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BIG hair, heart

Lady Bunny

hosts

Toast to

LIFE

By David Taffet
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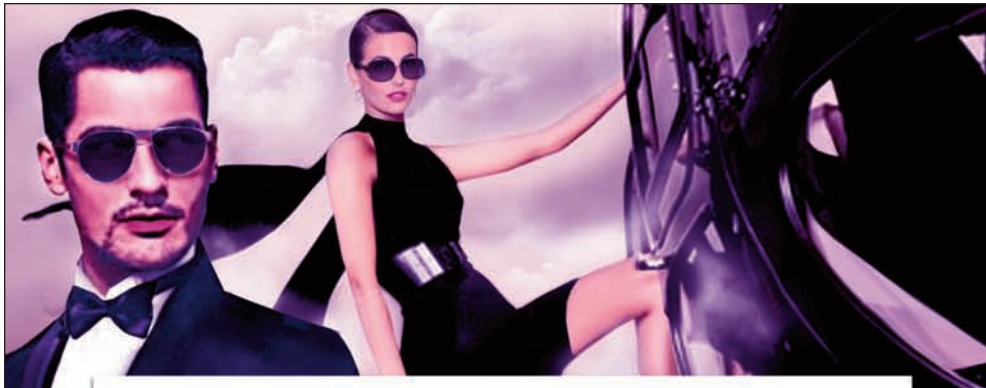
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Officer Monica Cordova with her son at pension board meeting.

Dallas Police and Fire Pension extends benefits to married same-sex couples

Less than a week after the Dallas City Council voted to change the definition of spouse to include married same-sex couples for the Employee Retirement Fund, the pension that covers the city's police and fire departments voted to do the same.

The Dallas Police and Fire Pension board had discussed the issue since last fall in reaction to an Internal Revenue Service ruling that all 401 plans, which includes federally chartered pension funds, had to offer equal benefits to legally married same-sex couples.

A special meeting of the board was called for Tuesday, Feb. 24, to amend the plan.

Councilman Philip Kingston made a motion to change the definition of spouse to add four words "or any other state." The new wording recognizes a spouse as someone "to whom a person is legally married in this state or any other state."

Before voting on Kingston's proposal, the board went into executive session twice to consult with attorneys.

City Attorney Warren Ernst's advice was used to change the definition for the ERF and was relied upon by the police and fire board to make its decision.

After the vote, Councilman Lee Kleinman said benefits begin immediately.

— David Taffet

Debbie Riddle to the rescue: Defending Texans' virtue

Once again, a Republican lawmaker is rallying forth to defend the virtues of Texans by making it a criminal offense for transgender people to use public restrooms in the Lone Star State.

State Rep. Debbie Riddle, R-Spring, has introduced two pieces of legislation that just go to show how utterly ridiculous some people are in their zeal to make sure that people who aren't like them don't get to be treated fairly.

Equality Texas issued an action alert against HB 1747 and HB 1748, both of which were introduced by Riddle on Tuesday, Feb. 24.

According to Equality Texas, Riddle's HB 1747 amends the definition of "disorderly conduct" to make it a crime for transgender people who have not been able or do not choose to correct their official gender markers to use "public gender-segre-

gated space appropriate to their gender identity or expression."

HB 1748 makes it a state jail felony for most business owners if they repeatedly allow a person who has at least one "Y" chromosome to enter a space designated for women, or a person with no "Y" chromosome to enter a space designated for men. The bill also makes it a Class "A" misdemeanor for a person with at least one "Y" chromosome to enter a space designated for women or a person without a "Y" chromosome to enter a space designated for men.

In a Jan. 13 post on her Facebook page, Riddle notes: "This is the 1st day of our Legislative Session here in Texas. I am rolling up the sleeves of my new red dress & getting to work. I have several bills I think you may like. One will protect women & children from going into a ladies restroom & finding a man who feels like he is a woman that day."

— Tammye Nash

Labor Department releases final rule on FMLA

The U.S. Department of Labor released a final rule change extending the current definition of "spouse" to include same-sex spouses in the Family and Medical Leave Act Wednesday, Feb. 25.

The change will go into effect on March 27.

Under the FMLA, according to the Labor Department, eligible employees of covered employers can take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. The new rule change would change the language from recognizing marriages based on "state of residence" to recognize marriages based on "place of celebration."

A "place of celebration" rule allows all legally married couples, whether opposite-sex or same-sex, or married under common law, to have consistent federal family leave rights regardless of where they live.

— James Russell

Ark. bans anti-discrimination laws; Is Texas next?

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson on Monday Feb. 23, allowed legislation prohibiting cities and counties in his state from passing statutes and ordinances protecting LGBT people from discrimination to become law without his signature. The law, SB 202, goes into effect 90 days after the legislative session ends this summer.

Hutchinson said earlier this month that he had "reservations" about the legislation, but not enough to actually veto it. He chose instead to demonstrate those reservations by letting the bill become law without his signature. He did so despite what The Washington Post called mounting pressure from civil rights advocates nationwide.

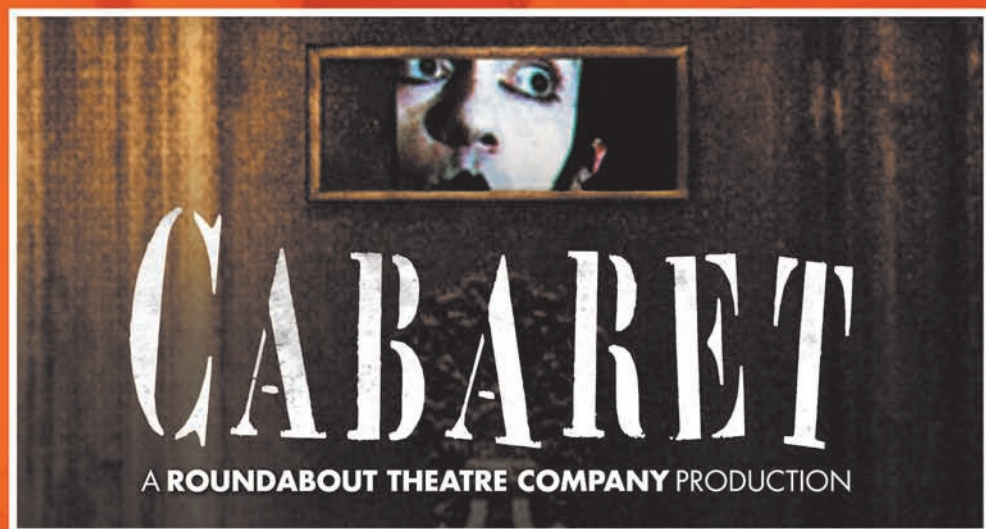
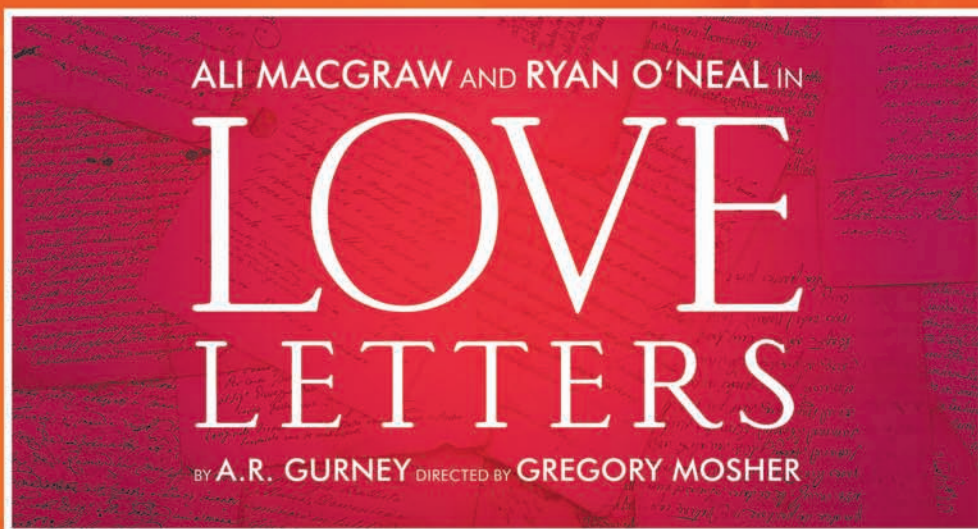
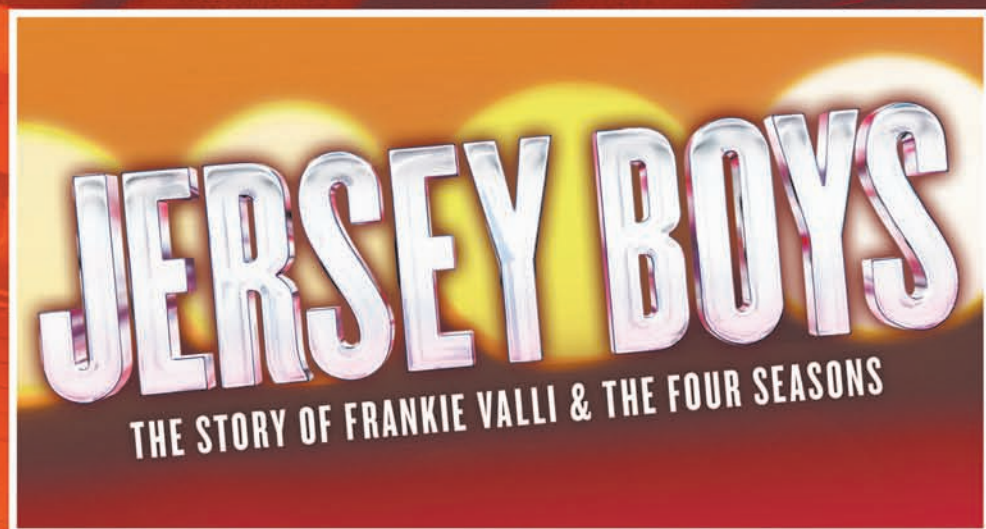
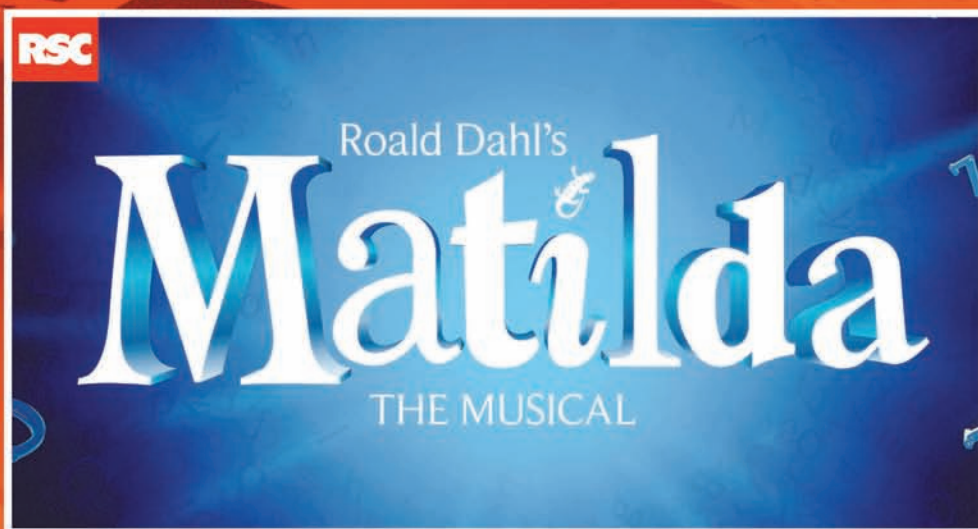
The same kind of bill has been in the Texas Legislature this session. Sen. Don Huffines, R-Dallas.

According to Equality Texas, "SB 343 would restrict the ability of local elected officials to pass or enforce ordinances, rules or regulations that are not identical to state protections, restricting local governments to only protecting the attributes covered under state law: race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin."

That means that ordinances in Fort Worth and Dallas and Houston and even in Plano that protect LGBT people from discrimination would be, in effect, rendered useless.

— Tammye Nash

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Obituary



Robert Latimer Christman III died Jan. 30, 2015. A celebration of his life will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 7, at the Interfaith Peace Chapel on the campus of the Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

Born Sept. 19, 1944 in Dayton, Ohio, Christman loved art and scouting as a child. He served in the U.S. Navy for four years, and he retired in 2004.

