

dallasvoice

The Premier Media Group | Founded 1984 | Volume 31 | Issue 31 | FREE | Friday, December 12, 2014



**LGBT
TEXAN
OF THE YEAR**

**MICHAEL
SAM**

By Tammye Nash, Page 10

**Also inside:
Other local
notables in 2014**

What Consensus on PrEP?

In May 2014, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended the widespread scale up of the number of Americans on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent HIV transmission - to 500,000 people. The FDA first approved use of the AIDS treatment Truvada for a PrEP indication in July 2012. However, a Gilead Sciences/Baylor College of Medicine study of 55% of US pharmacies found that there had only been 3,253 prescriptions written for PrEP between January 2012 and March 2014. Despite recommendations by the CDC, the World Health Organization and others, there appears to be no unified consensus on PrEP, as many of the following comments and citations indicate:*

2014

NY Times Editorial Board

- “The dangers of that behavioral change [possible reduced condom use/inconsistent medication adherence] are worrisome. Unprotected sex could lead to higher rates of syphilis, gonorrhea and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as unwanted pregnancies. If people fail to take their pill every day, as many will, they will increase the risk of developing and spreading a resistant strain of the virus.”¹

Josh Barro, Reporter, New York Times

- “Mr. [Tim] Murphy writes [in New York Magazine], ‘When taken every day, it’s been shown in a major study to be up to 99 percent effective.’ This is a claim I hear thrown around a lot among gay men in New York. And it’s wrong. The 99 percent figure isn’t a study finding; it’s a statistical estimate, based on a number of assumptions that are reasonable, but debatable.”²

Liz Highleyman, Reporter, Bay Area Reporter

- “In randomized, controlled clinical trials the gold standard is “intent-to-treat” results – how well did a drug work among everyone assigned to take it, including people who may not have used it regularly or who stopped early due to side effects or for other reasons. This is usually the primary type of data reported in medical journals.”³

- Intent-to-treat results are thought to better reflect outcomes in the real world. A drug may have strong antiviral potency, for example, but if many people find it too inconvenient or too toxic to use regularly, its real effectiveness in practice may be low.”³



Gail Wyatt, Associate Director, UCLA AIDS Institute

- Dr Gail Wyatt, who has been working in the field for more than 30 years, said that adherence could be a problem for extreme high-risk populations that have little, if any, basic healthcare, and would need things like therapy before they could handle taking a pill everyday. “Those are the folks that I think we really need to focus on if we want to stem the tide of this sea – not the people who are always at the front of the line. Those would be the better educated, employed, middle-class individuals,” said Wyatt. “That’s where we usually start, and then we’re frustrated when we can’t bring other people to the table.”⁴

Daniel O’Neill, Physician, LGBT Health and HIV/AIDS Advocate

- “Also troubling is how the discussion to date has both overstated what we know about the effectiveness of PrEP and repeatedly mischaracterized it as a simple once-a-day blue pill, when in reality it involves so much more.”⁵

Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, former Medical Director, HIV Services, Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York

- “I would say personally, in my practice, I prescribe Truvada for pre-exposure prophylaxis, and about 50% of the people that present to me asking for Truvada, don’t get it, that they get other interventions and other things that I have to offer them to prevent HIV.”⁶

Larry Kramer, Gay Rights Advocate and Playwright

- “There is already a lot of complacency among gay men that makes the lucky uninfected neglect or reject condom use. So we don’t know the full story well enough to be raving so uncritically and warning so little.”⁷
- “ ‘Anybody who voluntarily takes an antiviral every day has got to have rocks in their heads,’ Mr. Kramer said, describing the side effects of drugs he has taken.”⁸

Zachary Quinto, Actor

- “I have heard too many stories of young people taking PrEP as an insurance policy against their tendency toward unprotected non-monogamous sex. THAT is my only outrage.”⁹

David Malebranche, Associate Professor of Medicine, Emory University School of Medicine

- “While you’re at it, go to bed after taking the blue pill and ignore the fact that 36 people in the iPrEx study contracted HIV despite being on Truvada. Sleep comfortably while the medication gets absorbed in your bloodstream, ignoring the examples of millions of MSM who have managed to remain HIV negative over the past three decades with behavioral change alone. Don’t concern yourself with thoughts of potential side effects or medical follow up to monitor your blood counts, kidney function, and bone density. Just keep dreaming. PrEP is as easy as taking a vitamin. Isn’t that what they’ve told you?”¹⁰
- “I refuse to be a mindless drone that simply dispenses medication based on demographic groupings and industry pressure, especially when many people may not need it to remain HIV negative.”¹⁰

Continued on next page

What Consensus on PrEP? (Continued from last page)

Susan Buchbinder, Assistant Clinical Professor UCSF Departments of Medicine and Epidemiology/Biostatistics

- “We know that people who take their pills regularly are probably different from people who don’t take their pills regularly on a number of levels,” [Dr. Susan Buchbinder] said; for example, they could use condoms more frequently or have fewer sex partners, and those behaviors could help them avoid H.I.V. independently of Truvada’s effects.”¹¹

Joseph Sonnabend, Physician and AIDS researcher

- “We simply do not know enough about PrEP to make a sweeping population based recommendation. We have little idea of what adherence might look like in various populations, we know little about the degree of protection in specific sexual acts. Different sex acts carry different risks, for example, to the receptive or insertive partner in anal sex. Also, how effective is PrEP in situations of exposure to high and low viral loads. So the WHO recommendation that all sexually active gay men consider PrEP is not only remarkable in that it’s supported by such scanty evidence, it’s also offensive because gay men are viewed as so uniformly dangerous that they need to be medicated.”¹²
- “A more balanced response would have been a call for more research, and importantly, for a fuller description of those individual situations where PrEP use may be a rational preventative intervention at the present time.”¹²

Dr. Mitchell Katz, Director of Los Angeles County’s Department of Health Services

- “I think [pre-exposure prophylaxis] is a very useful intervention for a very small percentage of people,” he said. “I don’t think it’s for everyone.”¹³

Richard Weinmeyer, Research Associate, American Medical Association’s Ethics Group

- In a February 2014 Bioethics Forum article, Weinmeyer — expressing his personal views — argued that preventive use of Truvada could encourage sexual irresponsibility. “Personal responsibility for one’s actions has simply been thrown out the window in a community in which we are too often concerned about stigma and moral judgment,” he wrote. “We dare not speak against the reckless behavior of others because we wring our hands over the omnipresent worry that we will shame one another.”¹⁴

2013

Regan Hoffman, Former Editor-in-Chief, POZ Magazine

- Regan Hofmann, the former editor-in-chief of Poz, a magazine for people living with AIDS, called PrEP a “profit-driven sex toy for rich Westerners.”¹⁵

2012

Sean Strub, Founder, POZ Magazine

- “Treatment as prevention is highly effective at preventing HIV transmission, but it isn’t going to protect from syphilis, the meningitis thingy that’s now so scary or lots of other nasty pathogens that are transmitted sexually.”¹⁶
- “I think it’s the wrong way to address HIV prevention.”¹⁶

2011

The Lancet

- “Enthusiasm generated by these results must be tempered with caution. A shortfall exists in access to antiretroviral drugs for populations in need of treatment to prolong their lives. In the face of the current global economic situation, how can these drugs be provided as prevention to those high-risk populations, while people with the disease in need of treatment continue to go without?”¹⁷
- “Expanding the use of antiretrovirals to include pre-exposure prophylaxis will increase the risk of resistance, which is already a serious problem. HIV is a rapidly evolving virus and development of resistance creates the need for ever changing regimens of drugs in various classes. The current dire situation with antibiotics should serve as a lesson to initiatives seeking to increase the ways in which we use antiretroviral drugs.”¹⁷

For works cited, please visit www.prepfacts.hiv





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Cover design by Kevin Thomas.

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Carol C. Cervantez and C. David Mallory

Two suspects arrested in Ashlea Harris murder

Two suspects have been arrested in connection with the death of Ashlea Harris, 31, of Fort Worth. Harris was found dead in her southwest Fort Worth apartment, Friday, Nov. 28, by firefighters responding to a fire.

Police believe after murdering Harris, Carol Carter Cervantez, 25, and Clarence David Mallory, 19, stole her keys, planning to rob the store she managed.

Both were signed and booked into the Fort Worth Jail on charges of capital murder offense and theft. Bail for each was set at \$600,000.

— James Russell

Same-sex couples half as likely to divorce as straights

A new study by the Williams Institute found that married gay and lesbian couples are half as likely to divorce as straight couples.

The study found that 1.1 percent of same-sex couples dissolve their relationships each year while 2 percent of opposite-sex couples divorce. It also found female couples are more likely than male couples to formalize their relationships. Also, even in states that already had marriage equality, same-sex couples were more likely to marry after the Windsor decision that struck down part of the Defense of Marriage Act.

— David Taffet

Justice Department releases new policy to curb police profiling

The Justice Department has released new policies aimed at curbing profiling by law enforcement based on sexual orientation, gender identity, religion and national origin, expanding on a 2003 decision to bar profiling based on race and ethnicity.

Attorney General Eric Holder said the policy is necessary especially in light of numerous recent incidents involving police brutality.

"Discrimination is not something we need to keep us safe — it's bad police work, it's unconstitutional, and it makes us all less safe," said National Center for Transgender Equality Executive Director Mara Keisling. But she also expressed reservations, citing a survey revealing 46 percent of transgender people say they would feel somewhat or very uncomfortable seeking police assistance.

— James Russell

Olgin murder trial update

David Strickland appeared for a status hearing in November in a case in which he pleaded not guilty to multiple charges, including murder, in connection with a 2012 attack on lesbian couple Mollie Olgin and Kristene Chapa in Portland, Texas.

The trial will take place in the San Patricio County Courthouse in Sinton, north of Corpus Christi.

Strickland's wife was also arrested in June. She was suspected of tampering with evidence, but that charge has been dropped.

Strickland appeared in court wearing a bullet-proof vest and defense attorneys may ask for a change of venue. The next hearing is set for Feb. 6.

— David Taffet

What's the best gayborhood in the U.S.? C'mon, you know...

The Out Traveler just compiled a list of the top 10 gayborhoods in the U.S. Li'l ol' Oak Lawn is number one!

Yup, according to the publication, the eateries and clubs (face it: We have quite a few bars in the Crossroads!), the proximity to both downtown and right here in the Design District (where the Voice offices are now located) and the friendliness of the residents (yee-haw, Texans!) make it the favorite in the land. So can we please get away from this "Dallatude" thing?

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Texas won't issue driver's license to gay man because he's married

According to a report in the Des Moines Register, an Iowa gay man who moved to an Austin suburb with his husband can't get Texas drivers license because of their marriage.

Michael Miller Gribble changed his name on all legal documents after he and his husband married. When they moved to Texas, he brought his marriage license and birth certificate to apply for his new driver's license. He was turned away because Texas won't recognize a marriage license from a same-sex couple as proof of a name change.

He was told he could either get a divorce or a legal name change. Opposite-sex couples do not need a court-order to change last names. A marriage license is proof of the change.

The newspaper reports that couples from Iowa have had similar problems in Nebraska, Florida and South Dakota. Iowa has been a marriage-equality state since 2009.

Gribble applied for a passport reflecting his new name. He can use that as proof of who he is rather than a marriage license and birth certificate.

This isn't the first time that the state of Texas has refused to issue a driver's license because of a same-sex-marriage-related name change. It happened earlier this year to a lesbian who legally married her female partner in California and then moved with her wife to Texas. And in October, Houston Mayor Annise Parker announced on Twitter that the state refused to give her 16-year-old daughter a driver's license because the girl's birth certificate listed two moms.

— David Taffet



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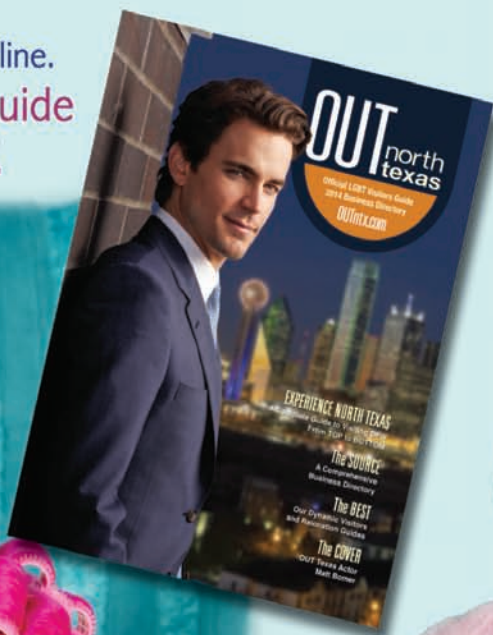
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localbriefs

Free spay, neuter services continue

Dallas Animal Services, Dallas Companion Animal Project, Spay Neuter Network and the SPCA of Texas continue to offer free surgeries and vaccinations for both owned pets and community cats through March 2015. Pets that do not have a current city registration will also be registered at no cost.

Make appointments by calling 214-324-4349. Caretakers of community cats should call 214-814-0161 or email pam.asturias@spayneuternet.org for assistance. Owners and caretakers must provide proof of residence at the time of surgery.

The free services are part of the Big Fix for Big D Initiative, which has already spayed and neutered some 20,000 cats and dogs in Dallas since the program's inception three years ago.

Ready For Hillary Tour Bus to stop in Fort Worth for rally

Tarrant For Hillary, a local organization of Hillary Clinton supporters urging the former secretary of state to seek the presidency in 2016, will host the Ready for Hillary Tour Bus, 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 17, at Cowtown Diner, 305 Main Street in Fort Worth. Tour the bus and join Rep. Marc Veasey, D-Fort Worth, for a complimen-

tary reception. Other local officials will share brief remarks.

Dallas ISD seeks literacy tutors

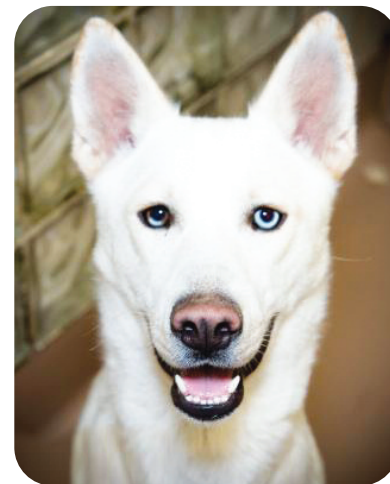
Dallas ISD is looking for literacy tutors to volunteer one hour a week. Volunteer tutors are matched with two students from first to third grades and asked to spend at least 30 minutes with each student per week. Visit <http://www.dallasisd.org/impact> or contact 972-925-5440 or volunteer@dallasisd.org for more information.

