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16

headlines

TEXAS NEWS

- 8 An overview of D-FW elections
- 10 Marriage: How, What, When, Where
- 12 Dating over 40: Making it work
- 16 Lesbian 'promposal' stirs a Keller HS



20

LIFE+STYLE

- 20 Dixie wins with Tupperware
- 24 Honeymoon in Hobbiton
- 26 Diary of a bridezilla
- 28 Star wedding photog shares ideas

ON THE COVER

Design by Kevin Thomas



28

departments

- | | | | |
|----|----------------|----|---------------|
| 7 | The Gay Agenda | 31 | Calendar |
| 8 | News | 35 | Billy Masters |
| 18 | Texas Voices | 36 | Scene |
| 20 | Life+Style | 39 | Classifieds |

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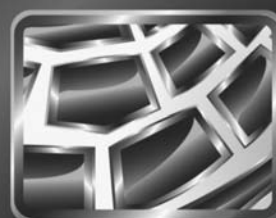
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Trans activist will speak at alternate UNT graduation ceremony

Local trans activist Pam Curry will speak at an alternate graduation ceremony planned by people not happy with the university's choice of Gov. Greg Abbott as commencement speaker. The ceremony is set for April 18.

Almost 2,000 people signed an online petition to dump Abbott as the speaker, according to CBS 11. Protesting Abbott's views on marriage equality and education, students created the Facebook page "Abbott Free UNT" and posted comments like, "Upset about Greg Abbott????? Protest by walking out of the ceremony as soon as he takes the stage! Attend your department graduations or attend LAVENDER GRADUATION hosted by the Pride Alliance."

Spencer Keralis, who sent the invitation to Curry to speak at the Lavender Graduation, is connected to the UNT libraries that house the LGBT archives.

Curry accepted the invitation and wrote on her Facebook page, "I will approach this as a challenge to be the motivation, and inspiration that Gov. Abbott can't and won't be. So I'm asking for the prayers from all my friends."

— David Taffet

Obama calls for ban on discredited reparative therapy practice

President Barack Obama called for an end to the discredited practice known as reparative therapy on Wednesday, April 9 in response to a WhiteHouse.gov petition calling for a ban on the process following the suicide of a young transwoman, Leelah Alcorn last December.

"We share your concern about its potentially devastating effects on the lives of transgender as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual and queer youth," the statement reads. "When assessing the validity of conversion therapy, or other practices that seek to change an individual's gender identity or sexual orientation, it is as imperative to seek guidance from certified medical experts."

Numerous professional organizations, including the American Psychiatric Association and American Medical Association, oppose conversion therapy, as it is commonly called, is most often used on LGBT minors to change their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Currently California, New Jersey and the District of Columbia have banned conversion therapy. Bills have been introduced in 18 states, including Texas, which would ban the process. Texas Rep. Celia Israel, D-Austin, who authored HB 3495 to ban conversion therapy, is currently awaiting a committee hearing on her bill.

— James Russell

NCTE honoring Phyllis Randolph Frye

Pioneering Texas trans rights activist Judge Phyllis Randolph Frye of Houston is one of three people being honored at the National Center for Transgender Equality's 12th anniversary celebration, "The Tipping Point: An Evening to Celebrate and Inspire," next month. Other honorees are Gabriel Foster and Kellan Baker.

Through her Houston-based law firm, Frye's has

for years fought in the courts and in the streets for the rights of trans people and the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people, too. In 2010, Frye became Texas' first out transgender judge, and now, as senior partner with Frye, Oaks and Benavidez, PLLC, Frye devotes her practice exclusively to transgender clients. In 2010, Houston Mayor Annise Parker appointed Frye as an associate municipal judge.

Frye will receive NCTE's Julie Johnson Founder's Award.

The 12th anniversary event takes place from 6-9 p.m. May 11, at The Hamilton Live in Washington, D.C.

— Tammye Nash

Diverse coalition speaks out against numerous anti-LGBT bills at Capitol

Texas lawmakers and the head of the Texas Association of Business joined with civil liberties organizations on Tuesday, April 7 at a press conference warning against numerous bills filed this year that promote discrimination against LGBT Texans.

Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, and Rep. Rafael Anchia, D-Dallas, said they are worried about at least 20 bills that would allow, promote or even require discrimination against LGBT Texans. They also voiced concerns over two bills that they say would burden taxpayers, businesses and the LGBT community.

Currently three resolutions would expand the state's Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which the Legislature passed with an overwhelming bipartisan majority in 1999, is sufficient. Like the federal RFRA, it protects religious liberty from government overreach while including provisions to ensure that civil rights protections against discrimination aren't undermined.

— James Russell

Springfield repeals nondiscrimination ordinance

Voters in Springfield, Mo. narrowly voted on Tuesday, April 7 to repeal an ordinance that extended anti-discrimination protections to LGBT citizens, six months after it was put on the books.

Opponents of the ordinance say that the outcome of the vote is a victory for the faith community, as the ordinance had "many potential legal ramifications for businesses."

LGBT-rights advocates were disappointed by the results of the vote, but pledged to continue the fight for more comprehensive protections for the LGBT community.

Krista Moncado, a supporter of the ordinance, said, "Either way, it was going to be emotional... People have worked so hard on this. We'll rest tonight and we'll regroup tomorrow."

The ordinance has been on hold since it was passed six months ago. Mayor Bob Stephens said the issue should be decided on the federal level.

Missouri is not a marriage equality state, but it is the only state under court order to recognize marriages performed elsewhere. Also, St. Louis issues marriage licenses as a result of court case and Kansas City does as well, well, just because they found they could and no one was going to stop them.

— David Taffet

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localbriefs

Chorale opens Mayor's Creative Conversation

The Turtle Creek Chorale has been invited to open the Mayor's Creative Conversation about Music at 5:50 p.m. on Monday, April 13, at the City Performance Hall, prior to the kick off of the event.

The Creative Conversation will be co-hosted by Mayor Mike Rawlings and Dallas Morning News writer Robert Wilonsky from 6-8 p.m. The panelists are a diverse group of individuals that will speak on how to better serve the arts community in order to attract and retain artists, their supporters and influencers.

The chorale's next concert — Britten, Beatles & Bond — is April 23-25 at City Performance Hall.

For tickets, visit TurtleCreek.org.

Whitley named ED of H4PJ

Activist and community organizer Todd Whitley has been named the new executive director of Hope 4 Peace & Justice after serving as its board chair for 18 months. Most recently, Whitley worked as manager of communications for Equality Texas and has been serving as the H4PJ's part-time program director for the last six months.

"Instead of using religion to marginalize and discriminate against people, we must advocate that everyone is deserving of being loved and accepted for who they are — regardless of their skin color, citizenship status, whom they love or

how they express their gender," Whitley said.

Board member Michael Magnia was elected to replace Whitley as board chair and will help steer the organization's direction.

"Working with Todd in this role, we can move closer to our vision of expanding our coalition and partnering with other faith-based organizations promoting a more inclusive vision of what it means to be 'religious,' particularly as it pertains to the causes of others," Magnia said.

For more information, visit H4PJ.org

Out & Equal registration opens

Registration is now open for the annual Out & Equal Workplace Summit, slated for Oct. 6-8 at the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas.

Out & Equal collaborates with executives, human resources departments and employee groups at Fortune 1000 companies and government agencies to ensure that everyone has the tools they need to deliver on their commitment to workplace equality.

The Workplace Summit offers panels with executives and experts discussing the big issues of the day, open roundtable discussions on concerns related to LGBT workplace equality, educational workshops tailored to specific learning tracks, a global perspective series on the tools needed for workplace equality, case studies, transgender, bisexual and people of color programs, plenaries and more.

To register, visit OutAndEqual.org.

pet of the week / FRECKLES

Meet **Freckles**, an amazing boy with a super personality. Freckles was found running stray with his wingman, Curley. The two are thick as thieves and would benefit from continuing their journey together as best buds. This would sure alleviate any remorse of leaving one alone all day and provides the perfect playmate. If you're reading this, you're seeking the unconditional love only a furry friend can provide. Stop by today and welcome Freckles (and maybe his BFF, too) into your heart and home.

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



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THE GAY AGENDA

Have an event coming up? E-mail your information to staff writer James Russell at russell@dallasvoice.com by Thursday at 10 a.m. for that week's issue.

APRIL

• **Weekly: Lambda Weekly** every Sunday at 1 p.m. on 89.3 KNON-FM; **Fuse** game night every Monday evening except the last of the month at 8 p.m. at the Fuse space in the ilume, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Apt 2367; **Fuse Connect** every Wednesday from 7 p.m. at the Fuse Space.

• **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: FUSE Gay Movie Night: E-Cupid**
Free movie screening at 6 p.m. at the Fuse center, ilume, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Apt. 2367. For more information e-mail fusebox@myresourcecenter.org or visit DFWfuse.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 a.m.–4 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 11: DFW HRC Federal Club April Mixer**
Monthly mixer from 6–8 p.m. at J. Gilligan's, 400 E. Abrams, Arlington. Drink specials.

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

• **April 12: Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance Don Baker Education Fund**
DGLA hosts a Dallas City Council 2015 Candidate Forum from 12–2 p.m. at the Round-Up Saloon, 3912 Cedar Springs Road.

• **April 13: Tarrant County Stonewall Democrats Monthly Meeting**
Monthly meeting of LGBT and allied Democrats meets at 7 p.m. at Tommy's Hamburgers, 2455 Forest Park Blvd., Fort Worth. For more information call or e-mail Carol Cappa at info@tarrantstonewall.org or 817-229-9017.

• **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 14: Stonewall Democrats of Dallas**
6:30–7:30 p.m. at Ojeda's Restaurant, 4617 Maple Ave. For more information call 214-506-3367 or e-mail info@stonewalldemocratsofdallas.org.

• **April 14: JEWEL Lesbian Fiction Book Club**
Monthly book club discussion with author Sandra Mormon discussing her book *Letters Never Sent*. Open to all women 7–9 p.m. at ilume, 4123 Cedar Springs Road. Free. For more information e-mail jewel@myresourcecenter.org.