Christman also studied at Dayton Art Institute. He moved to San Francisco in 1974 and was transferred to Dallas a few years later. He moved back to California in 2009, but returned to Dallas in 2013.

Known as "Maw Maw" to his friends, Christman was handyman who could fix or install just about anything. He loved to spend time at the coffee shop reading the paper, going to movies and spending time with friends. He also loved to laugh and to make others laugh.

He volunteered at Cathedral of Hope for several years as an usher, and at Resource Center of Dallas. He was a faithful friend and a beloved member of the community.

Christman is survived by his mother, Awanda Griffin; sister Christine Hammer Epps; and his dog, Jake.

localbriefs

Stonewall interviews candidates

Stonewall Democrats interviews candidates for Dallas City Council and mayor from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. on March 7 at Sue Ellen's, 3014 Throckmorton St.

All members in good standing 30 days prior to this event are invited to participate in candidate interviews and vote on endorsements. Others may join the organization and meet the candidates.

Lunch and spirited discussion will be provided.

Same-sex marriage rabbi does Texas House invocation

Rabbi Kerry Baker did the invocation in the Texas House of Representatives on Wednesday, Feb. 25. In his morning prayer, he advised legislators to treat everyone equally and watch out for those who are marginalized.

"It's not enough to do what is good for the majority, but to do what is good for all of us," Baker said.

Baker is the rabbi who performed the first legal same-sex wedding in Texas last week after a court ruled Sarah Goodfriend and Suzanne Bryant (see p. 11) should be issued a marriage license in Travis County.

Goodfriend works in the office of Rep. Celia Israel, but Baker lives in fellow Austinite Rep. Elliot

Naishtat's office. House members normally invite clergy who live in their own districts, so it was Naishtat who invited Baker to deliver the prayer.

DIFFA celebrates 25 years

DIFFA/Dallas celebrates the 25th anniversary of its House of DIFFA black tie fundraiser benefiting numerous North Texas AIDS service organizations. Silent/live auction, seated dinner and fashion runway show begins at 6 p.m. on March 7 at the Omni Hotel Downtown Dallas, 555 S. Lamar St.

One of the largest, oldest and most successful fundraising organizations aiding HIV/AIDS, DIFFA has chapters in Dallas, New York City, Chicago, Kansas City, San Francisco and Seattle. DIFFA/Dallas has granted more than \$6 million to over 25 front line HIV/AIDS Service Organizations in North Texas.

Ticket prices vary and are available at Bit.ly/1ID2U2Y. Info at Diffadallas.org.

Let them eat cake

Freshman Rep. Mark Keough, R-The Woodlands, served cake at the state Capitol this week to celebrate the "10th anniversary of 2005 Marriage Act" after a busy day of lobbying with the Texas Faith and Family Day sponsored by numerous anti-LGBT groups, including Texas Values, Texas

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The Adoption Center is open 11 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Mon-Sat, and noon-5 p.m. Sun. All adopted pets are spayed or neutered, vaccinated and microchipped. Standard adoption fees are \$85 for dogs and \$55 for cats. They also offer discounts on adoption fees for pets over 6 years of age, to any senior citizen that adopts a pet and to anyone adopting more than one pet at a time. For more information, visit www.DallasAnimalServices.org or find us on Facebook at Facebook.com/DallasAnimalServices. Photo contributed by Judi Burnett.



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Eagle Forum and Texans for Fiscal Responsibility. Keough was celebrating the amendment that was declared unconstitutional in Feb. 2014 and whose fate is currently awaiting an opinion of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, which heard the case in January 2015.

He later joined other legislators in cutting another larger cake, including Rep. Cecil Bell, R-Magnolia, Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels, and Lt. Gov Dan Patrick. Gov. Greg Abbott spoke at an earlier rally.

"Regardless of your politics," tweeted one per-

son, "I 100% support offering free cake to your constituents. #FreeSpeech #txlege"

Legislator files complaint against marriage equality judge

Rep. Tony Tinderholt, R-Arlington, filed a complaint against District Judge David Wahlberg who permitted a Travis County couple to wed last week.

In his complaint, Tinderholt believes "Wahlberg failed to give notice to the office of



Rep. Tony Tinderholt

Attorney General of Texas which is required by statutory law under government code ... Constitutional challenge by a judge requires notice and must wait until 45 days after to enter final judgment."

"This judge deliberately violated statutory law and this is unacceptable," Tinderholt told the Chronicle. "This complaint and any action, which the legislature decides to take, is about ensuring that our judicial system respects the laws of our state and respects the separation of powers. Judge Wahlberg allowed his personal views to dictate his action and ignored state law to accomplish his desired outcome."

The freshman Arlington legislator defeated Diane Patrick of Arlington in a contentious GOP primary last year. ■

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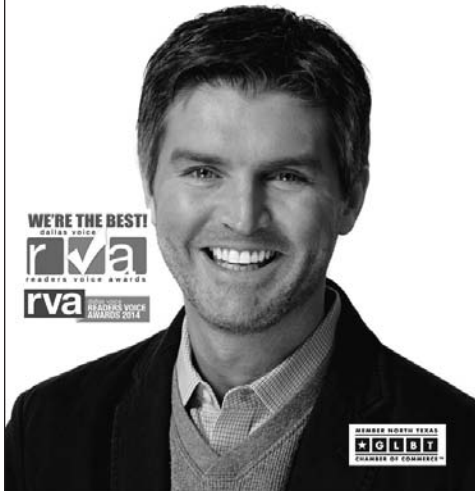
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Bunny hops



Lady Bunny

Lady Bunny returns to Dallas to DJ for the annual Resource Center fundraiser Toast to Life

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

As AIDS transformed from crisis to manageable disease in the late 1990s, Resource Center added its signature event: Toast to Life.

"We toasted those who were living and those carrying on," Resource Center CEO Cece Cox explained. This party, she said, lets the center recognize people who carry on the mission of the organization and toast those who continue to live with HIV and AIDS.

"And allies who stand with us," Cox added. "We can't thank them enough."

It's also an opportunity to raise unrestricted funds to cover expenses — such as maintaining the facility and staff — that government and foundation grants don't pay for. Funding from Toast to Life goes toward new AIDS services as well as new youth, elder and trans programming.

This year, the party moves from downtown to the Empire Room in the Design District. A number of restaurants — some repeats and some new — will have tasting stations. Face painters and fortune tellers reflect the party's "New Orleans Voodoo on the Trinity" theme.

Drag icon Lady Bunny is guest DJ for this year's

Toast to Life, and she said she hopes to turn the event into more of a dance party.

Best known as the creator of Wigstock, Lady Bunny now serves as the dean of drag and as a judge on RuPaul's Drag U. She said her friendship with RuPaul goes back to the early 1980s.

Bunny was raised in Chattanooga, Tenn. After she graduated from school, she moved to Atlanta where she roomed with RuPaul and began appearing in the clubs. She described southern drag as a reaction to the polished pageant drag popular in Atlanta at the time. But while she loved southern drag, Bunny's idea of what drag could be blossomed when she moved to New York a few years later.

"It was not limited by lip sync," Bunny said. New York's tradition of theater was part of the drag tradition there, and "Drag queens were writing and starring in plays."

Suddenly, Bunny said, she felt she had permission to do comedy and anything else she wanted. That's when she and a few others started Wigstock. She said Wigstock started when she and a few friends were drunk at the Pyramid Club on the East Side and decided to put on a show at nearby Tompkins Park.

"The first one was modestly attended," she admitted, but by the next year, Wigstock had grown into a phenomenon. The show took place annually on Labor Day, and as it grew it moved to larger Union Square Park and then to the piers along the Hudson.

In 1995, *Wigstock: The Movie* was released, and

Lady Bunny was introduced to an appreciative international audience.

But there is much more to Bunny than just her drag persona. She is a New Yorker, which means the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 did quite a bit to shape her view of the world. And Bunny isn't happy with Bush, Obama or the prospect of Hillary.

"I was getting a bagel on 13th Street and saw the second tower fall," she recalled about that day. But rather than immediately think of revenge as most Americans did, Bunny said she asked herself, "What have we done to make ourselves a target?"

In her view, as a result of those attacks, the U.S. invaded Iraq "for no reason," causing 500,000 deaths there and leaving a million people displaced.

She said she voted for Obama but is disappointed in his administration. Will Hillary Clinton be any better?

"Gays hate me for saying this," Bunny said, "[but] at least the GOP has a choice of bad presidential picks."

While Bunny identifies personally as a gender queer drag queen, she said she has strong admiration for trans people. "The trans community is addressing one of society's last taboos," she said.

Bunny said that she doesn't live as a woman during the day, although her mother refers to her as "Bunny" and refers to herself as Momma Bunny.

"She threatens to storm the stage and show who the real talent in the family is," Lady Bunny said.

Although her gender identity might be male, her gender expression is definitely not. Bunny said she is regularly called ma'am on the phone.

"Drag queens understand transgender more than anyone else," she said. "When you choose a job that involves wigs, the same jerks who are going to bash me are going to bash trans people."

Bunny said she is very proud of the strides the trans community has made, especially in the entertainment field, citing *Transparent*, Laverne Cox and Janet Mock.

"The hardest ones to convince are straight men," Bunny said, but she thinks that's about to change.

Depending on how the media handles it, she thinks Bruce Jenner's transition will resonate with straight men. With Jenner, she said, people remember one thing — an Olympic champion whose face was on the Wheaties box, an athlete who was at the top of his field. Bunny said for someone like that to transition is powerful and will make a difference in the way straight men view the trans community.

From the trans community to AIDS activism, Bunny's opinion comes with every appearance. She said she saves her raciest politically incorrect humor for her bar performances, but she loves gigs like Toast to Life because events like these remind her of the 1980s.

"Activism was so popular then," Bunny said.

She said she's looking forward to her Dallas appearance to reignite old friendships and meet new people at Toast to Life.

Lady Bunny will be DJ at Toast To Life, the annual fundraiser for Resource Center that takes place at 7 p.m. on Feb. 28 at Empire Room, 1225 N. Riverfront Blvd. Tickets at RCDallas.org.



FINALLY | Sarah Goodfriend, left center, and Suzanne Bryant, right center, pose with their daughters, Dawn Goodfriend, left and Ting Goodfriend, right, following Sarah and Suzanne's wedding ceremony Thursday, Feb. 19. (Eric Gay/Associated Press)

Married after all these years

After a 31-year engagement and two kids, an Austin lesbian couple has become the first same-sex couple to receive a marriage license in Texas

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Sarah Goodfriend and Suzanne Bryant made national news last week when a judge ordered Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir to issue them a marriage license.

"Young couples came up to us with tears in their eyes," Goodfriend said.

But she and Bryant both insisted they aren't the stars of this story: "Everyone wants a picture with the certificate," Goodfriend said. "That's the star."

On Feb. 17, a Travis County probate judge declared the Texas same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional and recognized a marriage posthumously for the sake of settling an estate.

Goodfriend and Bryant's attorney saw an opportunity. The couple — who had been together for 31 years and have been raising Dawn, 18, and Ting, 13 — since they were infants, had been trying to get married for eight years.

Eight years ago, they were part of a group that applied to the county clerk for a marriage license.

U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia issued his February 2013 ruling, in *DeLeon v Perry*, striking down Texas' anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment, "we hoped he'd rule and not immediately stay," Goodfriend said. But the judge immediately stayed his ruling, blocking any chance for same-sex couples to get a marriage license based on his decision.

(That case, in which plaintiffs are Cleo DeLeon and Nicole Dimetman of Austin and Mark Phariss and Vic Holmes of Plano, was heard by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in January. A ruling is pending.)

This latest probate court ruling, Goodfriend said, gave them another chance to get that elusive license, and Goodfriend and Bryant moved quickly to take advantage of the opportunity be-

fore the window closed again.

While the attorney filed a petition with state District Court Judge David Wahlberg asking for an emergency ruling ordering Travis County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir to issue a marriage license for health reasons, Goodfriend and Bryant went to the county clerk's office to wait. Their petition also asked Judge Wahlberg to waive the normal 72-hour Texas waiting period.

