

# dall voice

The Premier Media Source for LGBT

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Petropolitan owner  
**Chris Watts**  
wants to help create a  
community as passionate  
about animals as he is

## PASSION FOR PETS

By Tammye Nash  
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Photo by Tammye Nash  
Cover design by Kevin Thomas

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[DallasVoice.com/Category/Instant-Tea](http://DallasVoice.com/Category/Instant-Tea)



Rich Sheridan

## Rich Sheridan arrested in anti-gay graffiti case

Dallas mayoral candidate Rich Sheridan was arrested March 27 in connection with a graffiti case dating from June 2014. He has been charged with spray-painting "666" on the Legacy of Love monument and at Cathedral of Hope, and similar acts of vandalism at other locations.

Asst. Dallas Police Chief Randy Blankenbaker said defacing a public monument and a place of worship are state jail offenses. In addition, police are filing hate crime charges against Sheridan. The graffiti charges are a third degree felony. The hate crime enhancement could increase the charge to second degree with a penalty of 5 to 20 years in prison.

— David Taffet

## Clerk in Denison shop berates mother for letting daughter choose boy clothes

A clerk at a children's clothing store in Denison reportedly accused a mother of child abuse for allowing her 5-year-old daughter to choose a boy's suit and tie as her Easter outfit.

Rachel Giordano said her daughter Maddie is a tomboy who has "preferred to dress in boys clothes since she was about three years old." Rachel said she doesn't mind a bit if Maddie likes wearing boy clothes, but a clerk in Martha's Miniatures in Denison did mind. A lot.

Giordano said she and Maddie were hanging out at Denison's Art Walk last Saturday, March 28, when she decided to take her daughter into Martha's to shop for an Easter outfit. But when the store clerk saw the little girl, she was outraged.

Giordano told KTEN the clerk "told me that I was promoting wrong behavior, that parent's should not let their children choose the way that they dress if it's cross-gendered."

Giordano posted on her Facebook page about the incident, and the clerk responded with a post to the store's Facebook page saying she was "shocked" by the incident and that "I asked [the mother] why she was encouraging this. ... This is child abuse from the mother."

The Martha's Miniatures FB page has since been removed and just so you know, Giordano ended up

taking Maddie to JCPenney's, where the little girl got her Easter suit.

— Tammye Nash

## House takes \$3 million from AIDS prevention funding for abstinence

The Texas House of Representatives voted 97 to 47 to move \$3 million in AIDS prevention money to abstinence-only education, according to the Texas Tribune.

The amendment was proposed by first-term Rep. Stuart Spitzer, R-Kaufman. During debate over the proposal, we found out that Spitzer was a virgin when he married his wife at age 29, and she's the only woman he's had sex with. He didn't specify if he ever had sex with a man.

Coming to his defense was Scott Turner, R-Frisco, who said we can never have enough abstinence education money. Turner challenged Rep. Joe Strauss for the Speaker of the House position and after losing, berated House members for not voting for him.

Spitzer was challenged by Democrats who questioned if he knew how sexually transmitted diseases were spread and who asked what his definition of sex was.

Oh, and Spitzer is a doctor, so if you live down in the Cedar Creek Lake area, you may want to make a note to find a different doctor.

— David Taffet

## Hutchinson won't sign Arkansas 'religious freedom' bill

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson announced Wednesday, April 1 that he will not sign the "religious freedom" bill passed by lawmakers in his state, saying that he will instead send the measure back to the state Legislature for changes to make sure that it mirrors a federal law already in place.

Hutchinson said he made his decision because he wants Arkansas to be "known as a state that does not discriminate but understands tolerance." He also said he is considering issuing an executive order that bans discrimination in the state's workforce.

Hutchinson said his own son, Seth, signed a petition urging him not to sign the bill.

— Tammye Nash

## DoJ charges Oklahoma university with trans discrimination

The Department of Justice filed discrimination charges on Monday, March 30 on behalf of Rachel Tudor against Southeastern Oklahoma State University. They charge is gender discrimination.

Tudor claims she was denied tenure because she is transgender, according to Reuters.

Tudor was an assistant professor of English at the school and was denied tenure in 2011. The school claimed she hadn't published enough, even though she had more peer-reviewed work than her department chair. School officials also claimed they couldn't substantiate that Tudor actually did some of the work she claimed she did on her application for tenure.

Tudor told Dallas Voice at the time that the works in question were in the school library with her name on the cover.

— David Taffet

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## localbriefs

### TCGPWA celebrates Easter with Agape

Tarrant County Gay Pride Week Association celebrates Easter on Saturday, April 4 by participating in Agape MCC's Easter Egg Hunt.

The Easter Bunny visits Agape MCC, 4615 E California Parkway, Fort Worth at noon to begin an afternoon of games and contests for kids. Each child receives four tokens to play games. Easter egg hunts begin at 1 p.m. for children up to six years old and at 3 p.m. for children 3 to 12 years old. At 2 p.m. is a pinata bash.

Coloring and drawing contests take place through the afternoon and door prizes are awarded at 4 p.m.

### Fort Worth Rights Now plans protest

Damon Carver, organizer of Fort Worth Rights Now, along with GetEQUAL Texas, plans a protest from 4-7 p.m. on April 4.

Meet at Chipolte, 3000 W. 7th St., Fort Worth. Protesters then plan to take over the busy intersections at University Avenue and W. 7th St. with banners and crosswalk picketing. The protest is in response to Indiana-type discrimination laws that are being considered around the country.

"We will not allow any citizen of Texas to abuse religion to arbitrarily hate LGBT people, minorities, and non-traditional people in Texas," Carver said.



### Chris Chism makes Alexandre's debut

Cathedral of Hope assistant director of music and worship Chris Chism makes his Cedar Springs debut at Alexandre's on Wednesday, April 8.

Chism said he plans to sing and play Top 40 covers as well as a few standards and original material.

### Equality Texas holds final advocacy day

Equality Texas holds its third and final advocacy day beginning at 11 a.m. on April 13.

Meet with lawmakers in Austin to talk about how discrimination affects the LGBT Community.

GALA North Texas is sponsoring transportation from Plano for \$15 that includes food. Tickets for transportation from Plano are available at [GALANorthTexas.org](http://GALANorthTexas.org).

Training takes place at First United Methodist Church of Austin, 1201 Lavaca St., Austin at 11 a.m. The church is one block west of the state Capitol. People are assigned to groups and each group given about seven legislators to visit.

To register for the day, visit [EqualityTexas.org](http://EqualityTexas.org).

### pet of the week / BUDDY

**Buddy** is a sweet and loving little guy in search of a new forever home. He is being fostered by Chris Watts and the folks at Petropolitan on behalf of his former owner who is no longer able to care for him. Buddy is about 2 years old and weighs about 12 pounds. For information on meeting Buddy and possibly making him part of your family, call Petropolitan at 214-741-4100. Petropolitan is located at 408 S. Harwood in downtown Dallas. The shop is open 7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Sat., and is closed Sun.



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# THE GAY AGENDA

## APRIL

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

• **April 3-5: Grace United Methodist Church Easter Weekend Services**

Grace UMC hosts a Good Friday service 7–8 p.m. and three Easter services from 8–11:45 a.m. Easter SONrise Service 8–9 a.m. followed by an Easter Egg Hunt at 9:30–10:15 am for children ages 3–12, and a worship service 10:30–11:45 a.m. Grace United Methodist Church, 4105 Junius Street. For more information call 214-824-2533 or e-mail gumc@graceumcdallas.org.

• **April 4: 8th Annual Stockyards Easter Run/Walk**

1K, 5K and 10K run and walk starts at 8:30 a.m. in Fort Worth's Historic Stockyards, East Exchange. Easter egg hunt and roll afterward. Benefits the All-Star Equestrian Foundation. \$200 cash prize for largest team. Register at Bit.ly/1LOxI5S. For more information call or e-mail Veronica Merrill at 817-257-4480 or at v.merrill@tcu.edu.

• **April 4: Easter Egg-stravaganza at Northaven United Methodist Church**

LGBT family friendly event includes Easter egg hunts, raffle, egg races with prizes, brunch and photo opportunities with Easter Bunny. 10 a.m.–noon Northaven United Methodist Church, 11211 Preston Road. For more information call 214-363-2479.

• **April 6: Hidden consequences of changing Texas' Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)** Equality Texas, Texas Freedom Network and ACLU of Texas present a conversation on the impact of pending legislation on families, cities, local governance and businesses 7–8:30 p.m. at University Presbyterian SA, 300 Bushnell Ave., San Antonio. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. RSVP at Bit.ly/1F11LOJ.

• **April 7: DFW Transcendence Trans/SOFFA Meeting**

Trans and ally support group meets monthly on first and third Tuesdays from 7–9 p.m. at Agape MCC, 4615 East California Parkway, Fort Worth. For more information call Finn Jones at 214-499-0378 or by e-mail at sfinn.jones@gmail.com.

• **April 8: GEAR: Men's Support Group**

Monthly meeting discussion topics relating to masculine gender identity and transitioning. 6–8 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St. For more information call 214-528-0144 or email gear@myresourcecenter.org.

• **April 9: Fashion CITED: A Style Event**

Style show benefits Legal Hospice of Texas. 6:30–9:30 p.m. at Frontiers of Flight Museum, 6911 Lemmon Ave. Tickets available at Bit.ly/1DGApH3.

• **April 9: LULAC Officer Installation Ceremony and Meet and Greet with City Council Candidates**

Meet the new LULAC officers and candidates for

Dallas City Council from 7–8 p.m. at Havana Lounge, 4006 Cedar Springs. Enjoy light appetizers and get to know candidates and learn about their positions on issues.

For more information e-mail LULAC4871@gmail.com or visit LULAC4871.org.

• **April 10: High Tech Happy Hour**

Texas Instruments Pride, the LGBT and ally 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 Fat Rabbit Dallas, 2523 McKinney Ave. For more information e-mail Paul von Wupperfeld at pavw@ti.com.

• **April 11: Hold Me Tight Couples Retreat**

Randy Martin, LPC-S and Carolyn Solis, LPC facilitate a retreat focused on same-sex couples based on the work of Dr. Sue Johnson, author of Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love. Open to couples and individuals. 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. at Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan Street.

\$200 per person or \$400 per couple. Registration fee includes Lunch and the book Hold Me Tight Preregistration is required. For more information call or e-mail Randy Martin at 214-392-8247 or at martinlpc@yahoo.com.

• **April 12: Oak Cliff Earth Day Celebration at Lake Cliff Park**

• **April 13: Equality Texas Freedom Advocacy Day**

Lobby legislators in Austin about discrimination against LGBT people. Final EQTX lobbying day. 11 a.m.–4 p.m. at First United Methodist Church of Austin Family Life Center, 1300 Lavaca St. Advanced registration required. Register at EqualityTexas.org.

• **April 15: Evening of Hope Reveal Party**

Benefits AIDS Outreach Center. Blue Sushi, 3131 W. 7th St., Fort Worth. \$20.

• **April 15: GEAR Women's Support Group**

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. For more information call 214-528-0144 or email gear@myresourcecenter.org.

• **April 16: 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.

• **April 16: Urban Engagement Book Club: Civic Sermons: Ideas for a Difference Civic**

## Culture by Gerald Britt

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. For more information visit CitySquare.org.

• **April 18: Gaybingo: Safari**

Monthly Resource Center benefit takes place 6–9 p.m. in the 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.

• **April 18: 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.

• **April 21: JEWEL Lesbian Fiction Book Club**

Monthly book club discussion open to all women 7–9 p.m. at ilume, 4123 Cedar Springs Rd, on the 3rd Tuesday each month. Free. For more information e-mail jewel@myresourcecenter.org.