Classical music's biggest stars 'Sing for Hope' to cure HIV/AIDS

Sing for Hope, a New York City based national non-profit organization that helps artists give back to their community, gathered more than 70 of classical music's biggest stars, to create a new classical music CD: "An AIDS Quilt Songbook: Sing for Hope." Proceeds from the album will support amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research funding critical HIV/AIDS cure-focused research. The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, whose executive director was recently profiled by the Voice, inspired the album. The album is available for purchase nationwide \$19.95 via iTunes, Amazon and retail stores.

pet of the week / TJ

TJ is a handsome Siberian husky mix who was transferred to Operation Kindness from another shelter. TJ arrived with an injury that required treatment. Now he's all better and ready for a new start. TJ would love an active family who is willing to spend time with this young dog. He is a beautiful work in progress and with a little time and effort he will be an awesome dog. At 1 year old, he is pretty much fully grown. TJ has a thick, plush coat that will require some grooming. TJ is a great dog but he is still young and a very rambunctious pup. We recommend a home with older children because he may be too rough for small children and toddlers. If you are ready for a BIG puppy, come meet TJ.



TJ and other pets are available for adoption from Operation Kindness, 3201 Earhart Drive, Carrollton. The no-kill shelter is open six days: Monday, 3-8 p.m.; closed Tuesday; Wednesday, 3-8 p.m.; Thursday, noon-8 p.m.; Friday, noon-5 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, noon-5 p.m. The cost is \$110 for cats, \$135 for kittens, \$150 for dogs over 1 year, and \$175 for puppies. The cost includes the spay/neuter surgery, microchipping, vaccinations, heartworm test for dogs, leukemia and FIV test for cats, and more. Those who adopt two pets at the same time receive a \$20 discount.



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LGBT Texan of the Year: Michael Sam

First openly gay man drafted by the NFL has survived a year of ups and downs, but has lived his story 'with honesty and integrity'

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

Last January, if you weren't a college football fan, you'd probably never heard of Michael Sam. Today, just 12 short months later, everybody knows who he is: the first openly gay man drafted into the National Football League.

Sam, born Jan. 7, 1990, in Galveston, grew up in nearby Hitchcock, Texas, first taking to the football field at Hitchcock High School. Sam has said in previous interviews that at first, football was just a way to escape what he has described as an unhappy childhood. But by the time he graduated from high school, football had become his pathway to a much brighter future.

Sam accepted a scholarship from the University of Missouri and quickly became a standout player for the Mizzou Tigers. At the end of his senior season, Sam was named the Southeastern Conference's co-Defensive Player of the Year and a member of the All-SEC First Team. He was also named a semifinalist for the Chuck Bednarik Award, the Hendricks Award, and the Lombardi Award.

Early projections had Sam going in the third or

fourth round of the 2014 NFL draft. Then Sam came out as a gay man.

Sam's Mizzou teammates already knew he was gay. He told them during a team-building exercise in August 2013 as part of the preseason training. They hadn't cared, and it certainly hadn't affected his performance on the field.

"I looked in their eyes, and they just started shaking their heads — like, 'finally, he came out,'" Sam told the New York Times in an interview last February.

But when draft day came, it seemed as if perhaps the NFL wasn't as accepting as the Tigers. The SEC co-Defensive Player of the Year, a man expected to be grabbed up by a pro team no later than the fourth round, wasn't drafted until the seventh round. He was the 249th player taken out of 256 drafted.

Some have said that Sam was seen as being just too small to play defensive end and too slow to be an outside linebacker in the NFL. Others suggested that his disappointing performance in the NFL Scouting Combine in February caused him to drop in the draft.

But for LGBT sports fans, it was a sign that the NFL might not really be ready for its first openly gay player. And then Sam reacted to news that he had been drafted by the Rams by kissing his boyfriend, Vito Cammisano, and playfully smearing cake in his face — a moment broadcast by ESPN.

It didn't go over well with some folks, including some past and current players. Miami Dolphins

safety Don Jones tweeted "horrible" and "OMG." Derrick Ward, a former Super Bowl champion who had played for the New York Giants and the Houston Texans, tweeted: "I'm sorry but Michael Sam is no bueno for doing that on national TV," and "Man U got little kids lookin at the draft. I can't believe ESPN even allowed that to happen."

Sam made his professional football debut in a preseason game on Aug. 8 against the New Orleans Saints. He made one tackle in that game, and in his second game, he tallied his first professional QB sack. In four NFL preseason games with the Rams, Sam made 11 tackles and three sacks, including a game-leading six tackles in the final game.

And yet, on Aug. 30, the Rams cut Michael Sam. NBC News' Pro Football Talk website noted, "Unfortunately for Sam, he was simply caught up in a numbers game, and the Rams decided that he wasn't one of the top 53 players on their roster." Rams Coach Jeff Fisher, who had vowed Sam would be treated like any other player, said cutting him was "a football decision."

But again, others felt his sexual orientation was a factor. Buffalo Bills lineman Eric Wood blamed ESPN, saying that the sports station's breathless reporting on the presence of an openly gay player in an NFL locker room turned Sam's efforts to make the team into a "distraction," something no NFL team would be willing to risk.

Within days, the Dallas Cowboys had added Sam to their practice squad. And Sam came home to Texas, bringing Cammisano with him. But on

Oct. 21, Sam was cut again.

Cyd Zeigler with OutSports.com said in a Nov. 4 post that NFL league officials told him there are several teams that "have their eye on" Michael Sam. And, he said, former Arizona Cardinal and former St. Louis Rams player Aeneas Williams, an NFL Hall of Fame defensive back, told Zeigler that he believes Sam has the ability to play ball at the pro level, and that he expects to see Sam playing on some team soon.

Zeigler, though, wasn't so confident. He wrote, "For now, there is no other explanation for the collective snub of Sam: NFL team front offices are not treating Michael Sam equally simply because he's openly gay."

Regardless of what happens now, though, Michael Sam has already made history. And he has already taken the LGBT community several steps forward with him on the road to equality.

Cece Cox, CEO of Resource Center, said this week that Sam's story is a big deal, for him and for the community as a whole.

"We've made so much progress in the last few years, and we hear so many success stories every day about LGBT people. But what's so interesting about Michael Sam's story is that it has been such a big deal," Cox said. "That is a reminder to us that it really is a big deal still. His story inspires so many people, and we still need that. As LGBT people we need to see that, and LGBT allies and even those who are against us need to see that."

■ SAM, Page 15

Plano passes flawed nondiscrimination ordinance

Gay and lesbian Plano residents called the ordinance a first step but trans community believes the ordinance makes things worse



FIRST DOWN | Gay and lesbian Plano residents sat among opponents who carried anti-ordinance signs at the Dec. 8 Plano City Council meeting. (Photo courtesy Todd Whitley)

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
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The Plano City Council passed an LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance on Monday, Dec. 8, by a 5-3 margin after a contentious debate, and not without angering some on both sides of the debate.

The ordinance prohibits “discrimination in places of public accommodation, employment practices, housing transactions and city contracting practices.”

Anti-LGBT opponents claim the new ordinance allows men to use women’s bathrooms, even though the ordinance has an exemption for bathroom use. LGBT rights advocates are unhappy with the vast number of exemptions listed in the ordinance.

Toyota’s impending move of its corporate headquarters from California to Plano provided the impetus for passing a nondiscrimination ordinance. Although none would speak to Dallas Voice on the record, some gay and lesbian employees of Toyota are concerned that their marriages will become invalid when they move to Texas. Plus, Plano only scored 22 on the Human Rights Campaign’s Municipal Equality Index.

Objections to the ordinance poured into the mayor’s and councilmembers’ offices from Attorney General-elect Ken Paxton from McKinney and a variety of Collin County lawmakers, including Jodie Laubenberg of Parker. Laubenberg is best known for saying on the floor of the Texas Legislature that rape kits prevent pregnancy.

Liberty Institute opposed the ordinance and is threatening to sue the city, calling the law unconstitutional.

“In effect, the proposed ordinance makes it a

crime to do business in the city of Plano while maintaining Christian, Jewish, Muslim or other traditional religious views of marriage, sexuality and gender identity,” Liberty Institute said in a written statement.

While a number of Christian denominations and most branches of Judaism recognize same-sex marriage, the ordinance offers a number of exemptions including a religious exemption.

Other exemptions are offered for political, governmental, educational and non-profit organizations.

Todd Whitley, Equality Texas communications manager, was at the meeting and described the atmosphere as poisonous.

“It was as if the only thing missing was their pitchforks and torches,” Whitley said.

He did credit the mayor and council for remaining steadfast in their support. He said after listening to the accusations from opponents, Mayor Harry LaRosiliere told the crowd they were going to pass the ordinance because it was the right thing to do. Whitley applauded LaRosiliere’s leadership in refusing to table the ordinance and in getting it approved by the council.

Trans Pride Initiative Executive Director Nell Gaither said the ordinance opens with a “good, broad statement on discrimination,” but then becomes ineffective because of the exemptions.

“I’ve never seen such broad exemptions,” she said.

She said the city attorney’s statement on the exemption of non-profits specifically targets the trans community. The attorney referenced “men

■ PLANO, Page 17

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Activists urge caution in coming out by claiming benefits; TCDRS clarifies means of designating spouses

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

Activists Rafael McDonnell and David Mack Henderson recently discovered rules issued by the IRS requiring even states that don't legally recognize same-sex marriages to recognize same-sex spouses when it comes to federal tax issues.

That means, McDonnell and Henderson noted, that defined contribution and defined benefit plans — which includes 401(k) retirement plans, and 125 “cafeteria plans,” among others — must recognize a plan member's legal same-sex spouse, as long as the couple was married in a jurisdiction that legally recognizes same-sex marriage.

But the activists are also warning that just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

“You're walking a tightrope here,” said McDonnell, the communications and advocacy manager for Dallas' Resource Center. “There's no state law in Texas that protects LGBT people from employment discrimination. So even if someone has the right to designate their same-sex spouse as their beneficiary, that doesn't mean they couldn't then

be fired” for being gay.

Some governmental jurisdictions and agencies do have statutes and policies prohibiting anti-LGBT discrimination in employment. Cities like Dallas and Fort Worth have implemented such protections, as have some counties. But in Texas, those jurisdictions and agencies remain the exception and not the rule.

“People could really be opening themselves up to a lot of risk,” McDonnell said.

Henderson, a tax preparation specialist and president of Fairness of Fort Worth, agreed.

“It's one thing for us as activists to say you have the right to do this. It's quite another for somebody to step up and put themselves on the line like that,” Henderson said. “It just may not be a prudent decision. That's part of the sad truth of inequality.”

Earlier in the month, McDonnell and Henderson pointed out that the board of the Dallas Police and Fire Pension System, which is a 401(a) retirement plan but is one of 12 systems in the state that are specifically enabled by state statute, recently “kicked the can down the road” by choosing to continue to study the option of offering benefits to same-sex spouses of employees, rather than putting those benefits in place as the Dallas City Council had ordered.

McDonnell said DFPF has no choice but to get policies in place to offer those benefits by the IRS'

Dec. 31 deadline. But the independent counsel consulted by the DFPF board says otherwise.

McDonnell said he had contacted Dallas City Councilman Lee Kleinman — who, with Councilmembers Phillip Kingston, Scott Griggs and Tennell Atkins, is a councilmember trustee for DFPF — regarding the pension plans failure to recognize same-sex spouses. Kleinman and Carolyn Davis are councilmember trustees on the Dallas Employee Retirement Fund and “have been working for benefits there as well,” Kleinman said.

Kleinman told McDonnell in an email that, according to DFPF's attorney, “your analysis is contingent on the requirement that these plans are subject to” the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, and therefore subject to the Supreme Court's ruling on DOMA. DFPF is not subject to ERISA, he said, and therefore not required to comply with the ruling on DOMA.

Kleinman also stressed that he and other councilmembers have pushed consistently for both DFPF and DERF to offer benefits to same-sex spouses of employees.

McDonnell, however, noted that legal counsel in other jurisdictions had reached different conclusions, and suggested DFPF “should go ahead and make the change now. First of all, it's just the right thing to do, and secondly, you don't want the IRS coming after you.”

Retirement plans that do not comply with the IRS guidelines on recognizing same-sex spouses risk being disqualified for tax-deferred contributions, which means that contributions to those plans that had previously been pre-tax income would suddenly become immediately taxable.

“In my opinion,” McDonnell said, “failing to

offer those benefits or delaying recognition ignores the fiduciary responsibility these plans have to their members. You ignore the IRS at your own peril. These people don't play around.”

Designating your 'spouse'

In initial reports, McDonnell and Henderson said that Dallas County human resources officials had indicated that the Texas County and District Retirement System — the retirement plan for Dallas County employees — complies with the IRS ruling on recognizing same-sex spouses, but that at present, LGBT employees could only designate their spouses as beneficiary “other than spouse.”

Because the IRS does not recognize domestic partnerships or civil unions, the “other than spouse” designation could cause problems down the line, the activists noted.

However, a public relations firm working with the TCDRS notified Dallas Voice that the retirement system makes no distinction between opposite-sex and same-sex spouses.

TCDRS officials said in a statement to Dallas Voice, “At the Texas County and District Retirement System, members can designate their legal spouse as their beneficiary regardless of gender. When designating via paper form or online, they would just select ‘spouse.’”

That, said Henderson, “is huge.”

He continued, “That is a very significant clarification, and it means that TCDRS is far more in line with the IRS guidances than we were told previously. That means a great deal, because legally spouses get preferential tax treatment in all sorts of situations.” ■



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New federal contract rule could affect ExxonMobil

Companies doing business with the federal government must amend EEO policies

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

A new rule affecting companies that do business with the federal government may finally force ExxonMobil to add gender identity and sexual orientation into its Equal Employment Opportunity policy.

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance finalized rules this week banning federal contractors from discriminating based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The new rule allows the federal government to implement an executive order issued by President Barack Obama over the summer.

While most major corporations already have nondiscrimination policies in place, Irving-based ExxonMobil has steadfastly resisted making nondiscrimination a corporate policy by fighting shareholder resolutions and refusing to place wording in its EEO statement.

Before Exxon and Mobil merged in 1999, Mobil was one of the most progressive U.S. companies in terms of protecting LGBT employees and providing benefits for same-sex partners. After the merger with Exxon, all of those rights and benefits were removed.

Each year, shareholders have proposed adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the EEO policy. For the past several years, the New York state pension funds, which own \$1.5 billion in ExxonMobil stock, have put the proposal before shareholders for a vote. Each year, the proposal has been voted down by shareholders.

One year, the company even went to court to prevent the proposal from going to shareholders for a vote. The company lost in court, but won the vote taken at the annual meeting, held each year at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas.

Exxon has argued that it doesn't discriminate against any of its employees and this year began offering partner benefits.

On a scale of 0 to 100, Human Rights Campaign again rated Exxon a negative 25 in its Corporate Equality Index. Despite the fact that the company is once again offering benefits it took away from Mobil employees when the companies merged in 1999, there are no employment protections in place for LGBT workers. HRC said that because of that gap in protections, an employee could apply for benefits but then be fired after outing himself.

