAPT AGREED." The inbound crew were on a flight from Washington, D.C., to DFW.

I was stunned, not only as a member of the LGBT community, but also as a journalist. How could something like this happen? What assumption was the crew making about the people on board the plane? How did they know the passengers were "gay activists"? Were people going to get away with this? Remember, this was 20 years ago.

I didn't know the answers for the first questions, but I did to the last one — the station wanted to know what happened so we could do a news story.

During the break before the 5 p.m. news, I briefly chatted with Stan, the afternoon anchor at the station, and let him know what was happening. He agreed it was a good story and should be the lead for the 6 p.m. newscast. So, I assigned our evening reporter to call the airline for their reaction, and I called David back. He had me speak with the late John Thomas, who at the time was the executive director of what is now Re-

source Center Dallas.

John was always good with comments — he was known as "the most visible gay man in Dallas" because he was often quoted by the media. Donna, the evening reporter, was having a hard time getting a statement from the airline.

She slipped me a note — "AA wants to know how we got information." I wrote her back, "Doesn't matter — story goes on at 6 with or without statement." That shook some comments loose. At 6 p.m., Donna and I went into the studio to do the story. She did the nuts-and-bolts of what happened, and I did the sidebar story with John Thomas.

Afterward, I called my contacts at the network in New York City and asked them if they were interested in this story. Donna's report ran nationally that evening at 8 p.m. The following day, newspapers and television stations caught up to the story we broke.

I don't know why, but I took that fax home that night. It turned up a couple of years ago when I was looking through some old papers. I donated it to the Center, and it's now part of the archival materials being digitized at the University of North Texas.

This incident made American Airlines look at how it handled LGBT employees. The carrier formed an LGBT employee resource group, started to market itself toward LGBT travelers and last year sent a letter to key members of the U.S. Senate advocating on behalf of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Today, American Airlines is also a strong and powerful champion of many local and national LGBT organizations, including Resource Center Dallas.

Would any of this have happened if the inter-airline communication hadn't leaked out? Perhaps. But it did, and the fact that the story went national in a pre-Facebook and YouTube era made a difference.

Rafael McDonnell is communications and advocacy manager, Resource Center Dallas. He can be reached at RMcDonnell@rcdallas.org.



Rafael McDonnell  
Contributing Columnist



## Speak Out poll

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RESULTS FROM LAST WEEK'S POLL:

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# Heel to heal

As the nation recovers from recent tragedies, out dancer Daniel Harder of the Alvin Ailey company says people find hope in the art of dance

**RICH LOPEZ** | Contributing Writer  
getrichindallas@gmail.com

The American people have been tested as disaster plagued April: Flooding weather in the Midwest, the devastating explosion in West, the bombing at the Boston Marathon. The country may have breathed a slight sigh of relief with the capture of the terrorists, but still goes the process of healing and rebuilding.

But for Daniel Harder, a principal dancer with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, these hardships give a reason more than ever to embrace the arts.

"Our biggest goal is to uplift and to be a mirror to the audience," Harder says. "Our post-Boston performances have left us feeling the energy and joy from the audience. That joy has been tangible and we become one with them, so to speak."

It is certainly a moment for Dallas audiences to rejoice. The performance at the Winspear next week marks the company's first time performing in town in 30 years.

Harder credits the influence and inspiration of the company founder with his encouragement to go out and experience life and be in tune with what's going on around them and then take that to the stage. With that, the 25-year-old dancer takes to heart the notion of reflecting the audience's emotions while at the same time reviving broken spirits and highlighting the better nature of us all.

"I don't want to sound cliché, but I agree with the mantra that art imitates life," he says. "Because we get so much joy in dancing, we're blessed to do it and perform it. And the passion and warmth from the audience just reminds me that there is something to be said for the human spirit."

None of that is lost on TITAS executive director Charles Santos, who has programmed AAADT to this season's offerings. But clearly, he is excited to be part of the company's re-appearance in Dallas after three decades.

"One of the great things about Ailey is that they are highly entertaining," Santos says. "They are crazy great dancers, and the most diverse and exciting repertoire out there. There's something for everyone at an Ailey performance. This truly is the must-see perform-

ance of our year."

As an openly gay black man, Harder has been comfortable with himself since childhood, but while training with the Ailey school, instruction and life lessons were affirming in encouragement to be true to self. In the arts, it's no surprise that being gay is hardly an issue, but with Ailey, Harder found something deeper.

"Even under our new director Robert Battle, we're pushed to be ourselves and wherever you are at that point in the journey of your life, we have to bring to the stage," Harder says. "We celebrate the African-American experience, the gay experience, the straight experience. It all is a privilege."

What's taken so long for the company to bring that mission back to Big D? As Harder puts it, Dallas has just had to find its way back into the schedule. And the resurgence of the Arts District was a big help in getting them here.

"It's all based on timing, and so every year we have our routine stops while others get filled in to different spots," he explains. "But we're excited about Dallas because we have several people from Texas and I have family and friends there. A lot of times, it just depends on if there's a theater large enough — we have a big crew."