• **April 21: DFW Transcendence Trans/SOFFA Meeting: Carter Brown of Black Transmen, Inc.**

Trans and ally support group meets monthly on first and third Tuesdays from 7–9 p.m. at Agape MCC, 4615 East California Parkway, Fort Worth. For more information call Finn Jones at 214-499-0378 or by e-mail at sfinn.jones@gmail.com.

• **April 23: UT Dallas Diversity Awards Gala**

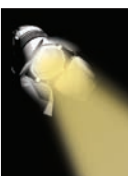
UT Dallas 2015 Diversity Awards Soiree recognizes students, student organizations, staff, faculty and community members who advance the UT Dallas commitment to embrace, enhance, and celebrate diversity and awards scholarships to UTD students. Jack Mackenroth, an activist, athlete, and fashion model, serves as the master of ceremonies. 4 p.m. at UT-Dallas' Clark Center, 800 W. Campbell Road, Richardson. For more information contact Rosie Peterson at 972-883-4560 or by e-mail rpeterson@utdallas.edu.

• **April 24: North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce 10th Annual Dinner**

Honoring North Texas business and community leaders at 5:30 p.m. at Renaissance Dallas Hotel, 2222 N. Stemmons Freeway. CelebrationOfExcellence.com.

• **April 25: Tenth Annual Prairie Fest**

Now in its tenth year, Fort Worth's Prairie Fest is an outdoor festival benefitting the Tandy Hills Nature Center, one of the last remaining natural prairies in the region. Free. 11 a.m.–8 p.m. at Tandy Hills Nature Center, 3400 View St., Fort Worth. For more information visit Tandyhills.org.



# SPOTLIGHT:

## Fashion CITED



Organizers of 9th annual Fashion CITED fundraiser benefitting Legal Hospice of Texas say it's their biggest event so far. LHT, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary of providing compassionate legal services to those who are terminally ill or living with HIV, is going all out.

Rhonda Sargent Chambers serves as the event host. Five local designers — Yomono, Petit Atelier, Marek + Richard, Haggard and Zulma & Enro — will debut their latest collections. Fashion CITED takes place Thursday, April 9, from 6:30–9:30 p.m. at Frontiers of Flight Museum, 6911 Lemmon Ave. Table seating is sold out but runway seating is still available at Bit.ly/1DGApH3.

# Living his dream

Petropolitan owner Chris Watts wants to help create a community as passionate about animals as he is

**TAMMYE NASH** | Managing Editor  
nash@dallasvoice.com

Not everybody gets to make their passion be their profession. Chris Watts is one of the lucky few. And now, his business is growing along with his passion for his work.

Watts and his husband, Todd Fisher, own Petropolitan, a full-service pet services shop located in downtown Dallas, at 408 S. Harwood. Soon they will be opening their second location, at the intersection of Emmett Street and Hampton Road in Oak Cliff. It is a move that will more than triple their total space and give them the chance, Watts said, to begin offering the kind of services that they hope will enrich their new community as well as their pocketbooks.

## Getting started

As a child, Watts said, it was his dream to be a veterinarian. But as he got older and the time came to choose a career, Watts said he ended up on a different path, eventually going to work in the marketing department of Bank of America.

Then came the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. "I worked in the green building in downtown Dallas when 9-11 happened. After, we were there, talking about our contingency plan, about what to do if something happened there. And I just realized, I can't do this anymore," Watts recalled.

And so he left his corporate job to go to work managing a friend's pet grooming shop. Eventually, the shop sold to a new owner — "someone who was all about the money, and not about the animals" — and Watts was once again on the move.

"Within 60 days of giving my notice there, we were opening Petropolitan," he said.

It took a while longer for Fisher to get out of the office and into the family business, Watts continued: "Todd worked as a hatchet man for IBM. He traveled all over the world, consolidating offices, laying people off. He definitely needed to find his soul again, too."

The two agreed that they couldn't give up Fisher's income right away. "But once we got Petropolitan up and really going, we decided Todd could be free of his corporate side, too," Watts said.

## What's now, what's next

Most of Petropolitan's business now is in pet grooming, pet boarding and pet sitting, Watts said. And while most of the business in the shop deals with dogs, Petropolitan reaches out into other species, too.

"We work with cats. We've house-sitted chickens and we've handled pet rats. We have even contracted out to handle some snakes. Well, I

won't work with snakes, but we have others who do. My criteria is that they have to have legs before I handle them," he laughed. "We've bathed a pig; we've bathed a rabbit. We've never worked with horses, but if someone asked us to handle horses, we'd have to make sure we have someone with the expertise to do that."

Watts said Petropolitan can board pets at the shop during the day, and will sit with pets in the owner's home. They walk the animals, and offer a pick-up-and-delivery service, too, whether that means delivering the animal to the shop, to the vet or to its home.

But despite all the services Petropolitan offers now, Watts said those services will just grow once the new, second location is open.

"We've been toying with the idea of a second location for some time, but no place was just right. We just decided we weren't going to force it. If it happened, it happened," Watts said. "Two weeks ago, we weren't even talking about opening a second location. Today, we've got a signed lease in hand. It was just all very serendipitous."

The new location is "centrally located to Oak Cliff," Watts said, which in addition to being a burgeoning part of town is also where he and Fisher



Chris Watts left a marketing job at Bank of America to work in a friends grooming business. Now he owns his own pet services company. (Tammye Nash/Dallas Voice)





live. "And there is a significant lack of animal services and resources," he added.

The new location has about 9,000 square feet of space — more than twice the space of Petropolitan's 4,000-square-foot downtown location. "It already has its own parking," Watts said, "and it was a vet's office before, so the build-out we need

was already there."

And that, he said, opens the door to any number of new services that Petropolitan can offer, including low-cost spay and neuter clinics, low-cost vaccination clinics, even classes and seminars to help pet owners and the community as a whole better understand the city's ordinances regulating

But for this year, the Pooch Parade will be calling the corner of Malcolm X Boulevard and Main Street home, on the Deep Ellum Arts Festival Main Stage. The parade takes place from noon to 1 p.m. Emcee for the event will be comedian Dan Danzy, and District 2 City Councilman Adam Medrano and District 14 City Councilman Philip Kingston are confirmed as judges.

Watts said that longtime event emcee Paul J. Williams was unable to participate this year because of a scheduling conflict, "but he will be back next year."

Last year, Watts said, about 220 pooches donned their Easter finery to parade through Lee Park, while about 75 pet/animal-related vendors had booths in the park, and about 80 animals were adopted.

With the last-minute changes, participation in this year's Pooch Parade might be down. But Watts is optimistic.

"We have 10 rescue groups that are participating, and I think there will be plenty of people there. People love their pets; the animals always bring them out," he said. "I want to see lots of pooches in the parade, and tell the people they should still wear their Easter bonnets! I think that's a tradition we should keep."

—Tammye Nash

## Saving the Pooch Parade

When lack of funding forced organizers to cancel the annual Easter in Lee Park event, including the ever-popular Pooch Parade, Chris Watts at Petropolitan stepped in to save the day, at least as far as the Pooch Parade is concerned.

Watts, who has been in charge of the Pooch Parade for the last several years, arranged to have the event take place on Easter Sunday as part of the already-scheduled Deep Ellum Arts Festival.

"The Pooch Parade has such an incredible lineage. It has been part of Easter in the Park for years, and people didn't want to see it die," Watts said. "It is a tradition. But traditions can change, and sometimes, that's a good thing.

"It's always been in Lee Park, but I think moving it to Deep Ellum this year will be a good thing," he continued. "This city, Dallas, is just so eclectic. Every neighborhood, every community has its own history and its own traditions. And it can be a really good thing to go out and experience other people's neighborhoods. We need to do that, and moving the Pooch Parade to the Deep Ellum Arts Festival for this year can do that."

He said he and other organizers are already planning for next Easter, looking for new sites and new ideas.

animal ownership.

"We can't do it all by ourselves, but we can do it all if we partner with the city's animal services and with the rescue groups in town," Watts said. "What we want is for this to be more of an overall wellness center instead of just a shop. We want to offer all the services you need for your pets, outside of actual veterinary services."

The new space, Watts continued, will have room for trainings and workshops — such as pet CPR training — "and we're even talking to a retailer about taking over part of the space as a store for pet supplies," he said. "This is a collaborative effort, something that will help make our already incredible neighborhood even more incredible."

## Living the dream

As if being able to make a living doing something he loves weren't good enough, Watts also gets to serve on the city of Dallas' animal shelter commission. First appointed by then-District 3 City Councilman Dave Neumann, Watts has since been re-appointed to the commission by current District 1 Councilman Scott Griggs. It is a job he takes very seriously.

"It's our job to advise the council on issues dealing with animals and to help out the animal services department with strategic ideas," Watts said. "We are kind of a liaison between the animal services department and the council and the community."

Taking ideas from the community to city officials, helping people understand the reason for ordinances involving animals and how to be compliant with those ordinances.

"I am passionate about animals, and I want to help create an incredibly passionate community when it comes to animals," Watts said. "It's a lofty goal, but I think we can get there."

## The lucky ones

Watts has plenty of help in getting there when it comes to his Petropolitan family. Right now, at the downtown location, the company has 11 employees. When the new location opens, he said, "we'll be adding at least that many plus some."

Watts said that potential employees don't have to worry about having a lot of experience. In fact, he said, "We really prefer to teach them most of the job."

What matters instead, he said, is attitude.

"In every ad we place looking for employees, we always say, 'No divas, no drugs, no drama,'" Watts said. "We don't want any of that. Pets respond to that kind of thing, and it's not a good kind of response.

"What we want is people who have a passion for pets," Watts said. "That's what counts."

Passion. That's a key word for Watts, who said his goal is to help put Dallas once again at the top of the heap for pets.

"In the '90s, Dallas was one of the top 10 dog-friendly cities in the country. Now, it's not even in the top 50. I want to help Dallas get back up in the top 10 again. That's what I am passionate about.

"You know, not a lot of people get to make a living doing the thing they love, the thing they are passionate about," he added. "I do. I am one of the lucky ones." ■

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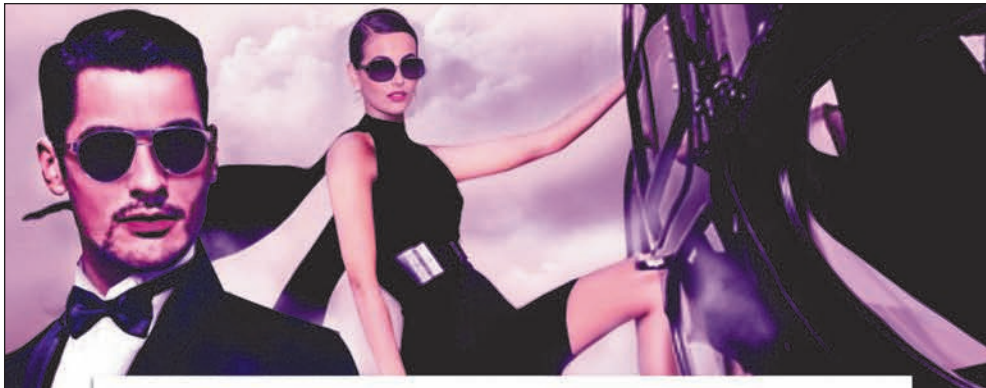
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# Meet our intern

UNT senior and German/Spanish major Raul Juarez is exploring the world of publishing



**JAMES RUSSELL** | Staff Writer  
russell@dallasvoice.com

Since Raul Juarez joined the Dallas Voice as our intern last month, the University of North Texas senior has contributed two stories to our print issues. But Juarez is more than just a byline. I sat down with him to learn more. ■

**Dallas Voice: What's your background?**

**Where do you live?** Raul Juarez: I'm 24 years old, so I was born in 1990. I was raised in Garland and still live there with my mom and all three siblings. I've lived there my whole life. I'm the oldest of four. My dad died around nine years ago.