While ExxonMobil has no employment protections in place, the company has rarely been accused of employment discrimination. Last year, however, the national workplace discrimination organization Freedom to Work filed a suit against the company in Illinois.

According to Freedom to Work President Tico

Almeida, Freedom to Work used a paired testing method that is a longstanding practice civil rights organizations use to root out illegal discrimination in employment and housing.

Two test resumes were submitted for a position with the company. One was an LGBT applicant who was highly qualified for the position. Another was a less-qualified straight woman.

Exxon responded by treating the better-qualified LGBT applicant far worse than the less qualified non-LGBT applicant.

On three occasions, Exxon contacted the less-qualified, non-LGBT candidate for an interview, and Exxon even suggested that it would hold open the job for that person. The better-qualified LGBT candidate was never contacted by Exxon about the position.

"While our litigation against Exxon is currently before the Illinois Human Rights Department, the oil giant's failure to change their policies opens them up to new legal complaints based on President Obama's latest executive order," Almeida said in a written statement. "As we look to settle our case, we call on Labor Secretary Tom Perez to help ensure that ExxonMobil adequately amends its Standards of Business Conduct and does away with its notorious and offensive anti-LGBT workplace policies and practices."

Pride at Work Executive Director Jerame Davis welcomed the change to federal contractor employment policy but said the "rule is not a silver bullet." "Every day, LGBT workers face untold difficulties



in the workplace," Davis said in a statement. "From taunts and harassment to being denied promotions and being fired, LGBT employees are regular targets on the job and in the hiring process."

Although some workers in every state will now be covered by workplace protections, the rule still doesn't cover all workers.

The new rules only cover workers in companies that do business with the federal government. Other gay and lesbian employees remain without protection in 29 states, and transgender employees are vulnerable in 32 states. The new rule applies to federal contractors who hold contract entered into or modified on or after April 8.

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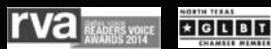
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Black Tie Dinner distributes \$1 million



THANK YOU | Legacy Counseling Center rolls out a thank you banner after receiving a check for \$32,010 at the 33rd annual Black Tie Dinner check distribution party at Renaissance Hotel on Dec. 11. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

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Half goes to HRC; Resource Center
receives largest local donation

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Black Tie Dinner distributed \$1 million in funds at its annual distribution party on Thursday, Dec. 11 at the Renaissance Hotel on Stemmons Freeway.

Of the 15 local beneficiaries that split \$500,000, Resource Center received the largest check at \$58,785. Other beneficiaries received between \$27,000 and \$40,000.

Human Rights Campaign national board co-chair Cathi Scalise accepted the organization's check for \$500,000.

The 33rd annual Black Tie Dinner was held on Nov. 15 at the Sheraton Dallas. Speakers included WFAA sportscaster Dale Hansen, comedian Dana Goldberg, basketball player Jason Collins and singers Steve Grand and Alex Newell.

Prop 8 attorney David Boies attended early in the evening but had to catch an early flight to Washington. His partner in the litigation, Ted Olsen, spoke during the dinner.

Next year's event returns to the Sheraton on Nov. 14. ■

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Congregation Beth El Binah.....	\$28,210
Equality Texas Foundation.....	\$29,035
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund.....	\$39,060
Legacy Counseling Center.....	\$32,010
Legal Hospice of Texas.....	\$29,010
Northaven United Methodist Church.....	\$29,935
Resource Center.....	\$58,785
Turtle Creek Chorale.....	\$28,010
Uptown Players.....	\$31,335
Women's Chorus of Dallas.....	\$27,160



Habgood to lead Realtor group

Steve Habgood of Hewitt & Habgood Realtors, pictured here with his business partner Kathy Hewitt, has been elected president of MetroTex Association of Realtors. With 15,000 members from throughout North Texas, MetroTex is the fifth largest real estate association in the U.S. It provides a number of services to its members, including professional development, community service and advocating for homeowner property rights. In the upcoming legislature, Habgood said, the organization will lobby extensively on a number of issues, including transportation and water issues, taxation and property rights.

Texas town hall on same-sex marriage set

De Leon v. Perry plaintiffs will be among those in attendance at Austin event

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

The new Texas for Marriage coalition will host a town hall to discuss what's next for marriage equality in the Lone Star State and across the nation at 6 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 15, in the George and Alice Brown Conference Room in the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, 2313 Red River St., Austin.

The event is free and open to the public.

The forum comes less than a month before the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals is set to hear arguments, on Jan. 9 in New Orleans, in same-sex marriage cases from Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Speakers will include Evan Wolfson, president of Freedom to Marry; Mark McKinnon, media adviser to President George W. Bush and Texas chair of Freedom to Marry; and Cleopatra De Leon and Nicole Dimetman, plaintiffs in De Leon v. Perry, Texas' federal marriage case.

"Texas families and employers have been left behind — and the discrimination in Texas is causing them real hardship and unfairness. With the 5th Circuit about to hear arguments in another set of marriage cases, most of which have resulted in freedom to marry wins, the Texas for Marriage campaign is calling on supporters to continue creating the climate that encourages the courts and state officials to bring this discrimination to an end without delay," Wolfson said.

■ **SAM**, From Page 10

Cox said she has met Sam at LGBT community events in Dallas, "but I don't really know him." Still, she said, from what she has seen, Sam has handled this tumultuous year with grace.

"His story has been so powerful, and he has lived it with such integrity. It's easy for somebody who suddenly becomes a celebrity, with so much attention on them, to let it go to their heads. But he has stayed humble," Cox said. "When the



In February, U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia ruled the Texas ban is unconstitutional, but he put a stay on his order while the state appealed. LGBT groups are calling on Garcia to lift the stay, which would allow same-sex couples to marry immediately in Texas.

Should Orlando lift his stay, the conservative 5th Circuit is likely to place a new stay on the ruling until it hears the case.

The U.S. Supreme Court earlier this year refused to hear appeals on cases from other states in which marriage bans were overturned, and the number of marriage equality states has increased from 19 to 35 since Garcia's ruling.

Texas is one of 15 states that still bans same-sex marriage. According to a 2010 Census analysis by LGBT policy think tank The Williams Institute, 46,401 same-sex couples are living in Texas, representing 5.2 same-sex couples per 1,000 households. ■

hateful, mean and hurtful comments started, he stayed on the high road. He didn't stoop to their level."

She added, "Michael Sam's story matters, and he has told that story in such an amazing way. Playing in the NFL is not an easy job, and he's had a tough year. But he has remained positive through it all. He has lived his life with honesty and integrity. What he is doing has inspired people, and I hope he keeps on doing it." ■

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Holiday spotlight: Gauge Xavier's Annual Coat Challenge



JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

Gauge Xavier just doesn't just share updates with his friends on Facebook. He also uses the social media site to get friends involved in their communities.

An active supporter of LGBT causes and member of the Dallas Bears, Xavier has plenty to oc-

cupy him already. But the one event he organizes that can have the most impact is also one of the easiest to set up.

Every year, Xavier sets up a simple Facebook event page asking friends to "donate a new or gently used coat, gloves, scarf and/or hat to the local charity of your choice, preferably one that does not resale the item, to bring the gift of warmth to someone desperately in need."

This year's clothing drive runs through Dec. 20.

Xavier started the coat drive a few years ago while living in Pittsburgh. "It was a way for my company to give back," he said.

When he moved back to his native Texas in 2011, Xavier brought the tradition with him.

"Facebook is another way to help communities and carry on an annual tradition first begun out of state," he wrote via e-mail. "I have 700-plus friends out there to get the word out and challenge them to do the same in their communities world wide."

Xavier, who now lives in Arlington in a polyamorous relationship with his "three wonderful husbands," said response has been wonderful.

While he does not track donations, Xavier said he doesn't need to; he trusts people.

"There is no official tracking, as the challenge is designed to get people thinking and doing in their respective communities. Those who share on the Facebook event are the only tracking.

"I have to trust if they say they gave, that they gave. I can't be distrusting of humanity and micro managing the giving of others." ■



Holiday Calendar

DECEMBER

Through Dec. 14: Linze's Toys for Tots Drive
Linze Serell's eighth annual Toys for Tots drive and Christmas party begins at 8 p.m. at Garlow's, 308 E. Main Street, Gun Barrel City.

Through Dec. 20: Gauge Xavier's Annual Coat Challenge
Dallas Bears member Gauge Xavier challenges you to donate new or gently used winter clothing to the local charity of your choice, preferably one that does not resale the item. <http://on.fb.me/1Begw3s>.

Through Dec. 24: 16th Annual CoH Christmas Gift Wrap Service
Drop off gifts in the reception area at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road, before Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services

throughout December and they will be wrapped and ready for you when you leave. Purchase gifts at Sources and use the CoH Gift Wrap Service to receive a \$2 Sources gift card. 5:30-8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 3, 10 and 17. 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 7, 14, 21. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24.

Contact Paul Kolasci at paulkolasci@gmail.com to make an alternative appointment.

Dec. 12: AIDS Walk South Dallas launch party
Fifth anniversary launch party hosted by Dallas Black Dance Theater, 6:30-9:30 p.m. at 2700 Flora St. AIDSWalkSouthDallas.com.

Dec. 13: Women's Chorus of Dallas presents HoliDAZE
TWCD sing holiday classics with a twist, 7 p.m. at City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. Tickets at 214-520-7828 or TWCD.org.

Dec. 13: LEGACY Christmas Event & Planning Session

Cathedral of Hope's monthly social group for adults 50 years and older meets for a Christmas Carol potluck dinner at 1:30 p.m. at Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Dr. Contact Roy Joplin via e-mail at rvj5868@att.net with questions.

Dec. 14: Advent: Joy, Music Sunday, 9 and 11 a.m., at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

Dec 14: Worship Service and Holiday Potluck
Following the 10:30 a.m. service, stick around for the 11:45 a.m. Holiday Potluck Dinner at Agape Metropolitan Community Church, 4615 E. California Parkway, Fort Worth.

Dec 14: Community Cantata: "Noel Celebration"

Former WFAA news anchor Gloria Campos narrates the production featuring churches from the region, 3 p.m. at Celebration on the Lake, 9120 S. Hwy. 198, Maybank. Contact Kathy at 817-602-4645 for more information.

Dec 14: Alexandre's Wreath Auction
The Seventh Annual Christmas Wreath Auction

is from 8–10 p.m. at Alexandre's, 4026 Cedar Springs Road. The pre-party begins at 7 p.m. with catered food, drink specials and the opportunity for silent bidding before the auction. Wreaths will be on display for viewing and silent bidding inside Alexandre's before and on Dec. 14.

Dec. 15: Tarrant County Stonewall Democrats Holiday Party

The Tarrant County Stonewall Democrats host a free holiday party from 7-10 p.m. at The Phoenix Apartments, 429 College Ave., Fort Worth. Catering will be provided as well as mulled wine and beer. RSVP here: facebook.com/HolidayParty.

Dec. 14: Oak Lawn Band Concert

Join the Oak Lawn Band for a free silent auction and concert at 7 p.m. at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. Donations encouraged.

Dec. 15: Resource Center Open House

Drop by and meet the staff, 5:30–6:30 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St.

Dec 16: DFW Trans-Cendence Holiday Party and Potluck

7 p.m. at Agape MCC, 4615 E. California Parkway, Fort Worth. ■

■ **PLANO**, From Page 11

trying to access women's services."

Gaither said that referred to trans women accessing services from shelters.

Plano spokesman Steve Stoler gave Dallas Voice a statement from Plano City Attorney Paige Mims that concurred with Gaither's assessment.

"Non-profits are excluded because many non-profits have a service model based on segregated classes that is vital to their mission such as domestic abuse shelters to protect women or substance recovery homes limited to one gender. Rather than carve out detailed exceptions for every non-profit scenario, the city decided to blanket exclude non-profits," Mims said.

Mims also weighed in on the bathroom language.

"The city tried to balance privacy interests with equality interests," Mims said. "Most public bathrooms are semi-private and not conducive for privacy reasons to being unisex. Whether bathrooms are segregated based on gender is at the discretion of the particular business. If bathrooms are segregated, people will use the bathroom that corresponds with their physical anatomy whether born with that anatomy or changed by surgery."

Gaither questioned whether the Plano Police Department would start a new "genitalia unit" that would inspect anyone accessing a public bathroom in Plano. She said she is concerned that enforcement of this exclusion would make things worse in Plano for trans men and women than before the ordinance.

And Gaither warned that trans people would not be the only ones affected. Anyone who is not gender-conforming that accesses a restroom in Plano could be arrested and forced to prove his or her gender.

Gay and lesbian Plano residents who attended the meeting were more cautiously optimistic. All called LaRosiliere a hero or new-found ally after he threatened the anti-ordinance crowd with re-

moval from the chambers.

Jeannie Rubin, a founder of the Collin County LGBT group GALA, was excited about passage of the ordinance.

"It's the first big suburban city to catch up with the rest of the world," she said.

She said the city strategy was to keep discussion of the ordinance under the radar to keep the opponents away. The city used the same strategy in October when Plano updated its EEO policy for city employees. Those changes went into effect immediately with partner benefits set to begin in January.

Rubin said the deputy city manager has offered to become the liaison to the LGBT community and city staff has indicated the ordinance is a beginning. She expects the ordinance to be updated and amended as the Dallas and Fort Worth laws have been.

Rubin also said she expects other Collin County cities to follow Plano's lead.

"In Collin County alone we have 22 cities," Rubin said. "So this is just the tip of the iceberg."

Plano resident Dawnetta Miller, who spoke at the Plano City Council meeting, said, "Change is incremental. We've turned a corner in Plano."

She acknowledged the shortcomings of the ordinance and said it could be revisited down the road.

Attorney Lorie Burch, who was raised in Plano and now lives and practices there, also spoke at the meeting. Burch called the city "conservative but welcoming."

The discussion of the ordinance "brought out the most extreme side of our community," Burch said. "They made the point we're a bunch of bullies, but they were threatening lawsuits and voting [councilmembers] out of office."

Burch acknowledged that the ordinance is not perfect.

"We didn't get everything we want," Burch said. "[But] we got a first down. Let's keep moving the ball." ■

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The 'Golden Rule' is not enough

Plano serves as the perfect example of why nondiscrimination laws are necessary, despite progress made

Despite where I stand on some political issues, I do understand the desire of many people to want to limit the role of government in their lives. And I understand firsthand the importance of faith and why people want to protect their ability to exercise their religion in their churches as they see fit.

I may not agree with their beliefs, but the Constitution of the United States says others' religious freedom doesn't require my consent.

But some religious people — many of them the same ones squawking about the government interfering too much in their personal lives — use the first amendment's protection of religion as a license to discriminate against people who might not fit into their narrow views.

So, after sitting through three very long, unnerving hours at the Plano City Council meeting Monday night, Dec. 8, where they were holding a public forum on expanding the city's nondiscrimination policy to include veteran status, sexual orientation and gender identity, I can assure you that our country still, absolutely, needs laws that protect some of its most vulnerable citizens.