• **April 15: HRC DFW Fairway to Equality Happy Hour**
Kick off the 20th annual HRC DFW Fairway to Equality Golf Tournament from 6–8:30 p.m. at Cedar Springs Tap House, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Ste. 100. For more information and to RSVP visit On.fb.me/1GZIGRJ.

• **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 Rap Session**
Peer group discusses topics relating to feminine gender identity and transitioning every third Wednesday of the month. 6–8 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St. For more information call 214-528-0144 or email gear@myresourcecenter.org.

• **April 15: NOH8 In My School at UTA**
The extension of the NOH8 Campaign visits UT-Arlington's University Center from 11 a.m.–3 p.m. in front of the to take photographs. Duct tape and paint will be provided. Those wishing to be photographed are encouraged to bring their own white T-shirts. Free and open to the public. For more information, contact the UTA LGBTQA Program at 817-272-3099

• **April 16: LULAC Rainbow Council City Council Meet and Greet**
Officer installation and city council candidate meet and greet from 7–9 p.m. at Havana Lounge, 4006 Cedar Springs Rd. For more information e-mail LULAC4871@gmail.com.

• **April 16: Log Cabin Republicans Meet and Greet**
Social hour from 6:30–8:30 p.m. at The Quarter Bar, 3301 McKinney Ave. For more information e-mail Chad Michael Terry at logcabindallastx@gmail.com.

• **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 17: GLSEN's Day of Silence**
Take a vow of silence for the annual international event bringing awareness anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools. For more information or to register, go to Dayofsilence.org.

• **April 17: Shout Out! 2015 Prom**
Cathedral of Hope hosts Shout Out! 2015 Prom, an LGBT and ally inclusive prom for students ages 13–18 from 7–11:30 p.m. at the Interfaith Peace Chapel inside CoH, 5910 Cedar Springs Road. Doors open at 4 p.m. for opportunity to work with stylists. Purchase tickets at Youth First, 3918 Harry Hines Blvd. For more information, call or e-mail Yadi Martinez at 214-879-0400 or ymartinez@cathedralofhope.com.


• **April 18: Open-Door Productions hosts Nancy Beaudette**
Open Door Productions presents Canadian singer-songwriter Nancy Beaudette at 7 p.m. at Agape MCC, 4615 E. California Parkway, Fort Worth. \$16.25 online or \$18 at the door. For more information and to purchase tickets visit Odp texas.com.

• **April 18: Gaybingo: Safari**
Monthly fundraiser for Resource Center takes place 6–9 p.m. at Rose Room at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. 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 20: Metroplex Republicans Meeting**
6:30 p.m. happy hour and 7 p.m. dinner and presentation at Mattito's Mexican Café, 3102 Oaklawn. For more information visit Metroplexrepublicans.com.

• **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 fjones@gmail.com.



Open Door Productions hosts Nancy Beaudette



Readers may remember Nancy Beaudette from her last swing through the area in 2012. The Canadian, lesbian singer-songwriter will be back in Fort Worth as part of her third Texas tour on Saturday, April 18 to promote her new album, *South Branch Road*, courtesy of Open Door Productions.

The award-winning performer has been described as “ebullient and optimistic and clearly enlivened by her future with music.” Her combination of charm, grace and a wit is attributed to her childhood near Cornwall, Ontario, where she learned to fiddle with her grandfather. Should be, fun, eh?

7 p.m. at Agape MCC, 4615 E. California Parkway, Fort Worth. \$16.25 online or \$18 at the door. For more information and to purchase tickets visit Odp texas.com.

SPOTLIGHT

With almost half its members facing term limits, Dallas City Council faces largest change in years

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

For the first time in recent elections, none of the three Dallas City Council districts with the largest LGBT populations has a contested race.

The three districts are District 1 in North Oak Cliff, represented by Scott Griggs, and Districts 2 and 14 in Oak Lawn, represented by Adam Medrano and Philip Kingston, respectively.

In the last election, Griggs faced incumbent Delia Jasso when his neighborhood was carved out of District 3. The Oak Lawn seats were vacant. Medrano faced one major opponent and Kingston had six other people in his race.

Griggs, Medrano and Kingston have become known as “The Three Amigos” on the council, not only because they’ve become friends, but because they often vote as a block.

But The Three Amigos are not the only council members who have supported the LGBT community on the current council. Lee Kleinman in District 11, which roughly runs from Walnut Hill Lane to Campbell Road between the Tollway and Central Expressway, sits on both the Police and Fire Pension board and the Employee Retirement Fund.

Other council members sit on the boards as well, but Kleinman took the lead in arguing with non-council board members to equalize benefits for gay and lesbian employees. The chair of the Police and Fire board accused Kleinman of having a political agenda. While he certainly has LGBT constituents, he stood to gain little since he, too, is running unopposed.

Kleinman never waived in his arguments that fairness dictated all retirees receive the same benefits.

4 FW council members are unopposed; 5 others face 1st-time challengers

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

A political campaign based on reforming the code compliance process or challenging an incumbent’s record on economic development may sound more like an episode of TV’s Parks and Recreation. But it’s really just another campaign season for the Fort Worth City Council.

All incumbents filed for re-election but not all of them are facing challengers.



Two other council members are also running unopposed — Sandy Greyson in District 12 in Far North Dallas and Jennifer Gates in District 13, which includes a small portion of Oak Lawn near Love Field.

The news in this election is how many council members hit term limits — including Vonceil Jones Hill, who has opposed almost anything for the LGBT community and whose redistricted seat includes a large LGBT area in southern Oak Cliff.

Also leaving the council will be Dwaine Caraway, Carolyn Davis, Tennell Atkins, Sheffie Kadane and Jerry Allen.

Former Stonewall Democrats of Dallas President Omar Narvaez said, “This is a huge opportunity to change the face of the council.”

He called the current council progressive and said, “Most of the folks running are pro-LGBT.”

Quite a few candidates are running for each of the open seats. For Allen’s northeast Dallas district, three people are vying for the position. Five each for Hill and Kadane’s seats. South Dallas attracted the most candidates with six seeking to replace Atkins and eight each making a bid for Caraway’s and Davis’ seats.

“Whoever comes in, we have to be prepared to rewind a little bit,” Narvaez said. “We have to remember when we meet new folks, we can’t expect them to be where we are.”



Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance President Patti Fink agrees and said her organization’s PAC started interviewing candidates for endorsement this week.

“We’re looking for candidates willing to learn about issues important to our community,” Fink said.

With the exception of Kadane and Hill, each of the retiring council members has become a reliable ally. Davis sits of the ERF board with Kleinman and backed him up every step of the way as he argued for equal benefits.

Atkins sits on the Police and Fire Pension board and after one particularly contentious meeting, met with a group of lesbian police officers who attended that meeting. He was in tears as he apologized to them for not being able to protect their families.

As chair of the Budget, Finance and Audit committee, Allen steered a number of changes in city policy that were recommended by the LGBT Task Force through the committee and the full council.

Two other races are for incumbents Rick Callahan in District 5 and Monica Alonzo in District 6.

Alonzo faces token opposition from three candidates to retain her West Dallas seat. However, her district usually sees the city’s lowest voter turnout, so even a moderate challenge from one of her opponents could cause a run off or even a loss.

First-term councilman Callahan is facing a strong

challenge from two opponents. Jesse Diaz opposed Callahan in the 2013 election. Callahan won even though this district was drawn as a Hispanic seat. Diaz had Stonewall’s endorsement.

In this race, Stonewall threw its support behind Sherry Cordova.

Cordova promised to be an ally to the LGBT community in City Hall.

Narvaez said this was one of the races he was personally watching, adding that he considers Callahan to be out of touch with his district.

Earlier this year, Callahan voted against a change to language in the ERF benefit plan to equalize benefits for gay and lesbian retirees. His campaign manager said Callahan has struggled with the issue of same-sex marriage. In his 2013 Dallas Voice questionnaire, Callahan said he supports civil unions, not marriage equality.

Trans Pride Initiative Executive Director Nell Gaither said many of the recommendations of the LGBT Task Force were implemented over the past year equalizing benefits and protections, but some work does remain for the upcoming council.

“Providing trans healthcare benefits that includes all necessary medical care is one,” Gaither said, adding that the council needs to finish addressing some inconsistencies in the wording of the city’s nondiscrimination ordinance.

The major issue in this campaign — even for the LGBT community, if Stonewall Democrats’ screening meeting is an indication — is the Trinity Toll Road. The Three Amigos oppose any road between the levees other than a parkway linking park attractions. The mayor and Kleinman are among the toll road’s supporters.

Candidates from South Dallas are distinguishing themselves mostly on this issue. The anti-road candidates say their constituents won’t be able to afford to use the highway if it’s built. The pro-road candidates say it will bring jobs to their area and get other residents to parts of the city where jobs are more plentiful.

For more election and candidate information, visit CitySecretary.DallasCityHall.com/Elections.html.

The four council members unopposed in their re-election bids are Mayor Betsy Price, Councilwoman Ann Zadeh and Councilmen Jungus Jordan and W.B. “Zim” Zimmerman.

Jim Riddlesperger, a professor of political science at Texas Christian University, said he anticipates a low-key election season. Unless there’s an open seat, he said, incumbents coast to re-election with little opposition.

“Fort Worth historically hasn’t been the type of city to seek contested races,” he said.

Incumbents usually hold the edge in an election, but that doesn’t mean outliers won’t try to oust a sitting council member. This cycle, Fort Worth incumbents are facing first-time challengers who are running different types of races.

Take Bob Willoughby. The first-time candidate is

challenging Councilwoman Gyna Bivens, who defeated an incumbent in a 2013 runoff. Though Bivens is running for only her second term on council, Willoughby thinks city hall already needs a fresh face. According to his campaign website, he has had multiple issues with code compliance.

He's what Riddlesperger called an "expressive candidate" — the type with an axe to grind. "Expressive candidates could be running because they're mad, but it's difficult to convert that into a win," he explained.