"For me, the return of

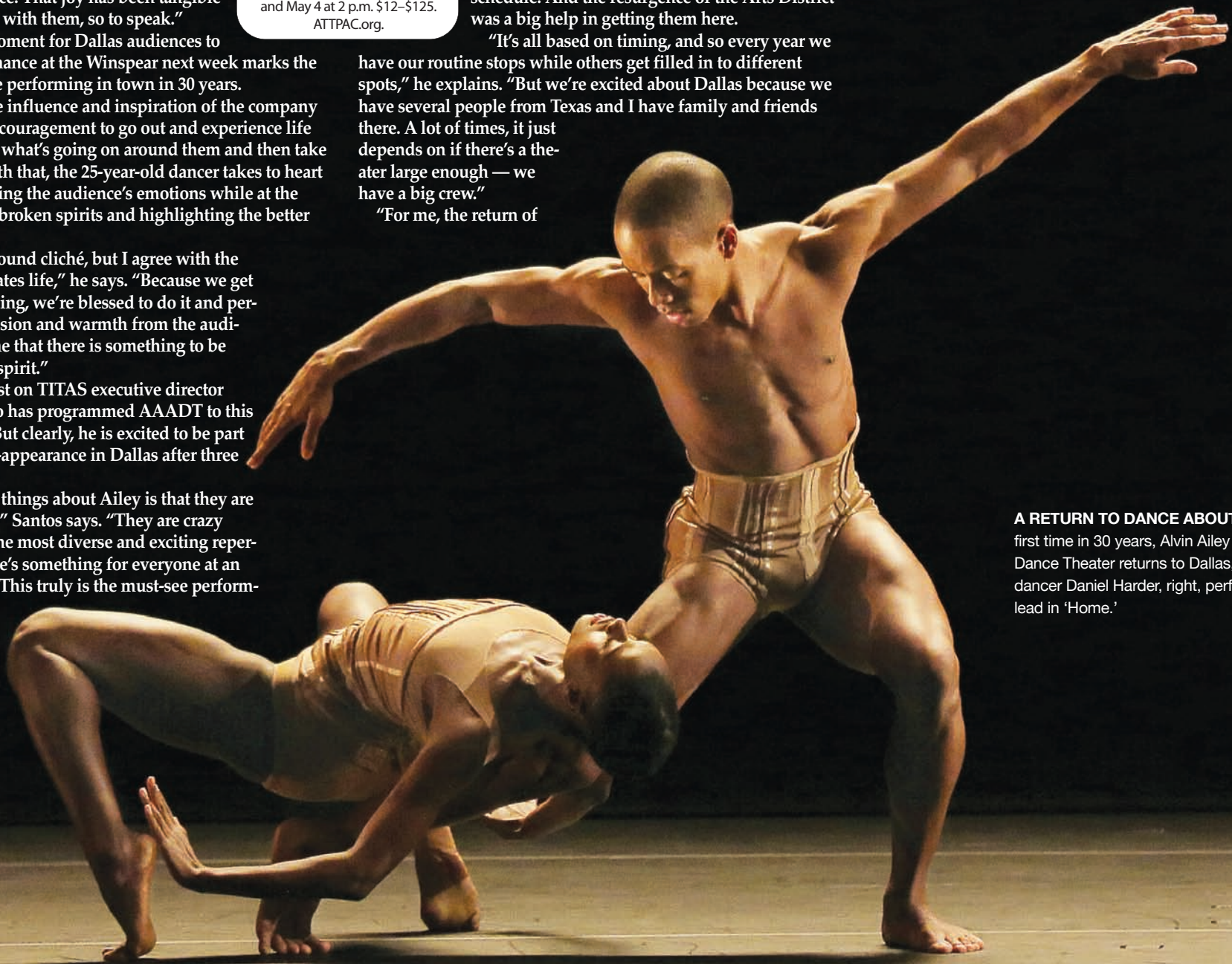
## ALVIN AILEY DANCE

Winspear Opera House,  
2403 Flora St. May 3-4 at 8 p.m.  
and May 4 at 2 p.m. \$12-\$125.  
ATTPAC.org.

Ailey to Dallas only solidifies the international profile that Dallas now has," Santos adds. "Today, it is all about the quality we bring onto these beautiful stages here in the Arts District [including] the stunning Winspear Opera House. They demand excellence; Ailey is that excellence. It means Dallas has truly taken its place as a cultural destination on the international playing field, and the international arts community has taken notice."

Harder details the company will perform "great repertory pieces," but most importantly, the one that enthusiasts are most anticipating.

"We have exciting works to perform, but yes, we will be performing Mr. Ailey's masterpiece, *Revelations*," he says. "And we're so looking to that moment we have with Dallas that shares the joy and hurt and triumphs we're all feeling right now." ■



**A RETURN TO DANCE ABOUT** | For the first time in 30 years, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater returns to Dallas, with out dancer Daniel Harder, right, performing the lead in 'Home.'



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# Dangling Chad

Two's the charm for diva Chad Michaels, this year's Purple Party headliner

Chad Michaels didn't start out a winner, but ended up that way. Michaels was one of the frontrunners in Season 4 of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, but it was neck and neck most of the season until Sharon Needles proved the victor. But that didn't deter Michaels: He went on to take the crown as the first-ever All-Stars winner, and the legend was born. Michaels will be headlining the opening night of the Purple Party this week with a performance Friday at the Rose Room. We connect with the fierce diva before the show to talk about series, his Cher impersonation and why Texas queens are still the pioneers.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

**You were runner-up in Season 4 but the victor in the all-star season. Was that a vindication?** Winning *All Stars* was truly an honor and one of the most memorable experiences of my life. But I have never felt vindicated because I have never had any issues with Sharon Needles winning Season 4. I have no need for vindication because everything is as it should be! I respect RuPaul's decisions. Sharon has done big things with her title and I am proud of her and know that she will always be a legendary representative of *RPDR*. The only regret I honestly have is not presenting my impersonation of Celine Dion during the "Gay Pride Boat Float" challenge in Season 4. I should have painted that boat to look like the Titanic and gone down with the ship!

**Reality shows often feature "the usual suspects." Did you feel your seasons accurately portrayed the contestants or were you stereotyped?** I agree that in reality TV, there often are the "usual suspects," [but] I feel that we were all portrayed fairly accurately. There is a degree of editing, but the editors don't put words in our mouth. They may be rearranged a little for dramatic effect, however, if a person [comes across as] an idiot on the show, they only have themselves to thank.

**In the world of drag, you're along the lines of a true female impersonator, especially for portraying Cher...** I only did Cher one time in two seasons of *RPDR*. It is completely unfair to box me into one category as I have proven to the world that my tricks are boundless.

**Do you think, though, that there's a hierarchy in the drag world — impersonators versus camp, etc.?** Each person lives in their own delusion. If someone thinks they are better than another queen because they dance, or they do comedy, or they do impersonations, or they are a "pageant queen," they have gotten it twisted. Aside from out transgender counterparts, the majority of us are men in dresses, so get it straight in your heads. No one is better than anyone else, just different shades of gray.

**Tell us about your Cher impersonation.** My drag mother, Hunter, got me started doing Cher in 1992 and I will be forever grateful. It has been an amazing journey and a labor of love. Cher is to many of us the ultimate diva and I have always felt it important to do her justice and never make my work a parody. Lots of practice and many years of character study have gone into my work and still feel like a work in progress. Cher loves her impersonators and I had an opportunity to meet and work with her in '03 at a fundraiser.

My other impersonations include Celine Dion, Marilyn Manson, and more recently, Florence Welch. I have

been enjoying the fact that my fans got to know me much better on *RPDR* and now expect more from me than Cher.

**Most drag queens go by a campy or female name, but not you. ...** Chad Michaels is my real name! I started using my name for stage during my run with La Cage in Las Vegas. I simply have never identified with a female name. I am the same person in and out of drag and don't put on some big contrived personality. I'm real and I want people to know that. I want credit for my work and I want them to remember my name, Chad Michaels, not Missy Misdemeanor, or blah blah blah.

**Have you been to Texas before? What are your impressions?** I love Texas and always have a blast! I've performed in Houston, San Antonio and many years ago, Dallas. I have friends in Texas like Lawanda Jackson, Onyx and the legendary Cher Mother, Wayne Smith. Texas has a big heart and always rolls out the hospitality. I am really excited to be working at the Rose Room — it will be an honor to play where so many legends have been born.

**The last few months have been tragic in the drag world, especially here in Dallas, with the passings of**

**Sahara Davenport and Erica Andrews. How have losses like that impacted the community?** The passing of these two legends has absolutely affected everyone in the drag community. Differences aside, we as a community are very close. When one passes, we all feel it. It's like a shock wave. I didn't know either entertainer on a personal level, but I certainly did feel the loss of their light and talent in the world.

**Do you have an opinion of Texas queens in general?** Texas Queens are a special breed: Big hair, big costumes, and big personalities! I feel that keeps the traditions of drag alive. Pageantry was born in Texas. Texas legends abound and often set the standard for drag in our country. I have a lot of respect for these Southern divas! Texas men are some of the kindest gentlemen ... and biggest scoundrels ... I have encountered! Texas has it all — super-sized. I can't wait to see Dallas. It has been too long and I aim to let you have it. Mother Dust is coming!

**What's your favorite part of performing?** Simply affecting people. I love live performance and onstage is where I am truly happy. What we do as entertainers is unique and we have the ability to make people feel strong emotions. It is important to me to leave people with something when I am done with my shows. Happiness, intrigue, sadness, whatever. My hope is that I change someone's point of view or lift them up from a heavy place if only for five minutes. That's how we as entertainers change the world one performance at a





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**Have you enjoyed touring the country in your *Drag Race* victory lap?** Touring has been the big payoff for me. I love to get out there and meet my fans and all the people who have supported me through this long journey. The only differences I see in audiences are the faces. They are all very much the same in the respect that they are hungry to be entertained and they love their divas. It is an honor to be respected by

so many and I take making them happy when I entertain very seriously. Without our people and fans, we are nothing — believe that.