"We kept the kids out of school," Bryant said, and they called their rabbi.

Even after the court order, the couple wasn't sure they'd get their license. DeBeauvoir could have asked the attorney general for an opinion or found other reasons to stall.

Instead, "She bravely said, 'I have a court order,' and issued the license," Bryant said.

The Travis County Clerk doesn't allow weddings to take place in the office, so the couple went outside where their rabbi performed the ceremony with their daughters in attendance. Then they quickly ran back inside and filed the license before Attorney General Ken Paxton could act.

Bryant and Goodfriend don't see themselves as heroes and have been surprised at the amount of attention they've gotten. But they hope their experience will make it easier for others when marriage equality truly does arrive in Texas, possibly later this year.

"It's an opportunity to put a face on this," Goodfriend said of her marriage to Bryant. She added that she hopes seeing her family in the news will help make fellow Texans more comfortable with marriage equality.

Does their marriage change anything for them after 31 years?

Goodfriend addressed her health and said she's doing well now. But, she said, if anything happens, marriage and their relationship are one less thing she and Bryant have to worry about.

Despite being together for so many years and raising children together, both said making it official mattered.

A number of years ago, Goodfriend said, "I gave Suzanne this coffee cup I like." She said she was looking at it after their marriage and thought, "It's community property. I can use it."

■ MARRIED, Page 13

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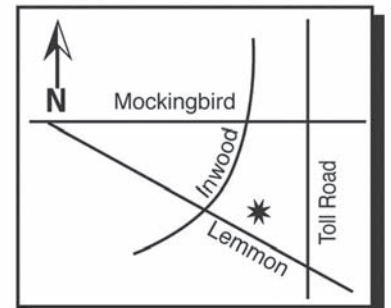
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THE GAY AGENDA

FEBRUARY

• Feb. 28: 17th Annual Toast to Life: Voodoo on the Trinity

What do you get when you mix a bunny with magic? You get "Voodoo on the Trinity," the theme of Resource Center's annual Toast To Life fundraiser. DJ Lady Bunny will provide entertainment. The fundraiser begins 7 p.m. at The Empire Room, 1225 N Riverfront Blvd. For more information, visit Bit.ly/1BUUp2w.

• Feb. 28-March 1: Denton Church Celebrates African-American History Month

St. James AME honors the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and 150th year of Juneteenth on Saturday and Sunday with a health fair 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on Saturday and celebration with music and more from 3-5 p.m. on Sunday at St. James AME, at 1107 E. Oak St., Denton. For more information call 940-387-1223 or e-mail StJamesAMEDenton@gmail.com.

MARCH

• Lambda Weekly every Sunday at 1 p.m. on 89.3 KNON

• March 1: Bring on Brunch and Community Celebration Fundraiser

Celebration on the Lake Church's membership ministry hosts brunch and fundraiser following worship service at 11 a.m. \$10 per person or \$15 for couple. Celebration on the Lake Church, 9120 S Highway 198, Mabank. For more information call or e-mail Membership Committee Team Leader Joseph Baird at 903-288-4149 or bairdj1771@gmail.com.

• March 5: Resource Center Volunteer Orientation

Mandatory volunteer orientation 9:45 a.m.-1 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St. For more information and to register call 214-528-0144 or visit the Resource Center.

• March 7: 25th Anniversary of House DIFFA Celebration

DIFFA/Dallas celebrates the 25th anniversary of its House of DIFFA black tie fundraiser benefitting numerous North Texas AIDS service organizations. Silent/live auction, seated dinner and fashion runway show begins at 6 p.m. at the Omni Hotel Downtown Dallas, 555 S. Lamar St. Ticket prices vary and are available at Bit.ly/1ID2U2Y. For more information visit DiffaDallas.org.

• March 7: Stonewall Democrats Candidate and Endorsement Screening

Takes place 9 a.m.-4 p.m. upstairs at Sue Ellen's. Open to the public but membership must be current or renewed at least 30 days prior in order to participate with the Endorsement Committee. 30-day deadline is Thursday, Feb. 5th. Visit StonewallDemocratsOfDallas.org for more information.

• March 10: Women's Chorus of Dallas' The Voices of Women concert

WCD partners with the Texas Woman's University Concert Choir and University of North Texas Women's Chorus to celebrate the music of women's composers at 7 p.m. at Dallas City Performance Hall. Tickets are \$20. For more information or to purchase tickets call 214-520-7828 or visit TWCD.org.

• March 11: GEAR: Trans*men Community Session

Monthly meeting discussion topics relating to masculine gender identity and transitioning. 6-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St.

• March 12-15: TBRU 20 - Bear On Studio 54: Return to the Discotheque

Annual Texas Bear Round Up gathering at Crowne Plaza Hotel, 7050 N Stemmons Freeway. Call 682-231-2624 or email customerservice@tbru.org for more information. Register online at TBRU.org/?page_id=12.

• March 12: TBRU 20 Bears BearDance

Texas Bear Round Up hosts fundraiser for

HIV/AIDS organizations 8 p.m.-4 a.m. at Station 4, 3911 Cedar Springs. \$25 advanced tickets or \$35 at the door. Register online at TBRU.org/?page_id=12.

• March 13-14: End with Red: A Time for Solidarity

The Afiya Center's second annual weekend fundraiser and symposium on the reproductive justice movement includes dinner with a presentation by guest speaker Byllye Avery at 6 p.m. on Friday. Faith-based roundtable discussion on the church's position on women's issues such as HIV/AIDS at 9 a.m. Both events at Academy of Black Arts and Letters, 1309 Canton Rd. Register online at Bit.ly/1z8d8Rq.

• March 13: High Tech Happy Hour

Texas Instruments Pride, the LGBT and straight ally employee diversity group, hosts its monthly High Tech Happy Hour to increase professional and social contacts between groups and individuals and to foster community. 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Ten Bells Tavern, 232 West 7th St. For more information contact Paul von Wupperfeld at pavw@ti.com.

• March 14: #NOH8Worldwide open photo shoot

Photo shoot with Adam Bouska benefitting NO8 campaign. 2-5 p.m. at Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, 14115 Hillcrest Road. Single/Solo Photos: \$40. Couple/Group Photos: \$25 per person. Cash and credit cards only. More information at NoH8campaign.com.

• March 17: JEWEL Lesbian Fiction Book Club Monthly book club discussion open to all women 7-9 p.m. at ilume, 4123 Cedar Springs Rd. Free. For more information e-mail jewel@myresourcecenter.org.

• March 18: GEAR Women's Rap Session

Peer group discusses topics relating to feminine gender identity and transitioning every third

Wednesday of the month. 6-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St.

• March 19: Urban Engagement Book Club: Hatred's Kingdom by Dore Gold

CitySquare's monthly Urban Engagement Book Club explores various social justice issues with writer Randy Mayeux and local social justice leaders. Free. Noon of every third Thursday at the Opportunity Center, 1610 S. Malcolm X Blvd. More information at CitySquare.org.

• March 19: Gray Pride: Senior Moments

Monthly Senior Moments series discusses topics and issues impacting LGBT seniors. Free. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St. For more information call 214-528-0144 or e-mail GrayPride@myresourcecenter.org.

• March 19: First Annual Mr. and Mrs. AIDS Walk South Dallas 2015

Benefit for AIDS Walk South Dallas 2015 with guest DJ, performers and drag contest at 11 p.m. at The Brick, 2525 Wycliff Ave. Registration begins at 4 p.m. \$10 cover. Contact Ivan Nolen at 214-579-0473 or Auntjuan Wiley at 214-455-7316.

• March 18: GEAR Women's Rap Session

Peer group discusses topics relating to feminine gender identity and transitioning every third Wednesday of the month. 6-8 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St.

• March 21: Tarrant County AIDS Walk

Takes place 9 a.m.-12:30 pm at Trinity Park Pavilion, 2300 W. 7th Street, Fort Worth. Registration at 9 a.m. \$20. Benefits AIDS Outreach Center. Register at Bit.ly/AOCAIDSWalk.

• March 21: AIDS Walk South Dallas

Takes place 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at St. Philip's School and Community Center, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Visit Bit.ly/1wxUG4I for registration details.

• March 21: GEAR Voice Feminization Support Group

Monthly meeting to study and practice voice feminization training. Free, but seating is limited to 30. 2-4 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St. For more information call 214-528-0144 or e-mail gear@myresourcecenter.org.

• March 21: Gaybingo: Lucky Charms

Monthly Resource Center benefit takes place 6-9 p.m. at Rose Room at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Rd. Doors open at 5 p.m. For more information call 214-540-4495 or e-mail Gaybingo@myresourcecenter.org.

• March 22: PositiviTEA 2015

Benefit for Legacy Counseling Center Grace Project for women living with HIV 1-3 p.m. at Eden Restaurant & Pastries, 4416 West Lovers Lane. General admission \$50. Sponsorship opportunities available. For tickets and more information visit LegacyCares.org.



Spotlight: Bring on Brunch at Celebration on the Lake

Celebration on the Lake Church, fresh off paying off its loan on its new home early, is trekking forward toward another new goal: increasing membership. The membership ministry for the LGBT-affirming church in Mabank hosts its Bring on Brunch membership brunch and fundraiser following worship services, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 1. The fundraiser benefits the Community Celebration Event on March 28, a free, all-day event including live bands, entertainment and food. Tickets are \$10 per person or \$15 per couple. Celebration on the Lake Church, 9120 S Highway 198, Mabank. For more information call or e-mail Membership Committee Team Leader Joseph Baird at 903-288-4149 or bairdj1771@gmail.com.



SPOTLIGHT:

Funding in limbo for Easter in Lee Park



GOODBYE EASTER | Unless organizers can raise \$20,000 in the next few days, Easter in Lee Park will likely be cancelled.

GoFundMe drive has few days left to meet \$20k goal

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

Cedar Springs Merchants Association has only six days left to reach its \$20,000 goal in its GoFundMe account intended to raise the funds necessary to stage the annual Easter in Lee Park event on April 5.

The group, as of 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, had collected only \$845 toward its \$20,000 goal. CSMA officials, in a press release announcing the effort, said the March 4 deadline is necessary because organizers need time to get the city permits necessary to hold the event. New requirements by the city, including a fence around the perimeter of the park, security and permits, have increased the cost of staging the event to \$25,000, "a level no longer sustainable by the association itself," according to the statement.

If the goal isn't met, pledged funds will not be charged to donors' accounts. The group then has two options: cancel the event or stage a bare-bones event without the traditional Pooch Parade and live music. (Once a mainstay of Easter in Lee Park, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra no longer performs due to increased extra costs associated with staging an event on a holiday.)

If CSMA decides to host a bare-bones event, they will emphasize park rules and guidelines, said David Berryman, executive director of the CSMA. In this case, dogs must be on leashes and attendees may not have alcohol or open containers.

Berryman admitted the campaign is a last ditch effort. He called the fundraising strategy "all or

nothing," and he does not anticipate meeting the fundraising deadline.

Easter in the Park is not the only event having a hard time. Overall "it's getting harder for events to find corporate sponsors," Berryman said, noting he knows of several other area organizers that have dramatically scaled down their events, if not completely cancelled them.

Before pulling its support of the event in a divisive dispute in 2011, the Turtle Creek Association worked with the Lee Park Conservancy, the non-profit organization that runs the park, to stage Easter in Lee Park. According to Dallas Voice archives, TCA withdrew its support about a month before the event that year, choosing instead to stage an alternative "family-friendly" event called "Creek Craze."

Critics accused the TCA of homophobia in pulling its support, and "Creek Craze" flopped.

CSMA has continued to fund Easter in Lee Park, even though it has lost money each year since, Berryman said.

CSMA President Alan Pierce said in a written statement, "It would be a tragedy to lose this great Easter tradition in Dallas. We must ask for help in order to continue it."

Thom Dance, who runs The UPS Store on Cedar Springs and is a member of the CSMA, said he hopes for a last minute intervention. "I hope we can save it. It would be a shame to lose it." ■

CSMA is taking donations through GoFundMe. To contribute, visit EasterInLeePark.com.