Andy Gallagher, on the other hand is, what political scientists call a "stealth candidate," Riddlesperger said. The mortgage loan officer is running against Councilman Dennis Shingleton.

Stealth candidates may be using the opportunity to gather a network and meet people. But Gallagher is the clear underdog in the race, so it's curious that he's also declined media requests. "Normally when you're running for office, you want to be in the media spotlight, not shying away from it," Riddlesperger said.

Two other challengers are running low-key, but visible campaigns. Financial analyst Steve Thornton is challenging Sal Espino in District 2. And in District 8, Sharon Mason-Ford, a teacher, is challenging Kelly Allen Gray. Both challengers suggest it's time for some new blood on the council.

While Thornton is campaigning on Espino's long tenure, Thornton said basic city needs still lack across the district. Espino was elected in 2005.

Mason-Ford isn't citing Gray's short tenure as a liability — Gray was first elected in a special election and is running for her second full term —

but is citing a lack of development as reason enough to elect her over Gray.

Unlike the other first-time candidates, Cary Moon, the small business owner challenging Councilman Danny Scarth, is running the most typical campaign: meeting with neighborhood groups, raising money and, of course, kissing babies.

Fort Worth does not have a singular "gayborhood," like Cedar Springs or Oak Cliff in Dallas. And unlike many other cities of its size, Fort Worth lacks a distinct council district more heavily populated with LGBTs.

Riddlesperger pointed out Zadeh's district as the most LGBT-friendly, in part due to the urban, liberal-leaning population. "It was the district represented by Joel Burns and LGBT issues were a centerpiece of her campaign," he said.

Fort Worth's LGBT population is just more dispersed, said David Henderson, president of Fairness Fort Worth. The lack of a distinct LGBT identity is hardly a threat to LGBT equality however, if the city's high ratings on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index and major advances over the past decade are any indication.

Fortunately, Riddlesperger said, anti-LGBT animosity is hardly a reason anymore for anyone to run in any council races. "We don't have any openly gay-baiting council members. [The LGBT] issue is over," he declared. ■

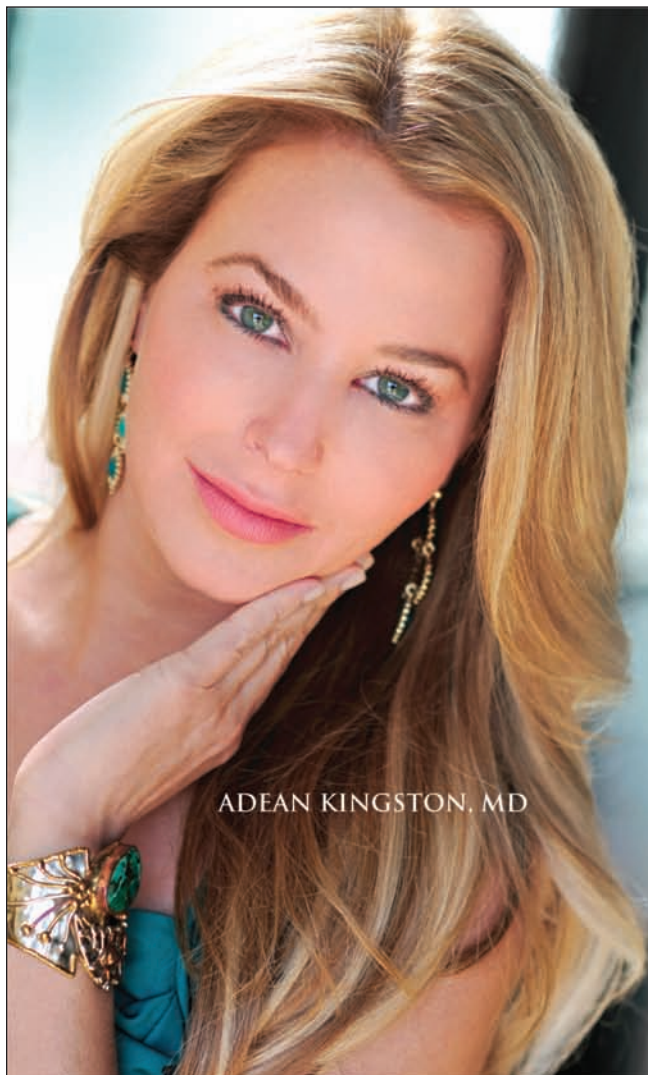
Council elections take place May 9. Candidate filing information is available at FortWorthTexas.gov/elections/?id=138010.



Dallas City Council members, from left, Scott Griggs, Adam Medrano and Philip Kingston have become known as "The Three Amigos," not only because they've become friends, but because they often vote as a block. (Dallas Voice file photo)



Fort Worth City Council member Ann Zadeh, left, and Mayor Betsy Price are unopposed.



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Where? How? What? When?

What can we expect regarding
rulings on marriage equality
from SCOTUS, the 5th Circuit?
And what happens when those
rulings are handed down?

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com



Todd Whitley, right, with his partner, Miguel Atkins, is

June is the traditional month for weddings. But same-sex couples that want to get married in Texas this year might want to hold off until July.

That's because the Supreme Court of the United States is hearing marriage equality cases from the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals on April 28 and is expected to render its decision by June 29, the last day of the court's session. Most court watchers expect that the court will rule in favor of equality, making same-sex marriages legal nation-wide.

At its hearing later this month, the Supreme Court will consider two questions: "Does the 14th Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state?" and "Does the 14th Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state?"

Mary Bonauto, civil rights project director at Gay and Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, will present arguments for the first question. Bonauto's office wouldn't predict an outcome, but assured that the matter is in good hands.

"We never, never, never make predictions," said GLAD spokeswoman Carisa Cunningham, "but we're confident we'll get a fair hearing and we know we have a strong case."

Cunningham called Bonauto one of the most experienced and successful marriage equality attorneys in the U.S. Former Rep. Barney Frank once called her "our Thurgood Marshall," referring to the attorney who won the landmark 1954 Brown v Board of Education case.

Bonauto, who's been with GLAD since 1990, argued Goodridge v Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts case that resulted in Massachusetts becoming the first state to legalize same-sex marriage. Before that, she filed the Vermont law-



suit that resulted in Vermont becoming the first state to offer civil unions.

More recently, Bonauto argued a case in Massachusetts that successfully challenged the federal Defense of Marriage Act. She then joined the legal team for Windsor v. U.S., a case that resulted in a U.S. Supreme Court ruling striking down section 3 of DOMA in 2013.

Cunningham said that in preparation for the April 28 hearing, Bonauto is "shutting off her email" for the next few weeks while she reads Supreme Court decisions and practices answering questions in mock oral arguments.

If the Supreme Court rules in favor of marriage equality in June, Cunningham said, the remaining 13 non-equality states — including Texas — should have marriage pretty quickly, despite any efforts by state attorneys general or other state officials to stop it.

"A Supreme Court ruling is a pretty powerful tool," she said.

However, there will likely be more battles to fight. Even in liberal Massachusetts, which became the first marriage equality state in 2004, the state Supreme Court decision was only 5-4, and it survived with little challenge because the state doesn't allow ballot measures and the state's Constitution is difficult to amend. Lawmakers in Congress, including right-wing Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, have already begun talking about ways to short-circuit a SCOTUS ruling in favor of equality, including amending the U.S. Constitution, even though that is a long and arduous process.

Despite marriage equality being a done deal in Massachusetts for more than a decade, Cunn-

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planning a pre-hearing rally at the Legacy of Love monument. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

ham said people there are “tremendously excited” at the possibility of marriage equality nation-wide. The people who were there at the beginning want to be there at the finish line, she said.

Lambda Legal Supervising Senior Staff Attorney Ken Upton said one of the cases before the Supreme Court is a Lambda Legal case so he couldn’t make a prediction about the outcome either. But he did talk about what experts in the field are saying.

A year ago, Upton noted, there were 18 marriage equality states. Today there are 20 more because the Supreme Court stopped staying pro-equality rulings.

“Why would they let all these people marry in all these states and then turn around and say, ‘Oh, just kidding,?’” he said. “That’s a little cruel.”

Upton said he’s been reading briefs that have been submitted to the Supreme Court and has seen nothing new from the opposition. He added that while the court is likely to rule on the last day of the session — June 29 — the justices could issue a decision earlier. But rulings in the most controversial cases are usually left for the last day.

But, he added, “Maybe [marriage isn’t] controversial anymore.” A case heard earlier this winter involving federal subsidies for health insurance was more controversial, he suggested.

The court could even hold a ruling over until next session, Upton acknowledged, but that rarely happens.

Once the SCOTUS ruling comes down, Upton expects clerks in some counties — like Dallas and Travis — to issue licenses immediately. Attorney General Ken Paxton could try to stop them, but Upton thinks it’s unlikely he’d be able to obtain an injunction.

Many county clerks around Texas may wait for a mandate from the 5th Circuit, which could be issued immediately or not come until July.

Upton said one way marriage could come to Texas earlier would be a ruling from the 5th Circuit on the cases it heard in January, but he thinks that’s unlikely. Had the court intended to rule, it would have acted when Neal Lane, lead attorney in the Texas marriage equality case, asked the court to lift the stay in March. He said he believes the 5th Circuit has decided to wait for the Supreme Court to rule.

Community activist Todd Whitley said the excitement over the Supreme Court hearing is growing around the country, but especially in states like Texas that haven’t yet achieved equality.

On April 27, the eve of the Supreme Court hearing, Whitley said people will gather at the Legacy of Love Monument on Cedar Springs Road at 7 p.m. Community leaders will speak about why marriage equality is important.

He said “Lighting the Way to Justice” rallies will be held across the country that night.

After the Supreme Court hearings the next morning, several couples will hold a press conference at the Dallas County Records Building to speak about what the hearing means to them.

When the Supreme Court rules in June, Whitley said, a march is planned from the Dallas County Records Building to the Legacy of Love Monument.