**Tell us something no one knows about you.** People don't know I have a wooden leg — I lost it in World War II and have become quite adept at walking in it in heels. It has only fallen off onstage once and I certainly hope it won't happen in Texas because the girls will read me! God, that feels good to come clean!

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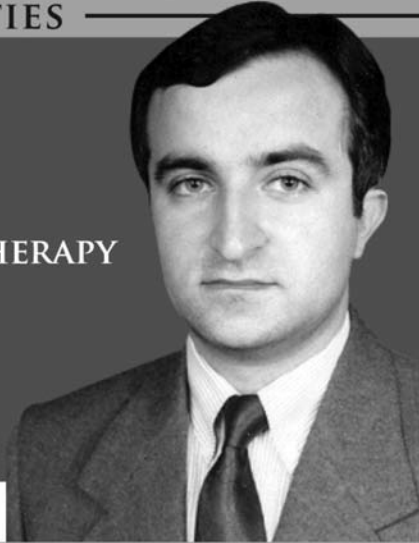
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# New Sunday Funday

Uptown isn't the only neighborhood that can do a proper gay brunch



When Claude Griffin decided to start a Dallas version of Big Gay Brunch, it was mostly because he was tired of waiting for someone else to do it.

"I've traveled around the country and seen them in other cities," Griffin explains. "I had a couple of ideas, but I kept thinking somebody in Dallas would start one. And I kept waiting, and waiting. ..."

Last month, Griffin gave up waiting, so he and pal Louis Rad — who was starting his own, smaller-scale brunch group — decided to join forces.

The pair settled on a name — Sunday Funday Big Gay Brunch — and fired up a Facebook page. This time, they didn't *have* to wait: That first day, the page logged 45 members. Within the week, that number swelled to 364.

"It was meant to just be a social thing, but it turned out so crazy," says Rad, who does not sound displeased by this turn of events. "It just became this monster."

"The monster" is held at the Addison Blue Mesa Grill, and it has evolved quickly (Sunday will be only their second outing). Little wonder: With top-notch DJ Michael Evans, drink specials, free Absolut "sample shots," roving drag queens and an "official" time spanning five hours, SFBGB is like a nightclub dance party. With quiche.

Evans works his turntable magic to keep the monster energized with "high-energy dance music," he says ... although he gave Griffin and Rad a bit of a fright when they first joined forces.

"Poor Clyde," Evans says, laughing. "When I first started, we were testing the sound system and I put some Doobie Brothers and Clyde looked like, 'Uh-oh.' I told him, 'Don't worry, I'm just testing the system!'"

While not playing any '70s soft rock, Evans does lean toward a crowd-pleasing mix, which thumps along as drag queen Ivan Trump works the crowd.

"Our drag queen is not only participating in the event, she's taking part — talking to people, interacting with them. She's bringing life to the whole thing," says Griffin.

The idea of a Sunday morning spot where gays could hang out wasn't unusual, but perhaps the decision to locate it in the 'burbs was intentional.

"One main reason we wanted to have it in Addison is that there is a huge gay population in North Dallas," he says. "We're only 10 minutes for most folks, right off the Tollway. People have been coming from Garland, Frisco, McKinney."

Those highway travelers make sense. But Griffin and Rad point out that folks have been making the trek even from Central Dallas ... including the gayborhood.

"Those bitches came in hordes," Rad jokes, "and they had a blast."

The event has expanded to include a charity aspect, as the group has teamed with Resource Center Dallas as a sponsor of GayBingo, and also plans donations to victims of the West, Texas, explosion. In addition, the planners have been raffling off items, including iPhones and overnight stays to raise money for the nonprofits.

"We really just wanted to do something for the community," Griffin says. "And it's fun as hell. We are not about drama at this location. It's been about community."

And, of course, quiche.

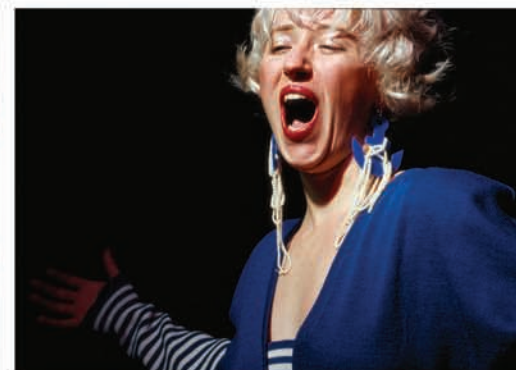
— *Jonanna Widner*

*Blue Mesa Grill, 5100 Belt Line Road, Addison.  
April 28, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. \$25.*

**LET 'EM EAT QUICHE** | Big Gay Brunch co-founders Claude Griffin and Louie Rad had great success with their first event in March; the second, coming Sunday, is expected to be even bigger.

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L+S auto

# A sip of Civic whine



Between Consumer Reports failing to bestow its somewhat over-hyped "Recommended" rating upon the re-designed 2012 Honda Civic, and the boo-hooing from the rest of the journalistic flock, you'd think a person would have had to be legally drunk to buy the little zipper. I could give you a very long list of big name compacts that are considerably less fabulous than the Civic; it just needed a little polish to become great. A quick makeover for 2013 makes the Civic more delicious.

Plastic interiors were not exquisite, but they alone do not justify the tears. What small car doesn't have a Hollywood actress' worth of plastic? No matter, because the revised 2013 Civic's cabin has been stitched and tucked.

The two-tier instrument cluster, with tachometer behind the leather-wrapped steering wheel and digital speedometer above, is star shuttle cool. Lighted strips on either side of the speedometer glow between green and blue, depending on how efficiently you're driving. Maybe it's just my love of all things '80s, but I prefer digital, and especially like the Civic's layout. I also like the multi-function LCD screen next to the speedometer that provides displays for audio, trip computer, temperature and time: All of the information you could ever want is in one sweep.

The navigation screen and automatic climate control land in the driver-oriented center stack. Two big cupholders, concealed armrest storage, USB plug and power jack live in the center console. Beyond stitched dash, door and console coverings, our test car spoiled with heated leather seats, fold-flat rear seats, flip-down rear armrest, Bluetooth and power moonroof.

Designers spent a little extra time outside, too.



Chrome accents on the grille and lower fascia, smoked taillamps and a chrome beam across the deck lid sparkle. The silver and black 18-inch alloys are pretty sporty. There was something that

seemed a little cheap about the car before, but it now looks more like an entry-level Acura. The armchairs should fall silent.

Under hood is a 140-horsepower 1.8-liter four-cylinder engine, connected to a 5-speed

automatic transmission. It definitely won't overpower the senses, but it gets you there, cruising comfortably at 80. Want more? Choose the 201 horsepower Si edition. Otherwise, hit the ECO button to make the throttle less sensitive, feather in a light loafer, and enjoy 28/39-MPG city/hwy. Although you won't become intoxicated with power, joy burbles with little fuel bills.

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CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer  
crwauto@aol.com



ger Accord, suspension motions are crisp, dancing as if trained by an Arthur Murray engineer. Annoying vibrations and vague steering are mostly exorcised. There are no squeaks or rattles; build quality is tighter than a miser. Eight hours on the highway, and over rough downtown streets, dispelled the myth there's anything seriously wrong with the Civic.