Sponsorship levels for businesses and corporations include Title Sponsor, Entertainment Sponsor and Pooch Parade Sponsor. Individuals and organizations can donate at a variety of levels, all of which are listed on the website. Most donation levels include a reward. For instance, donate at least \$25 — the Pal level — and have your name listed on the website as a donor.



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Where everybody knows your name

Real estate agent Lacey Brutschy prepares to launch a new social media website that's all about community and accountability

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

Everybody wants to find that place where they fit in, whether it's that perfect house or apartment where they can escape the rigors of the workaday world, or that corner bar where everybody knows their name. And when it comes to where you live, finding that place you fit best is vital.

That's the idea behind Dallas real estate agent Lacey Brutschy's new social media network, Exxempt.com.

It started out, Brutschy said, as a way for people relocating to Dallas "to find their places and their people." It has since evolved, she added, into a site for anyone in Dallas looking to find their niche.

"I get so tired of hearing people say, 'I hate Dallas.' They don't hate Dallas; they just hate the part of Dallas they live in. They just need to find the right neighborhood for them," said Brutschy, who works with Carolyn Shamis Realtors.

Just look at that three-and-a-half-to-four-mile stretch of real estate between Downtown Dallas and Old East Dallas, she said. "Those two areas — Downtown and Old East Dallas — they aren't very far apart at all. But those two neighborhoods are totally different from each other, and the kind of people who want to live Downtown are different from the kind of people who want to live in Old East Dallas.

"You don't even have to go that far," Brutschy continued. "Just compare Downtown Dallas to Deep Ellum. That's what? Only 12 blocks apart? And Deep Ellum has a totally different feel than Downtown."

She clarified, "I'm not saying that one neighborhood is 'better' than another one. That's not what this is about. It's about what neighborhood is better suited to which people."

But Exxempt.com goes further than just profiling neighborhoods, Brutschy said. It gives users a chance to find what restaurants best fit them, what bars and nightclubs, grocery stores, retail business

— even what people fit them best.

"It will be all user-driven," Brutschy said. "The idea is to create positive communication, accountability and a sense of belonging for people. What we want this to be is a site that builds community and that holds businesses and people accountable."

Users will have the chance to rank neighborhoods, businesses and people based on a number of criteria, and the site will then use those rankings to determine who/what/where are the "trendsetters" in Dallas. Knowing that others will be watching and ranking you, Brutschy said, will encourage users to always be at their best.

"Everyone wants to be cool. Everyone wants to be on the up-and-up and in the know," she said. "So knowing that people are watching what you do and how you behave, and that they have a place to go and tell other people about you, that holds people accountable for how they are. I think it makes people want to be better."

Other popular networking sites "have no community," Brutschy said. "They are selling your information, selling contacts. Exxempt won't do that. It will make money off the advertising revenue."

But even having an ad on the website will indicate that a business is a well-regarded member of the community, because advertising won't be open to just anyone, Brutschy said.

"Businesses will have the chance to register and log in to answer comments about them and to address negative ratings if they want to. But a business will have to have a rating of at least three-and-a-half stars to get ad space on the site," she explained. "That helps maintain the accountability that we want."

Brutschy acknowledges that she has set high goals for the new website. But she won't let the naysayers kill her joy.

"It's a big job. I know that," she said. "But I am young enough — and maybe dumb enough — to believe that it will work. I believe that we can create a place for a free-market community where we hold ourselves accountable and we hold each other accountable, and we can make it work. We will make it work."

Exxempt.com is already online for those who want to register as users. But the site won't go live until after the invitation-only launch party on Wednesday, March 4. For information, use the "Contact Us" page at Exxempt.com/contact. ■

■ MARRIED, From Page 9

"I thought about calling Sarah my wife," Bryant said. "Hi, this is my wife. It carries import. Love. Commitment. It's significant."

Both said it was even more important to their daughters.

"Their parents have the same recognition of being next-of-kin as their friends' parents," Goodfriend said.

"Dawn meets someone and talks about 'my parents' cautiously,'" Bryant said. "This brings our family into the light."

Goodfriend noted that the day after their marriage, a state representative and a state senator filed bills she called "nasty" that would strip county clerks of the duty to issue marriage licenses. She called those lawmakers and their ilk "a particular segment that gets political mileage out of beating

up on us."

Bryant said, "Part of our hope is we give a non-threatening face to our family. If and when the Supreme Court or the 5th Circuit rule, this will have softened the reaction."

And when marriage does begin statewide, Bryant predicted, many people will say, "I thought we started doing this back in February."

So what's coming up for this couple of Texas pioneers?

Bryant said Monday night was the first night they all had dinner together. Usually they eat together as a family and say the *motzi*, the Jewish blessing before a meal, five nights a week.

As for a honeymoon, Goodfriend is accompanying Ting's class on their eighth grade trip and Bryant is taking Dawn and her boyfriend, who are seniors, to see universities. Both joked they were taking separate honeymoons. ■



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Subscriptions via First Class Mail are available at the following rates: Three months (13 consecutive issues), \$65. Six months (26 consecutive issues), \$85. One year (52 consecutive issues), \$130. Subscriptions are payable by check, cashier's check, money order, Visa, Mastercard or American Express.

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Policing the bathroom police

Debbie Riddle's ridiculous legislation would block trans people from public restrooms — and more

This isn't the first time I've had problems going to the bathroom. When I was 21 years old, I worked in an office complex. I was openly transgender and an activist for six years already. The whole town knew about me.

Employees at the water cooler, their Dixie cups overflowing with gossip, talked about that "tranny" they hired over in Building III. My coworkers filed complaints about bathroom use.

I was banned from the ladies' room by human resources because my presence was "threatening." They forced me to use the men's rooms, but the men weren't having it either. So, where did they expect me to go? I use the bathroom for one thing only. To pee. And that other thing. That's two things.

Confused, embarrassed and about to burst from that gallon of tea I downed earlier, they allowed me a women's bathroom on the very opposite end of the complex.

I figured the situation would change when I got my new birth certificate. It was the first time I'd been elated to get an F on a paper. The surgeries had ended in April that year and I was waiting for New Hampshire to mail it.

My smile was Texas-sized when I presented my bathroom pass to HR. No longer a half-citizen, I was a card-carrying member of the female demographic. I would urinate freely in the women's bathroom. My bathroom.

It crushed my soul when they told me to keep using the same bathroom. I continued to do the potty dance, running at full speed, for as far as the building walls allowed.

A month later, they called me in for a surprise exit interview and fired me. My work allegedly suffered because I spent all my time running across the building to use the bathroom.

Now, you may think, "Why not simply give in? It can't be worth all that just to use a door with a dress on it. You were a dude once. You used the men's room all the time. Just go pee and get on with your day."

It was not my choice that I was born wrong. I had a proverbial tumor removed — a necessary surgery because it was killing me. I'm not simply some "guy" who can't pee standing up anymore. I'm a woman, and I will be treated with dignity.

I've legally used women's bathrooms for the past 15 years now. Transgender people aren't such a rarity in public anymore. Fewer and fewer feel the need to hide so fiercely. We asked society to give us the same respect they would give any other human being, and so far, they're responding fairly well.

Despite this progress, and my 15-year, near-perfect record of using the toilet like a big girl, Rep. Debbie Riddle has proposed House Bill 1748, an



Winter Laurel Mullenix

Special Contributor

amendment to Texas' Health and Safety Code, in the Texas Legislature.

Paragraph B of this bill explains that a building's management faces felony charges for allowing anyone older than 7

to repeatedly use the "wrong" bathroom. Paragraph C hands out Class A misdemeanors directly to the person using the facilities if they are older than 13.

Even if telling a full-grown woman where to pee weren't offensive, this is still an amendment to the Health and Safety Code — a law that would legally designate the differently-gendered a public health hazard. Telling people where to pee when you only have two doors is offensive and confusing. Gender doesn't fit within a couple designations.

Debbie Riddle answers this "problem" in Paragraph E:

"For the purpose of this section, the gender of an individual is the gender established at the individual's birth or the gender established by the individual's chromosomes. A male is..."

On second thought, I'll save you the boredom and summarize. According to the bill, everyone is either male or female genetically. Identity confusion, surgical alterations, presentational differences or genetic variations be damned — Y chromosomes belong to men and women have the X chromosome market cornered.

In short, Debbie wants to keep transgender people out of her bathrooms, like my former coworkers.

Segregation aside, her definition has more holes than me. First and foremost, the definition conflates sex and gender, which are two very different things. Sex is defined by reproductive roles. Gender is defined by social roles.

For example, when you tell a girl to "be a man," you're not telling her to grow a penis. You're telling her to behave in a stereotypically masculine way.

There are more gender-based ways to behave than a pair of dubious stereotypes, and there are more genetic combinations than XX and XY. Recently, a woman with XY gonadal dysgenesis (a fancy word for being born with female genitalia and male chromosomes) gave birth. In a black-and-white world like Texas, this means a man just gave birth to a human being.

Debbie, riddle me this: What if she identified as male?

The second issue is the disparagement of those who are handling their gender mismatch.

It's like waking up from a weird dream and realizing you were buried alive. You don't know why, or what happened. Your screams are suffocated by the coffin and six feet of dirt. There is nothing to do but handle it. Surgeries and legal documents make it easier and help us feel a little

more normal as we move about on this little planet.

That hard-earned sanity and quality of life means nothing in Debbie Riddle's Texas. That's disparagement.

Furthermore, many trans women either cannot or prefer not to have surgery, and states have different requirements for document changes. I don't know how some of them endure the pressure, squeezing every ounce of normality out of life that they can get. They crossdress, fluctuate and explore genders — anything that helps them cope with the trauma of gender dysphoria.

Most people don't believe me when I tell them I am transgender; me peeing in a men's room would be extremely uncomfortable for everyone involved. Simply put, I am not a man.

What about those who identify as non-binary? Crossdressers and genderqueer would be forced to endure emotional distress every time they use a public bathroom. If they conformed, they'd just feel the same distress from another angle.

It's the little things we take for granted that make up an oddly enormous part of our happiness.

Riddle's bill would have a negative impact on traditionally-gendered people, too. It bolsters dubious, age-old gender stereotypes. Actually, it writes them into law. Debbie literally defines gender according to those stereotypes.

Most public bathroom confrontations that make the news arise between cisgender and transgender women. Transgendered women are typically born male.

Disallowing gender variations to sort themselves by the bathroom where they best fit in, the implication is society must protect "normal" women from transgender women. This means that transgender women are just men in disguise, men who alter themselves to harass normal women in the bathroom.

And the implication there is that men are inherently predatory towards women. It fosters more stereotypes and abuse, as it also paints women as weak, helpless victims in need of extra special treatment. The feminist movement doesn't need that. Transgender women are the bleeding edge of the feminist movement, openly giving up male privilege to be true to themselves.

Awareness of transgender issues is higher than ever. This is the time to break down the stereotypes and create change. If we as Texans allow this bill to pass, we are taking two steps back for human rights. It doesn't matter how people present themselves or identify, they are still human. And all humans require a bathroom now and then.

Promoting stereotypes and further alienating transgender people causes harm to everyone. I encourage all of you to stand up and speak out. If you don't already know who represents you, visit the Texas Legislature Online site to find out. Contact your representative and let them know that you won't have it. Tell them that you stand for equality, that you want to break down those hateful walls.

By standing together, we can create change and achieve the equality people deserve. ■

For Sahara

When Kennedy Davenport's drag sister Sahara passed away, she was devastated. But she turned her pain into resolve, following in Sahara's stilettos on 'Drag Race'

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor

jones@dallasvoice.com

Chiiiiillllle!" For all her glamour and runway style, at heart, Kennedy Davenport is just a country girl from Oak Cliff. Now in her 30s, she still lives in the same house she grew up in since before adolescence. She drawls her words with an unmistakable Texas twang. And she tells it like it is — behind all those wigs and eyelashes, she's authentic. And she wants everyone to know it.

And soon everyone will, when she makes her national debut as one of the contestants on the upcoming season of the hit Logo competition series *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

"I'm an open book and I don't have any secrets — my whole life is a journey and the greatest thing that I experienced being on *Drag Race* was being able to share my truth ... as an entertainer, and just as a human," Kennedy says. "My life has not been a crystal chandelier. Dressing up and being beautiful is one thing, but when you crack that shell open and say, 'I am human too,' that's the best thing that could happen."