Depending upon the wording of the ruling, a flood of couples may be expected to apply for their marriage licenses that day. Although Texas has a three-day waiting period, a number of Dallas County judges are expected to waive that waiting period for couples that have already been waiting years for the right to marry in Texas and allow them to marry immediately. ■

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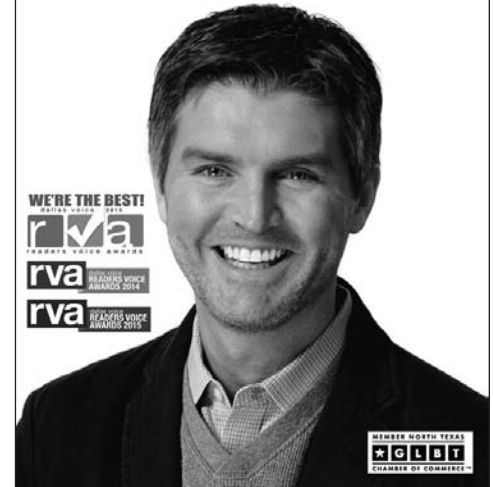
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Dating over 40: How to make it work



THE
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ISSUE

Local counselor advises relying less on apps and more on actually meeting in person

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

"I don't think gay men know how to date — at all," licensed professional counselor intern Chris-James Cогnetta says.

That may be because most gay men didn't get to date appropriately in high school and don't begin to learn how until they're older.

Since the AIDS crisis hit, Cогnetta says, we've been taught that dating is a means to an end — find the right partner. But, he adds, "It doesn't have to be. Dating can just be enjoying someone's company."

And while many gay men rely on the Internet and ever-changing technology to find a date, Cогnetta says apps like Grindr are part of the problem. Gay men often live behind an online persona they've created.

Cогnetta doesn't discount Grindr as a tool to meet, but he suggests getting together for the first time at a place like Starbucks for a cup of coffee — dinner could take hours, but a cup of coffee shouldn't last more than 30 minutes. And a short meeting that can evolve into a subsequent date if there's a spark could be very helpful, he says.

Cогnetta says gay men who meet online do a number of things wrong. One is chatting online too long.



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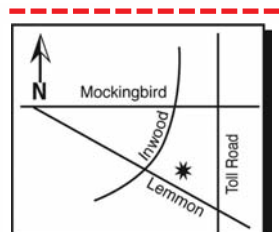
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Some people talk online for months before meeting, and that gives them time to build up a persona that no one can live up to.

Cognetta has two rules when he meets in person with someone he first met online. First is the 30-second rule: "Either can opt out," he explains. "Give a polite 'no thank you' and walk away."

His second rule is not to go home with someone on a first date. That first date should be about exchanging information.

"It's not all about you," Cognetta says. "Find out about them. Focus outside yourself. Expect nothing."

That first meeting is about discovery, he says, so go into the date expecting to be treated with respect and, hopefully, to have a good time.

"You might come away with a new friendship, a business opportunity, a new joke," he says. "Learn something."

If things work out, leave it open for another meeting. Rather than asking the person on a date, he suggests saying something like, "Next week, I'm doing X and maybe you'd like to join."

Cognetta urges men to always know where they stand at the end of the date. "At 40-plus, you're too old or maybe too mature to be playing mystery date," he notes. "Be in charge of your own destiny."

But also be aware of warning signs. Notice if the other man is not forthcoming with information. Look for physical cues. Is he constantly checking his phone? Did he come up with thousands of things he's doing next week, without suggesting an alternate time to meet again?

"Perhaps another time," is a polite way to end



things, Cognetta suggests, or "May I follow up with you in a week," gets him to commit to receiving a call from you again — or not.

Many gay men over 40 handle things passively-aggressively, not responding when someone calls and hoping the other person will get the hint,

Cognetta notes. But a direct approach is usually better: "Thank you so much, but I just don't see the connection," he suggests.

That's an approach Cognetta says has gotten him good responses such as, "Thanks for being honest."

Because people over 40 are more settled, they're usually looking for someone who is their intellectual equal as well as emotionally and economically stable.

Since gender roles don't apply, gay men over 40 have to create some of their own rules and boundaries — like who picks up the check?

Many people in their 20s, Cognetta says, date in swarms. More often than not, they have serial relationships. A man in his 40s, he suggests, needs to know who he is and who he wants to be with.

To meet people outside of dating apps Cognetta urges men to go where people are — church, political groups or other LGBT organizations, bars. Do things that interest you, he encourages, noting that "As we age, we isolate."

While no one is going to change someone else, figure out what you're willing to accept and embrace and know what you're not. "What are your must haves," Cognetta asks.

He suggests before thinking about dating someone seriously, get your own house in order — job, drugs, past relationships. For mature relationships to be successful, we need more than simple sexual attraction, he says, although that's important too. ■

Chris-James Cognetta is a licensed professional counselor intern in practice with Stonewall Behavioral Health, 3625 North Hall St. Suite 1250. Stonewall-inc.com.

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Ryan White money awarded more than a month late



Dallas AIDS Healthcare Foundation staff and patients who attended the April 7 Dallas County Commissioners Court meeting talked to Commissioner John Wiley Price after the meeting. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

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While AHF continues its suit against Dallas County for a share of the grant, former employees file a lawsuit charging illegal kickbacks

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Dallas County Commissioners Court approved distribution of Ryan White funding on April 7 without including funding for AIDS Healthcare Foundation.

The fiscal year for Ryan White grants began March 1, so the delay in approval along with the county's normal six-to-eight-week turnaround in processing payments means AIDS service organizations will wait up to three months to be paid for services provided. The executive director of one agency expressed concern about the ability of some agencies to add new clients had the county continued to delay funding approval.

Because the preliminary awards list excluded AHF, has the agency filed a lawsuit against Dallas County. AHF Texas Regional Director Bret Camp said the lawsuit will proceed.

The director of another AIDS service organization, who also asked not to be identified, said the Request for Proposal grant application specified that to qualify, an agency had to be operating in Dallas County for at least three years at the time the application was submitted. AHF opened its clinic at Medical City just over two years ago, in December 2012.

After the vote at Commissioners Court, Camp said, "I'm glad funding will get out."

Camp, who worked for Resource Center for

years before joining AHF, said he was also worried about other agencies' ability to continue some services without the money.

AHF isn't shy about using the courts — as either the plaintiff or defendant. In Tarrant County, AHF was initially denied funding as well, but after the agency filed a lawsuit there, county commissioners voted to include AHF in the funding distribution. AHF also has a similar lawsuit pending against Palm Beach County, Fla. for Ryan White funding.

In addition, three ex-employees have litigation pending against the organization, charging it with using a system of incentive payments to reward patients and employees for using AHF's clinics and pharmacies, thereby inflating the number of patients it could bill Medicare and Medicaid for treating. The suit, filed in Florida, charges AHF with violating the state's anti-kickback law.

The three claimed whistleblower status and assert retaliation by the agency when they were fired after filing suit.

But AHF spokesman Ged Kenslea said the three plaintiffs want to try their case in the media after the federal government and Florida declined to intervene in February.

He said the organization is aggressive in finding people who are HIV-positive and getting them into care.

"With more than 60 percent of the 1.2 million people living with HIV / AIDS in the United States currently not in regular medical care and treatment, it remains core to AHF's mission to try and reduce that number," Kenslea said in an email.

He denied any wrongdoing by AHF and called the organization's approach "pro-active" by find-

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Promposal plan creates stir for Keller student

A high school sophomore in Keller didn't anticipate creating a stir over a prom proposal. But that's what happened, anyway.

Casey Akers, who attends Timber Creek High School in Keller, wanted to take a female friend to prom. Her friend didn't have a date, so Akers wanted to make the evening by performing a "promposal."

Akers, who is a lesbian and has a girlfriend, said she received the blessing of two school administrators. But after they found out she was asking a girl, those administrators said it "wasn't appropriate," Akers said.

In response, a friend started a social media campaign with the hashtag #Let-CaseyPromposal. Promposals, which are growing in popularity among high schoolers, are akin to a wedding proposal. And in many cases, promposals turn into elaborate public events.

The public event part is the problem for the Timber Creek High officials.

According to the school district's student code of conduct, "Students may not engage in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities." Administrators say a promposal would do just that.

"Promposals, and other similar public dis-



Casey Akers

plays may create a disruption to the academic setting, therefore they are not allowed for any student," according to statement released by the Keller school district.

District spokesperson Bruce Nieman reiterated, "Promposals aren't allowed anywhere."

“Students may not engage in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.”

They've occurred before, but they're never allowed."

But, Nieman added, same-gender couples are allowed to attend prom together in the Keller ISD — a fact may have gotten lost in the hoopla surrounding the social media campaign supporting Akers' plan.

Akers said she has received a lot of support after the social media campaign. And even if she can't stage her promposal, she's still going to the prom with her friend.

—James Russell

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ing and “linking HIV-positive individuals to life-saving care and treatment,” which he called critical to stopping HIV.

“We look forward to the opportunity to rebut these baseless charges in court,” Kenslea said.

Offering inducements is not illegal, but there are

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Dallas County Health Division	\$196,876
Dallas County Hospital District (Parkland)	\$3,824,927
Dallas Legal Hospice	\$53,321
Dental Health Programs	\$447,978
Health Services of North Texas	\$1,022,596
Legacy Counseling Center	\$165,597
Open Arms (Bryan's House)	\$65,772
Resource Center	\$1,811,824
TBD	\$31,788
Total	\$10,253,930

rules that have to be carefully followed. If Medicare and Medicaid find any wrongdoing, AHF could lose the ability to bill the government and private insurance companies.

AIDS Arms Executive Director John Carlo said his agency uses incentives for certain programs.

“We have programs that offer gift card incen-

tives targeting testing programs and attendance at educational programs,” Carlo said.

He said those incentives are covered by grants from the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institute of Health and other federal agencies that monitor the distribution of those funds closely.

“We are very cautious in the administration of these things,” Carlo said. “We don’t make system-wide incentive payments.”

Meanwhile, Ryan White money will begin to go to other agencies while AHF’s lawsuit proceeds.