Now that the plastic has been pushed, steering embraces the road and exterior lamps reflect an Acura, maybe the critics will stop being so critical. A long drive in the finessed Civic, and a drink of vino at the end, should dry the whiny tears — although the \$24,555 as-tested sticker will be plenty sobering. ■

**THE FIRST TWINK?** | The sporty modifications to the 2013 Civic, including a likable new interior, should silence those who complained about the 2012 model. (Photos courtesy Honda)

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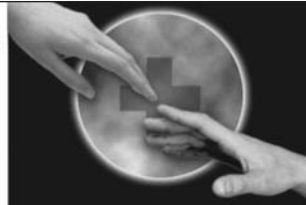
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# Back from the dead

Eden Riegel, who played lesbian icon Bianca on 'All My Children' for a decade, chats about the resurrection of the citizens of Pine Valley ... online

STEVEN LINDSEY | Contributing Writer  
stevenraiglindsey@me.com



It's common knowledge that nobody on a soap opera is ever *truly* dead — even if the actor portraying a role dies, the character simply comes back to life after some remarkable plastic surgery and a whole new look. Sometimes even a new ethnicity.

So it should come as no surprise that two entire soap operas that went to TV heaven in 2011 would come back to life eventually — looking mostly the same, but somehow different.

Prepare to meet the evil twins of *All My Children* and *One Life to Live*, both bringing sudsy action back to daytime via the Internet. Fans can once again catch new, 30-minute episodes streaming online in HD on Hulu and Hulu Plus, which pushes content to connected TVs, mobile phones, tablets and desktops. (Episodes will also be available at the iTunes Store for iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Apple TV, Mac and PC.)

For 10 years, Eden Riegel played Bianca Montgomery, the lesbian daughter of Pine Valley's most notorious citizen, Erica Kane (portrayed by Susan Lucci for more than 40 years) on the TV version of AMC. Now she's back in character in the new incarnation.

"It is a lot alike, I have to say," Riegel says during a break from performing in a play in Los Angeles. "A lot of the same people are involved. [Not, however, Lucci.] A lot of our producers are the same, the writers, of course the actors. We've all come back for this sort of family reunion with lots of cameras," she says. "It does feel somewhat the same except the Internet kind of lends this greater freedom to us."

That includes the ability to use curse words (though Riegel promises not gratuitously) as

well as show more skin than network TV allowed.

"I'd say the biggest difference is that kids are able to use sort of the slang they'd really use. They sound like authentic kids," Riegel says. "We're really catering to the fans this time, not catering to advertisers. This is really a fan-driven resurgence. It's because the fans never gave up hope that this even happened."

The series is filmed in Stamford, Conn., which doubles for Pine Valley on location shoots. The cast films multiple episodes over a couple weeks and then *OLTL* moves in to produce their chunk of shows. It's a fast production schedule, but none of the network gloss has been lost in the new medium. If anything, they're just working smarter.

"I heard somebody say that they wanted to do 250 episodes a year or something," she laughs hesitantly, "and we can do it."

*All My Children* ended its TV run with a cliffhanger that seemed like it would never find resolution. But audiences may finally get closure.

"I would say the cliffhanger more than gets addressed," Riegel hints. "The effects are felt basically by everyone in Pine Valley. It's five years later, so we get this exciting time jump and catch up with these characters' lives. The cliffhanger definitely impacts my character in particular and she's reeling from the effects. It's affecting her family, so it's definitely a big part of the show. Moving it forward means that people don't have to stand around in black and mourn for weeks."

Riegel says to expect plenty of familiar characters and a few new ones, plus lots of drama for her character.

**NO SOFT SOAP** | Actress Eden Riegel, above, plays queer soap character Bianca on 'AMC,' who will now have to deal with her sexuality with her teen daughter Miranda, opposite. (Photos: Eric Leibowitz/OLN)



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"I'm not allowed to say much, but I can say that Bianca's daughter [Miranda] has SORAS: Soap Opera Rapid Aging Syndrome. She's a teenager now dealing with high school drama and taking after Erica Kane in a lot of ways. Bianca has always taken more after Mona [Erica's mother], so you get this interesting symmetry from the early days of Erica being a teenager rebelling against Mona. Now it's my daughter rebelling against me."

Miranda must also cope with her mother's sexual orientation.

"Miranda is dealing with things at school that have to deal with her mother's sexuality. The fact that Bianca is gay is really sort of first and foremost in her life and the plot. We deal with that fallout, too, because we've never seen Bianca with a grown daughter having to deal with maybe her daughter feeling the effects of intolerance," she says. "Bianca has certainly dealt with that, but it's a lot different when the person you love more than anyone in the world has to deal with it because of you. So I think Bianca feels some guilt about that and is trying to help her daughter deal with that. Bianca's sexuality definitely plays a role in the context of her family."

Ever since the Bianca character came out of the closet, she has been an icon of sorts to the



LGBT community, a role that Riegel cherishes.

"It's been a great experience," she says. "I love how the audiences really have embraced her. Certainly it's attracted gay audience members to watch the show and they connect with Bianca and they identify with her and that makes me proud. Also, straight audiences adore Bianca and they root for her. In a way, I think she's possibly opened a few minds and introduced people to their first kind of gay friends."

Most of all, she sees Bianca as a positive role model.

"We tried really hard not to make her a saint — she's a whole person. We don't want somebody representing this sexual orientation and not have her be a real human being. That's the whole point of all of it. Give people an image of themselves on TV," Riegel says. "If it makes people feel a little more comfortable about who they are because of the fact that they see it on TV, that's great."

All My Children premieres, along with One Life to Live, online Monday at TheOnlineNetwork.com. Riegel comes to Austin in June for the ATX Television Festival. ATXFestival.com.

## TRAVEL DIARY

The third annual **Hawaii Food & Wine Festival** returns to Oahu Sept. 1–9, and the lineup is pretty gay. Out chefs and former *Top Chef Masters* contestants **Art Smith** (Chicago's *Table 52* and Oprah's fave cook, pictured) and **Anita Lo** (New York's *Annisa*) are among the new celebrity kitchen masters slated to appear. They'll join returning luminaries **Nobu Matsuhisa** (of *Nobu*) and **Hubert Keller** (San Francisco's *Fleur de Lys*). About the only way to make a vacation to Hawaii better is to surround yourself with mouthwatering food. For more information, visit [HawaiiFoodandWineFestival.com](http://HawaiiFoodandWineFestival.com)



For some food and wine festivals close to home — but in no less beautiful surroundings — **Colorado** holds several throughout the year. The **Colorado Lavender Festival** blooms in Palisade July 12–14, with tours of lavender farms as well as cooking demos; the **Telluride Mushroom Festival** (mid-August — dates to be announced) takes over the gay-friendly mountain town just before its celebrated film festival, which itself takes place just before the **Telluride Blues and Brews Fest** (Sept. 12–15), a mix of beer and music.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

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L+S opera

# Aria serious?

Darren Woods, FW Opera's gay boss, steps into the limelight (literally) for the 1st time at Bass

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

The Fort Worth Opera has done its festival format since the spring of 2007, but this year, the festival takes on a different tenor.

That's because Darren Woods, the gay general director of FWO since 2001, is moving from behind the scenes to in front of them, taking on a singing role in its production of *The Daughter of the Regiment*, opening Saturday.

It's not wholly a vanity move — there were financial considerations, as well.

"My price was right — I didn't charge myself anything," Woods laughs.

In all seriousness, this is a big development. Woods' last singing gig (outside of the shower, at least) was at the New York City Opera in 1999, after which he retired from performing and transitioned into administration. But it is a homecoming of sorts.

"This is a role I did a *looming* time ago," Woods says. "It's not a big singing part, but it is a funny role — the long-suffering valet to the Marquise," played by Woods' longtime friend, Joyce Castle, with whom he shared the stage countless times back in his performance days. "When we realized she was doing the Marquise, I thought this was the one role we never did together, and would be a good time to correct that."