**Why did you decide to apply for an internship with Dallas Voice?** I was looking to get more experience in publishing. Journalism isn't my major, but it's important and of interest to me. Media influences what is said and read.

**What are you studying at UNT?** I'm a German and Spanish double major with a minor in public administration. I was raised bilingual but picked up German when I was at Richland College. It was one of the choices that didn't require I learn a new alphabet.

**Where else have you worked?** I haven't, but I've interned a lot. I worked at Paciugo and the Richland College Library. I also worked as a bilingual interviewer for HIV research at the Texas A&M Public Policy Research Institute's Dallas satellite. When I went to Berlin through a cultural exchange, I was a gay and lesbian youth engagement intern for a big LGBT group. I passed out condoms, educated students about bullying and worked with gay and lesbian youth.

**What was coming out like?** I'm out to most of my family. I came out to my brother first. He jokingly made a big deal out of it, saying "Oh well I need to talk to human resources!" I laughed because he made it clear it was no big deal. I also remember it was the day Lady Gaga first came to Dallas! I can't remember the date. (laughs)

**You live in Garland and commute to UNT in Denton?** Yeah but it's not too bad. It was last semester when I took 18 hours. But I'm not doing that again. The ride can be interesting. You get time to think. You can meet people along the way if you stop somewhere.

**You've been at Dallas Voice a month. What've you learned?** I've become a better writer and have gotten a glimpse into stories of the interest to the local LGBT community. I've learned how to investigate, too. Overall I have learned a bit from everyone. But there are still things I want to learn, like our design software. What about after you leave the Voice? Do you know? I still don't know. I know I have to finish school, and see what happens.

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# AHF sues Dallas County

The national AIDS nonprofit with a local clinic filed suit after being denied Ryan White funding

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer  
taffet@dallasvoice.com

AIDS Healthcare Foundation has sued Dallas County after being denied any portion of the county's Ryan White funding. That money comes from the federal government and is distributed by the county to agencies that provide HIV/AIDS medical and other support services.

AHF applied for funding in four categories — outpatient medical services, medical case management, case management and local drug reimbursement.

Parkland Hospital gets the largest amount of

the \$14 million in Ryan White dollars allocated to Dallas County for patient care and pharmacy. Both large and small nonprofit agencies also share in the funding to provide medical care, transportation, food, drugs, counseling and legal help.

The current grant period began on March 1, but no funds have been distributed yet in this cycle.

County commissioners have final approval of the distribution of funds. At their March 31 meeting, County Judge Clay Jenkins noted that the grant is "under litigation" and called an executive session.

But before going into executive session, the commission heard from two speakers, including Raul Ramirez.

Ramirez said his mother is HIV-positive, and that before AHF opened its north Dallas clinic, she struggled against a lack of access to care and a language barrier. AHF's patient care, he said, is "on

Bret Camp, opposite left, and Jonathan Petrus discussed the AHF lawsuit against Dallas County after the county commissioners meeting on March 31. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

point."

The commission didn't reconvene after executive session to announce any monetary awards.

If the Ryan White funds are not distributed soon, "agencies could close," said the director of one local AIDS agency, asking to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals by the county.

Another, who also asked for anonymity, echoed that statement and said most agencies might make it three months before having to borrow money. If the agencies were forced to borrow money, the principle could be repaid once Ryan White money was awarded, but interest incurred because of the delay would not be covered by the grants.

Once Ryan White grants are awarded, the county takes six weeks to two months to pay for services billed.

Los Angeles-based AHF opened its first clinic in Texas in August 2012. The organization started as an AIDS hospice, according to CFO Jonathan Petrus. Once medications became available to control the HIV virus, the agency began providing medical care.

Today, AHF serves more than 400,000 patients in 36 countries at 245 clinics. In the U.S., it operates 43 clinics in 13 states and in Washington D.C. Its projected budget for 2015 is \$1.1 billion.

In its lawsuit against Dallas County, AHF points

out, "As the largest provider of HIV/AIDS medical care in the United States, AHF has always met the requirements for receipt of program funds in the other states where AHF operates."

On March 2, AHF received notification that its "vendor certification requirement forms did not meet the specifications," which disqualified AHF's bid for Ryan White dollars.

In the letter from the district attorney's office, the agency was told it didn't submit a "certificate of registration" from the Texas Secretary of State. AHF claims that the request for proposal didn't require that document, but does request a "certificate of status."

According to AHF Texas Regional Director Bret Camp, neither document exists.

The letter pointed out several other items missing from the grant application, but AHF said they were not documents requested in the RFP.

At a meeting with the Dallas County purchasing department, AHF was told all applicants had to be incorporated for at least three years and had to be incorporated in the state of Texas. AHF opened its Dallas clinic at Medical City in December 2012.

According to the lawsuit, after AHF notified the district attorney's office it planned to challenge the disqualification, "the justification for denying

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AHF Program grant funds shifted from disqualification to a poor evaluation.”

Petrus said AHF didn't receive a bad evaluation.

“There's clearly room for more providers in Dallas,” Petrus said.

He said AHF's model was simple. Identify individuals who are positive, link them into the system and give them the best integrated care available without regard for ability to pay.

He said that based on national estimates, there are about 7,500 people out of care in Dallas County — 3,400 who are unaware of their HIV status and 4,000 who are aware but still not in care.

Camp said AHF has aggressively searched for people who are out of care, providing free HIV testing at its Out of the Closet resale store on Cedar Springs Road and in its mobile testing unit. He said very few of the north Dallas clinic's 700 patients came from other agencies.

Petrus said he hopes the lawsuit prompts the county to re-evaluate its position and include AHF in its awards, because he doesn't believe litigation would be good for either side.

AIDS service organizations are split on whether AHF should receive funding.

One agency spokesperson said AHF provides good patient care and favored the agency receiving funds. But another said his agency's understanding of the three-year rule indicates that it would disqualify AHF.

But both agreed that delaying Ryan White awards more than another month or two could seriously damage both large and small AIDS agencies across the county. ■



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# To RFRA or not



Religious liberty bills promise freedom, but for whom?

**JAMES RUSSELL** | Staff Writer  
russell@dallasvoice.com

In a 1989 decision, *Employment Division v. Smith*, involving two men who were fired for smoking peyote as part of a sacred Native American ritual and then denied state unemployment benefits, the U.S. Supreme Court vacated a lower court ruling declaring that the two were not fired out of religious bias but because they violated state drug laws.

The U.S. Supreme Court returned the case to the Oregon Supreme Court to decide if a state could deny unemployment benefits to a worker fired for using illegal drugs for religious purposes? The Oregon Supreme Court ultimately sided, in a 6-3 decision, with Oregon's Employment Division.

That ruling concerned both secular civil libertarians and those with deeply held religious beliefs, said Elizabeth Oldmixon, an associate professor of political science at the University of North Texas in Denton. A broad coalition then worked with Congress to pass the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, and President Bill Clinton signed it into law.

That bill, said Oldmixon, told the Supreme Court that in such cases, to give the benefit of the doubt to the plaintiffs, not the government.

Among the groups in that earlier coalition was Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, a nonpartisan educational organization that preserves church-state separation.

Today that group is actively involved in debate over state versions of religious freedom restoration bills popping up in legislatures across the country, primarily in response to court rulings legalizing same-sex marriage and an upcoming decision from the U.S. Supreme Court expected to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide.

The first RFRA to pass and be signed into law this year came in Indiana. Gov. Mike Pence signed that bill on Thursday, March 26.

Sarah Jones, AU's communications associate, said the federal RFRA "passed as a shield to protect religious minorities, such as non-theists, Muslims and Jews. It strikes a balance between religious expression and the federal government's interest in enforcing laws."

But the federal law soon fell under scrutiny again, when the Supreme Court again struck down a portion of the 1997 *Boerne v. Flores* ruling, said Chicago Kent College of Law Professor Sheldon H. Nahmod. That case asked whether or not the city of Boerne, Texas could prevent a Catholic church from expanding because of historical landmark and preservation laws. The court ruled for the church.

Striking RFRA's application to state and local governments left only the federal application intact, Nahmod explained. Then another act of Congress resulted in the Religious Land Use and

## Religious liberty bills currently under consideration in the Texas Legislature include:

- **HB 3567** by Rep. Scott Sanford. Would prevent the government from punishing a clergy member or person of faith who does not perform same-sex marriages.
- **HB 3864**, also by Rep. Sanford. Would allow child welfare organizations to deny care to children of LGBT parents based on religious beliefs. Sen. Donna Campbell filed its Senate companion, **SB 1935**.
- **HB 3602** by Rep. Cecil Bell. Would bar retaliation against “conscientious objectors” who refuse to perform same-sex marriages. **SB 1799** by Sen. Larry Taylor contains similar language.
- **HB 55** by Rep. Jason Villalba and **SJR 10** by Sen. Campbell. Would allow Texas’ businesses to refuse service or deny employment to LGBT people based on individual’s or religious organization’s beliefs. Villalba has since said he would reconsider his resolution, but Rep. Matt Krause filed the identical **HJR 125** late on March 12.
- **HB 2553** by Rep. Molly White. Would allow business owners to decide whom they serve or conduct business with based on religious convictions.
- **HB 1355** by Rep. Matt Shaheen. Would make it a criminal offense for an elected official to threaten, punish or intimidate a person based on the person’s religious beliefs.

— James Russell

Institutionalized Persons Act, signed by President Clinton in 2000.

That ruling set a precedent for another Supreme Court ruling, however.

In 2012, Hobby Lobby, the national arts and crafts chain, sued the federal government over a provision in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requiring employers to provide contraception coverage. *Hobby Lobby v Burwell* claimed covering contraception was a violation of the chain’s owners’ religious beliefs under the RFRA.

In a 5-4 decision, the court ruled in favor of Hobby Lobby.

What conservative groups praised about the ruling, others panned.

### At the state level

If one term could sum up the dispute between the two factions in the battle over state religious freedom laws, it’s “broad.” In the *Burwell* case, the term means either an unconstitutional overreach or a victory for religious liberty.

Supporters of current religious liberty bills, said Jones, “claim they just reaffirm what the federal bill already says. That isn’t true. These state level bills are written much more broadly and contain discriminatory provisions that aren’t present in the federal bills.”

She said additionally the *Hobby Lobby* decision ultimately “granted special privileges. One of the most common ‘special privileges’ is allowing small businesses the right to discriminate against customers, such as same-sex couples.”

But Rep. Matt Krause, R-Fort Worth, author of the Texas bill — HJR 125 — disagreed. Krause, a lawyer, interprets the federal RFRA much like Oldmixon or Jones. In written answers emailed to him, Krause said the federal RFRA “walks that fine line by asserting that the federal government can only burden the free exercise of religion (or conscience) if it has a compelling interest in doing so and it’s done in the least restrictive means possible. It gives citizens a cause of action to challenge the actions of government in these certain contexts.”

The bill, if enacted, he wrote, would codify in the state Constitution the state’s current religious freedom act, which passed in 1999.

In its current state, according to the Texas Freedom Network, the Texas RFRA bars measures that “substantially burden” the free exercise of religion. In addition, it includes other care-

fully crafted language that has helped avoid unnecessary lawsuits while providing various remedies and ensuring that the law is not abused. It currently mirrors the federal RFRA.

Passage of HJR 125 would change nothing, according to Krause.