At the outset, I started typing a transcript of the speakers. The very first speaker, before finishing with a threat to sue the city, decreed, "We will see people of faith subject to criminalization." The crowd, despite being asked to remain quiet, went wild, as if Dirk Nowitzki had just drained a massive three pointer in a defender's face.

The hate continued:

"Government should not influence religion or limit people from acting on their religious beliefs," the second speaker asserted.

"The pendulum of progress should not swing too far," said the next.

A pastor of a church relocating from Dallas to Plano got up and said that the ordinance was a threat to public safety and freedom of religion and criticized the council for equating "race and veteran status with sexual conduct." His final reminder to the council was against changing the fabric of Plano.

The next speaker proclaimed he knew of no instances where peoples' rights were currently being denied and was worried that the people protected by the amended policy would become some type of special beneficiaries.

(This doe-eyed theme of "no discrimination in Plano" would be repeated several times throughout the night.)

After a couple more speakers, I gave up; I couldn't type anymore of the bile.

With a precious few exceptions, the rest of the speakers came out against the ordinance with a mix of borrowed talking points, various untruths, the plea for more time, the "financial burden to small business" argument, and of course the choruses of "You're persecuting us by taking away

our rights to discriminate." (That's my paraphrase, of course.)

Not all the voices were hate-filled, nor were all the Christian viewpoints contradictory to the axiom to treat others as we want to be treated.

A straight man in his early 20s said in his remarks that he was standing with his lesbian sister and urged the city to do the same. A straight faith leader in the community professed her support as an expression of her faith — while being heckled for going over her time limit. During her remarks in support of the amended policy, a lifelong Plano resident and lesbian would ask those of us in support to stand with her.

I had forgotten the practice of some pro-equality folks to wear red to meetings like this; I stood up anyway, thankful I had at least worn burgundy-colored pants. I think this is the first time I really felt my face flush when I stood up for what I believed.

The majority of our allies were on the opposite side of the chamber; only about six to eight of us were where I was sitting. Many members of the audience craned their necks to look at us and sneer, or they looked away, shaking their heads as if in disgust.

Followers of Jesus? Really?

By the time the 30-plus speakers finished, I was emotionally exhausted and concerned not only about the vote count but also about my safety walking to my car when it was over.

I sat there, the hateful words echoing painfully in my head, realizing that despite how far we've come, how much equality has been won, there are people hell-bent on using religion, of all things, to keep us from realizing our Constitution-given rights.

But the mayor was next.

Diligent and prepared for the vote that was about to occur, but also visibly frustrated by the opposition's lack of respect for the governing body and the process, the mayor was clear and resolute. The unnerving fervor of the riled-up religious folks — who lacked only torches and pitchforks to complete the picture — did not deter the mayor, who left no doubt: The city was going to pass this because it was the right thing to do. (You know, "love your neighbor as yourself" kinda stuff.)

And expectedly, they were furious.

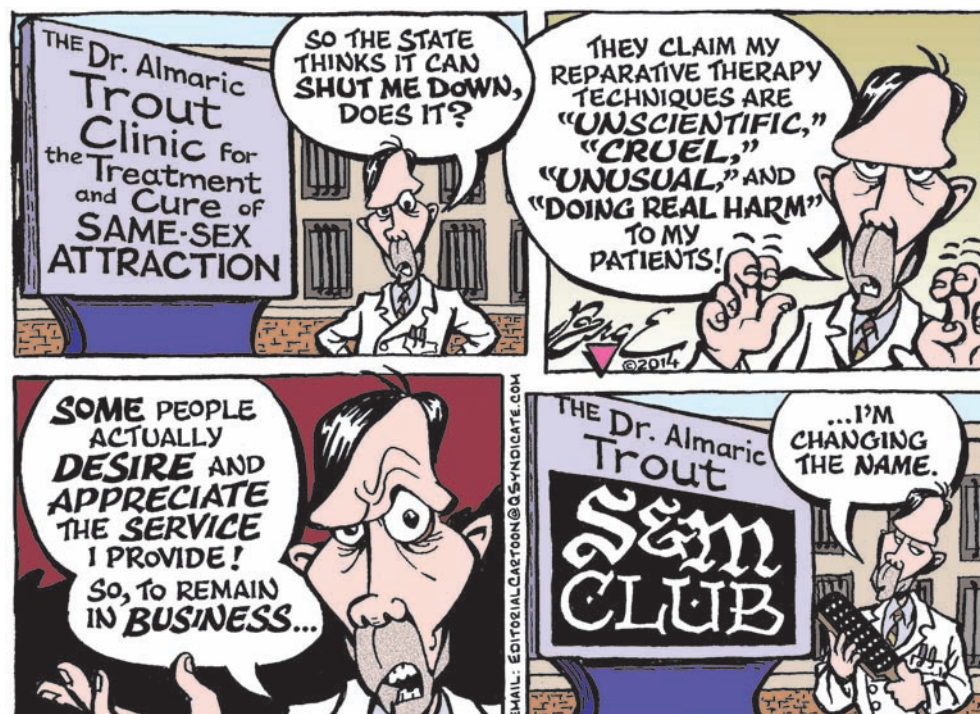
"Religious liberty! Fewer laws!" was the theme of the opposition.

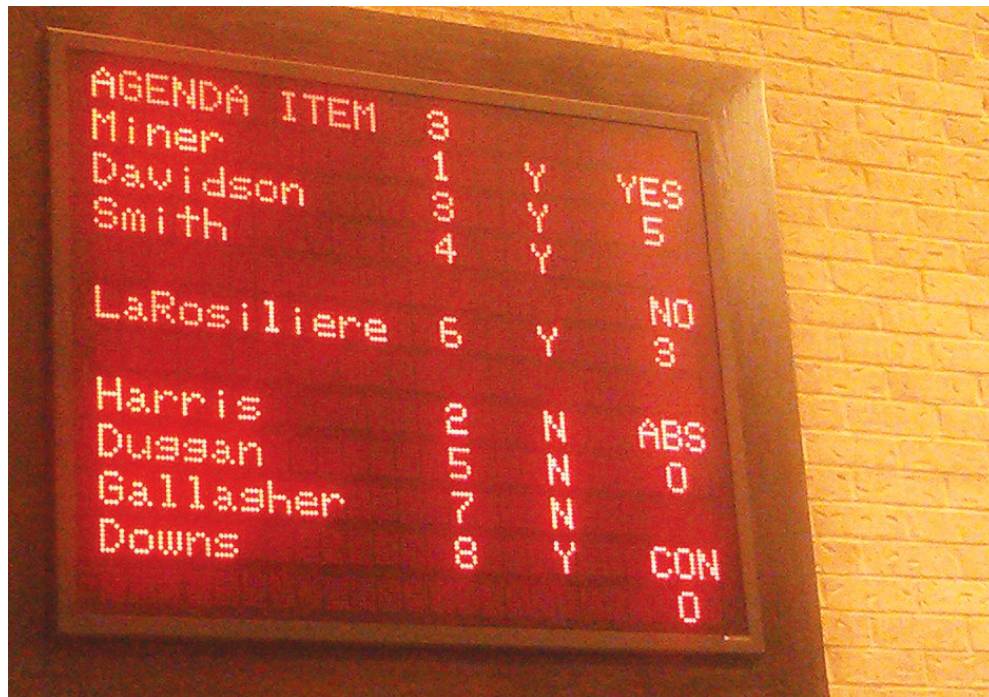
But if we trusted the "good judgment" of people — as a couple folks asked — women might still not be voting and we might still have slavery. The same kinds of laws that were necessary to force people to let women vote or own property, to allow people of different races to marry, to require citizens to serve all people regardless of race are still very much needed today for gay and transgender people.

The same people who scream about their lack



Todd Whitley
Contributing Columnist





of rights to discriminate against gay and transgender people are the direct descendants of the people who once needed the laws to force them to treat women and blacks and disabled people equally.

Personally, I am disgusted by those who sling around terms like “homosexual conduct” (they are using that word purposefully) and the sheer gall of those who reduce the experience of transgender people to “a man who would put on a dress in order to prey on a woman or a child in a bathroom.”

Plain and simple, these people are not truth-tellers. The Jesus of their Bible neither addressed loving, same-gender relationships nor explained his views of those who choose to express their gender based on what the individual — not society — believes it to be. (Hint: love your freakin neighbor as yourself).

But Jesus did talk a lot about telling the truth and about loving people.

The notion that anyone’s bathroom safety is at risk because of allowing a person to self-determine which bathroom to use is an outright fabrication. Like choosing to walk on the other side of the sidewalk when a black man is approaching, a person may feel uncomfortable around a transgender person. But bias is not protected by law.

Transgender people simply want to use the

bathroom safely just like everyone else.

Further, the belief that someone’s religion allows them to discriminate is wholly against the scripture these people claim to adhere to so vigorously. Faith gives no one license to refuse to serve someone of a different color, or to own them and make them harvest their cotton, or make them stay in the home and keep silent with no say in society, or . . .

Wait. What century are we in? Seriously.

I am grateful that yet another municipality saw fit to stand for those among them who need the protection of government. I admire the bravery of their stand and how many did so outwardly, because their faith compelled them to.

How I wish we didn’t need laws to compel citizens to do the right thing, that we could rely on the good judgment of people, that we could trust the words of those claiming to practice a guideline suggested by many different religions: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

But we are not there yet.

Not even close. ■

Todd Whitley is a local activist and communications manager for Equality Texas. He can usually be found tweeting (@toddwhitley), holding a picket sign, thrift store shopping or eating Tex-Mex. Read his blog at tdub68.wordpress.com

Letter to the Editor

All-time low

The Voice stooped to an all time low [in the Dec. 5 issue] with the article about the Grindr scammer (“Grindr scammer targeting Dallas gay men”).

Really, this is just a gossip column. When someone loans someone money, regardless of the sob story they hear, it’s a choice they make. The guy who loaned Michael Bellah money chose to do that. He hardly knew the guy, felt sorry for him and then loaned it. It was his choice. Since he didn’t get it back he comes to you and you create a big article about it.

Yes, there were others who listened to the same story and loaned money. Shouldn’t the article really be about the silliness of those people? Shouldn’t we run the articles, post their pictures and call

it “Goofballs who loan money to strangers”?

I’m embarrassed to be a part of this community at this point and your paper has just taken the Dallas gay community to an all-time public low. You’ve used your “paper” to embarrass a person, to share some stories that are truly gossip at best. I’m glad there’s no subscription price to the *Voice*. If there was, I’d cancel my subscription. If I was an advertiser, I’d certainly think twice about continuation.

I hope you take some time to think about what you print. Lets do news, not the latest relationship gone bad, or the latest idiot who loans money to a total stranger they feel sorry for.

Kyle Bunker
via DallasVoice.com

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ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
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Jonathan Pell is a big believer in signs and symbols. He began working for the Dallas Opera in early January 1985, and as his 30th anniversary with the company approached, he decided 30 was a nice, round figure to go out on.

It wasn't only that, though.

"After I got out of college, I went to work with my father as an interior designer in Wichita, Kan.

It was easy to come down to Dallas, and I wanted to see a young soprano who was performing here in *The Marriage of Figaro*." (He was so impressed by the work the Dallas Opera was doing, in 1973, he became a season subscriber.) And the last production he would oversee in his post? *The Marriage of Figaro*. The universe, it seemed, has decided: It was time to move on.

"I was beginning ... not to burn out, but to get

tired," he admits from the well-appointed East Dallas home he shares with Cleve, his partner of 18 years. "I go to every performance of every production. Over the years, I have [supervised] approximately 170 productions of 90-something titles and seen 600 performances and countless rehearsals, plus seen 450 different operas at companies all over the world. There's no good time to step away, but I felt comfortable leaving the company in the hands of Maestro Emmanuel Villaume, whom I have known for many years. And I'm still young enough to do other things that interest me." (Pell turned 65 this year.) "I've been very fortunate. I've always loved what I've done."

It will be hard to imagine loving anything as much as Pell has loved opera. In his 30 years here, Pell has witnessed countless changes in Dallas, in the culture and in his opera as well, including the historic move just five years ago from the cavernous Fair Park Music Hall into the acclaimed Winspear Opera House.

There was an interim step from Kansas designer to Dallas arts leader.

Pell first became intrigued by opera at age 6; for his seventh birthday, he even requested as his present tickets to see *La Bohème*. He studied voice and hoped to sing. But very early on, "I realized I don't have the kind of voice that I would pay to hear," he admits. After working with his father for several years, he went on a vacation to New York City for two weeks. At the end, he called his dad to say he wouldn't be coming back.

Pell soon found a position as an artist manager, representing serious musicians, singers, conductors and the like. And here's where the signs start popping up again.

"The very first time I traveled to see a client perform, it was to the Dallas Opera. I had a great rapport with the cofounders, Nicola Rescigno and Larry Kelly." He maintained a strong relationship with Maestro Rescigno for several years.

Then, in late December 1984, "Nicola came to my apartment on the Upper West Side," he says. Plato Karayanis was general director at the time is, and the DO's operations had become "a business model more than an artistic model. Nicola asked me to become the artistic administrator, but gave me just one week to decide. That was exactly 30 years ago this month."

As he had done several years earlier with his impulsive move to NYC, Pell accepted. He sublet his apartment and rented one fully furnished in Dallas. After three months, he decided to move all his stuff down here.

"Initially, I thought I'd do this for a couple of years. Although Dallas at the time was not as cosmopolitan as it is now, during the opera season I was occupied with [productions] and was in New York or traveling in the off-season so it hardly seems to matter. It was the best of all possible worlds, with great weather, high caliber work and the DFW airport."

For many years, the extraordinary work the Dallas Opera achieved was in part the result of its unusual season, which was mandated by the end of the State Fair in October and the beginning of the Dallas Symphony's season in December (which until 1989 also performed at Fair Park). That was a time when many opera companies were dark, and Pell was able to attract great artists to Texas.

"Some were attracted by the thought of the Wild West, even though of course it was not re-

As we select our LGBT Texan of the Year, we also want to acknowledge some of the local folks who helped define 2014 for us on the cultural side — people who often don't get the recognition they deserve, those who made an impact on the discussion and those who simply made North Texas a more interesting place to live. Thanks!