The awards made this week account for about 80 percent of funds available. Most Ryan White funds are distributed once an agency bills the county for services provided.

Parkland received the largest grant with \$3.8 million benefiting mostly outpatient medical care and medical case management.

The largest part of Resource Center’s allocation — more than \$1 million — goes toward its insurance assistance program. The dental program at its Nelson Tebedo Clinic will receive \$488,000.

Almost half of AIDS Arms award is for outpatient medical care while most of the money AIDS Interfaith Network will receive benefits its medical transportation programs.

Most of Legacy Counseling Center’s award is for substance abuse and mental health counseling.

Health Services of North Texas, which operates in Denton and Collin counties but receives its Ryan White money through Dallas County, received more than \$1 million spread over eight service categories from case management to outpatient medical care and insurance assistance. ■



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James Russell Staff Writer | 124

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The politics of the bachelorette party

What does a bi girl drag fan do when planning her bachelorette blast?

I joke all the time about having been raised by drag queens, but it's actually not far from the truth.

After a particularly heinous breakup left me shell-shocked and suddenly single at the starting line of my 20s, one of my best friends talked me into going to Backstreet in Little Rock (and I'm showing my age, because the club now goes by Trinita) to take in my very first official drag show. (I say "official" because I'd seen — and loved — a few scattered performances during Pride week on my college campus, but had never ventured into a club to witness a full-fledged production.)

I figured it couldn't hurt to take a night off of crying into a wine bottle in favor of some glitter, so off I went.

The year was 2009, and the show was predictably magical. I found solace in the sequins and got my life. Ever since then, taking in some drag has been regular part of my routine, whether it's watching (and dissecting) *RuPaul's Drag Race* with friends, drinking too much and getting my life at Gaybingo or grabbing a VIP table for Second Saturday drag nights at The Brick.

It's a hobby that I never thought twice about — until I got engaged ... to a man.

There are all sorts of guilty, messy, conflicting feelings that are par for the course when you're bisexual, but none more so than when you decide to settle down. If you choose a member of the same sex, it means you were actually gay the



THE WEDDINGS ISSUE

whole time! Choose a member of the opposite sex? Just kidding — you're actually a traitor to the cause.

I'm lucky to have so many amazing bisexual men and women to help me talk these feelings through in my coven, because although my identity hasn't changed, the way it is viewed certainly has.



Chaka Cumberbatch
Contributing Columnist

Because like I said, I've been going to drag shows for years, and I've seen more than a handful of bachelorette parties in my time. Before I got engaged, I was dead set against bachelorette parties in gay clubs. Dead

set. I felt it was insensitive at best, and disrespectful at worst.

The ability to marry, especially in the state of Texas, is a luxury for some when it should be a right for all. And I didn't feel like it was fair to

celebrate your impending marriage in an establishment full of people who aren't afforded that same privilege.

Part of me still feels that way. But now that I'm engaged myself, I find myself on the other end of the equation.

Was I really being fair? Is it now wrong for me to celebrate this milestone event in my life at my usual haunts? Am I no longer welcome because I'm marrying a man? Was I ever really welcome at all?

I already read incredibly femme, and my girls do, too; if I bring my bridesmaids to a show, will people treat us like a bunch of dumb straight girls acting like they're at the zoo?

Should I even worry about these things in the first place?

I can't help it either way — being bisexual means having one foot in two worlds at all times, never really certain if you're wanted in either. When my maid of honor — the same friend who brought me to my first show, and is now indoctrinating her 3-year-old with *Drag Race* reruns — asked if I had any preferences for my bachelorette this fall, my natural instinct was to request to see some drag. But now I'm not completely sure.

It's possible I'm thinking too hard about the entire thing, that this is the absolute first of the first world problems, that nobody would really care, that the entire problem lives exclusively in my head. It wouldn't be the first time.

But nothing has been more bittersweet about this engagement than happily planning my wedding while simultaneously having to watch so many of my closest friends get their hopes up about having their unions legally recognized, only to get let down time and time again. I'm painfully aware of how lucky I am to be able to marry the man I love at this specific moment in time, and I want nothing more than to be respectful of the struggles of those who can't.

I don't know if I've settled on an answer for any of my questions — about this issue or about the latest season of *Drag Race*. But the "when in doubt, choose glitter" life strategy I developed in kindergarten has yet to lead me wrong, so I'll probably choose the more sparkly of the two options ... and just omit the gaudy plastic penises.

Party City accessories turn my skin green anyway.

Chaka Cumberbatch is a bisexual writer and cosplayer extraordinaire who frequently freelances for Dallas Voice.



Spitzer's unrealistic expectations

Tea Party darling from Cedar Creek Lake gets amendment passed transferring HIV education funds to abstinence-only sex ed

Anyone surprised by Texas Rep. Dr. Stuart Spitzer's advocacy of abstinence education over HIV/STD public awareness campaigns shouldn't be. And you should expect more of the same from the East Texas legislator who represents much of the Cedar Creek Lake area.

Spitzer won the seat from two-term Republican Rep. Lance Gooden with the support of the Kaufman County Tea Party. His first challenge against Gooden in 2012 failed, but his second challenge, last year, succeeded in large part because he and his supporters portrayed Gooden as a liberal.

Spitzer described himself as a "true conservative," and he touted his marriage and two children as evidence of his strong moral character. A whisper campaign by Spitzer supporters suggested that Gooden, who is 32 and unmarried, might be gay, even though there is no evidence of that.

Gooden, from Terrell in Kaufman County, appeared to be more moderate than his opponent, and he made no public statements about the issue of marriage equality, while Spitzer spoke in favor of "traditional marriage," downsizing the state budget and whatever else the Tea Party wanted to hear.

Spitzer is a member of the First Baptist Church in Kaufman where he is a deacon and Sunday school teacher. At a luncheon in Austin where I sat next to him with another reporter, he pointed out to us that he is a teetotaler as well when he moved a glass of iced tea out of camera range to avoid the possibility of it being mistaken for a cocktail.

Spitzer is a surgeon, and he graduated from Baylor University and the UT Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. On the night of his election to the 83rd Legislature, Spitzer said, "God in his infinite wisdom has chosen to lead us here to this night of victory."

Spitzer, a native of Athens in Henderson County, wasted no time in pursuing his ultraconservative agenda by sponsoring legislation in the Texas House of Representatives diverting \$3 million from the biennial budget from HIV/STD prevention education to abstinence-only sexual education programs. The political newcomer cited his own sexual history as evidence of abstinence being an effective tool in preventing sexually-transmitted disease infections: He said he was a virgin until the age of 29 when he married his wife.

House Democrats fought Spitzer's message, citing statistics showing Texas has the third-highest HIV rate in the nation. They advocated abstinence among teenagers, but they argued against decreasing the budget for prevention methods for teenagers who reject the idea of abstinence.

Spitzer's amendment passed. 97-47.

The Texas Observer and Texas Monthly skewered Spitzer for statements like, "Abstinence is the best way to prevent HIV," and that his ultimate



David Webb
The Rare Reporter

no doubt involve lifelong abstinence supplemented by extensive conversion therapy.

After Spitzer's amendment passed in the House, Texas Monthly reported teen pregnancy is high and HIV cases are increasing in the legislator's district. The publication gave teenage pregnancy rates in District 4 by zip code, and it noted Kaufman County spends \$3.29 million per year on teen pregnancy and Henderson County spends \$2.99 million. The magazine quipped that Spitzer might be practicing abstinence, but lots of teenagers in his district obviously do not.

Spitzer's legislative office issued a press release in the wake of mass media coverage describing the firestorm as "multitudes of misleading attacks being levied by biased media sources and left-leaning blogs across the nation." The press release noted the amendment shifted less than 1 percent of the annual \$191.4 million HIV/STD Awareness Education fund budget to abstinence education, resulting in a 28 percent increase to it.

"It amazes me how visceral the attacks on my family and me have been as a result of this effort, and how misinformed people are as to the effects of our amendment," Spitzer said in the statement.

The lawmaker's work in Austin played well back home in District 4. Athens Daily Review Editor Chad Wilson praised Spitzer in an editorial, and the editor noted that he too had remained a virgin until his marriage.

If Spitzer and Wilson say they remained virgins until their marriages, I will take their word for it. Still, I think expectations that others will follow suit in large enough numbers to decrease incidences of sexually-transmitted diseases to be an unrealistic view of society, especially for a medical professional and a journalist.

Regardless of the criticism Spitzer might have endured from people who are on the front lines fighting HIV and other sexually-transmitted diseases, I imagine the praise he got from his conservative political base in his district more than made up for any sting he might feel from his foes. We no doubt will be hearing much more from Spitzer about issues important to the LGBT community during the rest of the legislative session — and possibly beyond. ■

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.

goal would be for "everyone to be abstinent until they are married."

Spitzer is on record against marriage equality, so it is unclear what he thinks gay and lesbian citizens should do, although we can probably guess. The suggestion would

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The bowl ed and the beautiful

Drag queen-cum-ex-con-Tupperware lady Dixie Longate:
Bringing comedy freshness to North Texas burp by burp

SCOTT HUFFMAN | Contributing Writer

scott_in_dallas@yahoo.com



I think the most popular [misconception] about Tupperware is that it's something that went away," says Dixie Longate, the fiery-spirited alter ego of drag comedian Kris Andersson.

Dixie is talking about the iconic kitchenware brand perhaps known best for its sealable "burping" bowls sold with lifetime warranties. Longate — an "ex-con from the Deep South" — is one of Tupperware's top consultants. She is also colorful evidence that the pioneering direct sales company continues to prosper.

This week, Longate kicked off the return engagement of Dixie's Tupperware Party, her one-woman audience participation show, and she's as honored as a prom queen to be back by popular demand.

"Oh, lord, it's so nice," Longate coos. "It's like, you know, when someone calls you and they say, 'Hey, that sex was so good. Come on, let's do it again.' It's the same thing, but it's like having sex for a month."

Longate promises, despite what images a Tupperware party may evoke, that her fun-filled shows appeal to a demographic far broader than a few blue-haired food storage aficionados.