“All I am trying to do is give our Texas RFRA constitutional protection,” he wrote. “There were efforts to make Texas’ RFRA language constitutional as far back as two sessions ago. It’s important to remember this is not a reaction to recent events ... before we had any instances of bakers, florists or photographers. The intent was by no means an ‘intent to discriminate’ or ‘license to discriminate’ but rather good policy that has served Texas well for over a decade and it deserved constitutional protection.”

Selisse Berry, founder and CEO of Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, is convinced that bills like Krause’s and its Senate companion, HJR 10 by Sen. Donna Campbell, are discriminatory.

“It reminds me of people of color not being served. It’s an overall sad state of affairs, especially given the advances of LGBT workplace equality,” she said by phone.

After signing Indiana’s religious freedom bill into law amidst backlash from a wide variety of groups, Gov. Mike Pence asked that state’s legislature to assure discrimination against LGBT people will not be allowed. But, if Krause and others said discrimination is not their intention, are activists wrong about the RFRA’s?

Chicago Kent’s Nahmod said it’s difficult to tell if these pieces of legislation are motivated by anti-LGBT animus.

“Indiana doesn’t have a statewide nondiscrimination ordinance,” he said, and while it could be argued signing the RFRA was a last-ditch push to prevent passage of a statewide nondiscrimination ordinance, that can’t be proven.

“But if discrimination is the intention, then they may be seriously unconstitutional,” Nahmod said.

But Berry disagreed.

“It’s naïve to say Pence’s decision to sign the bill was not motivated by discrimination,” she said. “Whether [these bills are] intentionally meant to discriminate or not, it’s clear the LGBT community needs a federal nondiscrimination ordinance,” she said. “We have state and city nondiscrimination ordinances [but] we still need a federal law to protect LGBT people.” ■

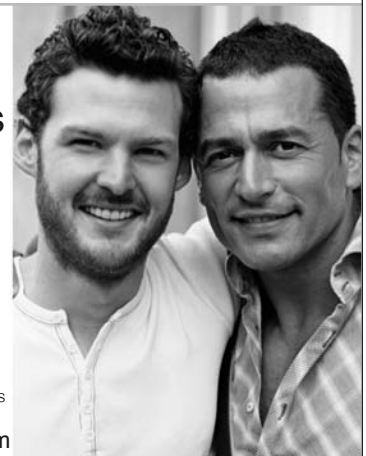
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# An easy fix

Indiana governor's first term is likely his last if he doesn't calm the uproar of the RFRA with protections for LGBTs

There's nothing funnier than watching a boat-load of politicians headed over a waterfall trying to back paddle their way to safety. And that's what we witnessed this week in Indiana over the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, passed the week before by the state's lawmakers.

After failing to convince anyone that the law really didn't discriminate against LGBT people, Republican Gov. Mike Pence promised Tuesday, March 31, in an Indianapolis press conference to "fix" the controversial bill by week's end, to clarify that it would not discriminate against LGBT people.

The governor claimed he interpreted the bill as nothing more than a measure to protect individual business owners' rights to exercise their religious freedom. Had he viewed the legislation as discriminatory, Pence said the RFRA would now bear a 'veto' rather than his signature.

The bill would, for example, allow bakery owners, florists and others the right to refuse to provide services for same-sex marriages if they feel it is a violation of their



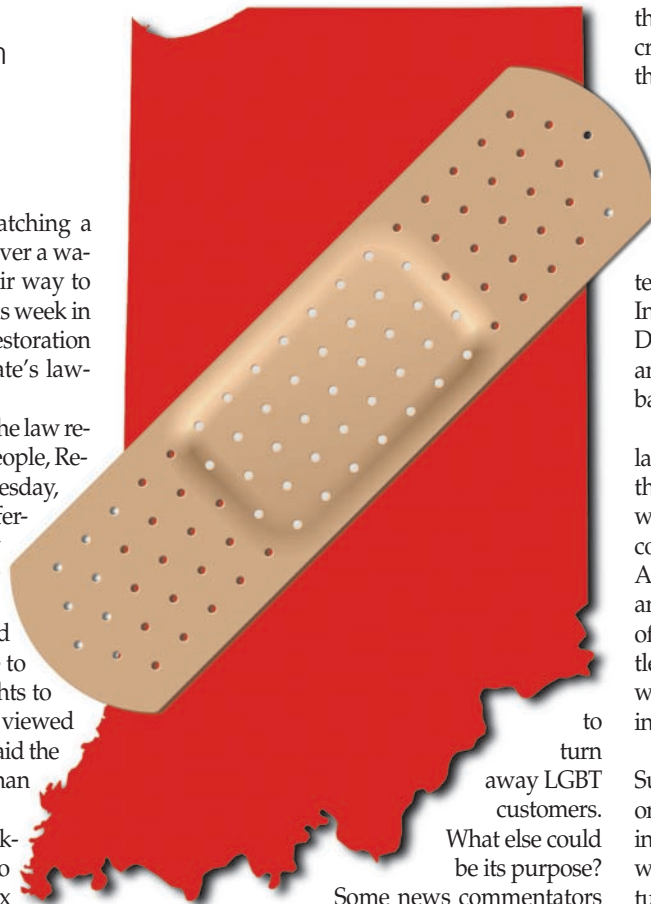
David Webb  
The Rare Reporter

religious beliefs, according to legal observers. Critics of the bill said widespread discrimination could ensue based on it, and the media televised an image of a sign in a restaurant door over the weekend banning LGBT customers.

Pence's press conference announcing the "fix" followed a backlash the Hoosier politician admitted he never imagined erupting: "Was I expecting this kind of backlash? Heavens no," the governor said.

Twenty states now have RFRA laws on their books. Supporters of the laws refer to them as "shields" rather than "swords," and they claim the laws, dating back 19 years, have never been successfully used to defend anti-LGBT discrimination.

Pence blamed the media of presenting a false impression of the law and creating a "perception problem." Still, even the supporters of the bill in Indiana hailed it as a legal method for businesses



to turn away LGBT customers. What else could be its purpose?

Some news commentators lashed back at Pence, who initially vowed not to ask for any changes to the bill's language when the uproar began. The commentators accused the governor of attempting to shift the blame to the media instead of shouldering it himself.

Top Republican contenders for the 2016 presidential nomination — Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and several other likely candidates — rushed to Pence's defense Monday evening, March 30, saying they too favored religious freedom laws. But they failed to offset the criticism of the White House, Democrats and — more importantly — the national business community.

Eli Lilly, Subaru, Dow AgroSciences, NASCAR, Apple, Walmart and Salesforce officials spoke out against the new bill. Angie's List announced it would postpone plans for a \$40 million expansion creating 1,000 new jobs, and National College Athletics Association officials announced they would move events such as the upcoming men's basketball Final Four in Indianapolis to another location in the future.

In response to the RFRA, Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, a Republican, announced in a press conference Monday that he signed an executive order reaffirming that businesses receiving city funds could not refuse LGBT customers. "Discrimination is wrong," Ballard said. "And I hope

that message is being heard loud and clear at our Statehouse." The Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and the Indianapolis Colts also joined in the outcry.

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said Pence tried to "falsely suggest" that Indiana's law resembles a federal religious freedom law signed by President Bill Clinton. He called the state law "a much more open-ended piece of legislation that could reasonably be used to try to justify discriminating against somebody because of who they love."

"We see business leaders saying that they are reluctant to do business in a state where their customers or even their employees could be subjected to greater discrimination just because of who they love," Earnest said.

Presumed Democratic Party presidential contender Hillary Clinton tweeted, it is "sad this new Indiana law can happen in America today." Other Democrats called the bill "shameful," and mayors and at least two governors across the nation banned official travel to Indiana.

Despite the drama in Indiana, Arkansas legislators approved an almost identical RFRA bill for that state on Tuesday. But Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who obviously learned a lesson from his Indiana colleague's dilemma, announced Wednesday, April 1, he would not sign the bill until changes are made to ensure it is not a discriminatory piece of legislation. In Oklahoma, a RFRA bill was scuttled after a legislator added an amendment that would force businesses to advertise their unwillingness to do business with the LGBT community.

All of this is set against the backdrop of the Supreme Court preparing to rule later in the year on the legality of same-sex marriage everywhere in the United States. Indiana Republicans plan to wage battle next year to amend the state's constitution to ban same-sex marriage. Indiana recognized same-sex marriage in October of 2014.

It's unclear how lawmakers and Pence will "fix" the new RFRA because legal analysts claim adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of Indiana's protected categories is the only method available to offset the bill. Pence said he opposes that move.

The governor noted he joined the recent civil rights march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge to commemorate the anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" in Selma, Ala., but he failed to provide any examples of supporting LGBT rights. If he truly opposes discrimination against LGBT people, the "fix" to the RFRA is support the necessary changes to the state's nondiscrimination law.

If he won't support that measure, then we probably won't be able to understand over the roar of the rapids what he and his colleagues are trying to say next. Pence's first term as governor will probably be his last. Nothing makes a bigger impression on a community of business people than financial loss. Most business people I've ever known consider one person's money as good as another's when they are trying to make a profit. ■

David Webb is a veteran journalist with more than three decades of experience, including a stint as a staff reporter for Dallas Voice. He also previously worked as a researcher and writer for SPLC. He freelances for publications nationwide.



# Hoosier to blame?

Right-wing lawmakers keep passing discriminatory legislation, but it's the liberals who don't vote that bear the blame

By now, we've all seen the news about the Indiana Legislature passing a so called Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and all the backlash that led to efforts to "clarify" the bill.

You've also probably heard that the Arkansas Legislature passed a very similar bill. Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson was paying attention to Indiana though, and refused to sign it into law.

The truth is that these laws have little to do with religious freedom and everything to do with discrimination. Unfortunately, as long as you wrap discrimination in religion or in the flag, the citizenry will buy it. Remember that whole "Patriot Act" thing?

These bills are about making sure individuals and businesses can refuse to bake same-sex wedding cakes and deny services to LGBT people based on a "deeply held religious belief."

In other words, it's OK to discriminate against LGBT people if you can quote scripture while doing it.

After Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed his state's Religious Freedom Restoration Act into law, there was a lot of talk of companies and events refusing to do business in or with the state. Everyone from the head of Salesforce to George Takei began calling for boycotts of all things Hoosier.

I admit at first I insisted the same thing: Make the state pay for its bigotry and intolerance and do it through the pocketbook.

But beyond that knee jerk reaction, I think this highlights a much more important issue. The question on everyone's lips has been, "Who elected the idiots who passed this law?"

I can give you a quick answer that will please few folks, but is the truth: It wasn't the progressive voters of Indiana, and it wasn't the LGBT people of Indiana. If Indiana is anything like Texas, and I think it is, these lawmakers were elected by the very focused and very driven far right-wing voters who got out and actually cast their ballots during the mid-term elections.

They voted in the state races, which get far less attention than the glamorous notional ones. They voted in the local elections, which most people ignore.

So the real answer as to how this law got passed is this: Liberals stayed home.

Progressive voters handed the legislature over to the far-right, so what did we expect? I say we, because here in Texas, we face the same thing. Our legislature is packed with "idjits" who are more than willing to do the bidding of the far-right, since that is who elected them.

And they are anything but "idjits" with the

possible exception of Louis Gohmert. They are shrewd politicians, and when they pass crazy laws like the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, they get a double win: They satisfy their "base" (the largely rural "values" voters), and yet do little to interrupt the flow of funds into the pockets of large corporations and, in turn, into their own campaign coffers.

A secondary effect is the squabbling it causes among the progressive voters, who immediately begin pointing fingers and causing a ruckus that will, in the end, have no tangible effect.

After the publicity dies down, the law will most likely be of little consequence and the electorate will fall back into the comfortable apathy that is their normal state most of the time. Part of that apathy is driven by the myth that "Our vote doesn't count" and that "All parties are the same."