Jonathan Pell

The Dallas Opera's artistic conscience for 30 years steps down

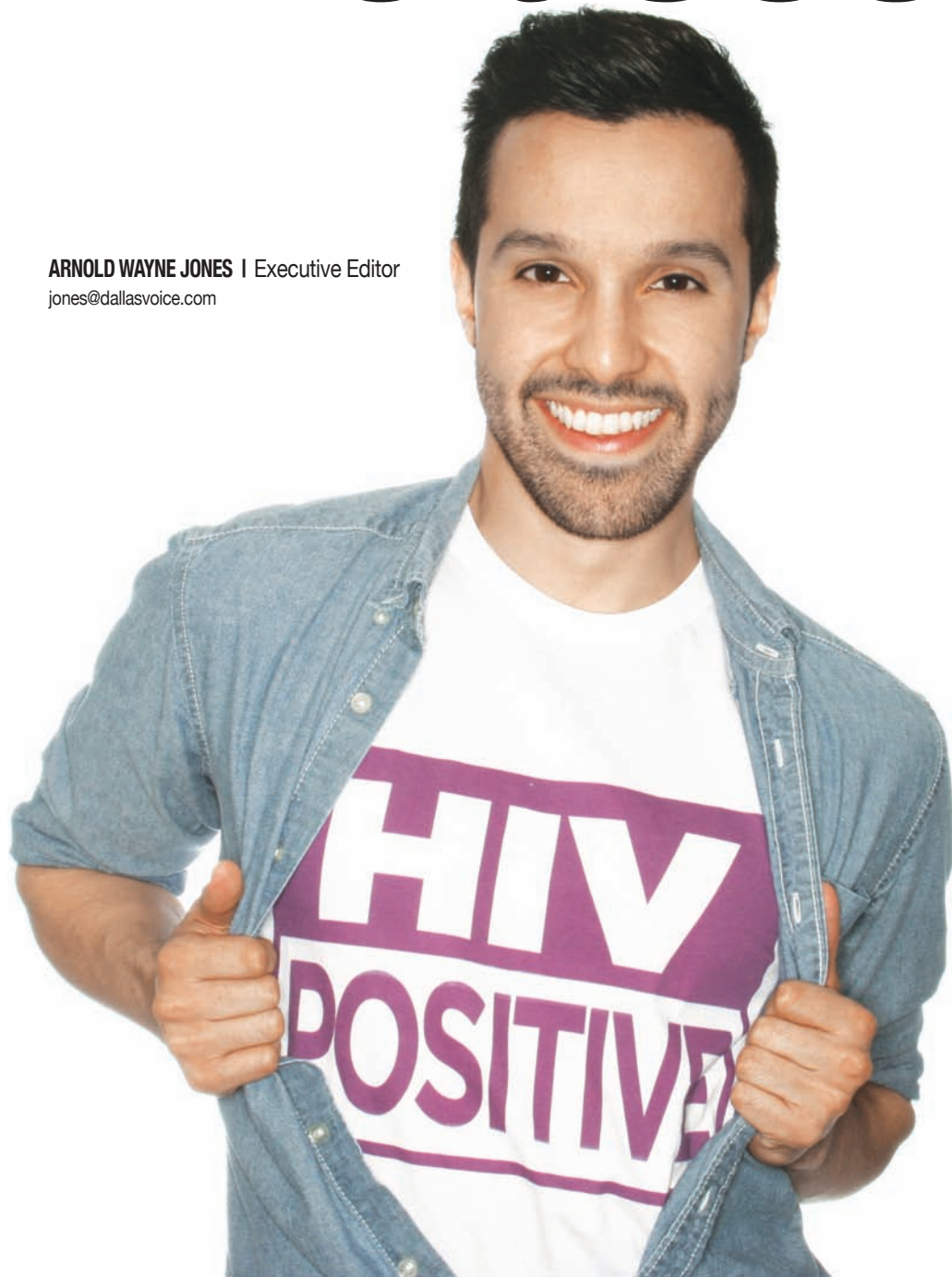
■ PELL Page 30

OPERA MAN | A room in Jonathan Pell's M Streets home is dedicated to memorabilia he has accumulated over three decades, including a photo of him with Placido Domingo. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)

The actor/singer turned his HIV diagnosis into a crusade for acceptance

Angel Velasco

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
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This year started out for Angel Velasco as a nightmare, but by the end, it felt like a dream.

It was the first week in January when Velasco, 26, learned that he was HIV-positive. The news hit him, as many can relate, like a thunderbolt.

But Velasco — an acclaimed actor and singer — is not the kind to let things stay bottled up.

He very quickly began sharing his status — first with family and close friends, then colleagues and finally the world.

In March, he heard about the opportunity to participate in a new ad campaign for HIV/AIDS awareness. “I applied online, but part of me

■ VELASCO Page 31

GREATER THAN | Angel Velasco turned his HIV diagnosis into a campaign to remove the stigma of being positive. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)

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COMPLERA is a complete HIV-1 treatment in only 1 pill a day.

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COMPLERA does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS.

To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses you must keep taking COMPLERA. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

It is not known if COMPLERA is safe and effective in children under 18 years old.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about COMPLERA?

COMPLERA can cause serious side effects:

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis)**, which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include feeling very weak or tired, unusual (not normal) muscle pain, trouble breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, feeling cold especially in your arms and legs, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Serious liver problems.** The liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and fatty (steatosis). Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice), dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored bowel movements (stools), loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking COMPLERA for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and stop taking COMPLERA, your hepatitis may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking COMPLERA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health. COMPLERA is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take COMPLERA?

Do not take COMPLERA if you:

- **Take a medicine that contains:** adefovir (Hepsera), lamivudine (Epivir-HBV), carbamazepine (Carbatrol, Equetro, Tegretol, Tegretol-XR, Teril, Epitol), oxcarbazepine (Trileptal), phenobarbital (Luminal), phenytoin (Dilantin, Dilantin-125, Phenytek), rifampin (Rifater, Rifamate, Rimactane, Rifadin), rifapentine (Priftin), dextansoprazole (Dexilant), esomeprazole (Nexium, Vimovo), lansoprazole (Prevacid), omeprazole (Prilosec, Zegerid), pantoprazole sodium (Protonix), rabeprazole (Aciphex), more than 1 dose of the steroid medicine dexamethasone or dexamethasone sodium phosphate, or the herbal supplement St. John’s wort.
- **Take any other medicines to treat HIV-1 infection**, unless recommended by your healthcare provider.

What are the other possible side effects of COMPLERA?

Serious side effects of COMPLERA may also include:

- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood tests to check your kidneys before starting treatment with COMPLERA. If you have had kidney problems, or take other medicines that may cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider may also check your kidneys during treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Depression or mood changes.** Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms: feeling sad or hopeless, feeling anxious or restless, have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself.

- **Changes in liver enzymes:** People who have had hepatitis B or C, or who have had changes in their liver function tests in the past may have an increased risk for liver problems while taking COMPLERA. Some people without prior liver disease may also be at risk. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your liver enzymes before and during treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Bone problems**, including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV-1 medicines.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking COMPLERA.

The most common side effects of COMPLERA include trouble sleeping (insomnia), abnormal dreams, headache, dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, rash, tiredness, and depression. Other common side effects include vomiting, stomach pain or discomfort, skin discoloration (small spots or freckles), and pain. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking COMPLERA?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or had any kidney, mental health, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take**, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. COMPLERA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how COMPLERA works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Do not start any new medicines while taking COMPLERA without first talking with your healthcare provider.
- **If you take rifabutin (Mycobutin).** Talk to your healthcare provider about the right amount of rilpivirine (Edurant) you should take.
- **If you take antacids.** Take antacids at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take COMPLERA.
- **If you take stomach acid blockers.** Take acid blockers at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take COMPLERA. Ask your healthcare provider if your acid blocker is okay to take, as some acid blockers should never be taken with COMPLERA.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if COMPLERA can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking COMPLERA.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk. Also, some medicines in COMPLERA can pass into breast milk, and it is not known if this can harm the baby.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information with **important warnings** on the following pages.



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What is COMPLERA?

- **COMPLERA** is a prescription medicine used as a complete HIV-1 treatment in one pill a day. COMPLERA is for adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before and who have no more than 100,000 copies/mL of virus in their blood (this is called 'viral load'). Complera can also replace current HIV-1 medicines for some adults who have an undetectable viral load (less than 50 copies/mL) and whose healthcare provider determines that they meet certain other requirements.
- COMPLERA is a complete regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines. HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS. When used properly, COMPLERA may reduce the amount of HIV-1 virus in your blood and increase the amount of CD4 T-cells, which may help improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or getting infections that can happen when your immune system is weak.
- **COMPLERA does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.
- **Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.** Do not share or reuse needles, injection equipment, or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them. Do not have sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

What is the most important information I should know about COMPLERA?

COMPLERA can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take COMPLERA or similar (nucleoside analogs) medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**
 - feel very weak or tired
 - have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
 - have trouble breathing
 - having stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
 - feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
 - feel dizzy or lightheaded
 - have a fast or irregular heartbeat
- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take COMPLERA. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**
 - your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
 - dark "tea-colored" urine
 - light-colored bowel movements (stools)
 - loss of appetite for several days or longer
 - nausea
 - stomach pain
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking COMPLERA for a long time.**

- **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** If you have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and take COMPLERA, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking COMPLERA. A "flare-up" is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before. COMPLERA is not approved for the treatment of HBV, so you must discuss your HBV with your healthcare provider.
 - Do not run out of COMPLERA. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your COMPLERA is all gone.
 - Do not stop taking COMPLERA without first talking to your healthcare provider.
 - If you stop taking COMPLERA, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking COMPLERA.

Who should not take COMPLERA?

Do not take COMPLERA if you also take any of the following medicines:

- **Medicines used for seizures:** carbamazepine (Carbatrol, Equetro, Tegretol, Tegretol-XR, Teril, Eptol); oxcarbazepine (Trileptal); phenobarbital (Luminal); phenytoin (Dilantin, Dilantin-125, Phenytek)
- **Medicines used for tuberculosis:** rifampin (Rifater, Rifamate, Rimactane, Rifadin); rifapentine (Priftin)
- **Certain medicines used to block stomach acid called proton pump inhibitors (PPIs):** dexlansoprazole (Dexilant); esomeprazole (Nexium, Vimovo); lansoprazole (Prevacid); omeprazole (Prilosec, Zegerid); pantoprazole sodium (Protonix); rabeprazole (Aciphex)
- **Certain steroid medicines:** More than 1 dose of dexamethasone or dexamethasone sodium phosphate
- **Certain herbal supplements:** St. John's wort
- **Certain hepatitis medicines:** adefovir (Hepsera), lamivudine (EpiVir-HBV)

Do not take COMPLERA if you also take any other HIV-1 medicines, including:

- Other medicines that contain tenofovir (ATRIPLA, STRIBILD, TRUVADA, VIREAD)
- Other medicines that contain emtricitabine or lamivudine (ATRIPLA, Combivir, EMTRIVA, EpiVir, Epzicom, STRIBILD, Trizivir, TRUVADA)
- rilpivirine (Eduvant), unless you are taking rifabutin (Mycobutin)

COMPLERA is not for use in people who are less than 18 years old.

What are the possible side effects of COMPLERA?

COMPLERA may cause the following serious side effects:

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about COMPLERA?"**
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before you start and while you are taking COMPLERA. If you have had kidney problems in the past or need to take another medicine that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider may need to do blood tests to check your kidneys during your treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Depression or mood changes. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:**
 - feeling sad or hopeless
 - feeling anxious or restless
 - have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself
- **Change in liver enzymes.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus infection or who have certain liver enzyme changes may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening liver problems during treatment with COMPLERA. Liver problems can also happen during treatment with COMPLERA in people without a history of liver disease. Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your liver enzymes before and during treatment with COMPLERA.

- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV-1 medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the main part of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The cause and long term health effect of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

The most common side effects of COMPLERA include:

- Trouble sleeping (insomnia), abnormal dreams, headache, dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, rash, tiredness, depression

Additional common side effects include:

- Vomiting, stomach pain or discomfort, skin discoloration (small spots or freckles), pain

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

- These are not all the possible side effects of COMPLERA. For more information, ask your healthcare provider.
- Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking COMPLERA?

Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including:

- If you have or had any kidney, mental health, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if COMPLERA can harm your unborn child.
 - There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- If you are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take COMPLERA.
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - Two of the medicines in COMPLERA can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if this could harm your baby.
 - Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements:

- COMPLERA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how COMPLERA works.
- If you take certain medicines with COMPLERA, the amount of COMPLERA in your body may be too low and it may not work to help control your HIV-1 infection. The HIV-1 virus in your body may become resistant to COMPLERA or other HIV-1 medicines that are like it.
- Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following medicines:
 - Rifabutin (Mycobutin), a medicine to treat some bacterial infections. Talk to your healthcare provider about the right amount of rilpivirine (Edurant) you should take.

- Antacid medicines that contain aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids **at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after** you take COMPLERA.
- Certain medicines to block the acid in your stomach, including cimetidine (Tagamet), famotidine (Pepcid), nizatidine (Axid), or ranitidine hydrochloride (Zantac). Take the acid blocker **at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after** you take COMPLERA. Some acid blocking medicines should never be taken with COMPLERA (see “Who should not take COMPLERA?” for a list of these medicines).
- Medicines that can affect how your kidneys work, including acyclovir (Zovirax), cidofovir (Vistide), ganciclovir (Cytovene IV, Vitrasert), valacyclovir (Valtrex), and valganciclovir (Valcyte).
- clarithromycin (Biaxin)
- erythromycin (E-Mycin, Eryc, Ery-Tab, PCE, Pediazole, Ilosone)
- fluconazole (Diflucan)
- itraconazole (Sporanox)
- ketoconazole (Nizoral)
- methadone (Dolophine)
- posaconazole (Noxafil)
- telithromycin (Ketek)
- voriconazole (Vfend)

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine. Do not start any new medicines while you are taking COMPLERA without first talking with your healthcare provider.

How should I take COMPLERA?

- Stay under the care of your healthcare provider during treatment with COMPLERA.
- Take COMPLERA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it.
- Always take COMPLERA with food. Taking COMPLERA with food is important to help get the right amount of medicine in your body. A protein drink is not a substitute for food. If your healthcare provider decides to stop COMPLERA and you are switched to new medicines to treat HIV-1 that includes rilpivirine tablets, the rilpivirine tablets should be taken only with a meal.

Keep COMPLERA and all medicines out of reach of children.

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about COMPLERA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about COMPLERA that is written for health professionals, or call 1-800-445-3235 or go to www.COMPLERA.com.

Issued: September 2014



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The Party Planners

Blake Baker, Wayne Davis, Donna Dumae: Helping folks have fun for charity



ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

All of Dallas loves a party, and *gay* Dallas all but lives for them. Swimsuit season? Pool parties aplenty. Christmas and New Year's? We know how to don our gay apparel like nobody's business. Even the fall and spring have Black Tie Dinner and DIFFA and countless more opportunities.

But parties don't happen by themselves, and a core of people not only do their best to entertain us, they do it for a cause. And for *free*.

All-volunteer nonprofits are perhaps the most remarkable of organizations. Toiling away for long hours without remuneration just to raise money to benefit others? It's a sacrifice. No wonder they need a party to make it worth it.

We kid. The parties are the selling point sometimes, but the charity is the beneficiary.