At least, it seemed like a good idea 14 months ago when he came up with it. As the festival opens, he's not so sure.

"I forgot how busy I am" as general director, he says. "I didn't remember the role being as big as it was. I opened the score about six months ago and said, 'Oh my god, am I in *that* scene, too?!"

The opera comique, by Donizetti, is one of the more accessible in the classical canon (FWO will perform it in French; an Italian version is also less-widely performed) — a "silly, wonderful story about a baby left with a regiment and raised by all of them as their daughter," Woods says. "It's sort of a musical theater piece since it has dialogue, but it's considered a 'singers' piece' — the ensembles are so intricate. It's a really fun romp with beautiful music. Most of my



**INTO THE WOODS** | The past year has been momentous for Woods — he married his partner last summer, and now returns to singing after years behind the curtain.

singing is with the chorus, but I have a few solo licks to show people I still got it!"

It also caps a crazy year for Woods. In addition to acting and coordinating the festival (and planning next year's), last summer Woods and his long-term partner married. Now he's back onstage.

"I love performing — it has been a fun, fun time. But believe me, I am not gonna make a habit of this," he says.

In some ways, it hasn't been *that* much of an interruption to Woods' schedule.

"I'm at every single rehearsal, every performance — I go because I might need to answer questions, such as whether we need to go into overtime with the orchestra," he says. "But it wouldn't work if the people involved weren't who they are. Ava Pine [who plays the title role] is like a daughter to me, and Rod Nelson [who plays Sgt. Sulpice] is a regular here. It really feels like we're doing a college play."

The difference is: in college, the juniors don't sign the sophomores' paychecks. That's where Woods can be tested.

"It can get schizophrenic," he concedes. "I don't think you can be somebody's boss and colleague at the same time. I go to rehearsals and put on the character tenor hat; when I walk out of that rehearsal, I become the general director again."

Still, the process has led to some amusing conversations.

"We were doing a scene and I asked [the director] Dorothy Danner a question. She said, 'Take it up with the general director.'"





# Drawing Dallas

Tall, talented [Aaron Bryan](#) communicates through music

**Name and age:** Aaron Bryan, 22

**Occupation:** Retail

**Spotted at:** Kroger Cityplace

Born in Edinburg, Texas, to a Japanese/Cherokee mother and an Apache father, this tall, handsome Aquarian — with his thick black hair, olive skin and smoldering eyes — could never get lost in a crowd.

**I got the music in me:** A self-taught musician, Aaron plays guitar, piano, ukulele and the six-string banjo. He's always loved writing, and together with his musical skills, it was a perfect chemistry to allow him to express and process his emotions. "Music is my journal. My songs are confessions of sadness, loneliness, frustration, falling in love, instant attraction, that spark when you meet someone special."

His dream is to become a professional singer, and he knows to be competitive he has to have his own unique voice. "I write songs about my own personal experiences that no one else can sing." One of his signature songs, titled, "Effortless" is about letting go of an old relationship and starting a new one.

**Gym dandy:** Aaron keeps fit by working out in the gym three times a week and running three times a week. He also enjoys reading fiction and blogging.

**One of his favorite quotes:** "A universe cannot exist without a mind entering into it."

**MARK STOKES** | Illustrator  
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Friday 04.26

**USA Film Fest continues this weekend**

If the end of the Dallas International Film Festival left you craving more movies, fear not — the USA Film Festival is back. The venerable celebration of American film continues through Sunday, but gay movie fans in particular will want to check out *Bridegroom*, a documentary from *Designing Women* creator Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, about the struggles of same-sex couples to achieve marriage equality. It screens Friday at the Angelika.

**DEETS:** Angelika Film Center Mockingbird Station. *Bridegroom* screens at 7:30 p.m. \$10. Ticketmaster.com. For full festival schedule, visit USAFilmFestival.com.



Sunday 04.28

**Women's Chorus sings along to 'Les Miserables'**

The film version of *Les Miserables* became a huge, Oscar-winning hit, and with its iconic songs, it's little wonder. If you've sung the score in the shower before, you'll wanna come to the Royal Lane Studio Movie Grill for the Women's Chorus of Dallas' special sing-along screening on Sunday. And if you're worried that you don't sound good enough to sing in public, fear not: You can't be worse than Russell Crowe.


**DEETS:** Studio Movie Grill, 11170 N. Central Expressway. 3 p.m. \$20. TWCD.org.

Tuesday 04.30

**Drag diva throws 'Dixie's Tupperware Party'**

If you think Dixie Longate is kidding when she puts on a huge wig and throws a Tupperware party inside the McDavid Studio at Bass Hall, think again. This drag diva may be campy and comedic, but she's damn serious about burpin' in freshness — rest assured, you can *actually buy Tupperware during the show!* (Dixie's one of the top salespeople for the product nationwide ... for real.) But it's still a hoot as she dishes between dishes in the return engagement of this one-person performance art piece. It'll blow your lid.

**DEETS:** Van Cliburn Recital Hall of McDavid Studio, 330 E. 4th St., Fort Worth. April 30–May 5. 817-212-4280. DixiesTupperwareParty.com.

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**THEATER**

**Angels Fall.** Pulitzer Prize-winning gay playwright Lanford Wilson's comic drama about six people brought together in a New Mexico mission church, directed by Rene Moreno. *(Reviewed this week.)* Greenville Center for the Arts, 5601 Sears St. Through May 5. ContemporaryTheatreofDallas.com.

**Avenue Q.** Theatre 3's hit from last summer and fall returns for an unlimited run in its Theatre Too space with most of the original cast. A puppet show, but not for kids (there's lots of sex). Theatre 3, 2900 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Ongoing. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays-Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2:30 p.m. \$10-\$40. Theatre3Dallas.com.

**The Grapes of Wrath.** WaterTower Theatre presents the Tony Award winner about the Joads, Oklahomans making a life for themselves in Cali. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. *Final weekend.* WaterTowerTheatre.org.

**Enron.** A musical adaptation of the events that led to one of the biggest corporate scandals in history. Regional premiere. Theatre 3, 2900 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. April 26-May 25 (in previews through April 28; official opening night April 29). \$10-\$50. Theatre3Dallas.com.

**Fly By Night.** A new musical set during a blackout goes into previews at the Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. April 26-May 26 (in previews through May 2). DallasTheaterCenter.org.

**Re-Designing Women.** A spoof of the '80s sitcom, performed by men. Presented by Uptown Players in the Rose Room, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Through May 19. UptownPlayers.org.

**Rx.** Kitchen Dog Theater presents this dark comedy about Big Pharma. The MAC, 3120 McKinney Ave. *Final weekend.* KitchenDogTheater.org.

**Too Many Girls.** The Rodgers and Hart musical gets revived by Lyric Stage. Irving Arts Center, 3333 N. MacArthur Blvd., Irving. April 26-May 5. LyricStage.org.

**Wicked.** The bewitching hit musical returns, courtesy Dallas Summer Musicals. Fair Park Music Hall, 901 First Ave. Through May 5. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

**OPERA**

**The Aspern Papers.** The 25th anniversary staging of the English-language opera that received its world premiere from Dallas Opera in 1988. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. April 28 matinee at 2 p.m. DallasOpera.org.

**Fort Worth Opera Festival.** The Fort Worth Opera opens its 17 days of opera, featuring four different works at Bass Performance Hall and other venues. Runs through May 6. For a complete schedule, visit FWOpera.org.