These are self-fulfilling prophecies that we maintain by the very apathy they are intended to engender. It's a negative feedback loop that reinforces the myth, and the right-wing knows it and exploits it with absolute artistry.

Additionally, the Republicans have been working hard at the "long game" and have successfully gerrymandered the states to favor their candidates. They have also passed a series of laws to suppress liberal votes and essentially rig the elections.

And where have we been during all this? Arguing among ourselves. Having endless discussions of the nuances of the issues and being distracted by whatever red herring the GOP tosses out next.

We have to stop being distracted and start playing the long game as well. That means voting as a block. It means using our considerable power to actually influence long-term policy and stop bickering over short-term road bumps.

It means we need to get down in the trenches and work for candidates who support our rights and our agenda.

It means we have to do more than spout our moral outrage, and start demonstrating our moral fortitude.

It means paying attention for longer than it takes for the next Facebook meme to hit the Internet, and start participating in the politics that affect our lives. ■

*Hardy Haberman is a longtime local LGBT activist and board member for the Woodhull Freedom Alliance. His blog is at [DungeonDiary.blogspot.com](http://DungeonDiary.blogspot.com).*



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After the tragic passing of Bruce Wood, DTC's Kevin Moriarty tapped Joshua L. Peugh for the sport-themed play 'Colossal,' which explores the complexities of male relationships ... including being gay in football

# Team building

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor  
jones@dallasvoice.com



It's a surprising statistic that more people see live theater every year than watch professional sports in person, but for Kevin Moriarty, it sometimes seems they are the same thing. Since becoming Dallas Theater Center's artistic director in 2007, Moriarty has overseen a number of plays with sports themes: *Back Back Back* (baseball), *Give It Up!/Lysistrata Jones* (basketball), *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (pro wrestling) among them. Add to that roster the latest rolling world premiere from DTC: The college football drama *Colossal*.

But this being Moriarty, nothing is every what it seems. *Back Back Back* has at its heart issues of steroid use and honor, *Lysistrata* sexual gamesmanship, *Chad Deity* about the perversion of the American Dream. And *Colossal*? Nothing less than what it means to be a man.

That theme is portrayed in a variety of expressions in Andrew Hinderaker's new play, set at the University of Texas at Austin. As it starts, a promising football star named Mike (played by real-life quadriplegic actor Zack Weinstein) has been felled by a tackle, severing his spinal cord and leaving him a paraplegic. This forces him to confront not only his estranged father Damon (played by Joel Ferrell), a respected dancer and choreographer disappointed that his son pursued sports instead of the arts ("It's sort of the anti-Billy Elliot," Moriarty jokes), but also to deal with his coach and the teammate with

whom he's been secretly involved romantically ... all while robbed of the mechanism by which he has always communicated with other men: His physicality.

"What do you do when your world collapses around you?" Moriarty asks rhetorically about the primary issue of the play. "How do you go to move forward when everything you know about yourself has been ripped from under you?" And, he says, a major component of that "is what it means to be gay in football."

The sports metaphor stands in for the cues men use to communicate — how they "spoke previously with their bodies and after have to use language, when a father and son's primary way of communicating has been through physicality but now one of them doesn't have that," Moriarty says.

Moriarty admits he was caught off-guard by how compellingly the play captured his imagination. He agreed to read the script and meet with the playwright more as a favor than a desire to develop a new property. He actually only read it hours before his scheduled meeting with Hinderaker. But he was instantly hooked. Always the devoted collaborator, Moriarty instantly decided to partner up with famed North Texas choreographer Bruce Wood in bringing the show to the stage.

"When I first read it I thought of Bruce immediately," Moriarty says. From his Texas roots to his sports background and artistic

temperament through which he explored issues of masculinity, "I kept thinking how Joel's character was essentially Bruce — his pridefulness about gender and his deep desire to be sensitive was very important [to my vision of the production]. I expected Bruce would be essentially my co-director." The team was announced last spring.

And then, as with the character in the play, that world collapsed. Last May, Wood suddenly succumbed to pneumonia and heart failure owing to his HIV status. It was devastating for Moriarty personally as well as professionally — his voice cracks slightly when talking about it still — but as everyone in theater knows, the show must go on.

Realizing he needed someone else to design the movement for the show, Moriarty tapped Joshua L. Peugh. "I don't think there is any replacing Bruce — he's sort of an icon for the community," Peugh says. "But being asked to step in was sort of strange. Harry Feril [a company member with Bruce Wood Dance Project] is in the company of *Colossal*, and I can absolutely see Bruce's [life] in the plot — his father was a football coach!"

The selection had a sort of circularity to it: An SMU grad, Peugh was recruited by Wood in 2012 to return to Dallas and work with him. He did, though shortly thereafter left to devote himself to developing his own company, Dark Circle Contemporary Dance. But

## COLOSSAL

Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St.  
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DallasTheaterCenter.org.

**THE MISSING MAN FORMATION** | Joshua L. Peugh — who always dreamed of choreographing a dance using football gear — stepped in to design the movement for the sports drama 'Colossal,' when his idol and colleague Bruce Wood died. The play, which employs actual college athletes in its cast and has its world premiere this week, converts the inside of the Wyly into a football stadium. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)

■ COLOSSAL Page 20

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■ COLOSSAL, From Page 18

despite their history, *Colossal* is Peugh's own work.

"Joshua is not doing this 'in the style' of Bruce Wood," Moriarty explains. "He brings a different energy to the [collaborative process]. For one thing, he's a younger generation and has a different relationship to masculinity. And his choreography is his own."

Peugh conceded as well that while Wood started out as an athlete, that was something new to him.

"I never played much sports," he admits. "I played soccer, and I lived in Korea for six years where they are obsessed with it." But working with the all-male cast of *Colossal* — a combination of actors, dancers and athletes making their stage debuts ("one had never even *seen* a play before being cast!" Moriarty says) — has been a learning experience and much as a teaching one for Peugh.

"I almost always try to work without a mirror so that my dancers *feel* how it's supposed to look and not just see it. [The athletes] have no preconceived notions [about what a step is supposed to be] — everything is new to them, and they have this great work ethic. They are used to going to practice and repeating it until they get it right. And they are incredibly aware of their bodies — they know exactly how long it takes them to stop and where their bodies are in space. And for the most part they blend in really well with the actual dancers."

The dance highlight is a 10-minute performance at "halftime" (the play runs without an intermission, but follows the structure of a football game), but Peugh was also instrumental in working with the actors, choreographing their movement (In real cleats! On actual AstroTruf!) during the non-dance portions.

"I've always been interested in athletic movement and have wanted for a long time to design a concert dance using football



**BROKEBACK SQUAD** | Young Mike (Alex Stoll) and Marcus (Khris Davis) are teammates who have a clandestine romance that is interrupted by tragedy in 'Colossal.' (Photo courtesy Karen Almond)

gear, a drumline, stadium lights ... and we have all that here!" Peugh says.

Indeed, Moriarty was devoted to transforming the very flexible space of the Wylie Theatre into a football field. Audience members sit in bleacher-like risers, and enter in groups, having to actually walk across the field to get to their seats. He always knew he wanted to create the sporting-event atmosphere inside the space, though he admits that changed some when he started working with designer John Coyne.

"John thought my idea was a mistake, because while there are 20 men in the play, it also has to be very intimate — the soul of the show are these two-character scenes," he says.

Two of those characters are Mike (played in flashbacks as the able-bodied athlete by Alex Stoll) and his closeted boyfriend and teammate Marcus (Khris Davis). But for Moriarty, that is merely one of the essential male relationships that is explored in the play. Ultimately, it is not a forbidden romance but an examination of communication.



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# Ask Howard

How to do what's wrong right

HOWARD LEWIS RUSSELL | Special Contributor  
askhoward@dallasvoice.com

Dear Howard,

I'm a solidly middle-aged, happily married (20-plus years now) gay man. At what point are the temptations to cheat on one's spouse supposed to end? It just seems the older I get, the more I get hit on, constantly, by ever-younger and hotter boys. Shouldn't the reverse be happening?

This morning, a visiting grandson of one of the people to whom I weekly deliver hot lunches as a volunteer, answered my knock with "Hi, I'm Trey." The kid grinned tanly, dressed only in a pair of low-rise stretch 28-inch waist, neon blue, nothing-left-to-the-imagination Calvin boxers: "Grandma's asleep."

No sooner had I fled Trey and began self-congratulating my moral triumph, than who should be lurking enticingly at his usual staked-out/four-way intersection but *the* hottest home-less stud in all of Dallas. "Mercedes Chad!" shouted panhandler Hank at me just as all my prayers of making a still-yellow-light escape turned red. "You know what 'fly' means, Chad?" Hank beamed, as I reached for my wallet shaking my head: "A man is 'fly' who always opens his window to any guy down like me and only pulls out something green and rectangular." As usual, Hank's thumbs had a way of exotically hovering around the area just beneath his belt buckle to seal his sucker pitch.

Howard, do you have *any* suggestions for how all us guys in lifetime-committed relationships out there, having grown basically bored long ago with our own better halves in the bedroom, can resist messing around on the sly with the allurements of ever-younger flesh? Is monogamy between two long-term, devoted, fellow homosexual partners just a hopeless cause from the get-go? — **Matthew**

**Dear Mercedes Chad-Matthew,**  
Selfless generosity and genuine kindness are — bar none — the most sexually attractive male traits on Earth ... far more so than, say, that ever-elusive, holy grail penis that's fantastically always somewhere out there, merely one more Prince Charming Grindr click away.

Simply relish your middle-aged "daddy-phase" attention at its "fly" face value, Chad, and enjoy every sweet flattery that younger men can milk you of it for, too ... including the home-less, 'cause yapping at "Rich Old Geezer's" weathered heels comes "Gramps," and ain't no-



*body* sexually turned-on by Gramps, ain't nobody gonna beg Gramps for money, ain't nobody even gonna glance at Gramps twice:

Nobody gets to live a happy long life, side-by-side with another, who refuses to mature. Sexual temptations always, inevitably, fade away — just ride things through. It's easier to be happy in the end; what's short-term will flame out on its own.

Dear Howard,

This hot guy I started dating about three months back only seems really interested in sex with me when there's porn playing on my TV in the background — the hardest of hardcore porn, curtains-always-drawn-with-the-doors-locked kind of stuff. It's almost as if, without Treasure Island Media to help him get through it, he couldn't be bothered.

The electricity in my apartment went out right in the middle of things last week, and I instantly got some flimsy excuse about him needing to "check on his dogs." He pulled out, pulled his pants back on and just left. I felt like dirt. Worse, I got soundly informed the next day that I needed a bigger TV, but honestly our sex isn't much better since than what he gave me before ... so, what's the deal with that? — **Kevin**

Dear Kevin,

Well, obviously, you didn't buy a big enough television; or, on the other hand, perhaps just *maybe* "this hot guy" you're dating might possibly be, oh, a total asshole prick. ... hmmm, I'm probably gonna go with that zonker, Kev. The guy's a loser. Dump him. ■

*Do you have a question about etiquette, love, life or work? Email it to AskHoward@dallasvoice.com and he may answer it!*

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# TASTING NOTES Brunch edition

Knife debuts brunch menu in time for Easter; plus your best bets for Sunday



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**ARNOLD WAYNE JONES** | Executive Editor  
jones@dallasvoice.com

Everyone knows that even if gays didn't invent brunch, they perfected it as a social event. But when Easter comes along, all bets are off: It's a free-for-all.