Countless folks give of their time and money and effort and creativity year in and out to make North Texas' gay community a better place. But the three we're highlighting here have done ex-

traordinary work for a long time. And elevated us all with festivities and fundraising. That is part of what makes these folks some of the memorable members of our community in 2014.

Don Jenkins, aka Donna Dumae

Back in the day, "the court system" was a center of gay culture, drag culture and gay activism. In Dallas, the United Court of the Lone Star Empire celebrated its 40th anniversary of fundraising this year, and during that time, Don Jenkins — under the drag persona Donna Dumae — has led the way.

Unlike other charity groups, the UCLSE keeps all the money local, and a lot of that money over the last three decades has passed through the bra strap of Dumae.

It's not just the court that Jenkins/Dumae has raised money for, however; she's tirelessly dedicated much of her career of volunteerism to raising money for AIDS Services of Dallas (two

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LIFE+STYLE

profile

shows a year since the 1980s), as well as the Texas Gay Rodeo Association. But on this milestone anniversary year for the UCLSE, it seemed fitting to single out Dumae for doing well more than her part over the years at fighting for funding — as well as fighting for rights — for LGBT Texans.

Wayne Davis

It's easy to think that the Dallas bear community comes out of hibernation just once a year, for the March madness that is the Texas Bear Round Up — a party weekend of international

Blake Baker

Lots of cities have parties named after colors: The White Party (Miami, Palm Springs). The Black Party (New York). But Dallas, always more colorful, moves down the spectrum with the Purple Party, which spread its wings in the spring.

But the Purple Party is more than a one-shot mixer with a good DJ and shirtless dancing men. The organizing entity is actually called the Pur-



PARTY FOR A CAUSE | All-volunteer organizations in Dallas raise tons of money for nonprofits while showing their supporters a good time, as with the pool party earlier this year as Sisu, put on by the Purple Foundation. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)

appeal that brings the hirsute and hefty to North Texas. But the Dallas Bears — the group that puts on TBRU, led by Davis — does much more than that throughout the course of the year. (This weekend is even a Christmas potluck dinner and gift exchange, just in time for the holidays.)

TBRU has grown exponentially under Davis' aegis, as has its fundraising might; every year, the group donates tens of thousands of dollars to local gay nonprofits (last June, more than \$65,000 went to six charities). It seems that bears are not only generously proportioned, they are *generous*, period.

Also a member of Dallas' leather community, Davis currently serves on the board of directors of the International LeatherSIR/boy and Community Bootblack weekend, a major leatherman gathering that now calls Dallas home every August. Clearly, Davis is a man who has a lot of skin in the game.

ple Foundation, and more than just a single event, or a single weekend (made up usually of a half-dozen events), the foundation partners with other groups nationwide and sponsors parties throughout the year; as president, Baker leads the all-volunteer staff in not only booking talent, securing venues and planning events, but donating the proceeds — more than half a million dollars donated the AIDS Services of Dallas, Legacy Counseling Center, the Resource Center and others since 2001.

Other notables: Scott Barretto, who plans the monthly Dick's Happy Hour, also organizes events that benefit community groups. Charlie McDonald's HoneyPot parties (the next of which takes place later this month) also donates proceeds to charity. And the rotating lineup of co-chairs for the annual Black Tie Dinner generate more than a million dollars annually. ■



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■ PELL, From Page 22

ally that anymore. It was simply that no one was vying for the attention of these great artists," he says. But while he has worked with many famous talents over the years, what has resonated most for Pell has been helping spot the next great artist.

"One of the great joys has been the identification and nurturing of talent before they were acclaimed," he says. "There's an excitement to recognizing someone when they're coming up."

The most challenging aspect, he says, is the delicate balance between achieving his mission as artistic leader while still adhering to a season that scores with audiences.

"You have to have artistry, integrity, be innovative, do titles that help sell tickets," he says. "You put together a season that will appeal to a broad range of people without sacrificing the desire and need to be innovative. We've done five productions of *Madame Butterfly* since I've been here, and audiences always want to be moved. It may be my fifth time I'm seeing it, but it's somebody else's first time."

Pell acknowledges that the Dallas Opera has had some blind spots. They've never done a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, in part because there used to be a company in town that did G&S exclusively, "and did it quite well," he says. They have done some *Porgy & Bess*, several world premieres and a number of American/English operas, but he teases, the DO will do something out of the ordinary next season. But he won't announce what it is for the record.

That will be left to someone else. For now, he's going to simply enjoy his retirement. ■



APRIL SWARTZ-LARSON, *Butch queen*

In October, this out McKinney High School student caused a stir — first by being recruited to run for homecoming queen (one of five candidates, and the only openly lesbian one), then actually winning. It may be the first time both members of the homecoming royalty accepted their honors in neckties and suits.

TJ AND TIMMY MUNDELL-PATTERSON, *Honorary Doctors*

When these Dallas businessowners decided to get married earlier this year, they celebrated their love — for each other and for *Doctor Who* — with some theme engagement photos that quickly went viral, and suddenly marriage equality had a time-traveling immortal face on it. The couple made it official in California last month.



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MONICA GREENE, *Mistress of Mexican cuisine*

Despite occasional departures to Colorado, this restaurateur can't resist the lure of North Texas, and we can't resist her food. She returned after a nearly two-year absence to design the menu at the fast casual Pegaso Diner in Fort Worth, and her recipes are just as delicious as we remember.

■ VELASCO, From Page 23

thought, 'I will never hear from them again,'" he recalls. "Then a minute later I thought, 'Why wouldn't they pick me?' I had a shot."

He did indeed have a shot. He was informed in April that he would be part of the Greater Than AIDS campaign (GreaterThan.org). There has already been one version, cast locally in San Francisco, but this new campaign was intended to target North Texas specifically, "because the number of cases is growing and they wanted to acknowledge that," he says.

The ads garnered national attention, and print versions and videos (streamable on YouTube) became a large part of the discussion on HIV in 2014. For Velasco, though, the act of discussing his status "became like a second coming-out."

"It has definitely been a surprise," he says. "Leading up to the release of the campaign, I wasn't thinking beyond being out there and telling my story. That was the hardest thing to prepare for. I was really anticipating everyone knowing. But my mom gave me the best advice about it. She said, 'Inspire people to take care of themselves.'"

Many of the other ambassadors' YouTube videos have from 5,000 to 10,000 views; as of last month, Velasco's had more than 70,000. That brought a lot of attention on him.

Velasco quickly became an expert about HIV: How rates are growing among those 18 to 24; how HIV infections are a serious issue not just in the gay community, but the African-American community as well. And one study in particular resonated with him: The one that says 1 in 6 individuals who is HIV-positive doesn't know it. And then there are the stigmas.

"We were discussing the topic of stigma at The White House," Velasco offers, nonchalantly mentioning how the campaign got him a seat in D.C. at a discussion group about HIV that he describes as surreal. "[I was interested] in social acceptance specifically as it per-

tains to religion. A lot of what [causes shame] boils down to is religion. We want to spotlight churches that are helping" HIV-positive people without being judgmental, he says.

Approaching a discussion about HIV from a place of understanding has been the most important part of the process for Velasco — and coming to terms with his past biases.

"A lot of the discrimination [HIV-positive people] experience comes from within the gay community," he says. Before, it never occurred to him that identifying himself as "DDF" (drug- and disease-free) was a negative; post diagnosis, he sees it otherwise.

"[The phrase] equates drug use to having a disease. People don't discriminate against other people for having diabetes, and a lot of doctors compare HIV to diabetes, in that it is very manageable." Even worse? Calling yourself "clean" as a synonym for being HIV-negative. "So many people use these terms that they don't even know they are stigmatizing. Before I contracted HIV, I said plenty of things like that," he admits.

It's that feeling of shame — a kind of secondary closet — that has inspired much of Velasco's mission in the past year.



"What I've really enjoyed doing is just talking to people. I'm trying to reach people who *are* positive and are having a hard time with it. When you are confident in your health your status, [a positive diagnosis] doesn't have to change anything about who you are."

Velasco is currently in the pre-planning stages of an online website for outreach, but plans to "take my time and make sure that everything is right. Beyond that, he hopes to make HIV awareness not just a passion, but a calling.

"I want to work in the HIV field and make it my day job," he says. "Being positive doesn't have to define who you are ... though I am letting it define me, so other don't."

Watch the videos at GreaterThan.org.

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BMW's sassy coupe

CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
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Since the iconic BMW 2002 evolved into the 3-Series nearly 40 years ago, the little coupe has been the sassy prince of the Munich-based dynasty. Small, sporty, refined and with just the right amount of attitude, the 3-Series coupe was the car you would enjoy thrashing wide-open on the Autobahn or precisely slicing up narrow ribbons of dragon asphalt. To set itself apart from 3-Series sedans, and to follow the naming logic of larger BMW coupes, the coupe flips its main digit to become the 4-Series.

It has a much more aggressive stance, taking on the muscular brawniness of the bigger M6 but with more finessed bodylines. A wider and longer wheelbase underlie initial impressions. Short overhangs, 18-in. M Sport alloys, deep bodyside lines, Hofmeister kink in the rear windowline and a wider version of BMW's iconic double-kidney grille make it clear who built this fab coupe. The sweet way the hood edge slices above the headlights and brake calipers with blue M logo whip the cake.

Slip your loafer into the base twin-turbo 2.0-liter 4-cylinder engine to kick out 240 horsepower — routed to the ground through an eight-speed automatic transmission and all-wheel-drive. Paddle shifters allow drivers to get the most out of the direct-injected engine. Gathering digits, the coupe thrusts from 0-60 mph in 5.7 seconds on the way to an electronically limited top speed of 155 mph. If that doesn't juice you, opt for the 300-horsepower 3.0-liter turbo-six. Just don't expect to match the 4-cylinder's 22/33-MPG city/hwy.

To command all of that majesty, you'll have to slip your digit into the tight little cabin. As in most BMWs, the interior is a balance of serious driving environment and upscale luxury. I snug-

gled into our test car's comfy heated sport seats with lower cushion extensions, curled all my digits around the heated leather-wrapped steering wheel, and gazed at the alloy dash trim. Big analog gauges, rain-sensing wipers, and automatic climate control make the car easy to drive. The presenter arm for the seatbelt is a bit much and entrance to the rear seats is best left to elves. Fortunately, the trunk is pretty large.

When put to pavement, the 4-Series raises fleshy flags to most competitors. The solid structure lets the stiff four-wheel independent suspension to seemingly feel the road by the inch and never feels bothered — especially with uber-grippy AWD managing power. BMW's Driving Dynamics Control with Eco, Comfort, Sport, and Sport+ modes modulate the throttle, steering,

and suspension for vastly different personalities. Eco mode makes the throttle less sensitive to conserve fuel. Comfort balances handling with on-road relaxation. Sport mode tightens

everything — the best choice for tearing up backroads.

It's not perfect. The blue (or optionally red) trim around the aluminum sheets on the dash looks garish. Getting comfortable can be a challenge as the instrument cluster and steering wheel seem high relative to the seating position. Don't even get me started on how difficult it is to pair a smartphone or use the iDrive infotainment system. Bitch is complicated!

BMW earned its reputation for building "Ultimate Driving Machines" with the 2002, 3-Series, and now, the 4-Series. All of these cars offer an exquisite driving experience, reasonable utility, and the satisfaction of knowing your neighbors will be envious. BMW's idea of ergonomics is questionable, but if driving is believing, the 428i is the ultimate. Let journalists complain. Just flip them your bigger digit, stomp the throttle, and feed them green dust. ■

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For multi-talented performer Donna Garner, tuneful musical is a great fit

Donna Garner first sang in front of an audience when she was five years old. She began piano about a year later, violin when she was nine, cello when she was 12...

We could go on. The veteran stage star, who currently plays the role of Baruška in the musical *Once*, which opens Wednesday at the Winspear Opera House, has chops that could fill a Wikipedia page and beyond.

"I studied at Oxford for a couple summers in an opera program," she notes casually and without an ounce of pretentiousness, as she gives me a quick rundown of her varied background.

That background certainly comes in handy for her current role. *Once* is the tale of two characters — Guy, a young Irishman busking in Dublin, and his love interest, Girl, a Czech immigrant. Baruška is Girl's mother. The show takes place in a raucous Irish pub, and all the music is played live by the actors. For her part, Garner plays concertina, piano, fiddle and accordion —

an instrument she had a whopping eight days to learn before her audition.

"I was already a professional pianist, so the right hand wasn't so bad," she says. "It was the left hand that drove me crazy for a while. But I figured it out well enough that they hired me."

The musicianship of the role was a natural fit for Garner, but so, it turned out, was Baruška's character.

"I love playing Baruška because she's a really, really strong woman. She's been through a lot but she's also warm," Garner

says. "She's watching her daughter who's an adult and trying to figure out her own life and she's watching her make those decisions and figure it out, and she's watching her with great pride and great love. I love the character because she reminds me of my mother."

Garner grew up in rural Canada, in "a house bursting with music." The atmosphere in *Once's* Irish pub has some similarities: specifically, that

■ GARNER Next Page

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■ GARNER, From Previous Page

special intimacy that is intertwined with a love of performance music.

"We love playing music together," says Garner of her castmates. "This group is a really talented group of people, very sensitive musicians. We're kind of like a family: Sometimes we get along better than others, but when we play music together — wow!"

That "wow" is something audiences get to connect with in a unique way. Before each show, the audience is invited to get onstage and hang

out on the set, which also happens to be a working bar. About 20 minutes before the show, the cast comes out and performs a loose jam session of Irish and Czech folk songs (ticketholders are encouraged to get to the show about 30 to 40 minutes early to participate).

"People love it," Garner says, the excitement in her voice rising slightly. "Their fascination of being up onstage and looking out from the stage, the look on their faces — I love it." ■

— Joanna Widner

'Xmas' reviews: 'Carol,' 'Story,' 'Trailer Park'

You can't swing a dead reindeer around North Texas this month and not hit a production with the word "Christmas" in it. And why not?

But not all Christmas tales are the same — from the sentimental to the spiritual to the irreverent to the secularly nostalgic, there's something for every taste whether you're the "Bah, humbug!" type or the plastic-pink-flamingo-in-a-Santa-hat lawn ornament kinda theatergoer.