"A lot of people think it's gonna be little old ladies sitting around talking about bowls," she says. "But I have so many great people coming. And then all these men friends come. Men are smart sometimes. They say, 'I want to go and be where a bunch of ladies are.' And I say, 'Hey, while you're here you might as well look at my legs because Jesus made 'em and they're long.'"

Dixie also gleefully acknowledges that her shows attract a fair share of gay fans — or, as she calls them, "homosectionals."

"Of course, all the homosectionals come," Longate says. "Homosectionals love being in the theater — I don't know why. I think

they get free glitter or something. They are such nice people, and they smell pretty. So it's great."

Longate has hosted her sassy style of Tupperware parties for more than a decade now, and her tireless antics have paid off handsomely. At Tupperware's annual convention — an event known as Jubilee — she has been recognized year after year as one of its top selling consultants. In fact, Longate's enormous success makes it difficult to believe that her introduction to hostessing was pure happenstance.

"I had gotten out of prison and my parole officer said, 'You need some sort of a job to get your kids back,'" Longate recalls.

"And I said, 'I don't want 'em back, because they are sticky and they are gross. They talk to you and you got to feed 'em.' You know, when you have sex with somebody, you don't necessarily have to feed 'em later. But kids you have to feed."

Reluctantly accepting her P.O.'s unwanted advice, Longate attended her first Tupperware party. She found the event surprisingly engaging.

"I had so much fun," she says. "And the drinks were free! That really roped me in. And I said, 'OK, I'm gonna do it!' Within a year I was the top seller in the entire United States and Canada [another word she charmingly mispronounces]."

Perhaps equally surprising to Longate was her transition from home party hostess to off-Broadway star. "A friend of mine said, 'You should take this and put it up on the stage,' and I said, 'You're stupid!' So I did, and it became this whole thing. Then people all around the country said, 'Why don't you put it on my stage?' It has just gotten bigger and bigger. I never even thought. That was 13-and-a-half years ago, and I'm still going strong. Isn't

that crazy?"

Though her show's longevity may have been unexpected, it hardly seems improbable — especially given Longate's uncanny knack for turning life's lemons into lemon-drop martinis.

"You know, there's always things in everybody's past," Longate says. "Even the things that I did bad, I was able to turn them into gold. Listen, I met some of my best friends in prison. Who doesn't need a couple of lesbians in their back pocket to help you out when times are tough and you need to build something? I'm real lucky."

Longate believes the opportunity to meet so many people has been the most rewarding aspect of her flourishing career. Indeed, one of her fondest memories is the chance meeting with a soap opera idol who attended one of her shows.

"This past summer, I was at a theater in Los Angeles and Miss Deidre Hall came to my party. She still looks as good as she did when she was hatched out of the womb. She's so damn pretty. I can't stand it. She came right up to me and said, 'Hi, I'm Deidre Hall.' I've been watching her on *Days of Our Lives* forever!"

If she hadn't found her calling with Tupperware, Longate suspects the glamorous life she enjoys might have been far more ordinary. "My aspirations were never that big," she admits. "I always just thought I'd be in the grocery store saying, 'Hey, the melons are two for one 'cause they've got a little bruise on them. But that's all right. They still taste good in your mouth.'"

Longate is astonished to think there may be some among us who have yet to attend a Tupperware party. She fears those lives must have giant voids in them.

"Well listen, I can fill that hole," Longate promises cheekily. "Come to the Tupperware party!"

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Honeymoon in Hobbiton

JEFTINGLEY | Contributing Writer

It took a year to plan the perfect wedding ...and the adventure of a lifetime

It's only fitting that Dallas couple Scott Cessac and Craig Parsons tied the knot in California.

It's where Parsons proposed to Cessac while cruising down the Pacific Coast Highway, culminating in an elaborate "welcome to your new life" video featuring cameos from filmmaker Del Shores,

Sordid Lives actress Ann Walker (who would later officiate their wedding) and *Chelsea Lately's* Sarah Colonna. More importantly, it was a geographically desirable stopping point before jet-



THE
WEDDINGS
ISSUE

ting off to their dream honeymoon in New Zealand and Fiji. But this "perfect storm" of wedded bliss didn't just come together organically. It was the product of lots and lots of research and planning — almost a full year's worth to be exact.

Building backwards from a post-honeymoon reception for family and friends at the Old Bedford School in Bedford, the duo established a timeline for exactly what had to be accomplished — not just to get married, but to maximize their

two-week honeymoon, much of which they planned to explore via campervan. They also thought through elements that represented their personality and inside jokes that they wanted to incorporate into all the festivities. Scott even took to the Internet to research Texas locations where they could get deep-dive scuba certified in preparation for their time in Fiji.

"Since the [post-honeymoon] party was in December — prime holiday party time — we decided to send out 'save-the-date' info earlier than normal," Parsons says. "We also decided to do a video in the spirit of the proposal video in conjunction with the save the date cards. With a few

friends, we filmed a lip-sync video to Laverne Baker's 'That's All I Need' on the stage of the venue we had rented for the party. We planned for the third video to be filmed the night of the party to make it a trilogy."

In addition to allowing for plenty of lead-time for planning, the couple divided up to-do items based on their own strengths. Parsons, a creative director and graphic designer, handled the website, save the date, invitations, etc. Meanwhile Cesaac, who works as a commercial real estate property manager, handled contracts, travel arrangements and payments. "We were a lean, mean honeymoon-planning machine," Cessac

TRAVEL JUNKIES | The wedding of Scott Cessac, left, and Craig Parsons was as memorable for their honeymoon in Fiji and New Zealand (including the set of 'Lord of the Rings,' opposite) as for their ceremony in L.A. with celebrity officiant Ann Walker.



says with a laugh.

With a plan and timeline firmly in place, the guys then began filling in the details with ideas found online, recommendations from friends on Facebook and some feedback from the New Zealand Tourism website.

"To be completely honest, we really just went with our gut most of the time. We just scoured the Internet-at-large for ideas, but mostly owe all our ideas to Pinterest," says Parsons. "We would just collect images and nuggets of ideas for the invite design, ceremony and reception. It was very fluid and seat-of-our-pants. We mostly did what *we* wanted to do."

After getting Walker to contribute to the proposal video, the guys then took her up on an offer to visit her during her radio show. At that time, they also learned that she was licensed to officiate weddings. It was the perfect fit. A small group of friends attended the wedding in Los Angeles with Walker as the surprise officiant.

Once officially hitched, the couple set off to the other side of the world for a fortnight of eye-opening adventures.

"We did some pretty adventurous things on our honeymoon. We went hiking, black water rafting on an inner tube through a glow worm cave 20 stories below the surface in ice-cold water, and braved a free fall across a 300-meter gorge on the world's biggest swing," says Cessac. "We also explored the Hobbiton set [from the *Lord of the Rings* movies], kayaked at the edge of the Tasman Sea, went scuba diving in the

ocean for the first time, spent 12 days in a campervan together and crossed a couple of scary-looking swing bridges."

Suffice to say, the planning paid off, with only one missed flight (cutting their Fiji stay by one day — but travel insurance saved them nearly \$2,000). For another cost-saving tip, the couple set up a site on Honeyfund.com, which allows friends and family to pitch in on honeymoon experiences.

"We absolutely didn't need presents, and I had heard of others using a funding site specifically for honeymoons before, so we opted to try it. Our theory was that anything friends and family contributed would expand our options in New Zealand and Fiji, but people could decide to contribute or be creative," says Parsons. "In the end, not as many contributed to the site, but it resulted in a very unexpected pattern — many of the gifts we received had a very sweet element of customization or personalization to them. More than one person took our save the date cards and invitations and got crafty with the design elements and our face illustrations."

To bring the journey full circle, they got tickets to San Francisco while in New Zealand so they can return to the scenic spot called Land's End where Parsons first presented Cessac with an engagement ring. They're bringing a collection of small stones gathered throughout New Zealand and Fiji, which they will leave as a reminder of their journey ... and probably inspiration for another couple checking out Pinterest. ■

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the big reveal? Seriously? Was she raised in a barn?

Nov. 30: Speaking of barns, why is everyone having these weirdly specific barn weddings lately? I could not be less interested in throwing any kind of wedding that involves my guests sitting on hay bales for an hour and drinking tepid house wine out of a mason jar, while watching my fiancé and me cycle through eight different unity ceremonies and a Dr. Seuss poem. The whole thing just feels very E-I-E-I-can't.

Nov. 30: So I'm totally registering for a stand mixer, btw. I don't even know if I'll ever use it, but I swear this is my god given Southern Bride right. No man will stop me.

Nov. 30: Fiancé wants to know where we'd put a stand mixer. Told him we'd just have to get a bigger kitchen. Fiancé wants to know what we would use a stand mixer for. Told him we'd come up with something. I don't think he's convinced, but it doesn't matter. **NO MAN WILL STOP ME.**

Diary of a bridezilla

Dallas Voice contributor *Chaka Cumberbatch* — a bisexual woman — got engaged to a man over Thanksgiving. Here are excerpts from the wedding planning diary of a girlie-girl on a mission

Nov. 28: Dear diary: **I'M ENGAGED.** I'm marrying my best friend, we're going to live happily ever after and I'm going to plan the living shit out of this wedding. Years of Say Yes To The Dress marathons have done nothing if not prepare me for this **EXACT MOMENT.**

Nov. 28: #justengaged #justsaidyes #excessiveringsselfies #sorrynotsorry

Nov. 28: So I currently have in my possession every single bridal magazine Barnes and Noble had to offer, along with like four different wedding planning books. I may have actually purchased one of them twice?

Nov. 28: Is it possible to like, teach yourself to be left handed? Because I'm literally doing everything with my left hand now. #ifyoulikeitputaringonit **BYE.**



THE WEDDINGS ISSUE

Nov. 28: This is about to be the most flagrantly basic thing I've ever done, but I wonder what you have to do to get them to write "bride-to-be" on your cup at Starbucks?

Nov. 28: Not much, apparently.