Still, we're happy to say that, just in time for National Mimosa Day (aka Easter Sunday), **Knife** has finally rolled out its entire menu from dinner to lunch to now brunch. And, being the meat-lover's steakhouse that it is, there's more than enough protein to satisfy every craving.

Chef **John Tesar** has cannily converted some of the distinctive items on his regular menu for brunch diners, not the least of which is the "tasting" of five bacons (if you ever doubted bacon could be diverse, this experience will disabuse you of that prejudice), as well as a ham tasting platter that will stagger your palate. That's in addition to the gussied-up "traditional" items, including the short rib benedict and crispy pork hash. (I imagine if everyone in Dallas ate this meal at one time, the pig would become as extinct as the dodo overnight.)

Just as appealing for professional brunchers is mixologist **James Slater's** lineup of cocktails, from the tangy-sweetness of the hibiscus caipirinha to his signature green bloody mary (made with tomatillos — I prefer to call it a bloody Spock, owing to its color).

Here are some other brunch locations you might wanna try this weekend as well, specifi-

cally for Easter:

**Stephan Pyles** will serve three-course Easter brunches at all three of his Dallas restaurants from 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. **San Salvaje** for \$45; **Stampede** for \$60; and the eponymous **Stephan Pyles** for \$75.

**Five Sixty by Wolfgang Puck** will open its doors for brunch on Easter Sunday offering an array of Asian-inspired breakfast and lunch dishes and spectacular views of the Dallas skyline. Executive chef **Patton Robertson's** menu will include Peking duckling and crispy suckling pig bao buns; pork belly pot stickers; assorted sushi and nigiri; eggs made-to-order as well as assorted mini desserts, all set in stations throughout the restaurant. \$55/adults, \$30/children. Reservations required at 214-741-5560.

**Eureka!** in the West Village is egg-cited it has launched its weekend brunch Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. All-American classics include \$5 bloody marys and mimosas and an extensive selection of craft beer.

**Asador** will be have its Easter brunch Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The full brunch menu is inspired by exec chef **Brad Phillips'** farm-to-fire style. Cost is \$55 (\$20 for diners under 12). Reservations are required; email yours to [reservations@asadordallas.com](mailto:reservations@asadordallas.com).

**The Gin Mill** celebrates Easter April 3-5 with their Easter Roast: Herb-roasted leg of lamb with homemade mint sauce served alongside petit pois, roasted potatoes and salad for \$18. The *a la carte* menu is also available. For reservations, call 214-824-3343 or visit [GinMillDallas.com](http://GinMillDallas.com). ■

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# FREAK machine

Renee Phoenix, queer frontwoman of Fit for Rivals, gets her Freak on

**S**ounding like a mix of Tegan & Sara, Joan Jett and Finland's heavy metal outfit H.I.M., the seven-year-old rock/punk/pop band Fit For Rivals is fronted by out lesbian singer/songwriter Renee Phoenix. Her vocals pack serious punch — and more than a pinch of androgyny — while the first singles and videos from upcoming 2015 album *Freak Machine*, “Hit Me” and “Freak Machine,” mash up head-bobbing, guitar-driven rock-punk and screamo style with strong melodies.

Hailing from Jacksonville, Fla., the five-piece band, which released debut album *Steady Damage* in 2009, is currently part of the SnoCore 2015 tour, making its way across the U.S. Phoenix talked with us about the upcoming *Freak Machine*, lesbian dramas that fueled its lyrics, and what she'd like to say to major influence Joan Jett.

— Lawrence Ferber

**Dallas Voice: You were in a band called The Explicits before Fit For Rivals. How was it different from Fit For Rivals?** Renee Phoenix: That was the first band I created and I was just figuring things out. It was a guttural punk band. There was double bass, loud in your face punk music. I took a turn to more pop-rock influence with Rivals.

**Did your parents encourage your love for music when growing up?** They've been very supportive. The only thing that drove them crazy was, when I first got into music, I wanted to try drums and after like five minutes of tinkering on a set my father was not having it. That's the only time they've been irritated with music. My dad was like, “Maybe we should switch instruments here.”

**You formed Fit For Rivals by taking out a Craigslist ad to audition band members. Did any crackpots show up?** Oh gosh, yes. Some didn't have any teeth or equipment. One guy came without a guitar or amp. I was like, what are you doing? Are you gonna be a backup dancer? What do you do? Eventually, [guitarist] Thomas Amason came. He can play, and from there it took on a life of its own.

**Did you consider potential bandmates' sexuality?** No, it doesn't really matter. Just people that are chill, got along, and of course accepting, because I am part of the LGBT community. Good people.

**What is the theme of *Freak Machine*? Is there a thread running through its lyrics?** Since our first album we've all grown as artists, and everyone has an individual voice. Everyone's doing their own thing. So I feel like the underlying theme would be maturity. I went through a lot since the first album and that's interweaved through the lyrics — relationships and per-

sonal things, figuring out who I am as a person. Getting it out through song really helped that. The song “Freak Machine” is about a failed relationship and the main thing, the best part about it, was the sex! To be completely honest! That person you can't resist. Dammit, why can't I push you away from me.

**Does the girl know the song is about her?** I mentioned it to her once before, but I'm not 100 percent sure she heard me. I feel like she knows. Even if you whisper under your breath, you'll know.

**Do lesbians stir up more drama than gay boys?** [Laughs] I feel like everyone can cause drama, honestly. No matter what your sexual preference, it comes down to the person. A lot of people back home in Florida like going out to the same places and seeing your ex. Where you live it can be a small community, and where I live it is. People like the drama and stirring the pot. I feel like it definitely contributes.

**Do you currently have a girlfriend?**

No, I'm single. And it feels good! I can focus on doing other stuff, like this. I can get distracted if it's a sour relationship or that person is sucking the life out of me, which happened with my last relationship. I'm trying to find someone who contributes to my life instead of draining me dry.

**Have you met Joan Jett, whom you cite as a major influence? And what would you say to her if you did?** I have not met her yet. I would love to. I would probably have a million questions I would forget as soon as I met her. I really admire everything she's done, and it would be an honor and privilege to tour with her or some sort of collaboration. That would be great. I really admire her work and what she does, and I strive to be the queen of rock and roll.

#### FIT FOR RIVALS

Gas Monkey Bar 'N Grill,  
10261 Technology Blvd. April 10.  
GasMonkeyBarNGrill.com.



# Geeky, queer & Texan

This weekend, Austin's HavenCon offers a safe place for gay gamers and sci-fi fans to get their nerd on



**GEEK GIRL EXTRAORDINAIRE** | A staple in Texas' cosplaying blogger community, Mia Moore is a featured panelist at HavenCon in Austin this weekend. (Photo courtesy ApertureAshley.com)

**CHAKA CUMBERBATCH** | Contributing Writer  
chakacumberbatch@gmail.com

If you or a gay nerd in your circle of friends is headed down to Austin this weekend, chances are it's to attend the maiden voyage of HavenCon. The geeks can't stop talking about it, and for good reason: HavenCon is not only the first

■ HAVEN Next Page

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■ HAVEN, From Previous Page

(and only) queer gamer and fantasy convention of its kind in Texas; it's also been a long time coming.

"For me, HavenCon represents just what the name implies," says Shane Brown, the heart, soul and founder of HavenCon. "A haven. A place where LGBTQA geeks, gamers, nerds — and anyone else with a passion for something that may be different — can come together to discuss the things they love with those that influence them."

So say you're a gay geek with nothing to do

this weekend: You've run out of episodes of *Young Justice* to re-watch, you're impatiently waiting on a new issue of *Bitch Planet* (which you should be reading), and your Tumblr dash has flatlined. Is it worth the drive to Austin?

Obviously. Among other things, expect to find a variety of gaming tournaments, incredible special guests (including *Legend of Korra* stars Janet Varney and P.J. Byrne), a selection of panels and even a Big Gay Cosplay Wedding.

"It's a way for the geek culture to stand together in solidarity for marriage equality here in Texas," Brown explains. Seriously? (I'd kill to crash it, and I'm a bride-to-be myself, so I know

better ... but I don't care.)

It's all part of Brown's mission to build an inclusive community of fanboys and -girls. Brown started the Gay Austin Geeks group in 2012, and has seen firsthand the amount of time, energy and dedication it takes to put an event of this magnitude together, particularly in conservative Texas.

"From my perspective, it is more difficult [doing something like this here] than in say, San Francisco, where it's pretty much a given that everyone is OK with the LGBT community," Brown says. "But I have to say, our sponsors and vendors have shown awesome support. I was



**SUPERFAN** | Shane Brown founded Austin's Gay Austin Geeks in 2012, but this weekend launches Texas' first-ever fantasy con specifically targeting the LGBTQA community.

initially worried I may not find enough, and here we are with a waiting list! I'm completely blown away."

HavenCon panelist Mia Moore, a Texas-based cosplayer, blogger and geek girl extraordinaire, agrees. "While I've always seen geek spaces as inclusive, I know that geeks can be just as hurtful as anyone else, intentionally or not. I think knowing that HavenCon is a safe space will encourage those who are nervous about conventions to come."

A staple in the Texas geek-girl blogger community, Moore will serve on several panels this weekend, including Bi Visibility and Representation, Cosplay for Beginners and Allies and the Community. "I'm most excited to talk about how bisexuality is portrayed in the media — or specifically, how it is usually avoided or misrepresented," Moore says. "I'm also all about finding your own form of self-expression, so I hope lots of people come to our cosplay panel and learn how to get started."

HavenCon is the latest in a line of up and coming LBGTQA conventions, and finds itself in good company among predecessors such as Bent Con, GaymerX and Flame Con, to name a few. Brown is optimistic that HavenCon will be welcomed warmly by its target audience, even in the midst of oppressive legislation and a sea of red.

"Obviously we aren't known to be the most LGBT-friendly [state]," Brown says, "but that is also what has really made something like this important to people. It's away for everyone to get together and show pride in our community and those that support us. We hopefully have found a way to bring the community and supporters together in a safe environment that is free of judgment and prejudice. I make myself available to everyone. And even if you're just curious as to what issues the LGBT geeks/gamers are interested in, come in and listen. Everyone is welcome here."

*Holiday Inn Midtown, 6000 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin. April 4 and 5. HavenConTx.com.*

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Saturday 04.04

Attention queens (and the occasional fairy): Scarborough Renaissance Fest is back!

Question: Which place is more medieval — a recreation of 16th century Europe in rural Texas or the states of Indiana and Arkansas? We know Scarborough Renaissance Festival welcomes its gay fans, from cosplayers to foodies to queens both royal and drag for its annual spring rite of old-school fun. It opens this weekend and runs through Memorial Day. Get thee downe there anon!

DEETS: Faire Grounds, FM 66, Waxahachie. April 4–May 25. SRFestival.com.



Friday 04.03 — Saturday 04.04

Cowtown turns into 'Chicago' for two nights only

It's one of the longest-running musicals in history, and for good reason: With a terrific score, breathtakingly modern plot and sexy, jazzy style, *Chicago* is entertaining, thoughtful and hot as hell. But while it's been around for 40 years, this tour — which includes classic songs ("Cell Block Tango," "All That Jazz," "The Old Razzle Dazzle") and iconic choreography — will only be at Bass Hall for two nights. Don't miss out!

DEETS: Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. April 3–4. BassHall.com.

Tuesday 04.08

Dixie Longate keeps everything fresh with Tupperware Party

The 1970s cultural phenom known as the Tupperware Party didn't actually go anywhere — it's still around, only it's moved from the living room to the stage. Dixie Longate (drag queen Kris Anderson) hosts a *real* Tupperware party (expect to leave with storage for your leftovers!) with a large dash of sass in the return of her comedy show to the intimate McDavid Studio. She's settling in for a nearly month-long run, but it shouldn't matter too much whether you see it opening night or later in the run — she has a way of keeping things fresh.