**SUCKER PUNCH** | Lisa Lampanelli performs her confrontational standup at the Majestic Theater Friday.

**FINE ART**

**Marc Chagall: Beyond Color.** The groundbreaking surrealist's work, from early posters to costumes to sculpture, are exhibited in a splashy exhibit. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through May 26. Special exhibition fee: \$16. DallasMuseumofArt.org.

**Cindy Sherman.** Massive collection of massive photographs from the influential artist are on display. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through June 9. Special exhibition fee: \$16. DallasMuseumofArt.org.

**Dan Rees.** Work from the man just designated the first artist in residence at the Goss-Michael Foundation, 1405 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through July 27. GossMichaelFoundation.org.

**China Through the Lens of John Thomson 1868-1872.** The vanished world of Imperial China preserved on glass plates. Crow Collection of Asian Art, 2010 Flora St. Through May 5. Free. CrowCollection.org.

**Gold on Black: Japanese Lacquer from the Jacqueline Lavant Collection.** The beauty of lacquered finishes is highlighted. Crow Collection of Asian Art, 2010 Flora St. Through Sept. 15. Free. CrowCollection.org.

**Connecting Dallas to the Holocaust.** A temporary exhibit at the Old Red Courthouse in cooperation with and curated by the Dallas Holocaust Museum. 100 S. Houston St. \$8 admission, \$4 special exhibit fee. Through July 14. OldRed.org.

**ModArtists.** More than a dozen artists exhibit at the ilume Gallerie, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Suite 107. Through May 11. ilumegallerie.com.

**FRIDAY 04.26**

**COMEDY**

**Lisa Lampanelli.** The insult comic performs. Majestic Theater, 1925 Elm St. 8 p.m. \$40. Ticketmaster.com.



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**submit**

To submit an item for inclusion in the Community Calendar, visit [Tinyurl.com/dvsubmit](http://Tinyurl.com/dvsubmit).

**MORALLY BANKRUPT** | The notorious Enron scandal is dramatized — with music — in Theatre 3's production of 'Enron.'



**FILM**

**USA Film Festival** continues through Sunday; Friday night's slate includes *Bridegroom*, a documentary about same-sex couples, directed by Linda Bloodworth-Thomason; Saturday's short film line-up includes films with Lily Tomlin and Jesse Tyler Ferguson. For complete schedule and tickets, visit [USAFilmFestival.com](http://USAFilmFestival.com).

**DINING**

**Maneet Chauhan at Komali.** The James Beard Award-winner at Food Network judge cooks at the gay-owned restaurant. Price includes a signed copy of her cookbook, which contains a foreword by *Chopped* host Ted Allen. Komali, 4152 Cole Ave. 6–10 p.m. \$95/person. [KomaliRestaurant.com](http://KomaliRestaurant.com).

**COMMUNITY**

**Purple Party.** A weekend of club events, all to benefit local charities, kicks off with Drag Racer Chad Michaels at the Rose Room Friday. For a complete schedule of events, visit [PurpleFoundation.org](http://PurpleFoundation.org).

**SATURDAY 04.27**

**BROADCAST**

**Lambda Weekly,** radio show addressing LGBT issues. This week's guest is Leslea Newman. 89.3 KNON-FM at 11 a.m.

**SUNDAY 04.28**

**WORSHIP**

**Cathedral of Hope.** Traditional service at the United Church of Christ congregation. 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. [CathedralOfHope.com](http://CathedralOfHope.com).

**MUSIC**

**Straighten Up and Fly Right.** A musical tribute to Nat King Cole. Majestic Theater, 1925 Elm St. 4 p.m. [Straighten-Up-and-Fly-Right.com](http://Straighten-Up-and-Fly-Right.com).

**COMMUNITY**

**LifeWalk Tea Dance.** The Green Team for LifeWalk holds a mixer at Joe's/The Brick to raise money for their Miss LifeWalk Pageant contestant, Veda Chardonay. 2525 Wycliffe Ave. 4–8 p.m. \$5 donation requested.

**TUESDAY 04.30**

**COMEDY**

**Dixie's Tupperware Party.** Drag diva Dixie Longate sells housewares with humor. Van Cliburn Recital Hall at McDavid Studio, 330 E. 4th St., Fort Worth. April 30–May 5. 817-212-4280. [DixiesTupperwareParty.com](http://DixiesTupperwareParty.com).

**Kyle Dunnigan.** The comedian, known for his YouTube videos and podcasts with Tig Notaro, performs. Sons of Hermann Hall, 3414 Commerce St. 7:30 p.m. \$13–\$16.

**THURSDAY 05.02**

**COMMUNITY**

**Boi Thursdays.** Weekly gay mixer with music from guest DJs. Winston's Supperclub, 3111 Welborn Ave., Suite 110. 9 p.m.–1 a.m.

**HEALTH**

**Art & Music Experience.** Food, spirits and art, including live demonstration. Proceeds benefit Mental Health America of Greater Dallas. Samuel Lynne Galleries, 1105 Dragon St. 6:30–8:30 p.m. [MHADallas.org](http://MHADallas.org).

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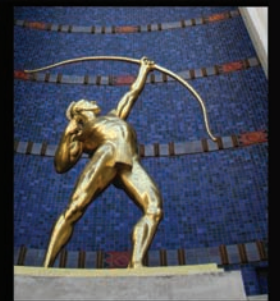
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**CELEBRITY BIRTHDAY**

**I.M. Pei** turns 96 on Friday. The Pritzker Prize-winning architect is well-represented in Dallas; he designed City Hall (with its futuristic base, a popular backdrop for sci-fi films), as well as Fountain Place and the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center.



**TAURUS: Apr 21—May 20**

There's no way to cover the extent of pending problems in a few words. For many of you it comes down to having to reckon with the truth. Finding a way to face it honestly has a lot of you wishing you were anywhere but here.

**GEMINI: May 21—Jun 20**

Having to watch yourself is one thing; half of this is about seeing how far people will go when it comes to ambition. Be careful. In this situation you're dealing with, someone will stop at nothing to make sure that they come out on top.

**CANCER: Jun 21—Jul 20**

It is good to see that the old way of doing things isn't as reliable as it used to be. To grow, you need to cultivate the willingness to move, or change at the drop of a hat.

**LEO: Jul 21—Aug 20**

This lesson seems to be about recognizing yourself as a vehicle for the creator. Without blowing the ego out of proportion, it's time to figure out how to be a star, or at least come forward with enough light in your heart to turn your life into a masterpiece.

**VIRGO: Aug 21—Sep 20**

Taking care of yourself will mean different things, depending on your situation. For some, it could be an account in your name. For others, it could be owning the right to do as you please, or at least begin to see that your rights deserve some recognition.

**LIBRA: Sep 21—Oct 20**

Too many people are confusing the issues with the kind of petty gossip that comes up whenever there is this much to talk about. Balance is what's needed here. Do you know where to look now that it's your turn to provide it?

**SCORPIO: Oct 21—Nov 20**

Nothing is what we think; there's no prescription for getting through anything. You may think things must go a certain way, but if you leave all alone and step out of the way, you just might tune into a miracle, and learn more about life in the process.

**SAGITTARIUS: Nov 21—Dec 20**

You are tired of hanging on and you don't want to keep making believe this is working for you. These things are usually a simple matter of rearranging your priorities. You are loved and love gives you the power to make a difference.

**CAPRICORN: Dec 21—Jan 20**

So much of you has disappeared, you need to get some of it back. If this sounds like the same old story, maybe so. Forgive me, but you're wiped out. Recouping and regrouping will be easy. With you it's always a simple matter of connecting with Mother Nature and resting your bones.