We don't know officially how Kennedy fared on show, but considering that she'll be making a personal appearance at The Brick this Monday following the season premiere, it's reasonable to assume she didn't get bumped Week 1. Indeed, her decision to do the show was a great leap of faith.

Kennedy was stationed in Miami after she enlisted in the Navy (she served three years, while Don't Ask, Don't Tell was still the law) and remained in Florida until she returned to Dallas to make drag her career. Being on the show definitely interfered with that.

"It's a commitment," she concedes, "especially if this is your livelihood. It was definitely a sacrifice. I took on this great responsibility after losing my father, and I am the guardian of my sister who is mentally retarded. Before I went on, I had to be sure she was OK. I was like, 'Lawd, let's make sure that water bill's paid!' My plate was really full so it was more than just to compete — it was my life."

The question she kept asking herself was: Did she still want to perform to make her living? "Can I make this profitable for my future?"

And it almost didn't happen at all. In many ways Kennedy would not be here had it not been for a tragic death that affected many *Drag Race* fans, but personally devastated Kennedy: The passing of a former contestant, Dallas' Sahara Davenport.

"Kalexis is my drag mother and founder of Davenport; Sahara was my drag sister," Kennedy explains. "To me, she was more than someone in the community — it was like she was my sister for real, like she was my *blood*. I was already doing drag before her, but it was like two little girls growing up. [When she died] it was more than just a loss; it hurt me dearly because I couldn't get to her."

Sahara's own appearance on the show turned out to be a motivating factor for Kennedy.

"We both had the same goals as far as female impersonation goes — she wanted to be Miss USofA and I wanted to be Miss Gay USofA. I was really in my own world when she auditioned and in survival mode — trying to keep these bills paid, honey! So I didn't have time to audition."

After Sahara made it on, however, "she was like, 'Sister, you gotta go ahead and put your tape in, girl.' So to finally put forth the effort — I said, 'Sahara I'm gonna do this for you.' To step in the same footsteps as her and compete was just so surreal."

What was most memorable about it?

"Chiillllle!" she says again. "You couldn't put it into one word, honey — it was challenging, hard, fun,

emotional, sooo tiring. It was like I was in high school all over again. I had to act and sing and dance and pull things out of me I haven't used in years. It was fun to learn the different aesthetics and different styles of drag. I developed real relationships with a lot of the girls — some I was closer to than others, but I think we all developed great relationships."

One thing she was especially happy about when she arrived? Santino Rice was off the show as a judge.

"I can truly say I was slightly relieved Santino wasn't there. Santino was a person who did not know about the art of female impersonation. So to have experienced Carson [Kressley] and Ross [Mathews] was exciting."

Equally exciting is how being on the show is a way of paying it forward — as Sahara did for her.

"Having that platform [*Drag Race*] to express my journey gave me every opportunity to tell the whole world who I am and what I've been through," she says. "This is the chance for us to be leaders, to let the younger generation know whatever they are going through? We've already been there." ■

RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE

Watching Party/Q&A with Kennedy Davenport, **The Brick**, 2525 Wycliffe Ave. March 2 at 8 p.m.



SHANTAY YOU STAY | Dallas queen Kennedy Davenport will make an in-person appearance at The Brick following the season premiere of 'RuPaul's Drag Race' Monday.

Magnolia blossom

Hollywood starlet-cum-Fort Worth legend Ruta Lee shows off her 'Steel'



Ruta Lee is such a down-home celebrity filled with such plain spoken Southern charm — she drops F-bombs during interviews, and conversation repeatedly turns to martinis — that you just assume she's a Texas girl, a native who headed out to Hollywood from a cattle ranch in West Texas. And you'd be wrong.

"There are those who will get into a fistfight if you say to them I'm not from Texas!" she says. "But no — I'm Canadian-born of Lithuanian parents, which makes me a real oddity."

Like Greer Garson, Lee became a transplant when she married a local man decades ago, making North Texas "my home away from home," she says. "People are wonderful here — the hospitality and the warmth and the generosity of spirit you feel as a performer. The audiences don't defy you — they want to enjoy themselves."

And audiences are anxious to enjoy Lee at Casa Manana, when she returns for a nine-day run in *Steel Magnolias*. Lee plays Clairee, the flamboyant small-town liberal doyenne in the crowd-pleasing tearjerker. It's a delicious role full of classic one-liners, most delivered by Lee.

"Let's face it," she says conspiratorially. "*Magnolias* is the show of the gay world. I don't know a single gay person who doesn't know every line in that show. My hairdresser, and every hairdresser I know — my fairy godchildren I call them, cuz I'm their fairy godmother — quotes not just my lines to me, but the entire show!" (Her own favorite zinger among the show's

many standouts is actually spoken by Ouiser: "I bet he takes the dishes out of the sink before he pees in it.")

Lee has heard these lines countless times over the years; this is at least the third time she's played Clairee. The fit is a good one: Both are glamorous but salty, the kind who get called "broads" and enjoy it. But every time she takes it on, it's a new experience — in part, because she keeps having to learn the show all over again.

"I'm one of those showpeople who, the moment the curtain comes down, everything leaves my brain," she laughs. "My lines sound vaguely familiar, but I have to learn the cues. And the girls [in this production] are just wonderful. It's funny how each time you play something like this, the dialogue takes on entirely different meanings depending on what mouths it's coming out of. I've never done that many plays where I can sit back and say, 'That feels new to me.'"

At 79, Lee certainly has done a lot of shows she'd need to make room for, from the Oscar-nominated classic *Witness for the Prosecution* to *Funny Face* to one of the *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* and countless TV guest spots since the Golden Age of Television. But *Magnolias* holds a special place in her heart.

"I like the fact that it has so much heart and so much lived-in humor — everyone can identify with it," she says. "The simplicity just touches hearts and keeping it going." ■

— Arnold Wayne Jones

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

Casa Manana, 3101 W. Lancaster Ave., Fort Worth. Feb. 28–March 8. CasaManana.org.

DO YOU HAVE TRACK LIGHTING? | Lee plays salty Clairee in 'Magnolias.' (Photo by Samuel Rushen)

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'Kinky' girl

Cyndi Lauper, the queen of New Broadway

The gay community has had no greater ally over the last 30 years than Cyndi Lauper. Since her Grammy-winning debut *She's So Unusual* in 1983, the dare-to-be-different gal has been an icon to outcasts, and often a plainspoken defender of LGBT issues — nowhere more so than via her True Color Tours. So it was a shock to no one when Lauper teamed up with the powerhouse gay team of Harvey Fierstein and Jerry Mitchell to collaborate on her first Broadway musical, *Kinky Boots*, which won a slew of Tony Awards in 2013, including one for Lauper herself for music and lyrics.

Just as the national tour opened in Dallas (see the review, Page 16), we got a chance to pose a few questions to Lauper about what it's like writing for Broadway, how she got drafted on the team and her own plans for more musicals down the road.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Dallas Voice: You'd never done a Broadway musical before — how did you get hooked up with Harvey and Jerry to be the composer of choice? Cyndi Lauper: Well, it came to me from Harvey. I'm a huge fan of Harvey and I know him because he's a very strong leader in the [LGBT] community that I'm a friend and family member of. And to do my first Broadway project working side by side with Broadway royalty like Harvey, [director/choreographer] Jerry [Mitchell] and our music director, Stephen Oremus, was just amazing. I mean, to be shown the ropes by these amazingly talented men — who at the same time, really respected and listened to my ideas — was just great. We all got along. Even when we had artistic differences about some points, we worked it out because we all wanted what was best for the show.

How familiar were you with the movie *Kinky Boots* before you tackled the project? I had actually not heard of the film before Harvey ap-

proached me about the idea of collaborating on it with him for Broadway. I watched it right after Harvey told me about it, though. I had just gotten off the road and was at home and when Harvey told me what the story was about I was intrigued. I loved the film.

What, if anything, was the most intimidating — or surprising — about composing for Broadway? Writing songs for theater rather than pop is very different. Your job as the composer of a musical is to move the story forward with the songs. You have to write for many voices and from all the characters' perspectives. And I had a blast doing that. There were songs that I wrote that I really loved that didn't make the show because maybe there was a change in the book or there was a different arc for a character and the story and therefore the song had to change. For my own CDs, when I write a song that I love, it makes my records! LOL! And of course when I write for myself, I'm writing from my perspective, it's the story I

am trying to tell through the songs on the album to my fans.

So how did you go about composing a score for different “voices” — characters other than your own? Was it a challenge? I really loved doing that, putting myself in the mind of one of the close-minded factory workers, or the mind of a young man struggling with issues he had with his father. Of course, there are those characters in *Kinky Boots* that I totally relate to, like Lauren, and there are universal stories being told in the show, so there’s that aspect, too. But I did find it particularly exciting to put myself in someone else’s shoes ... no pun intended.

You mentioned how you’re a friend and family member of the LGBT community, and have been deeply involved in LGBT issues for many years. Is that one reason why the story spoke to you? *Kinky Boots’* message is about being true to yourself and being proud of who you are. Really that is the heart of the matter for me. As a kid, because I was “different,” I got picked on a lot. I tried to fit in, too, but at the end of the day, that was more painful than not being in the in-

crowd or having a lot of friends or going to all the cool parties or in some cases being bullied. When I finally just accepted myself for who I was, I blossomed. I found my voice and in the end that is what brought me all my success, so I try and tell that story because only when you love yourself can your life really start. This speaks not just to the LGBT community but to everyone!

Since you won the Tony and have a huge hit, what are your plans in the future — any chance of another score from Cyndi? I absolutely would like to do more theater work. In fact, I’m already in early discussions about a few projects ... it’s just too early to talk about them.

What does the fact the show is now touring mean to you? At the heart of the matter, the story of *Kinky Boots* is about the power of love and acceptance, and I’m so happy the show is being brought to people in their own backyards so they can see it and hopefully be moved by it. We all need to be reminded of that lesson, and it’s great the show is going across the country and so happy people in Dallas have a chance to see it for themselves.



Review: ‘Kinky Boots’

For most lovers of musical theater, the arrival of *Kinky Boots* at Fair Park Music Hall is one of the signal shows of the season; for gay fans, it’s akin to a visit from the Pope. A six-time Tony Award winner, it tells the story of Charlie (Steven Booth), a straight man whose men’s shoe factory is about to go toes-up until he partners with fierce female impersonator Lola (J. Harrison Ghee), to create a line of hooker heels designed specifically for cross-dressers. Empowerment, glamour, a score by Cyndi Lauper and outrageous, uncomfortable footwear: Why, that’s all the makings of an instant gay classic.

Not so fast. While the show is a hoot and easy to like, it doesn’t set the stage on fire — it lacks soul.

Harvey Fierstein, who wrote the adaptation, has a strong touch in empowerment stories of just-be-yourself-itude, from *Torch Song Trilogy* to *La Cage aux Folles*; in fact, you could call this show *La Cage aux Footwear*. Folks try to live their lives out loud in the face of bigotry. But it’s not just *La Cage* it echoes; it conjured *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, *Evita*, *The Full Monty* and even the recent film *Pride*.

The musical sticks close to the plot of the film, for good and bad. Charlie’s late-to-the-game homophobia seems shoehorned in to create a conflict that doesn’t need to exist, and the finale, while a kick-up-your-heels party, doesn’t really tie up the storylines. Lauper’s score, despite jaunty pop sensibilities, isn’t filled with lasting hits in the B’way songbook. The anthemic act-closing numbers (“Everybody Say Yeah” and “Raise You Up”) are lyrically uninspired, although they have the intended effect of sending you out on a high note. The show’s best song, the balladic “Not My Father’s Son,” should touch a lot of hearts, though the staging is so morose it drags. (The energy level overall could be notched up.)

But why play footsie with such quibbles? You can choose to sit with a blank stare on your face and nitpick, or just sling back in your seat and have fun. There is, ultimately, something deeply satisfying about watching well-heeled Dallas audiences cheer on cross-dressers; you’d have to call it a remarkable feat.

— A.W.J.