DEETS: McDavid Studio, 301 E. Fifth St., Fort Worth. April 8–May 3. BassHall.com.





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## ARTSWEEK: NOW PLAYING

### THEATER

**Colossal.** A new play about football, centered on a University of Texas player who suffers a spinal injury. Directed by Kevin Moriarty. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through May 3 (in previews through April 8). DallasTheaterCenter.org.

**Chicago.** The long-running hit returns to North Texas for a limited engagement. Bass Performance Hall, 525 Commerce St., Fort Worth. April 3–4. BassHall.com.

**Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope.** The lively 1970s musical. Jubilee Theatre, 506 Main St., Fort Worth. April 3–May 3. JubileeTheatre.org.

**Hot Mikado.** A jazzy/bluesy rendition of the Gilbert & Sullivan operetta, with Major Attaway, Denise Lee and Paul Taylor. *Final weekend.* Theatre 3, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Theatre3Dallas.com.

**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. Through April 12. Theatre3Dallas.com.

**Lydia.** Octavio Solis' new play, set in a Texas border town and dealing with the dark secrets of a Mexican family. Presented by Cara Mia Theatre Co. through the ATPAC Elevator Project. Wyly Theatre. 2400 April 3–19. TicketDFW.com.

**The King & I.** The Rodgers & Hammerstein classic. *Final weekend.* Fair Park Music Hall, 901 First Ave. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

**The Illusionists.** Elaborate stage magic performance. Fair Park Music Hall, 901 First Ave. April 7–19. DallasSummerMusicals.org.

**The Testament of Mary.** The recent Broadway solo

show about the life of Jesus' mother while living in solitude in Ephesus seeks to humanize the figure revered in Christian iconography. A regional premiere presented by Undermain Theatre, 3200 Main St. Through April 11. Undermain.org.

**The Tale of Peter Rabbit.** Dallas Children's Theater presents this production featuring Kathy Burke Theatre of Puppetry Arts. *Final weekend.* Rosewood Center for Family Arts, 5938 Skillman St. DCT.org.

**Hotel California.** A world premiere comedy from MBS Productions. Stone Cottage Theatre, 15650 Addison Road. Through April 19. MBSProductions.net.

### COMEDY

**Dixie's Tupperware Party!** It's a real Tupperware party ... but she's not a real woman. Drag queen Kris Anderson "plays" sassy hostess Dixie Longate in this off-Broadway hit. Presented by Performing Arts Fort Worth. McDavid Studio, 301 E. Fifth St., Fort Worth. April 8–May 3. \$30–\$40. BassHall.com.

### FINE ART

**Jesse Meraz: Haute Fauxx.** The local gay artist opens a solo exhibition of displays that employ the trappings of the falsehoods, fantasy and emptiness of fashion. Artist's reception April 4, 7–10 p.m. Ro2Art Downtown, 110 N. Akard St. April 4–May 3. Ro2Art.com.

**What's Up Doc? The Animation Art of Chuck Jones.** A 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.

**George Tobolowsky: Targeting (Lare and Small).** A collection of smaller sculptures. ilume Galerie, 4123



**HAUTE FAUXX** | Gay artist Jesse Meraz's new solo show about the emptiness of fashion.

Cedar Springs Road, Ste. 107. Through April 25. ilumeGalerie.com.

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

**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.

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Perot Museum of Nature and Science, 2201 N. Field St. Through May 10. PerotMuseum.org.

#### FESTIVAL

**Scarborough Renaissance Festival.** The annual trip to Medieval Europe, including dancers, musicians, food, crafts and cosplayers. Faire Grounds, FM 66, Waxahachie. April 4–May 25 (weekends), 10 a.m.–7 p.m. \$25. SRFestival.com.

### FRIDAY 04.03

#### COMMUNITY

**Panoptikon.** The weekly retro disco dance party, presented by Lord Byron. Red Light, 2911 Main St. Doors 9 p.m.

#### HAUNTED HOUSE

**Dark Hour: Spring Fever.** A new show for this weekend only, Dark House, 701 Taylor Drive, Plano. April 3–4. DarkHourHauntedHouse.com.

### SATURDAY 04.04

#### SPORTS

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

#### CONCERTS

**Kiesza.** Granada Theater, 3524 Greenville Ave. 8 p.m. doors, 9 p.m. show. \$27. GranadaTheater.com.

### SUNDAY 04.05 — EASTER

#### 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

**Mad Men.** The final season of the iconic drama about life in 1960s America. Airs on AMC at 8 p.m.

### MONDAY 04.06

#### BROADCAST

**Dancing with the Stars.** The new season (20th) with openly gay former Dallas Cowboys recruit Michael Same. Airs on ABC at 7 p.m.

**RuPaul's Drag Race.** The seventh season of the reality competition series continues. Airs on Logo at 8 p.m.

### TUESDAY 04.07

#### FILM

**His Girl Friday.** A madcap screwball comedy from the Golden Age. 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 04.09

#### FASHION

**Fashion Cited.** A fashion show and fundraiser benefiting Texas Legal Hospice. Frontiers of Flight Museum, 6911 Lemmon Ave. 6:30–9:30 p.m. LegalHospice.org.

#### FINE ARTS

**Robert Deyber: Art with a Twist.** Opening and artist's reception for the gay contemporary artist. Martin Lawrence Fine Art Galleries in the Galleria Dallas. 6–8 p.m.

#### CONCERTS

**The Molly Ringwalds.** The '80s cover band performs — perfectly timed for Throwback Thursday — with this benefit concert for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. The Rustic, 3656 Howell St. 7:30 p.m. \$20 general admission, \$40 VIP (includes complimentary cocktail). OuthouseTickets.com/Event/Event6684

#### THEATER

**Red.** Gay playwright John Logan's Tony Award-winning play about expressionist painter Mark Rothko and the creative process. Stage West. 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. April 9–May 10 (in previews through April 10). StageWest.org.

**Ordinary Days.** Musical from Our Productions Theatre Co. Studio Theatre of Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. April 9–19. OurDallasProductions.org.

### this week's solution



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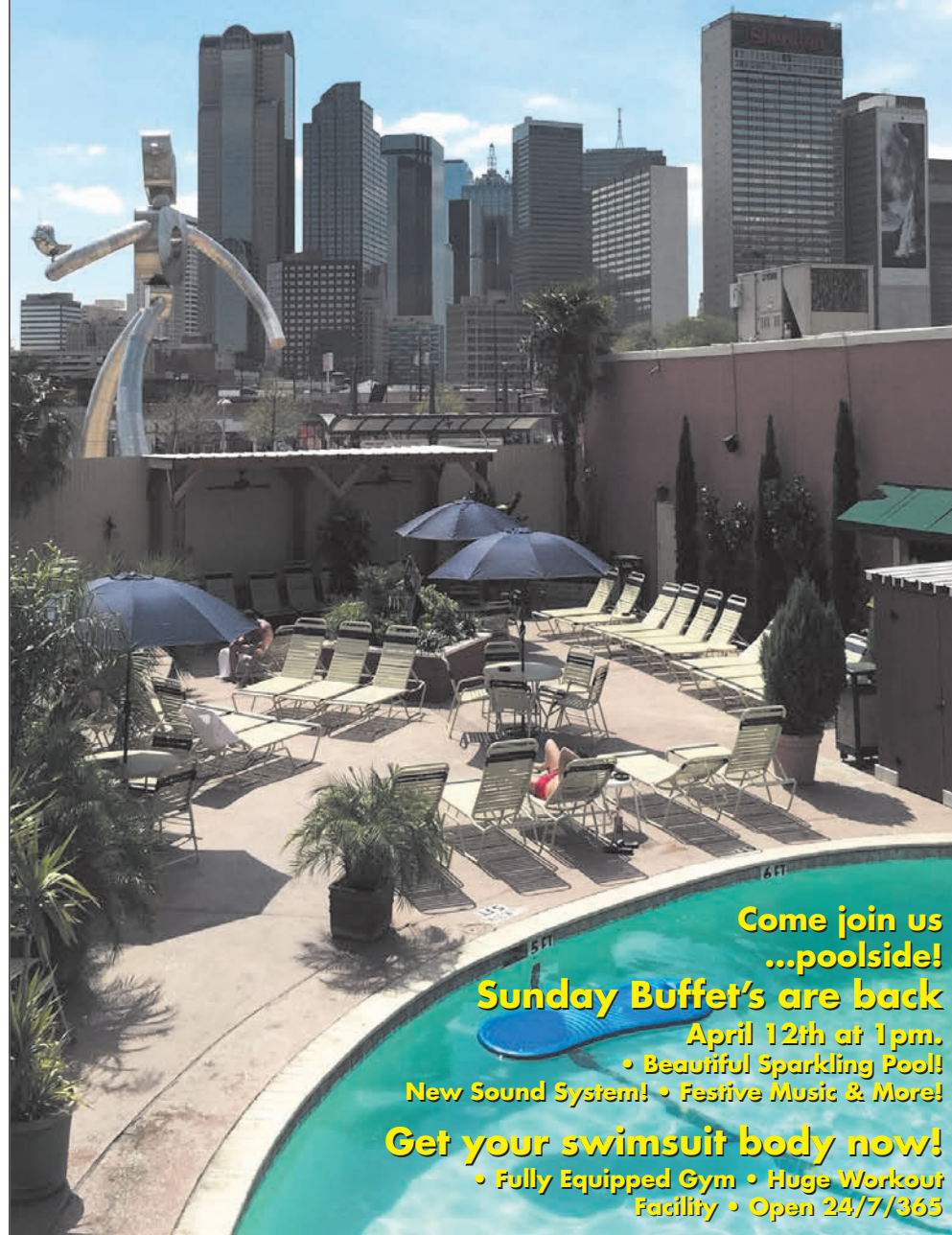
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# Cassie Nova

A reminder of the power of kindness

Howdy, everybody. It recently occurred to me how different it must be to be a very young gay person now, compared to how it was when I was kid. The everyday normalcy of seeing gays and lesbians in TV shows, in movies and books is so different from when I was young. In the '70s and '80s, there just weren't a lot of gay role models. I remember Hollywood Montrose from the movie *Mannequin*, Billy Crystal from the TV show *Soap* and Steven Carrington from *Dynasty*. And none of them were portrayed as "normal." The gay characters always seemed to be put there for shock value.

That's why it is awesome to see shows like *Empire*, *Modern Family*, *How To Get Away With Murder*, *Orange Is The New Black* and *Glee* showing gay

characters as regular people. To know Ellen DeGeneres is one of us and is still America's sweetheart sometimes blows my mind. I hope the gay youth of today know how awesome and important that really is.

I know being young and gay can be the loneliest and most confusing and frustrating time in your life. But having so many different gay people to look up to hopefully gives those kids a little hope. Hope that they are not alone. Hope that they are not so different. Hope that it does get better.

I remember when I was 15 or 16 years old and reading a short story by Clive Barker called *In the Hills*, *The Cities* and the lead characters were a gay couple. They were what I now know to be as just a regular couple, doing couple things like having a picnic, going for a drive in the country, having an argument and having sex. It is a Clive Barker story, so things don't end well for the couple ... but not because they were gay. Their sexual orientation was treated as a simple fact, like it was nothing. But to



me, it was everything. It was the first time I had come across anything where a gay person was just a person. A lead character that just so happened to be gay. It wasn't even all that great of a story but it was a turning point for me. It made me feel less alone and more optimistic about my future.

I find great comfort in seeing so many gays, lesbians and transgender folks in entertainment. I hope it is easier for the homo youth of today to feel normal but still feel special. Being gay is awesome. I just wish it didn't take us so long to realize it. (And Indiana, it seems, still hasn't figured it out.)