**AQUARIUS: Jan 21—Feb 20**

The piece of you that feels the need to be like everyone else is in a headlock with the part of you that needs to go deeper in order to find itself. You have come to a place where it's time to stop making so much room for everyone.

**PISCES: Feb 21—Mar 20**

Things that you are totally unprepared for will combine with the arrival of someone who hasn't shown their face in a long time to show you that order is born out of chaos, and tell you that the next best thing is about to show up and surprise you.

**ARIES: Mar 21—Apr 20**

In those moments when you're walking the fine line between the reality of things and the possibilities that your higher self has in mind, you will be tempted to hold back. I'm not so sure reserve is what's needed here; it looks to me like stretching your limits is what it will take to move things forward.

**JANE'S WORLD**



Jane's World © Paige Braddock 2013

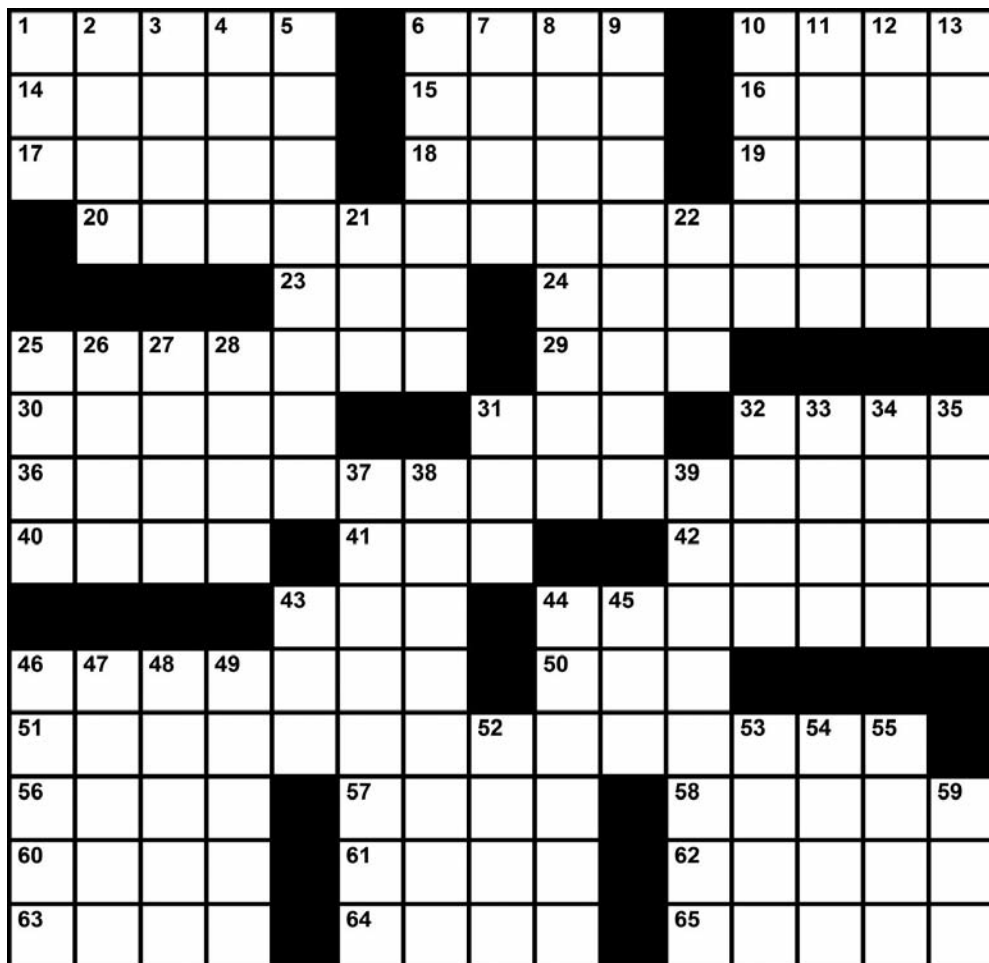
**bitter girl**



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# Ender's Game; Why Aren't You?

Solution on page 37

**Across**

- 1 "No problem" from a bottom?
- 6 Yr. before jr.
- 10 Like communion at the Crystal Cathedral
- 14 Connect with
- 15 Warhol pal \_\_\_ Sedgwick
- 16 Theater award
- 17 Sign in Frasier's booth, perhaps
- 18 Actress Foch
- 19 Seizures for Caesar
- 20 With 36-Across, assessment of marriage equality by 51-Across
- 23 Burgundy Bible gospel
- 24 Vin Packer and others
- 25 Part of the Bush pere pair
- 29 Neighbor of Neb.
- 30 Philosopher Locke
- 31 Mom's specialty, briefly
- 32 *La \_\_\_ aux Folles*
- 36 See 20-Across
- 40 Dike problem
- 41 Margaret of *Drop Dead Diva*
- 42 Type of queen
- 43 Prefix for system
- 44 Loads

- 46 "Metrosexual" pirate Jack
- 50 Vein filler
- 51 Antigay author of *Ender's Game*
- 56 Out-of-this-world org.
- 57 Baseball diamond cover
- 58 Constellation with a belt
- 60 Fateful March day
- 61 Morales of *Resurrection Blvd.*
- 62 "You'll \_\_\_ Walk Alone"
- 63 Susan B. Anthony colleague Carrie
- 64 Cut
- 65 Former NFL player Tuaolo

**Down**

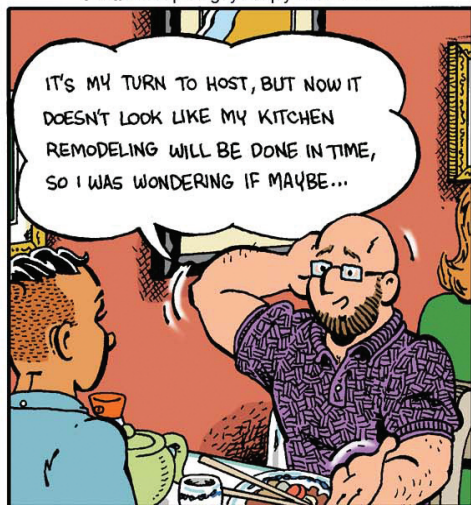
- 1 Simpson trial judge Lance
- 2 It reveals a drag queen's thighs
- 3 Gun, slangily
- 4 Inflamed end?
- 5 Locale of the Hawthorne neighborhood
- 6 Nero's tutor
- 7 Garfield's sidekick
- 8 Top
- 9 A wrestler may use it to hold his man
- 10 Nicholson title role
- 11 Final notices
- 12 Like a ballerina
- 13 Ass-kissers' responses
- 21 Heston in a chariot
- 22 Tin Man's request
- 25 Lament loudly
- 26 Skin moisturizer
- 27 Uncommon, to Caligula
- 28 Swindle
- 31 *Heather Has \_\_\_ Mommies*
- 32 Backs (out)
- 33 \_\_\_ bit (slightly)
- 34 Bannon's *Odd \_\_\_ Out*
- 35 JFK predictions
- 37 Confronted
- 38 Trot out
- 39 Missile head
- 43 Suffix for southeast
- 44 Where a baker may put his meat
- 45 Gallery objects
- 46 Type of boom
- 47 What the Devil wears, in a movie
- 48 Nice buns, for example
- 49 Friar's affair
- 52 Anal alternative
- 53 Greek war deity
- 54 It was gauche, for Debussy
- 55 Active one
- 59 Shooters' org.