Runs through March 8 at Fair Park Music Hall, 901 First Ave. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

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Napa Valley is a foodie paradise, but there's more to it than gastronomy

ANDREW COLLINS | Contributing Writer
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Northern California's Napa Valley is by no means solely about winery tourism — though admittedly, that's a huge draw. But in addition you'll find soothing hot springs spas and smartly furnished B&Bs, scenic opportunities for hiking and biking, and some of the country's most cele-



DRINKING IN NATURE | A breathtaking summer sunset over the vineyards of Napa Valley. (Photo courtesy VisitNapaValley.com)

brated restaurants.

This sunny, temperate valley bracketed by rugged ridgelines is first and foremost simply a gorgeous place to spend a relaxing weekend. Of course, having an appreciation for Napa's world-class cabernet sauvignon, merlot and chardon-

nay doesn't hurt.

Just a 50-mile drive north of San Francisco (the region's largest community), Napa (pop. 80,000) lies just 15 miles east of the grape-growing town of Sonoma. The Napa and Sonoma valleys compete with and complement one another. Collec-

tively, they've become favorite destinations among LGBT travelers for everything from spa- and epicurean-themed getaways to destination weddings, and they're close enough to each other that it's easy to spend time in each valley over the course of a weekend.



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Highway 29 runs north through the Napa Valley, starting in Napa itself and then linking the smaller, charming towns of Yountville, Rutherford, St. Helena and Calistoga. Each of these communities contains an abundance of prominent wineries, plus stylishly rustic restaurants and romantic country inns. You can drive the entire 30-mile valley in an afternoon, but it's best to set out early to give yourself time for tastings — and lunch — at a few wineries along the way.

A scenic alternate route, the Silverado Trail provides a more visually alluring introduction to the valley, winding through the foothills past fine wineries while avoiding much of the traffic along Highway 29. One other way to explore the region is by booking a trip on the Napa Valley Wine Train, which offers lunch and dinner rides from Napa to St. Helena in 1952 dome trains, classic 1915-17 Pullmans, and (in summertime) open-air railcars. These 36-mile round-trip excursions through the beautiful valley take about three hours and include first-rate food and wine.

Napa has a relatively compact and easily strolled downtown that abounds with diverting fashion boutiques and specialty food stores, winery tasting rooms and bars, the historic Napa Valley Opera House and Uptown Theatre, and several lively cafes and restaurants. Much of the action is along Main and First Streets, which intersect near Napa Creek and its attractively landscaped waterfront. A 6.0-magnitude earthquake shook downtown in August 2014, causing extensive damage to dozens of downtown buildings

as well as more than 200 injuries, but the majority of Napa's businesses have reopened. Still, some businesses were still making repairs in late 2014, so it's best to call ahead.

Beyond downtown are several arts-related attractions. Out on Carneros Highway a few miles southwest of downtown, di Rosa is a dramatic lakeside art museum and wildlife preserve on some 200 acres of carefully tended grounds. You can visit the indoor art galleries, wander the sculpture meadow and tour the house on this former winery and estate. Also well worth a visit is the Hess Art Collection, a fine assemblage of contemporary art at Hess Winery, where you can also taste the acclaimed malbec, cabernet sauvignon and gewurztraminer.

For some fresh air and exercise, visit Skyline Wilderness Park, a breathtaking 850-acre wilderness a few miles southeast of downtown. You'll find some 25 miles of trails for biking, hiking and horseback, and when the weather is clear, you can see as far west as San Francisco Bay and Marin County's Mt. Tamalpais.

Beyond Napa, each of the towns in the valley has a wealth of wineries. Yountville and Rutherford are small, quaint communities with a handful of notable restaurants and inns, and bustling St. Helena has a lively downtown with a particularly robust and sophisticated business district. At the northern tip of the valley, unpretentious and low-Calistoga is famed for its curative hot springs; it also cultivates a somewhat more countercultural vibe than the rest of Napa. About 10

miles north of town, you can visit one of the county's best spots for outdoor recreation, Robert Louis Stevenson State Park — the 5-mile hike to the 4,343-foot summit of Mt. Saint Helena offers spectacular views.

As for the most popular exercise in Napa County, wine-touring can involve anything from dropping by one token tasting room during your visit to planning each day around stops at four or five wineries (anymore than that tends to become exhausting). Regardless of how many you visit, consider appointing a designated driver or even booking a trip with one of the region's many winery-touring companies.

Notable Napa restaurants

The unassuming village of Yountville is home to one of the most famous restaurants in the United States — book far in advance for the opportunity to dine at Thomas Keller's peerless French Laundry. You can also opt for a meal of classic French bistro fare at Keller's less-spendy and more casual Bouchon. But downtown Napa is packed with other superb restaurants as well. A high-ceilinged, chatter-filled space on Main Street, TORC serves beautifully plated contemporary American fare. Carpe Diem is one of the most inviting wine bars in town, offering up an eclectic menu of eminently noshable small plates, from flatbreads to ostrich burgers. Swanky Tarla serves flavorful Mediterranean cuisine in a compact, stylish dining room, while Celadon turns out exquisitely prepared, globally

inspired fare, like five-spice duck breast and Moroccan-style braised lamb.

For a quick lunch, stop by cozy Melted, a mod cafe serving creative sandwiches (try the one with pork loin, apple cider butter, wasabi slaw and bourbon cheddar). Or take a stroll through Oxbow Public Market, with its bustling array of small restaurants and fine food vendors, including Gott's Roadside for gourmet burgers and garlic fries, Hog Island Oyster Co. for fresh seafood, Ritual Coffee for single-origin artisan-roasted brews, and the Model Bakery for mammoth cinnamon buns, gooey cookies and chewy pizzas.

In the county's northern climes, Longmeadow Ranch Winery & Farmstead is one of the most romantic special-occasion restaurants in the valley, and Tra Vigne in downtown St. Helena serves impeccable modern Tuscan food. Up in Calistoga, both JoLe — a lively farm-to-table bistro in the center of town — and brunch favorite Calistoga Kitchen should be on any foodie's "must-try" list.

Where to stay

A great base for exploring the entire region, Napa is home to a mix of upscale resorts and artfully restored small inns. Among larger properties, the inviting River Terrace Inn is close to downtown but with a quiet setting along the Napa River (it's within walking distance of

■ NAPA Next Page

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Illustration by Linas Garsys

■ **NAPA**, From Previous Page

Oxbow Public Market). Rooms are handsomely decorated, and some have balconies overlooking the river and whirlpool tubs. The sleek, five-story Andaz Napa (part of Hyatt's luxury brand) is in the heart of downtown and contains 141 cushy rooms with hickory hardwoods, plush linens and waterfall showerheads.

Two neighboring B&Bs of particular note are the Beazley House, a hip-roofed beauty with blue-and-white awnings and 11 warmly appointed rooms, and the gay-owned Inn on First, an Arts and Crafts-style mansion with 10 sophis-

ticated rooms, marvelous gardens and spectacular breakfasts.

Calistoga has several wonderfully romantic, gay-owned inns, including the Chanric Inn, which has seven luxuriously furnished rooms, a landscaped pool area and a tranquil massage room. Gracious Chateau de Vie overlooks gardens of lavender and rose and contains four opulent rooms with such classy perks as L'Occitane bath products, iPod docks and cab sauv made from grapes grown on vineyards surrounding the property.

Another favorite, located just off the main village street, is Luxe Calistoga, a stately 1873 inn

that mixes old-fashioned elegance with modern convenience. Note the iPads (with menus from local restaurants bookmarked), gas fireplaces and flat-screen TVs in each of the five roomy accommodations. If you prefer a more countrified setting, consider Kurt Stevens' and Richard Flynn's Meadowlark Country House, a 10-room hideaway located on 20 serene and secluded acres a few minutes' drive from town. Rooms at this cushy retreat have marble whirlpool tubs and private decks, and amenities include a clothing-optional mineral-fed pool, hot tub and dry sauna. It's an idyllic setting for unwinding after a day of exploring this gorgeous valley. ■

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Winery primer

At last count, there were more than 450 wineries in Napa Valley. Some favorites, both for the quality of wine and the experience of visiting the tasting room and grounds, include:

Beaulieu Vineyard, Rutherford: founded in 1900 and set in a stately building offering full tours and tastings.

Castello di Amorosa, Calistoga: the owner of esteemed V. Sattui Winery opened this incredible 121,000-square-foot castle in 2007. The artwork and architecture makes for a truly memorable experience.

Chimney Rock, Napa: set in an ornate white building in northern Napa along the Silverado Trail.

Clos Pegase, Calistoga: Michael Graves designed this striking, contemporary winery that produces high-caliber wines.

Domaine Chandon, Yountville: one of Napa's preeminent destinations for sparkling wine.

Franciscan Estate, St. Helena: among the prettiest of the wineries along Highway 29, with tastings offered in the tranquil courtyard during the warmer months.

Rutherford Hill Winery, Rutherford: occupies a handsome barnlike building; bring a lunch to enjoy an al fresco meal at the winery's lovely Olive Grove Picnic Area. It's just up the lane from the sumptuous wine country resort, Auberge du Soleil.

Stag's Leap, Napa: beautiful patio and gardens, famous for its Cabernet Sauvignon having beaten out several top French wines in a blind taste test in 1976.

Sterling Vineyards, Calistoga: the experience here involves taking an aerial tram up to the hilltop villa and winery.

Finding a restaurant

If you want to book a reservation at any of the dining establishments mentioned, here's a quick recap of them and their website.

Bouchon, BouchonBistro.com/Yountville.

Calistoga Kitchen, CalistogaKitchen.com.

Carpe Diem, CarpeDiemWineBar.com.

Celadon, CeladonNapa.com.

The French Laundry, FrenchLaundry.com.

JoLe, JoleRestaurant.com.

Longmeadow Ranch Winery and Farmstead, LongmeadowRanch.com.

Melted, MeltedNapaValley.com.

Oxbow Market, OxbowPublicMarket.com.

Tarla, TarlaGrill.com.

TORC, TorcNapa.com.

Tra Vigne, TraVigneRestaurant.com.



LIFE+STYLE

best bets

South Asian Film Festival debuts with gay content

As mentioned in last week's lead story, the inaugural DFW South Asian Film Festival gets makes its bow this weekend, with the gay-run organization including some LGBT-interest programming (at 2:15 p.m. on Saturday), but the entire slate of films looks intriguing, including a colorful *animated feature for all ages*, *The World of Goopi & Bagha*, pictured. Check out the entire schedule to find what interests you!

DEETS: Angelika Plano, 7205 Bishop Road, Plano. Friday–Sunday. DFWSAFF.com.



Friday 02.27 — Sunday 03.01



Thursday 03.05 —
Sunday 03.15

Out of the Loop Fringe Fest returns to WTT for 14th year

Fringe festivals get that name because they show quirky, strange, small, intimate and cutting-edge performances in a whole range of disciplines. This year's line-up of WaterTower's Out of the Loop fest features seven world premiere among the 20-plus shows you can choose from over the 11 days of the festival. Or get a festival pass and you might not have to choose at all.

DEETS: Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. March 5–15. Single tickets \$10; festival passes \$55–\$65. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

Friday 02.27

Rain reigns: 'Hedwig' is back as the angry rocker

Neil Patrick Harris' last gig before the Oscars was his Tony Award-winning role in the B'way musical *Hedwig & the Angry Inch*. We don't get NPH, but we still get a potent musical star in this production of the phenomenal show: Robert Rain, who has played the transgender German punk rocker on many occasions. He's back for a limited three-week run at the Margo Jones — an ideal space for this intimate yet soulful rock musical.

DEETS: Margo Jones Theatre at the Magnolia Lounge Fair Park, 1121 First Ave. Feb. 27–March 14. \$25. HedwigDallas2015.brownpapertickets.com.

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Gilligan's Fire Island. Spoofmeister Jamie Morris takes on the iconic sitcom with a gay twist in this bonus show from Uptown Players, a drag comedy performed at the Rose Room inside S4. 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Through March 14. UptownPlayers.org.

Kinky Boots. The smash Tony Award winner, written by Harvey Fierstein and with a score by Cyndi Lauper, makes its North Texas debut. Drag queens, union workers and leather — what more could you want? *Reviewed this week.* Presented by Dallas Summer Musicals, Fiar Park Music Hall, 901 First Ave. Through March 8. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

The (curious case of the) Watson Intelligence. Madeleine George's Pulitzer-finalist, time-traveling play about invention, artificial intelligence and human relationship. Stage West, 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. Through March 22. StageWest.org.