Now let's get to some questions.

*Dear Cassie, Do you think men hit on women the same way that men hit on men? I hear women (and men who dress as women) complain about the obnoxious and sometimes vulgar way men come on to them, but I've never heard the same complaints from my friends who are gay men. Thoughts? Thanks, G.*

Dearest G, It is not as different as you would think. There are always guys with cheesy pickup lines — gay and straight. I've seen just as many gay guys use lines like "Hey you wanna play dentist? You have a cavity that needs filling." Or "You want to sit on my lap and we will talk about the first thing that pops up." (By the way these are both lines I have actually heard, and one of them worked ... on me.) Anyway, the difference between using them on a guy compared to a girl is that I think they work more on guys. Not all, but some guys like a confident, forward man even if it comes off as a little corny and borderline offensive. Men are pigs, gay or straight. Gay men don't complain about it as much because we secretly love it. A transgender friend of mine who has dated gay guys and straight guys is always saying how vulgar and nasty straight guys get when hitting on her. Of course the womanly thing to do is to clutch your pearls and walk away in a huff. But the truth is sometimes pick-up lines work because there is a dirty little whore deep down inside all of us. Thanks, Cassie.

*Dear Cassie, A few weeks ago in your column, you talked about how drag queens can be shady and catty. As shady as some queens can be, I think it's also important to note that some of them indeed have big hearts and they make some major impacts on the people that they encounter. After years of trials and disdain the facades of harsh cattiness can be intimidating. I got to witness the true compassion of a few of them on occasion and some made lasting impressions.*

*I remember being invited to Christmas dinner by China Blue one year because it was known to her that I was estranged from my over-religious family and was and am a rather shy person on the whole. I*

*remember being at the host table in the Rose Room one night when Donna Day was performing when she shoved her huge wad of cash into my chest to hold 'til the end of her performance and being told by the host that it was a high compliment, for she trusted so few with her possessions. I miss the way that she could make me laugh at myself and my own hang-ups by just flaunting her own flaws and being real. And I remember that if not for one of them, I may not be around today. I was so depressed and drunk when I approached her and broke down crying. It seemed I just couldn't find where I belonged. I was too fat to be cool and too weird to be a bear. I was too shy to make anything other than acquaintances and there was no one that I could share my despondency with who would understand or care. This boy in a dress reached out to me and hugged me, said it would be ok, I was not alone, offered to pay for a cab so that I wouldn't have to walk in the rain, then checked up with me for weeks afterward just to see if I was in a better frame of mind.*

*So this isn't so much as a question as it is a thank you. Thank you to Cassie, China, Celeste, Valerie, Donna for helping me and others find our way. I love you all to infinity! Eric R.*

Dearest Eric R, Thank you for reminding us that a small act of compassion can help in many ways. Drag queens do get a bad rap sometimes, but many of the girls I know are the kindest, most generous souls I have ever met. They are, after all, the first people our community turns to anytime they need funds raised for a reason. They give selflessly to the community they love. They have big hearts under those big wigs. Thank you for sharing your story Eric. You made me feel ... feelings. Ugh! Damn you.

Stay strong my babies and always, love more, bitch less and be fabulous. XOXO, Cassie Nova. ■

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



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**Alexandre's:** Corey Paul at 10 p.m. on Friday. **Scott Bucklin Trio** at 10 p.m. on Saturday. **Chris Chism** at 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday. **Liz Mikel** at 9 p.m. on Thursday.

**Brick/Joe's:** Chris and Bruce's Birthday Luau on Saturday. **Midget pole assassin** live on Sunday. **RuPaul's Drag Race Monday Night Watch Party** features **Kennedy Davenport** at 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. and Q&A with Kennedy at 9 p.m.

**BJ's NXSI:** Boys N Baskets Easter stripper showcase with \$100 first prize on Sunday.

**Cedar Springs Tap House:** RuPaul's Drag Race Watch Party at 8 p.m. on Monday.

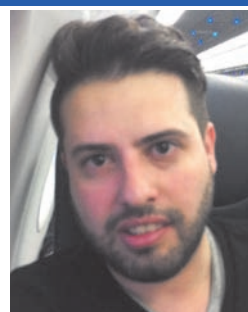
**Dallas Eagle:** Women in Leather at 9 p.m. on Friday. **Ms. Texas Leather** send off and fundraiser at 7 p.m. on Saturday. **Dallas Bears** club night at 9 p.m. on Saturday. **Leather Knights** club night at 9 p.m. on Saturday. **Dallas Girls of Leather** monthly meeting at 5 p.m. on Sunday. **Trash Disco Supafly** at 5 p.m. on Sunday. **Bear of the Month** contest at 9 p.m. on Thursday.

**Round-Up Saloon:** Annual Easter Basket Auction at 7 p.m. on Sunday.

**Sue Ellen's:** Party Raid Burlesque on Friday. **Time Machine Band** on Saturday. **Kathy and Bella** at 3 p.m. on Sunday. **Barefoot Hippies** at 8 p.m. on Sunday.

To view more Scene photos, go to [DallasVoice.com/category/photos](http://DallasVoice.com/category/photos). Scene Photographer: *Kat Haygood*.

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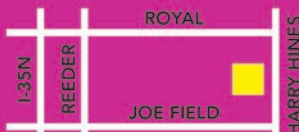
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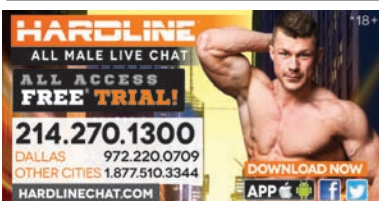
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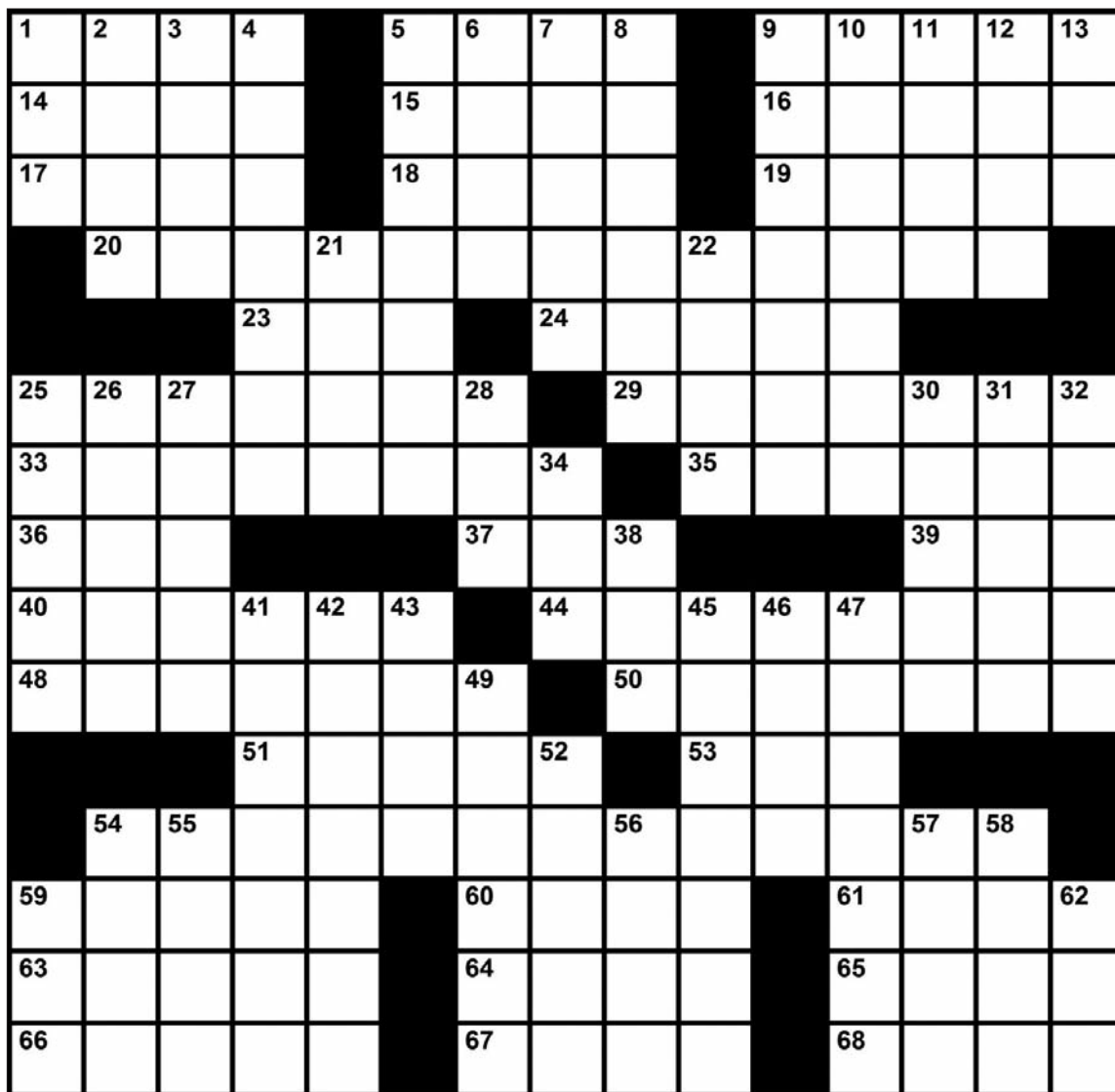
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## q-puzzle



## Actor/Actress

### Solution on page 29

#### Across

- Cole Porter's "Well, Did You \_\_\_"
- Word with top, for Mauresmo
- Name on a bomber
- Corleone head
- Loaf of Gomer's bread
- Pink fruit
- Birthright seller
- Skye on screens
- Safari head
- British actor to be cast as 33-Across
- Having one sharp, to Bernstein
- What squirrels do with their nuts
- Emma Peel was one
- Spasms in chasms?
- One of the first known to undergo gender-confirming surgery
- Language of Cho's ancestors
- "\_\_\_ Love You" (Beatles hit)
- Lodging place
- Bowie collaborator
- Go on foot
- Illustrator Gerda who lived with 33-Across
- Diana, to the Greeks
- Rulers like Caligula
- Ophelia and Hamlet or Claire

53 Cock follower

54 Movie currently in production  
about 33-Across

59 *G.I. Jane* actress

60 Margarine

61 Some escorts want them up front

63 Big name in Chinese history

64 Photo process

65 Sex type

66 Distributed queens, perhaps

67 NBA or NRA

68 Lamarr of Hollywood

#### Down

- Beard for Adam and Steve?
- Tool with jaws
- Ever so slightly
- Guy often found in handcuffs
- Catalog giant
- "Alas! \_\_\_ Yorick"
- Laura of "ER"
- Can't help but
- Ban on commercial intercourse
- When k. d. sings Auld lang Syne
- Pearl Buck character
- Actor John of *M. Butterfly*
- Writer Castillo

21 *Picnic* playwright

22 Early Robin Williams role

25 Male type

26 Baseball cap part

27 George, who was Mary Ann

28 Sacrifice-fly stat

30 Escort from the door

31 Painter Edouard

32 Some A-List gays

34 Wilde's tongue, for short

38 "We're \_\_\_ Gonna Take It"

41 Kind of case or court

42 Triumphant cry

43 Ike's ex

45 One that can blow you on the beach

46 Math branch

47 Queen of *Chicago*

49 Lady of La Mancha

52 Fodder figures?

54 The sound of music

55 "Hi" to Lorca

56 Becomes Jell-o

57 Actor Auberjonois

58 Rock Hudson role, usually

59 Dose of AZT, e.g.

62 Cunning

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