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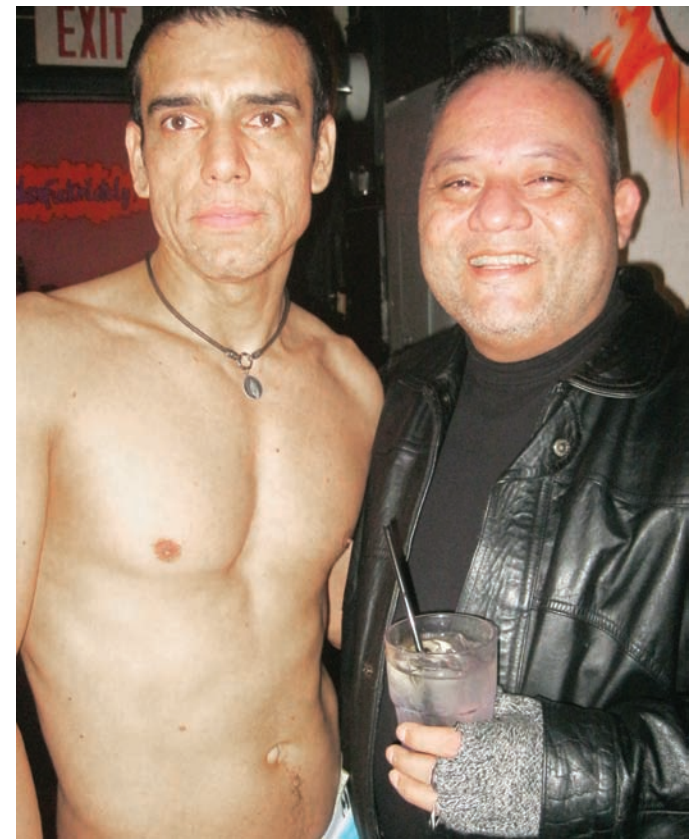
Keith, Lucy and Mathew at Dwell with Dignity Thrift Studio preview party.

**Purple Party Weekend** runs April 26–28. **RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars** winner **Chad Michaels** performs at the opening party at **S4** on April 26 with the full **Rose Room** cast. Brazilian sensation **DJ Gustavo Scorpio** headlines **Ignite**, the opening event of **Purple Party** weekend with an opening set by **DJ Paul McElroy**. The parties continue on April 27 as **DJ Justin Ryan** returns to Dallas to turn up the heat for **Rise**, Purple Party Weekend's official Saturday pool party, with a warm-up set by local DJ **Adam Metts** at **Sisu Uptown Resort**. Then **Southside Music Hall** hosts the **Main Event** with **Ana Paula** from Brazil and **Danny Verde** from Italy. **Purple Party** wraps up with a tea dance at **Lizard Lounge** and closing party at **Push** on April 28. ... The **Dallas Eagle** celebrates its 18th anniversary with a party that begins on April 26 at 7 p.m. **DJ Paul Kraft** spins on April 26 and **DJ Blaine Soileau** on April 27. ... **Kings and Queens of the Disco** at **Best Friends Club** benefits the **Greg Doll-gener Memorial AIDS Fund** on April 28. The show features **Miss Gay Texas State 2013 Madison Devereaux** and **Miss Gay Texas State at Large 2012 and 2013 Mattie Madison** and **Natasha Alexander Parson**. ... **Sweet Pain** performs at **Sue Ellen's** on April 26, **Everyone's Ex** on April 27 and **Ciao Bella** on April 28. ... **Linda Petty** and **The Main Event** performs at **Pekers** on April 26. Reserve a table ahead. ... **Mi Diva Loca** appears on **Woody's Back Patio** on April 26. ... **Dallas Diablos Rugby Football Casino Night** begins at 5 p.m. at the **Round-Up Saloon** on April 28. Proceeds benefit the rugby team. ... **DJ Muggs Mayhem** spins at **the Brick** on April 30. ... **Rusty Johnson's** back in town for the weekend and he performs at **Alexandre's** on April 26 with **Carlos Saenz**. **Jason Huff** appears April 26. **Anton Shaw** is the Wednesday entertainment and **Matt Barron** headlines on May 2. ... Calling all kings and queens to **Randy's Club Cherries** every Thursday night hosted by **Randy Norman** with \$200 cash prizes. ... Celebrate **Frisky Fridays with Ryan** at **BJ's NXS**. ...

To view more Scene photos, go to [DallasVoice.com/Category/Photos](http://DallasVoice.com/Category/Photos).



Greg and Stephanie at the Rose Room.



Rubik and Jesse at the Tin Room.



Friends' night out at Station 4.

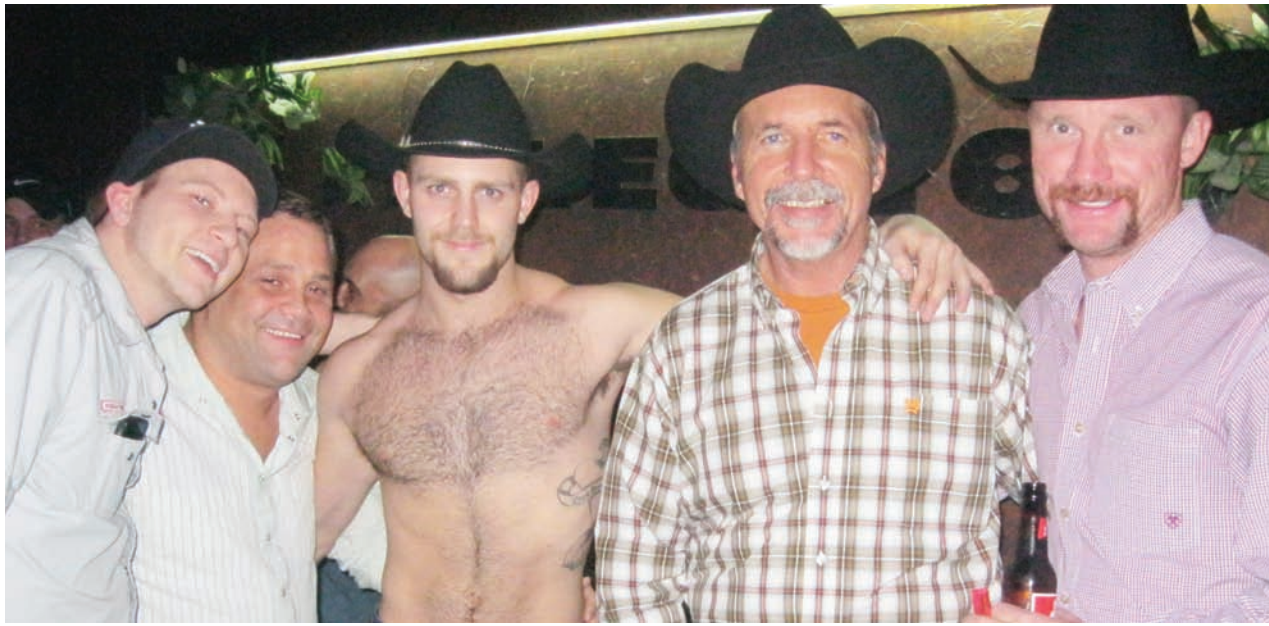


Vinnie and Christina at Best Friends Club.



Ashlei at the Rose Room.





Boys' night out at Club Reflection.



Daniel and Chris at Havana.



Jeffrey and Michael at the Round-Up Saloon.



Girls' night out at Sue Ellen's.

Mi Diva Loca  
  
Coles Whalen  
  
Heather Knox  
  
Eric Himan  
  
Bad Habits  


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