A Christmas Carol. The Dallas Theater Center's tradition of telling the heart-warming story of how curmudgeonly Ebenezer Scrooge (this time out, Chamblee Ferguson) finds the Christmas spirit is as honored as the Cowboys making the playoffs... OK, bad example. Point is, it has become a ritual for theater-going Dallasites more reliable than snow on Dec. 25 and stockings stuffed with care. The current production, which is a restaging (by director Lee Trull) of last year's then-new adaption by Kevin Moriarty, has all the heart, all the plot and a whisk-you-away 90 minute runtime. How they cram all that emotion — resentment, fear, epiphany, joy and wonderment — into such a compact package makes this a better instance of wrapping than you'll likely find under your tree. Credit the cast (led by Ferguson, but with a button-cute Tiny Tim and airborne Ghost of Christmas Present) with making it magical. God bless them, every one. *Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Dec. 28. DallasTheaterCenter.org.*

A Christmas Story. In 1940 Indiana, 9-year-old Ralphie wishes only for a BB gun for Christmas, but the task of convincing adults he won't "shoot his eye out" seems almost insurmountable. The charm of the film version of course is that it's a first-person account from three feet off the ground — the narrator may have perspective, but it shares it only ironically. The woozy reverie of the child's Christmas no where near Wales relies as much on its POV for human as the episodic wandering through the yuletide. But once you give all the characters songs to express their own inner voices, the storytelling gets muddled and the charm vanishes. Well, only almost. A number with the famed leg lamp as a kickline, and the eye-popping tap-dancing from a chorus of kids, are both so delightful, you can't help but smile. But it's not enough to make you believe in Santa. *Fair Park*



Music Hall, 901 First Ave. Through Sunday. *Dallas-SummerMusicals.org.*

The Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical (pictured). The gum-smacking trashy inhabitants of Armadillo Acres, first introduced in the similarly-named musical (less the word "Christmas") are back in Addison, once again with the core cast (Sara Shelby-Martin, Cara Statham-Serber, Megan Kelly Bates) and director (James Paul Lemons). The plot, filled with familiar tropes — an evil landlord plans to evict the residents if they can't come up with some cash, while one of the mobile homeowners gets convenient amnesia and forgets what a bitch she usually is — is told with energy if not originality, and the songs are fun if not exactly memorable. The conceit of the show and its predecessor is that of a kind of Greek chorus humanizing the wife-beater-wearing, go-go bar working, Joel Osteen-watching folks, poking fun but oh, so gently. There's appeal in it, but it doesn't feel as fresh as when WaterTower did it the first time. Then again, if you missed it back then, it's new to you. Don't forget to bring a Frito pie — covered dishes are just polite. *Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through Jan. 4. WaterTowerTheatre.org.*

— Arnold Wayne Jones



Saturday 12.13

TWCD celebrates the Holidayze

Not all Christmas carols need to be solemn, or campy ... or sing-songy, for that matter. How about some jazz? Gospel? Humor? Straight-up pop? Well, the Women's Chorus of Dallas will feature all those genres in their concert titled Celebrate the Holidayze, which promises to be both hilarious and touching.

DEETS: City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. 7 p.m. TWCD.org.

Friday 12.12—
Sunday 12.14

Uptown Players does Christmas their way

Virtually since the inception of the company, Uptown Players has held an annual fundraising revue when men sing songs written for women and vice versa ... always appeared in the first half of the year. Not so in 2014! The usual Broadway Our Way show gets a holiday makeover as Christmas Our Way, expanding the catalogue of music available and putting a snowy tint on the popular show. B.J. Cleveland directs and co-hosts, alongside Marisa Diotalevi. Expect a jolly good show.

DEETS: Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Friday–Sunday. UptownPlayers.org.



Friday 12.12

Eric Himan is back in Texas!

We like Eric Himan as much as any Texan can like an Oklahoman — heck, even more than that! Our musician to the north will be visiting the Metroplex Friday for his Back in Texas Show. And the diversely talented performer, who does folk, rock, pop, from acoustic to electric, will be twanging out with songs from his country music catalogue. The performance is part of his new deluxe EP and will even include some new songs in the mix.

DEETS: 1851 Club, 931 W. Division St., Arlington. 10 p.m. PledgeMusic.com/ EricHiman.



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BEAR ALERT! | The fourth annual Teddy Bear Party, a Christmas fundraiser where admission is a toy teddy, arrives Saturday. Brandon Moses is the DJ.



ARTSWEEK: NOW PLAYING

HOLIDAY SHOWS: CONCERTS, BALLET, THEATER

Christmas at the Dallas Symphony. Holiday concerts with Lawrence Loh conducting and the Lay Family Concert Organ played by Mary Preston. Meyerson Symphony Center, 1601 Flora St. Dec. 12–14 at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 7, 12, 14, 20–21 at 2:30 p.m. MyDSO.com.

The Nutcracker. Tchaikovsky's holiday classic, presented by Texas Ballet Theater, moves to Fort Worth. Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. Dec. 12–27. TexasBalletTheater.org.

The Beulaville Baptist Book Club Presents: A Burlesque Nutcracker! A local tradition, this comedy from Mark-Brian Sonna pokes fun at small-town Texas life, pole dancer and Tchaikovsky. Stone Cottage Theatre, 15650 Addison Road, Addison. Through Dec. 28. BurlesqueNutcracker.com.

Christmas Our Way. Uptown Players' annual fundraising show moves to the holidays. Directed by B.J. Cleveland. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through Sunday. UptownPlayers.org.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. The return of the family-friendly musical about Santa's misfit helpers. Majestic Theatre, 1725 Elm St. Dec. 16–21. ATPAC.org.

A Christmas Story, the Musical. The popular film, adapted for musical theater. *Reviewed this week. Final weekend.* Music Hall at Fair Park, 901 First Ave. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

A Christmas Carol. The Dallas Theater Center's annual tradition, with Chamblee Ferguson as Scrooge and Lee Trull directing Kevin Moriarty's 2013 adaptation. *Reviewed this week.* Wylly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Dec. 28. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

Ebenezer Scrooge. Presented annually by Pocket

Sandwich Theatre for more than 30 years. 5400 E. Mockingbird Lane. Through Dec. 23. PocketSandwichTheatre.com

The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge. A comic twist on A Christmas Carol. Richardson Theatre Centre, 518 W. Arapaho Road, Richardson. Through Dec. 21. RichardsonTheatreCentre.net.

A Civil War Christmas: An American Musical Celebration. Lesbian playwright and Pulitzer Prize winner Paula Vogel (*How I Learned to Drive*) wrote this show, with music by Daryl Waters, about the holidays while all of the union was at war with itself. Theatre 3, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through Dec. 21. Theatre3Dallas.com.

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. Theatre Arlington, 305 W. Main St., Arlington. Through Dec. 21. TheatreArlington.org.

Jubilation II: The Colors of Christmas. A family-friendly holiday revue. Jubilee Theatre, 506 Main St., Fort Worth. Through Dec. 28. JubileeTheatre.org.

Beauty and the Beast. A traditional British Christmas panto, with a cross-dressing comic foil. Cox Building Playhouse, 1517 H Ave., Plano. Through Dec. 28. Theatre-Britain.com.

The Santaland Diaries. Adaptation of David Sedaris' short story about being a gay Macy's elf. Studio Theatre of Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through Dec. 28. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

The Great American Trailer Park Christmas Musical. The residents of Armadillo Acres celebrate the season. *Reviewed this week.* Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. Through Jan. 4. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

Miracle on 34th Street. Dallas Children's Theater stages this adaptation of the seasonal movie favorite. Rosewood Center for Family Arts, 5938 Skillman St. Through Dec. 21. \$15–\$28. DCT.org.

Frosty and Friends. A puppet version of the classic, especially for smaller kids. Rosewood Center for Family Arts, 5938 Skillman St. Through Dec. 21. DCT.org.

Yes, Virginia Woolf, There Is a Santa Claus. A dark take on Kris Kringle by Jeff Swearingen. *Final weekend.* Plano Children's Theatre, 1301 Custer Road, Plano. FunHouseTheatreAndFilm.com.

THEATER

The Arsonists. A new translation of the dark comedy by gets its regional premiere, courtesy of Kitchen Dog. *Final weekend.* The MAC, 3120 McKinney Ave. KitchenDogTheater.org.

The Explorers Club. A knockabout farce set in the age of exploration at the end of the 19th century. With Mark Shum, John-Michael Marss. A co-production of Stage West and WaterTower Theatre, runs presently in Fort Worth Stage West, 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. Through Jan. 4. StageWest.org. WaterTower Theatre, 15650 Addison Road. Jan. 16–Feb. 8. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

FINE ART

Isa Genzken: Retrospective. The German modern artist gets a rare and dazzling retrospective. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through Jan. 4. Special exhibit fee. DMA.org.

Bouquets; French Still Life Painting from Chardin to Matisse. A reexamination of the painting of flowers in the 19th century. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through Feb. 8. Special exhibit fee. DMA.org.

Mario Testino: Alta Moda. The famed fashion photographer turns his lens on the ordinary, indigenous residents of Peru. Dallas Contemporary, 161 Glass St. Through Dec. 20. DallasContemporary.org.

The Mary Baskett Collection of Japanese Fashion. Stunning couture from three of Japan's most iconic fashion designers: Miyake, Yamamoto and Kawakubo. Crow Collection of Asian Art, 2010 Flora St. Through Feb. 22.

FRIDAY 12.12

COMMUNITY

High Tech Happy Hour. The gay mixer, open to everyone, sponsored by TI's gay group. Two Corks and a Bottle, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. 5:30–7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY 12.13

SPORTS

FrontRunners. Gay jogging group meets at 8:30 a.m. at the statue in Lee Park for a run along the Katy Trail.

SPOKEN WORD

A Child's Christmas in Wales. Dylan Thomas' breathtakingly quaint short story is performed at the DMA as part of the Undermain Reads program. Horchow Auditorium at the Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. 2 p.m. Free.

CONCERTS

Celebrate the Holiday. The Women's Chorus of Dallas performs humorous and haunting carols of the season. City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. 7:30 p.m. TWCD.org.

The Brian Setzer Orchestra Christmas Rocks Extravaganza! The jazz musician performs. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. 8 p.m. ATPAC.org.

FUNDRAISER

Teddy Bear Party 2014. The fourth annual party that generates cuddly toys for underprivileged kids. DJ Brandon Moses spins; open bar. 2019 N. Lamar St. 8 p.m. Admission is one stuffed bear or \$25 in advance/\$40 at the door.

TUESDAY 12.16

FILM

La Cage aux Folles. The original French film that became both the Broadway musical and the American remake *The Birdcage*; an Oscar nominee for director and screenplay. Screens as part of the Tuesday New Classic series at Landmark's Magnolia in the West Village, sponsored by Dallas Voice. Screens at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 12.17

THEATER

Once. The Tony Award winner for best musical, based on the film, follows the hesitant romance between an Irish busker and an immigrant girl. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Dec. 17–28. ATPAC.org.

BROADCAST

Top Chef. This season, in Boston, with Padme, Tom, Gail and Richard Blais. Airs on Bravo at 8 p.m.

American Horror Story: Freak Show. The creepiest season yet of the anthology series. Airs on FX at 8 p.m.

THURSDAY 12.18

BROADCAST

Project Runway All Stars. Returning contestants compete. Airs on Lifetime at 8 p.m.

CONCERTS

Jangled. The Turtle Creek Chorale performs the first in its series of holiday-themed music under the baton of acting music director Sean Baugh. City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. Dec. 18–21. TurtleCreek.org.

this week's solution



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Cassie Nova

Trust, possessiveness, friendship:
Cassie is full up for the holidays

Happy holidays, everybody! I hope your season is as bright and shiny as Kim Kardashian's ass. But seriously folks, this is the season of giving so do something great for someone else, even if it is just a handy to a friend in a parked car. Give 'til it hurts. I'd like to give a special shout out to **Edna Jean Robinson** and all the entertainers who showed up at JR.'s on Dec. 2 for Edna Jean's Trailer Park Christmas Show. They raised a lot of money for the kids at Sam Houston Elementary School. And isn't that who the holidays are really for ... those horrible, selfish, greedy little kids. Just kidding! Great job from everyone involved. Those kids are lucky to have drag queens as their "fairy" godmothers to watch out for them. This year I will be giving ... advice. So here goes.

Hi Cassie, I have seen you at the Rose Room many times and love your personality — you're an amazing comedian. I am a 22-year-old bi guy (just want someone to love and love me back no matter gender) who has recently fallen in love with my best friend, who is straight. He knows I like him and we still go on "bro" dates and hang out a lot. My feelings for him are to the point that I want to kiss him and hold his hand; I like taking care of him. His mom loves me and treats me like a son. She cuts my hair and cooks me food and invites me over for Thanksgiving and family events. She talks to me about my best friend, Scott, and asks me to help him find himself. She is not dumb — she figured I was bi or gay.

And I feel she thinks the same of her son or she wouldn't ask me to help him figure things out. I have asked Scott, and he says he is straight, so I have left it at that. I now avoid him because my feelings are still growing for him. What do I do to get back to just being friends? I want him in my life. Just know it won't be how I want. Sincerely, Bi-myself.

Dear Bi,

First off, you are not being a very good friend. If he says he is straight you have to respect that. You can't project your issues on him. If you truly want him in your life then you need to be his friend and be there. When you are 22 years old, your feelings are so hard to keep in check. But that is what you need to do. Second, don't call them "bro dates." You are just making it weird. Stop putting him on a boyfriend pedestal. If you can't distance your feelings then maybe you should distance yourself. Good luck, Cassie.

Dear Cassie Nova, I recently competed and won my first pageant!! But the amount of shade being thrown is so ridiculous I would rather be bitten by a zombie and remain a walker for the rest of my life! What's the perfect way to shut the haters up?! Yours Truly, Miss Shaded Hated America 2014.

Well Miss Shaded Hated,

I am the last person to be giving advice on pageant related issues, but as long as your name is in their mouth, let them choke on it. Don't be a walker.

Eat their shade and sashay on to your next booking. Bloop!

Dear Cassie, I am newly remarried and am annoyingly, blissfully happy with my man. Here's the problem: I am finding myself being (at least in my own head) too possessive.



I feel like the bratty kid in the sandbox who refuses to share her shovel. Here's a bit of background. My husband gets along better with women and has more female friends than male. That sits OK with me because I have more male friends than female, so there's a mutual understanding. However, I keep experiencing a gnawing irritation when these ladies are cyber-present. It's immature of me, but I feel annoyed having to share "us" time with them ... even the ones I really like. I realize, intellectually, that the problem lies with me and that I'm being irrational. I just don't know how to fix it on an emotional/psychological level. I didn't have this struggle with my ex... maybe because I wasn't emotionally invested in that relationship. So, what do you suggest? Signed, NJonas.