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change. The return of the Valentine's staple, a series of musical sketches about love and romance from queer composer Joe DiPietro. *Final weekend.* Theatre 3, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Theatre3Dallas.com.

My Name Is Asher Lev. Circle Theatre kicks off its 34th season with this adaptation of the Chaim Potok novel. Circle Theatre, 230 W. Fourth St., Fort Worth. Through March 7. CircleTheatre.com.

In Real Life. The third installment of Charlayne Woodward's trilogy of plays about an African-American actress making it in the 1960s and '70s. *Final weekend.* Jubilee Theatre, 506 Main St., Fort Worth. JubileeTheatre.org.

The School for Wives and Medea. Dallas Theater Center presents two classic plays in rep — one a saucy Moliere comedy, the other Euripides' devastating tragedy. Directed by Kevin Moriarty. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. In previews through Feb. 28, with openings for both on March 1. Through March 29. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

Twelfth Night: A Musical Comedy Carnival. A rollicking, Mardi Gras-inspired take on Shakespeare. *Final weekend.* Rose Marine Theater, 1440

N. Main St., Fort Worth. Through March 1. ArtesDeLaRosa.org.

Steel Magnolias. Ruta Lee headlines in her reprise performance as Clairee in the gay classic tearjerker for Casa Manana, 3101 W. Lancaster Ave., Fort Worth. Feb. 28–March 8. CasaManana.org.

Bull. Mike Bartlett, who wrote Second Thought Theatre's controversial *Cock* last season, now brings us *Bull*, which addresses the hot-button issue of bullying. Wyly Theatre 6th Floor Studio. 2400 Flora St. Feb. 26–March 14. 2TT.co.

New Play Competition. The 13th annual presentation of six short plays, all by local playwrights (including gay writer and former winner Buster Spiller), voted on by audience members. Presented by TeCo Theatrical Productions. Bishop Arts Theatre, 215 S. Tyler St. Through Sunday. TecoTheater.org.

SPOKEN WORD

Mike Daisey: The Great Tragedies. The acclaimed (and controversial) spoken-word performer brings his storytelling to Dallas as part of the Off Broadway on Flora Series. Hamon Hall inside the Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Through Sunday. ATPAC.org.

CIRCUS

Cavalía: Odyseeo. Dallas premiere of the new Cavalía, a Cirque du Soleil-ish show featuring horses, as well as acrobatic performers. DrPepper Ballpark, 7300 Rough Riders Trail, Frisco. Extended run — now through March 8. \$29.50–\$229.50. Cavalía.net.

FINE ART

What's Up Doc? The Animation Art of Chuck Jones. An exhibit celebrating the iconic cartoons of the Oscar-winning animator, from Pepe LePew to Bugs and Elmer. Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, 1600 Gendy St., Fort Worth. Through April 26. FWMuseum.org.

Between Action and the Unknown: The Art of Kazuo Shigara and Sadamasa Motonaga. A side-by-side examination of the art of two of the post-war Japanese avant garde art movement known as Gutai, which sought not to transform matter but bring it to life with experimental



BUILDING BRIDGET | Comedian Bridget Everett performs Saturday at Sons of Hermann Hall.

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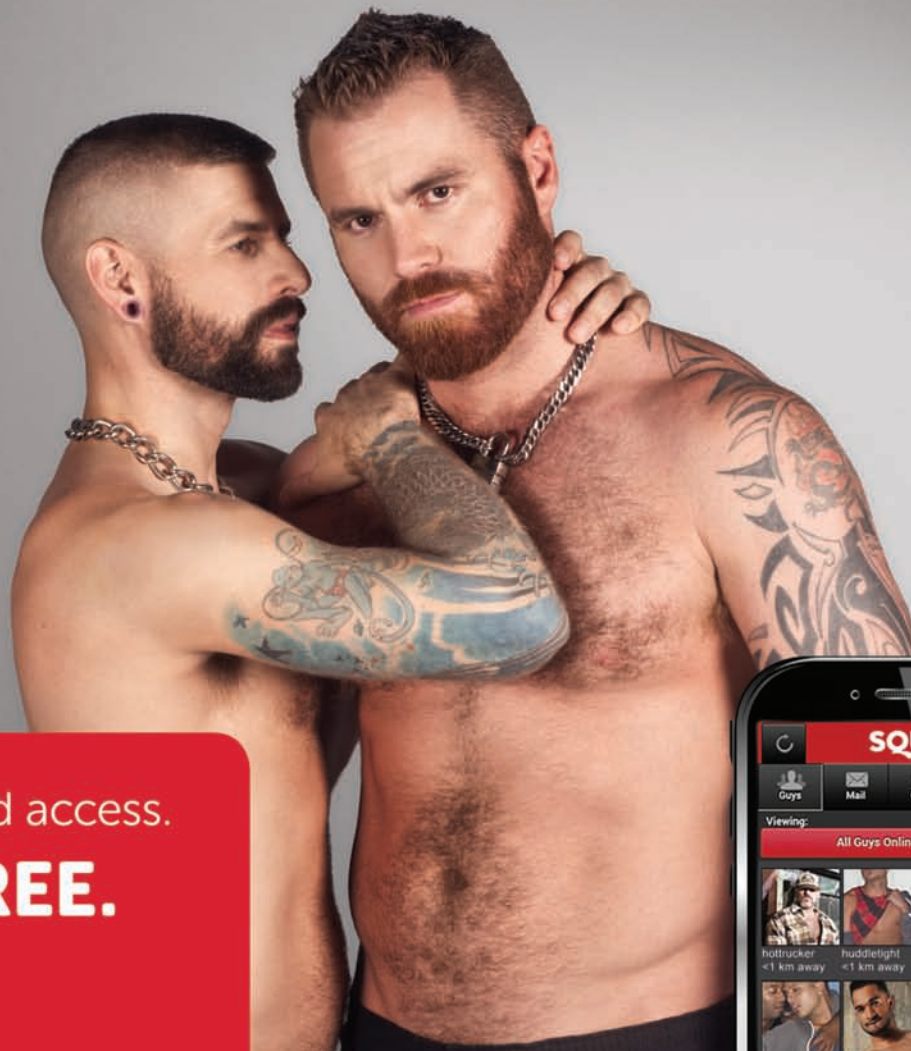
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techniques. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through July 15. DMA.org.

Spring 2015. Preview of the new collection of fine art opening at ilume Gallerie, 4123 Cedar Springs Road. Feb. 27-28, 7-10 p.m. ilumeGallerie.com.

Modern Opulence in Vienna: The Wittgenstein Vitrine. The DMA's conservationists restore this century-old display case of silver, lapis and glass — an amazing example of Viennese craftsmanship. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through Oct. 18. Free. DMA.org.

EXHIBIT

The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes. The Baker Street Irregulars are the focus of this elementary tribute to Sir A. Conan Doyle's enduring creation, the master consulting detective and cocaine addict. Includes interactive mystery-solving adventures. Perot Museum of Nature and Science, 2201 N. Field St. Through May 10. PerotMuseum.org.

FRIDAY 02.27

COMMUNITY

Panoptikon. The (now) weekly retro disco dance party, presented by Lord Byron. Red Light, 2911 Main St. Door 9 p.m.

SATURDAY 02.28

SPORTS

FrontRunners. Gay jogging group meets at 8:30 a.m.

at the statue in Lee Park for a run along the Katy Trail.

COMEDY

Bridget Everett: Parade of Flesh Tour. The buxom comedian performs. Sons of Hermann Hall, 3414 Elm St. Feb. 28. 8 p.m. \$14. ParadeOfFlesh.com.

COMMUNITY

Toast to Life: Voodoo on the Trinity. Lady Bunny headlines at the annual party and fundraiser for Resource Center with a voodoo theme. Empire Room, 1225 N. Riverfront Blvd. 7 p.m. (VIP), 8 p.m. (general admission). \$100-\$150. RCDallas.org.

SUNDAY 03.01

WORSHIP

Dignity (LGBT Catholics). Worship the first Sunday of each month, led by ministers Cliff and Jon Garinn. Interfaith Peace Chapel (lower level), 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 6 p.m.

BROADCAST

Downton Abbey. The fifth season finale of the drama about life among the British aristocracy. Airs on KERA at 8 p.m.

Girls. The fourth season of the quirky comedy-drama about modern living, co-starring Andrew Rannells and Zachary Quinto. Airs on HBO at 8 p.m.

Looking. The second season of the drama about gay life in San Francisco, starring Jonathan Groff. Airs on HBO at 8:30 p.m.

MONDAY 03.02

EXERCISE

Adult Broadway Butt Busters. DTC artistic associate Joel Ferrell leads an hour-long cardio-centric fitness class based on B'way choreography for an eight-week session each Monday evening. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through March 2. 5:30-6:30 p.m. \$150. ATPAC.org.

TUESDAY 03.03

FILM

A Streetcar Named Desire. Vivien Leigh in her other great screen role, as the tragic Southern belle Blanche DuBois, matched scene-for-scene by the sexual power of Marlon Brando is his best performance. Screens as part of the Tuesday New Classic series at Landmark's Magnolia in the West Village, 3699 McKinney Ave. Sponsored by Dallas Voice. Screens at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

THURSDAY 03.05

THEATER

Fellowship! The Musical Parody of the Fellowship of the Ring. A campy musical twist on the Tolkein novel. Theatre Too space at Theatre 3, 2800 Routh St. in the

Quadrangle. March 5-April 12. Theatre3Dallas.com.

Out of the Loop Fringe Festival. Seven world premieres are featured at the 14th annual assemblage of dance, comedy, music, drama, performance art and more. Presented by WaterTower Theatre. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. March 5-15. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

DIGS

Fort Worth Antiques & Art Show. The 52nd year of the showcase of collectibles and decor. Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3400 Burnett St., Fort Worth. March 5-7. FortWorthShow.com.

this week's solution

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Billy Masters

Billy recaps the Oscars, good & bad

How can I start an Oscars column without talking about **Lady Gaga**, pictured. I knew she was classically trained, but was taken aback by her singing of the medley from *The Sound of Music* on Sunday night. If you thought you were knocked out of your seat at home, you can only imagine what it was like in the Dolby Theatre. And once **Julie Andrews** came out, the theater actually shook with excitement.

Until that point, it was a rather pedestrian production. Sure, **Neil Patrick Harris** was a charming and affable host, but also unmemorable, save for re-enacting the underwear walk from *Birdman*. Speaking of his ensembles, I liked NPH's first tux (except for the lapels), loved the second one, thought the third one was ill-fitting, and liked the fourth, but thought it was a bit too casual (and I hated the flower). As to the ladies, how can I not mention **Jennifer Lopez's** dress ... or was it a float in the Tournament of Roses Parade? Let's put it this way: She and Oprah looked like twins. And speaking of twins, I think I'm actually getting tired of seeing JLo's breasts, and you know how I loves me a good set of titties.

Best speech of the night: **Graham Moore**, who wrote *The Imitation Game*. He started with a laugh by thanking Oprah, who presented the award. He then brought it home by comparing his struggles and suicide attempt at 16 with the struggles and suicide of Alan Turing, the subject of the film. He spoke directly to everyone out there who is weird, different, and doesn't fit in. "Stay weird, stay different, and then

when it's your turn and you are standing on this stage, please pass the same message to the next person who comes along." Bravo. By the way, contrary to what you may think, Graham Moore is not gay. Double bravo!

How fortuitous that on the eve of new Oscar winners being announced, a former recipient went public with her complaints. **Mo'Nique** gave an interview to *The Hollywood Reporter* claiming that winning the 2010 best supporting actress Oscar wasn't all it was cracked up to be. "It should come with more respect, more choices and more money. It should and it normally does. I thought, once you won the award, that's the top prize — and so you're supposed to be treated as if you got the top prize." Let us not forget: One role (even an Oscar-winning one) does not a career make. And if we know anything about Hollywood, it gives you what it wants, not what you think you deserve. According to sources, Mo'Nique was less than pleasant to work with.