Nov. 29: It's barely been 24 hours and I've already assembled my entire bridal party. We've brainstormed outfits, bachelorette ideas and have three tentative bridal shower themes for the two tentative bridal showers. And my sister has already vetoed a handful of my different dress ideas. We should really harness all this energy into, I don't know, running the country or something when this is all over.

Nov. 29: Did this girl literally just ask me to post a picture of the dresses I'm considering on Facebook? And spoil

Dec. 3: Some barn themed wedding venue just followed me on Instagram, and it looks like it sprung forth from the seventh circle of actual Pinterest hell.

Dec. 10: Set the budget! I'm pretty confident we'll be able to stick to it.

Dec. 12: Called around to price out some venues. Previous budget was delusional.

Dec. 12: And this is the part where I try to win the lottery.

Dec. 15: So I think I want a modern wedding.

Dec. 15: No, wait, I think I want a rustic glam wedding.

Dec. 15: Hang on ... maybe I want an abandoned loft wedding!

Dec. 15: Ooh, that barn is pretty.

Dec. 16: I take back everything I said



about barns.

Dec. 28: My fiancé doesn't think there's a critical difference between blush pink and baby pink and it is threatening this marriage before it's even begun.

Jan. 5: Going to a bridal show today!

Jan. 5: Witnessed an incredibly violent fight over a free wedding dress at the bridal show today!

Jan. 6: All I want right now is to go back in time, to the exact moment when I chose to give out my phone number at the bridal show yesterday, and just alter the course of my life. These vendors are worse than my student loans. #NotTodaySallieMae

Jan. 15: So I'm back to hating barns, I don't know what I was thinking. I was raised by drag queens and my dress alone would completely upstage an entire barn.

Jan. 15: There are actually ... a lot of dresses that I happen to really like. This could become a problem.

Jan. 18: Currently working through the logistics of wearing four dresses on the day of. Beyoncé would do it. And I have the same amount of hours in the day as Beyoncé.

Jan. 25: So this catering menu is prohibitively expensive and has me questioning a lot of my friendships.

Feb. 1: How am I already getting emails from divorce lawyers? That's gross. I was kidding about the whole blush versus baby pink thing. Mostly.

Feb. 12: I'm really not understanding how I am expected to spend hundreds of dollars on flowers that will already have one foot in the grave halfway through my reception. What part of the game is this?

Feb. 23: I think I've picked our venue!


Feb. 24: Or no, wait - I think I like this venue more than that other one.

Feb. 25: ...OK, maybe that barn wedding was cute.

Feb. 26: I take back everything I said about barns. ■

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Freeze frame

Superstar gay wedding photographer Steph Grant shares her ideas on filling your special day filled with a lifetime of memories

A full-time freelancer since 2010, Steph Grant (StephGrantPhotography.com/blog) is perhaps Dallas' most prominent LGBT wedding photographer. Her work has been featured in Curve magazine, the Huffington Post, Cosmopolitan and BuzzFeed, among others. She happily travels all over the country and beyond to shoot weddings as well as corporate events. So when it comes to knowing what to do for a couple looking to preserve their memories, there's no one more savvy.

Grant took some time to give us some insights on the role of a wedding photographer and advice on selecting the best one to document the love and joy of your big day.

—Alicia Chang



Dallas Voice: What's the photographer's role in the process of planning a wedding? Steph Grant: With my clients, I like to be as involved as they'd like with the wedding day schedule. This allows me to give my input as far as lighting and making sure we're not rushed when it comes to things like "first looks" and letting them have a moment after the ceremony to take everything in. Typically, I have found that couples welcome the input. We usually do this planning over cocktails and have a few laughs. I have had clients in the past say that they felt like they not only got a photographer, but also a wedding coordinator and someone to give them hugs when they were nervous. All in a day's work. These couples are more than clients; they end up being life-long friends. I love it!

How would you recommend that couples evaluate photographers when choosing one for their event?

Keep up with them for a while [via their website and social media presences]. See how they interact and talk about their clients, how they tell their stories with their words *and* their images. Look for consistency. This is one of the biggest days of your life, so always do your research. Work with someone who isn't just concerned and coming in day-of-wedding and snapping photos. Work with someone who wants to meet with you, get to know you and your love story so they can properly document it when the day comes. A photographer shouldn't be viewed as someone just taking pictures of the day; I want to be viewed as an artist. I take time with each image not only on the day of your wedding but also in the post-production. In short, work with someone who "gets you."

About how far in advance do you recommend that couples book you for a wedding? What are your busiest months? Least busy?

Just from personal experience, I'd say over a year for sure. I am already booking weddings and events for spring and fall of 2016. My busiest months tend to be September and October, but March was insane! In the fall of 2014, I believe I spent more time in the air than on the ground. I try to keep July open to take a month to myself — for personal projects, reading and pool time. Not only do I photograph weddings but I also photograph a good amount of corporate events around the U.S. and I just launched a side business called Promote Love Movement. So really, there is no such thing as a "least busy month."

What can a couple expect to pay a good photographer for a wedding? And what do you usually include in your wedding packages? I can really only speak for myself here. For us to partner together for your wedding you can expect to pay between \$4,500 to \$10,000. There are leather wedding albums involved for you and your parents, two top-notch photographers, engagement session with brunch, boudoir add-ons and much more.

Did you make a conscious choice to specialize in LGBT weddings? How did that happen? How do you feel about being increasingly known for this particular aspect of your work? Initially, no. Eventually, yes. The backstory is so great. Being a lesbian, it would make sense that I have a slew of lesbian friends. In 2012 I had photographed a couple of them. It wasn't until the summer of 2013 that something completely shifted in my career. I photographed a beautiful lesbian Indian wedding in Los Angeles. Little did I know it was the first lesbian Indian wedding in the U.S. The wedding photos quickly went viral and love spread like wildfire. Within a day, more than 81,000 people visited my website. I was being contacted by Huffington Post, Mashable and BuzzFeed for interviews. Almost two years later these images are *still* circulating. I had a unique opportunity because of this to be working with clients whom I can very easily connect with. I wouldn't change it for a second. I believe that once you ground your life and your career in promoting love, you can do no wrong. ■

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Clinton Thomas Summers and William (Bill) Allen Moore Jr. exchanged vows of matrimony April 4, 2015 in Baltimore, before family and friends. The wedding took place in the gardens of the Pier 5 Harbor Magic Hotel. Ron Corning, ordained by The Universal Life Church, performed the ceremony.

Bill is Founder and Owner of Advanced Skin Fitness. Together Clint and Bill opened Muscle Maker Grill, which is located on Lower Greenville.



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Tuesday 04.14

It's showtime! The camp classic 'Showgirls' gets a running commentary ... live!

It's probably the best terrible movie of all time, and the definition of a camp classic: *Showgirls*. But if you've never seen it — or simply want to see it again with the appropriate commentary — writer/performer David Schmader brings his one-night-only talk-along show to North Texas, a live show of running jokes and observations about the cult phenomenon.

DEETS: Alamo Drafthouse, 100 Central Expressway, Richardson. 7 p.m. \$12. Drafthouse.com/dfw.

Sunday 04.12



TCA home tour Sunday shows you life in the clouds

The annual Turtle Creek Association Home Tour gives you the opportunity to live vicariously through the lives of the well-heeled, as six high-rise residences — including condos at The Vendome, The Warrington, The Claridge and 4011 Turtle Creek — open their doors to looky-loos to see how the other half lives. There's even an optional after-party to rub elbows with other lovers of living well.

DEETS: Visit TurtleCreekAssociation.org to see the tour schedule and where to park and start your tour. 1–5 p.m. \$60–\$125.



LIFE+STYLE

best bets

Seeing 'Red' at Stage West

To some, modern artist Mark Rothko's works were just splotches of unwieldy color, but how he influenced — and was influenced by — other artists in capturing emotion goes much deeper ... for him and his protege, especially as he works on a challenging commission for the Four Seasons restaurant in NYC. Gay playwright John Logan won a Tony for *Red*, his investigation into the creative process and how it affects those around him, with Jim Covault as Rothko and Nate Davis as his assistant Ken.

DEETS: Stage West, 821 E. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. April 9–May 10. StageWest.org.

Friday 04.10



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ARTSWEEK

THEATER

Shoe Confessions. A staged reading of a new play about a shoe obsession. Presented by WingSpan Theatre Co. Directed by Marianne Galloway. With Catherine DuBord, Lulu Ward. Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Drive. April 10–11. 7:30 p.m.

Colossal. A new play about football, centered on a gay University of Texas player who suffers a spinal injury. Directed by Kevin Moriarty. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through May 3. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

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. StageWest.org.

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

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

Fellowship! The Musical Parody of the Fellowship of the Ring. A campy musical twist on the Tolkien novel. Theare Too space at Theatre 3, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. *Final weekend.* 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 Flora St. Through April 19. TicketDFW.com.

The Illusionists. Elaborate stage magic performance. Fair Park Music Hall, 901 First Ave. Through April 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. *Final weekend.* Undermain Theatre, 3200 Main St. Undermain.org.

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

OPERA

lolanta. Tchaikovsky's rarely-staged fairy tale, an enchanting one-act opera staged by Christian Rath and conducted by Emmanuel Villaume. This production closes the Dallas Opera's 2014–15 season. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. April 10, 15 and 18 at 7:30 p.m., April 12 matinee at 2 p.m. DallasOpera.org.

COMEDY

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

FINE ART

What's Up Doc? The Animation Art of Chuck Jones. A exhibit celebrating the iconic cartoons of the 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 (Large and Small). A collection of smaller sculptures. ilume Gallerie, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Ste. 107. Through April 25. ilumeGallerie.com.

Ronald Radwanski. New works. Opening night artist's



HOTEL HELL | The new play 'Hotel California' continues to run at Addison's Stone Cottage Theatre.

reception benefits the Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund. ilume Gallerie, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Ste. 107. April 11–May 9. ilumeGallerie.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.