Dearest NJonas,

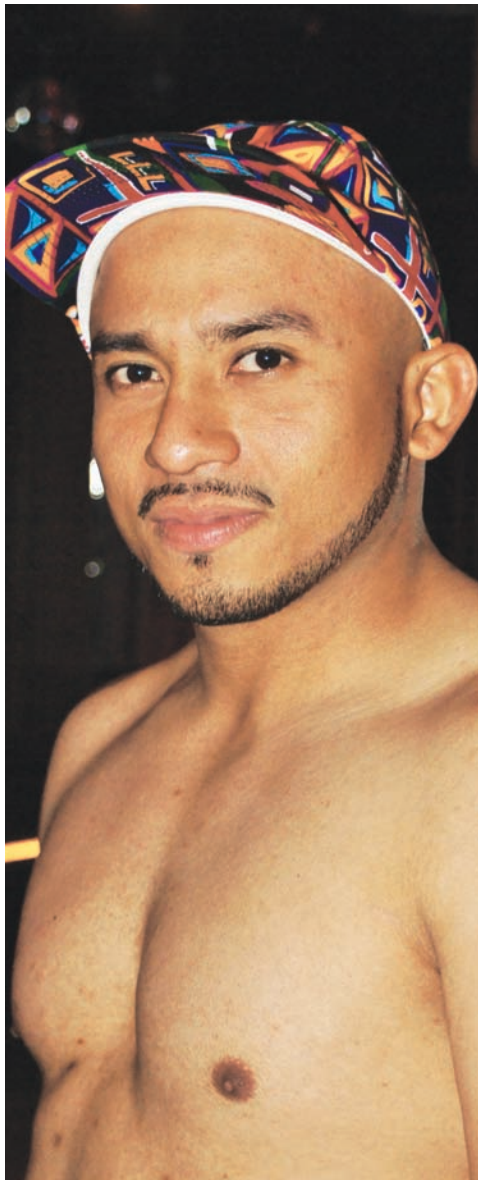
This is easy: Do you trust him? If you do, let those ladies be charmed by your man. No one will admit it, but we love it when someone else is jealous of what we have. Let him have his cyber friends. Take comfort in knowing it is you he comes home to, it's you that he married and loves. But always keep an eye on the situation and trust no bitch. I trust my husband 100 percent but that does not mean I trust others. Oh crap, maybe I am just as possessive as you are. We should start a support group. Cassie.

Here are a few of my most recent random thoughts: I call the patch of hair above the ass crack "the tramp thatch." Why is that stupid white man gonna let an anaconda swallow him? Kristen Stewart looks like she stinks, but Kristen Chenoweth probably smells like sugar cookies.

Merry Christmas everybody!

Love more, bitch less and be fabulous! XOXO
Cassie Nova.

If you have a question and want to suggest for Ask a Drag Queen — or just have some juicy gossip to share — email it to AskCassieNova@gmail.com.



Angelo at Zippers.



Brian and Richard at the Hidden Door.



Friends' night out at S4.



Ronnie at Liquid Zoo.

Making the **SCENE** the week of Dec. 12-18:

Alexandre's: *Walter Lee* at 10 p.m. on Friday. *Shelia P. and Infinity* at 10 p.m. on Saturday. *Wreath auction* at 8 p.m. on Sunday. *Mi Diva Loca* at 9 p.m. on Wednesday. *Alicia Silex* at 9 p.m. on Thursday.

Club Reflection: *Trinity River Bears* meeting at 2:30 p.m. and cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday. *Ugly Sweater Show* at 7 p.m. on Sunday. *TRB and Wall of Food Thank You Christmas Party* at 7 p.m. and show at 8 p.m.

Dallas Eagle: *National Leather Association* bar night on Saturday. *United Court of the Lone Star Empire* presents *Jingle Ball* on Sunday at 7-10 p.m.

Havana: *Rainbow LULAC holiday party* on Wednesday from 7-9 p.m.

Garlow's: *Linze Serrell* and a bevy of beauties hosts *Toys for Tots* show at 9 p.m. on Saturday.

Peker's: *Karaoke* grand prize is \$750 on Saturday.

Rainbow Lounge: *Kiana Lee* hosts *Kennedy Davenport* from *RuPul's Drag Race Season 7* at 11 p.m. on Sunday.

Round-Up Saloon: *Annual Christmas Stocking Auction* at 7 p.m. on Sunday benefits *Legacy Counseling Center*. Preview auction items on Saturday in the *Parlor*.

Sue Ellen's: *Heather Knox Band* on Friday. *Ciao Bella* on Saturday. *Jessica Grai* at 3-5 p.m. and *Anton's Christmas Show* at 6-9 p.m. on Sunday. *Cami Maki* on Wednesday.

The Rose Room: *Rising Star* with *Layla* and *Patrick* on Thursday.

Woody's Sports & Video Bar: *Dallas Cowboys* at *Philadelphia Eagles* on HD screen at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday. *Oak Lawn Bowling Association* awards presented on Monday. *Dallas Independent Volleyball Association* awards on Wednesday. *Dallas Gay Basketball* awards on Thursday. ■

To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/category/photos. Scene Photographer: *Kat Haygood*.



Kathy and Bella at Sue Ellen's.



Michael and Max at BJ's NXS!



Friends at Sue Ellen's



Matthew and Jonathan at Zippers.

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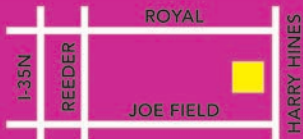


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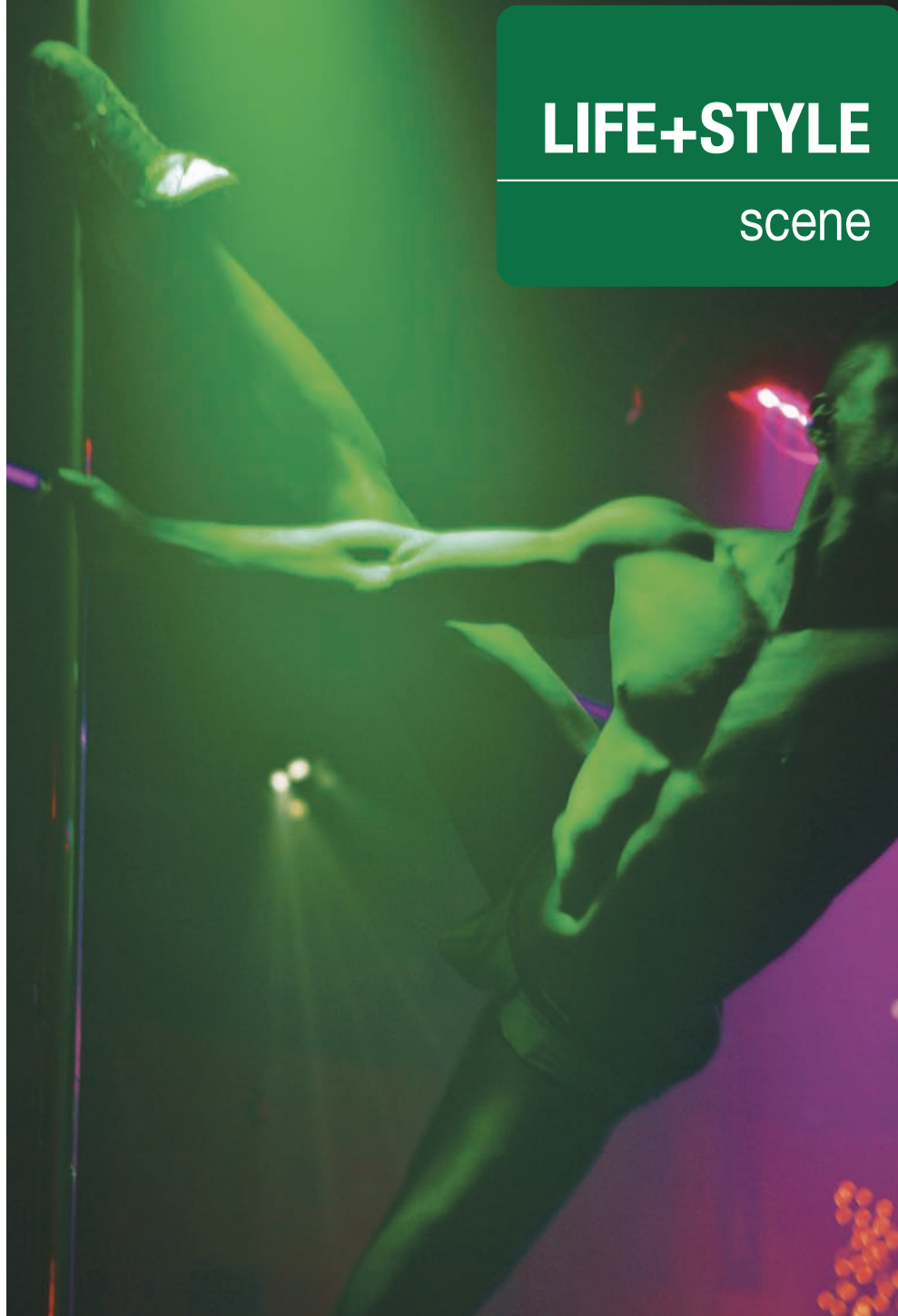
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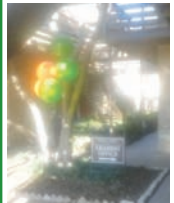
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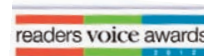
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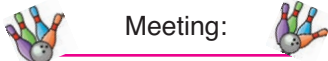
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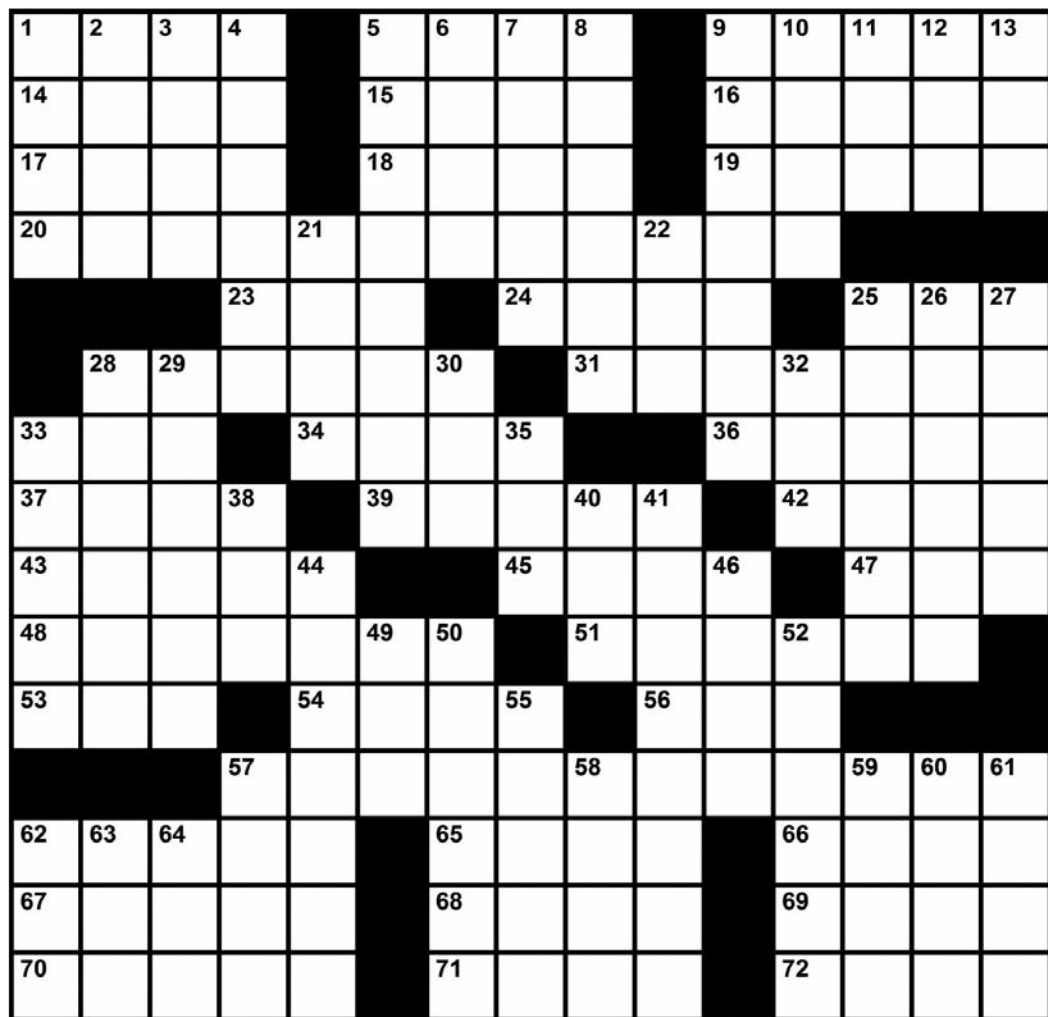
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They Died in the Closet

Solution on page 37

Across

- 1 Bankhead's home, for short
- 5 Pesky kid
- 9 Fruit peel in a drink
- 14 Russian river
- 15 Luau dance
- 16 Path finder
- 17 Make a hole bigger
- 18 *Exotica* director Egoyan
- 19 Hostile state
- 20 Star of the 1925 silent version of *Ben-Hur*
- 23 "It's ___ for Me to Say" (Mathis)
- 24 Jazz singer James
- 25 Tax preparer, for short
- 28 Hollywood Rock
- 31 Katharine of *Sylvia Scarlett*
- 33 White or rose alternative
- 34 Disney's ___ and the *Detectives*
- 36 "Holy cow!"
- 37 Alan of *And the Band Played On*
- 39 Said with a sneer
- 42 Shore opening
- 43 Elton John wears them
- 45 Constellation bear
- 47 Adjective for Abner
- 48 Norman Bates portrayal Anthony
- 51 Civil rights advocate Barbara
- 53 NFL gains
- 54 "___ I say ..."
- 56 Gaza Stripper assn.
- 57 Cross-dresser of the FBI
- 62 How sailors come
- 65 *Lord of the Rings* singer
- 66 Care beginning
- 67 Fruity-smelling compound
- 68 Six-pointer, sometimes
- 69 Cry of mock horror
- 70 It may arouse you in the sack
- 71 Collette of *The Hours*
- 72 "There Is Nothing Like a ___"

Down

- 1 *Perry Mason* star Raymond
- 2 Kind of code or rug
- 3 Word to a dominatrix
- 4 Marc of pop music
- 5 Erik of the opera, and others
- 6 Station wagon, e.g.
- 7 "___ Paris"
- 8 Football great Joe
- 9 Word after conversion
- 10 Otis of Mayberry, for one
- 11 Dick's running mate
- 12 Sch. for Rev. Spahr
- 13 Take a stab at
- 21 Narrow margin
- 22 No. 6 to P-town
- 25 Top of St. Peter's
- 26 Conductor André
- 27 Gay porn director Rainier
- 28 Gave a hand
- 29 Milk sources
- 30 Henry and June's Anais
- 32 Flick it
- 33 Like Harvey Fierstein's voice
- 35 Lucy of *Charlie's Angels*
- 38 Comics outburst
- 40 Erving, to fans
- 41 Places for really deepthroating?
- 44 Pull it out and shoot it off
- 46 Alice's Restaurant patron
- 49 Show agreement
- 50 Least foolish
- 52 Like The Bard's star-cross'd lovers
- 55 Holy, to Jose
- 57 Give a hoot, literally
- 58 Idol of porn
- 59 Don Diego de la ___ (Zorro)
- 60 Red rind contents
- 61 Sally who rode into space
- 62 Actress named Arthur
- 63 Big initials in fashion
- 64 B&O stop

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