It's not every Valentine's Day one gets to spend with **Cheyenne Jackson**, but I was lucky to escape Boston and be in Fort Lauderdale when he appeared in concert with **Seth Rudetsky** at the Parker Playhouse. Over the years, I've seen Cheyenne many times — in *Aida*, *All Shook Up* and *Xanadu* on Broadway; *Altar Boyz* off-Broadway; and *It's a Bird ... It's a Plane ... It's Superman* in Los Angeles. Each time, I left frustrated. Obviously he's gorgeous. He has a marvelous singing voice. One can't quibble about his acting ability. But, inexplicably, the sum didn't equal the parts; he never seemed to have it.

But lately, my opinion has changed. He gave a wonderfully nuanced performance in the film *The Green*. He showed his comedic chops on *30 Rock*. And most importantly, he really connected with audi-



ences in concert. I noticed this last summer during his run at the Provincetown Art House. Perhaps it was that he was being himself rather than playing a character. Or perhaps he's simply grown as an artist over the past decade. But the difference is extraordinary. In the past, we've run into each other socially

but, given my criticism, I suspect I'm not his favorite person. But never let it be said that Billy Masters doesn't have balls of steel — perhaps all the firmer due to the wearisome winter in Boston. After last week's concert, I found myself being ushered over to Cheyenne and Seth for a photo-op. Seth greeted me with a kiss, I complimented Cheyenne, shook his hand, and we posed for the photo ... with Jackson looking at me quizzically. Another bullet dodged.

By the way, Cheyenne has a new single out. "Find The Best of Me" is available on iTunes and the proceeds will be donated to the American Foundation for AIDS Research. He better be careful or I'm gonna turn into a fan!

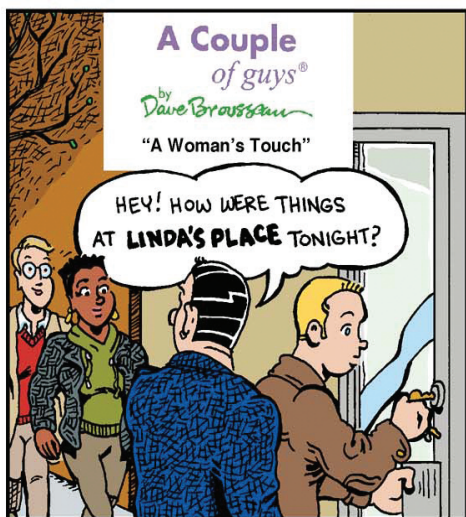
I had no interest in *Fifty Shades of Grey* (book or movie), but for you, I sat through the movie ... admittedly, in the privacy of my own home and with judicious breaks for napping. What a slow, lugubrious, endless film in which *nothing* happens. I can only imagine what a page-turner that book is! During the negotiation of their sexual contract, I couldn't get one thing out of my mind, how on earth does **Dakota Johnson** watch this with her family? Sure, I think it's hard to shock **Melanie Griffith**. But how do you sit next to nana **Tippi Hedren** during a discussion about vaginal fisting? I have trouble sitting near Big Mama Masters during those douche commercials!

Lastly, did you see **Miss Cicely Tyson** on *How To Get Away With Murder*? Why don't they just give her the Emmy now, because you ain't gonna see anything top that all year. And the writing? Wow! It was truly something to behold.

When I'm predicting the Emmys while reporting from the Oscars, it's time to end yet another column. I do have one last observation about the Oscars...or, rather, ABC's pre-show: whose bright idea was it to get **Michael Strahan** to say the name **Reese Witherspoon**? The only worse thing would have been **Sissy Spacek**. While I didn't have space to squeeze in a question this week, send me an email and I promise to get back to you before I work Sissy Spacek's name into another column.

Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

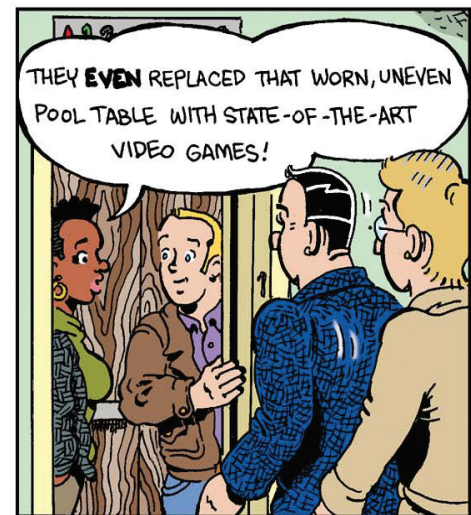
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Ryan and James at Liquid Zoo.



Friends at Sue Ellen's



Bo at Club Stallions.



Buck Wylde getting ready for a show.

Making the SCENE the week of **Feb. 27-March 5:**

Alexandre's: *Filter Kings* at 10 p.m. on Friday. *Bad Habits* at 10 p.m. on Saturday. *Mi Diva Loca* at 9 p.m. on Wednesday. *Lala J* at 9 p.m. on Thursday.

Best Friends Club: *Imperial Court* presentation at 7 p.m. on Saturday.

Brick/Joe's: *Dailom Kameo Nikon Birthday Bash* hosted by comedian *Da Mae Watergate*. Showtime at 11 p.m. on Friday. *Dallas Voice* sponsors *Karaoke Mega Star Monday* hosted by *Eric Way* on Monday. Cash and prizes awarded each week of the six-week contest. Open mic at 9 p.m. and contest at 10:30 p.m.

Changes: *Wall of Food show* at 8 p.m. on Thursday.

Club Reflection: *Cowtown Leathermen* cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Dallas Eagle: *National Leather Association* presents *Leather Perspectives* at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday. *Purple Party* presents *Score Saturday* at 9 p.m. on Saturday. *Dallas Girls of Leather* holds its monthly meeting at 5 p.m. on Sunday. *Triva Night* with *Mama Payne* at 8 p.m. on Thursday.

Round-Up Saloon: *International cocktail competition* at 7 p.m. on Monday with local judges *Steve Kemble*, *Krystal Summers* and *Frank Martinez*. RSVP on the *Round-Up* website for a chance to win a trip to *Key West*.

S4: *Katy Tiz* performs live on Friday. *Purple Party* spin edition on Friday.

Sue Ellen's: *Mojo Dolls* on Friday. *Chix* on Saturday.

Woody's Sports & Video Bar: *Underwear Auction* at 8 p.m. on Friday with *Champagne Chanel*.

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



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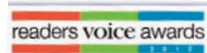
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- LAMBDA GROUP
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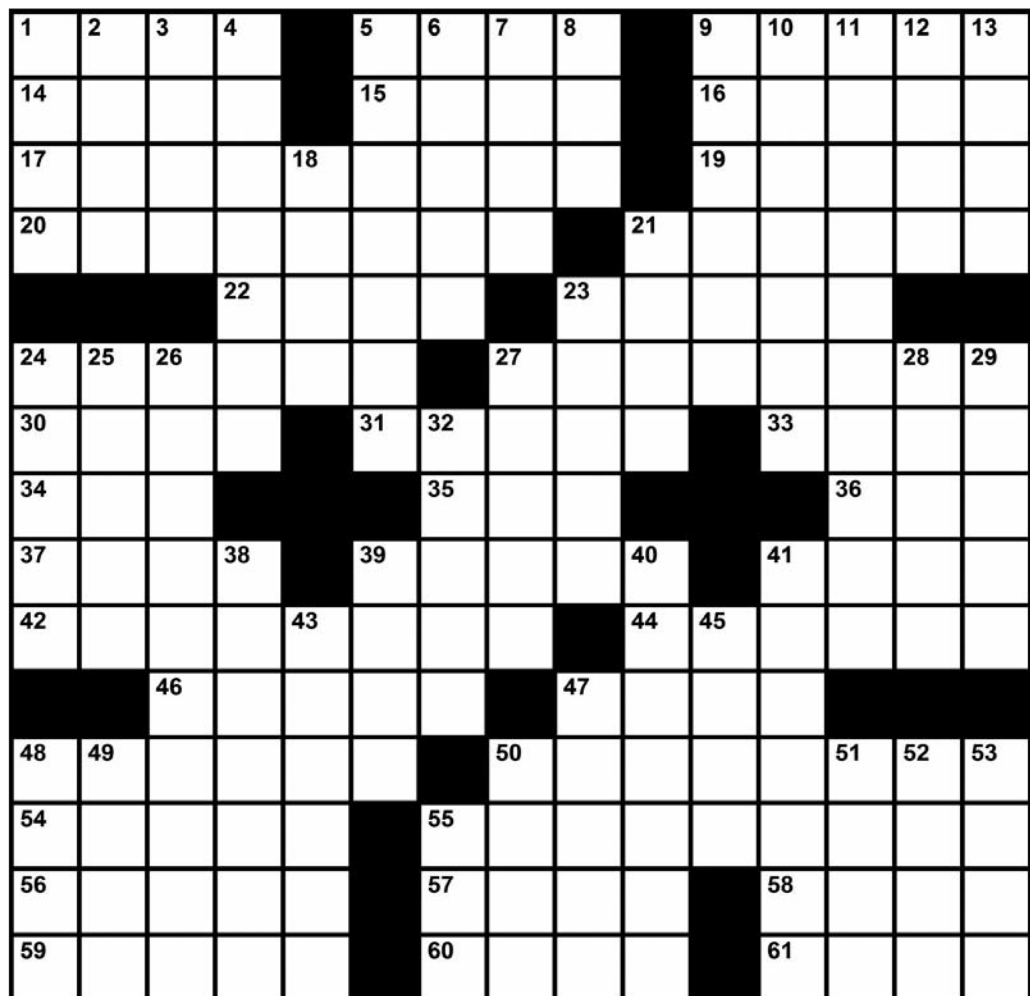
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It's Our Turn To Cry

Solution on page 23

Across

- Queen's beehive, e.g.
- NG: Neighbor of Pakistan
- They won't pose for nude photos
- Sometime defender of gay rights
- Oral gratification from the fridge
- NG: "Me too"
- Lesley's song about getting a rebound lover
- Come next
- Sexy one at a bar, e.g.
- NG: Scales
- NG: Vocalist Vic
- Study hard, as erectile dysfunction?
- NG: "___ first you don't succeed ..."
- Golf classic Dinah
- NG: Lots of
- Myrna of *The Thin Man*
- With 55-Across, Lesley's feminist anthem
- Initials of Stonewall Jackson's boss
- WNBA star Rebecca
- NG: Salon jobs
- NG: "What's ___ you?"
- Angel of the Waters* sculptor Emma
- Deep crack in Mother Earth

46 NG: Ex of "The Donald"

- Lesbian ___ fiction
- Orally appealing, perhaps
- Crack down
- Tried to tackle tight ends, e.g.
- See 35-Across
- NG: Overplay a part
- Russian river
- NG: Schedule guesses, briefly
- Tool for Edith Head
- Cut
- Dancer Reagan and Wood of the Stones

Down

- It's stuck under G-strings
- Two foursomes, to Lorca
- NG: "Why should ___ you?"
- NG: Stickler for details
- NG: Flavors by soaking
- Tops of houses
- NG: Dating from
- Org. that makes Stanley wear a cup?
- NG: Nutrition writer Davis
- Two drinks, at some gay bars
- Lesley's song about a stolen beau
- Broadway ticket souvenir
- Tools for cultivating pansies

- ___ all-time high
- NG: Movie theater
- Julius Caesar setting
- Stick them in with your pickle
- NG: In the works
- Lesley's song about a cheating lover
- NG: Ill-bred individuals
- ___ a customer
- Material on a drag queen's legs
- Whoopi, in *The Lion King*
- NG: Render unnecessary
- Mulan's male persona
- Send to the bottom
- Like a queen on the throne
- NG: Playful talk
- Karen Carpenter, for one
- Like an institution for penile penetration?
- NG: Hawkish deity
- Word before "sex," in marriage discussions
- Lesley, who sang "Judy's Turn to Cry"
- NG: Golden Rule word
- Guy under Hoover
- NG: Big name in oil
- You won't get a bang out of it



I closed my eyes, exhaled, and thought to myself: *remember this.*

Remember floating above the hills of Tuscany. The people we met—the friends we made. And, discovering that, sometimes, the grass really is greener.

It's funny, I don't remember a single thing from our Celebrity cruise—I remember *everything.*



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