FESTIVAL

Scarborough Renaissance Festival. The annual trip to Medieval Europe, including dancers, musicians, food, crafts and cosplayers. Faire Grounds, FM 66,

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Waxahachie. Through May 25 (weekends), 10 a.m.–7 p.m. \$25. SRFestival.com.

streets of Venice. 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.

SATURDAY 04.11

COUNSELING

Hold Me Tight: Couples Retreat for Marriage Preparation and Relationship Enhancement.

Therapists Randy Martin and Carolyn Solis lead this day-long session. Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St. 9 a.m.–4 p.m. \$200/person.

MONDAY 04.13

BROADCAST

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

TUESDAY 04.14

FILM

Don't Look Know. Director Nicolas Roeg's eerie meditation on loss and obsession, about a couple who lost their daughter but are haunted by a vision of her in

WEDNESDAY 04.15

COMMUNITY

Fairway to Equality Happy Hour. Human Rights Campaign's DFW chapter hosts this mixer kicking off the 20th annual benefit golf tournament. Cedar Springs Tap House, 4123 Cedar Springs Road. 6–8:30 p.m.

this week's solution

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My Gay
HOUSTON 5 YEAR ANNIV

Billy Masters

Jarec Wentworth pulls a boner; Jussie Smollett shows one!

The big story I've been researching for a few weeks is about a gay porn star who was blackmailing a former client. The porn boy in question is **Teofil Brank**, who films as **Jarec Wentworth**, pictured. Allegedly, Brank was threatening to disclose damaging information about his wealthy client. On Feb. 16 and 17, the client wired him \$500K and gave him his Audi R8 (worth \$180K). But that wasn't enough for Brank. Oh no, he got greedy. On March 3, he sent more demands via text message. "I want a condo here in LA. Bachelor pad. You have a taste I like. 2 bed Max. Prefer one [He's not *that* greedy]. I want 300,000 cash." Then he dropped the condo idea. He'd settle for \$1 million in cash and the car's title.

At that point, the victim went to the FBI, accompanied by an attorney. A sting was setup where Brank was going to meet the guy at The Grove in L.A. to pick up the cash and the title. Then the place was changed to a Starbucks in El Segundo (much more discrete). That's when FBI agents arrested him. The feds noticed someone watching from a Ford hatchback. That was **Etienne Yim**, a friend from whom Brank bummed a ride (because, apparently, he didn't want to bring the Audi to El Segundo). Brank also asked Yim to bring along a gun: a loaded .357 Magnum with six extra rounds of ammunition. Once the FBI found *that*, Yim sang like a canary. He told them where the Audi was parked, where Brank had deposited the money and about their plan to fly to Eu-

rope. Brank has been denied bail and is considered a flight risk, even though all his money and accounts have been seized. If convicted, he faces up to 15 years in prison. On the positive side, he might find his soul mate ... or at the very least, his cellmate.

In an interesting twist, Brank's lawyer pointed out that the "victim" may have had sexual encounters with underage individuals, which would be a criminal act. In one of his text messages, Brank refers to procuring boys for the client. Given these circumstances, the judge ruled that the man could be identified publicly. Alas, he's not a famous actor or a billionaire with name recognition. He's **Donald Burns**, co-founder and chairman of MagicJack. Although Don appears to have a significant other, he's also been seen squiring Sean Cody model **Ashton** aka **MacKinzie Amadon**. The twosome have been photographed at some pretty high profile (and private) events.

Former Dallas Cowboys recruit and native Texan **Michael Sam** has been pulling double duty lately — appearing on *Dancing with the Stars* and training for the NFL's Veteran Combine. Alas, this week he was voted off *DWTS* and didn't get any offers out of the combine, but all is not lost. The Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football League think they have a shot at signing him. Because when I think of great football teams, I think of the Gentile Alouettes.

Elton John's mother recently celebrated her 90th birthday ... complete with an Elton John impersonator! Where was her famous son? Turns out, they aren't on speaking terms. "Yes, it's seven years now in June. But you know, I've got used to it. And it was all so stupid — so petty," she says. According to Mom, it started when Elton asked her to cut off contact with two longtime friends who he no longer speaks to. "I told him, 'I'm not about to do that and

drop them. Bob is like a son to me. He has always been marvelous to me and he lives nearby and keeps an eye on me.' Then to my utter amazement, he told me he hated me. And he then banged the phone down. Imagine! To me, his mother!" Ah, but there's more to the story: "He told me that I thought more of **Bob Halley** than I did of my own son. And to that I said to him, 'And you think more of that fucking thing you married than your own mother!'" And therein lies the real issue: She seems to have a very low opinion of **David Furnish**. "Everyone who used to be invited to the parties doesn't get invited anymore ... and we know who is behind that." *Sigh* — a story as old as time.

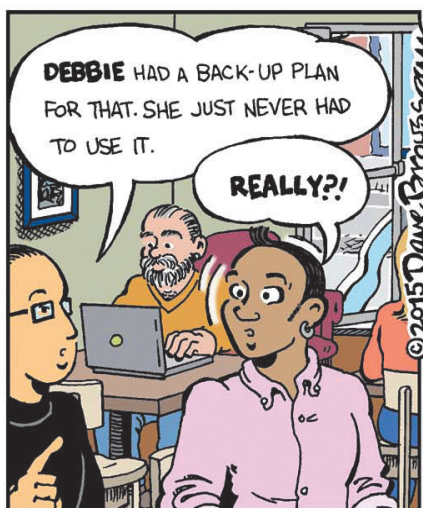
Speaking of parties, everyone always asks me where the next big party is. That would be Jeffrey Sanker's White Party April 24-27 in Palm Springs, the party where I inaugurated interviewing the fit and fabulous on the white carpet. Check out



e-mail: acoupleofguys@qsyndicate.com



www.facebook.com/acoupleofguys



JeffreySanker.com for more details. Although I won't be in Palm Springs, I will make it to Orlando June 2-8 for Gay Days and the 25th anniversary of One Magical Weekend. (You can find info at GayDays.com and at OneMagicalWeekend.com.) Next on my dance card is July 4th in Provincetown.

Fasten your seatbelts, it's time for another installment of *Fayewatch*. In news I can hardly believe, it's been announced that **Faye Dunaway** is writing a book about her experiences making *Mommie Dearest*! Yes, she's now going to cash in on the movie that she claims ruined her career and is the bane of her existence. I was sure this had to be an April Fool's joke, because you know what a scamp Faye is. But this appears to be legit: She's signed a deal with Dey Street Books. I'll believe it when I see it.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Randall in Dallas: *I discovered Empire because of you. I read online that there are nude photos of Jussie Smollett. True? He's so hot.*

There are indeed. Back in 2010, Jussie was making the transition from child star and nude photos somehow surfaced. At the time, nobody paid much attention to them, although they were certainly memorable. You see, Jussie is ... how shall we say it ... hung like a tyrannosaurus rex. And his ass ain't so bad, either. You can check out every inch — and we're talking double digits here — at BillyMasters.com.

When Jussie could have a hit singing about his own "Anaconda," it's definitely time to end yet another column. Unlike that infamous pizzeria, I am happy to serve anyone — like that porn star/hooker, I can be bought. If you'd like to find out how much it would cost, email me, and I promise to get back to you before MagicJack merges with FleshJack!

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

Have a question for Billy? Send an email to him at Billy@BillyMasters.com.



Alexia Heart, above, and Brent with Collected Comics and Games in Fort Worth were among those in Austin last weekend for HavenCon, the convention for LGBT geeks and gamers.



Looking for parking for a night out on The Strip.



Making the **SCENE** the week of **April 10-16**:

Alexandre's: **Walter Lee** at 10 p.m. on Friday. **Londée** at 10 p.m. on Saturday. **Chris Chism** at 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday. **Liz Mikel** at 9 p.m. on Thursday.

Best Friends Club: **Korina Duvall** hosts **Drag Bingo** at 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Brick/Joe's: **RuPaul** drag show with **Jiggly**, **Ongina**, **Mystique Summers** and **Kennedy Davenport** on Saturday night and Sunday brunch. Monday night karaoke finals right after watching **Rupaul's Drag Race** with **Kennedy**.

Changes: **Cowtown Leathermen** meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday. **Fort Worth Treehouse** meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

Club Reflection: **Cowtown Leathermen** cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday. **Wall of Food** show at 8 p.m. on Thursday.

Dallas Eagle: Celebrates its 20th anniversary this weekend. **National Leather Association** club night on Saturday. Annual **Dirty Bird Awards** at 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Havana: **Nicky Lauren** on Wednesday with DJ **Nonsense**, **Big Happy** and **Andrea Lariz**.

JR.'s Bar & Grill: **Extra Innings** on Sunday. **Cassie's Freak Show** on Monday.

Mable Peabody's: **Glitterbomb**, a queer variety show at 10 p.m. on Thursday.

Round-Up Saloon: **King of the Rodeo** at 7 p.m. on Sunday benefits **TGRA** and **Texas Tradition Sponsorship**.

S4: **Purple Spin Party** on Friday.

Sue Ellen's: **Chaz Marie** on Friday. **Chix** on Saturday. **Kathy and Bella** at 3 p.m. and **Bad Habits** at 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Caven Enterprises Benevolent Association poker tournament on Monday.

Woody's Sports & Video Bar: **Dallas Woody's Saints** softball **Extra Innings** from 4-7 p.m. on Sunday. **The Big D Talent Contest** preliminary hosted by **Jada Fox** at 8 p.m. on Thursday. ■

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




Girls' night out at Alexandre's.



Michael, Travis and Dustin at Woody's Sports & Video Bar.



Kennedy, Ronnie and Willam at The Brick/Joe's.



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Girls' night out at Sue Ellen's.



Jody gets his Easter on on The Strip.



Dancer at TMC:The Mining Company.



Rey and Shane at The Round Up Saloon.



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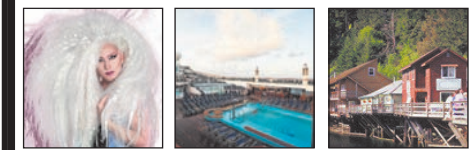
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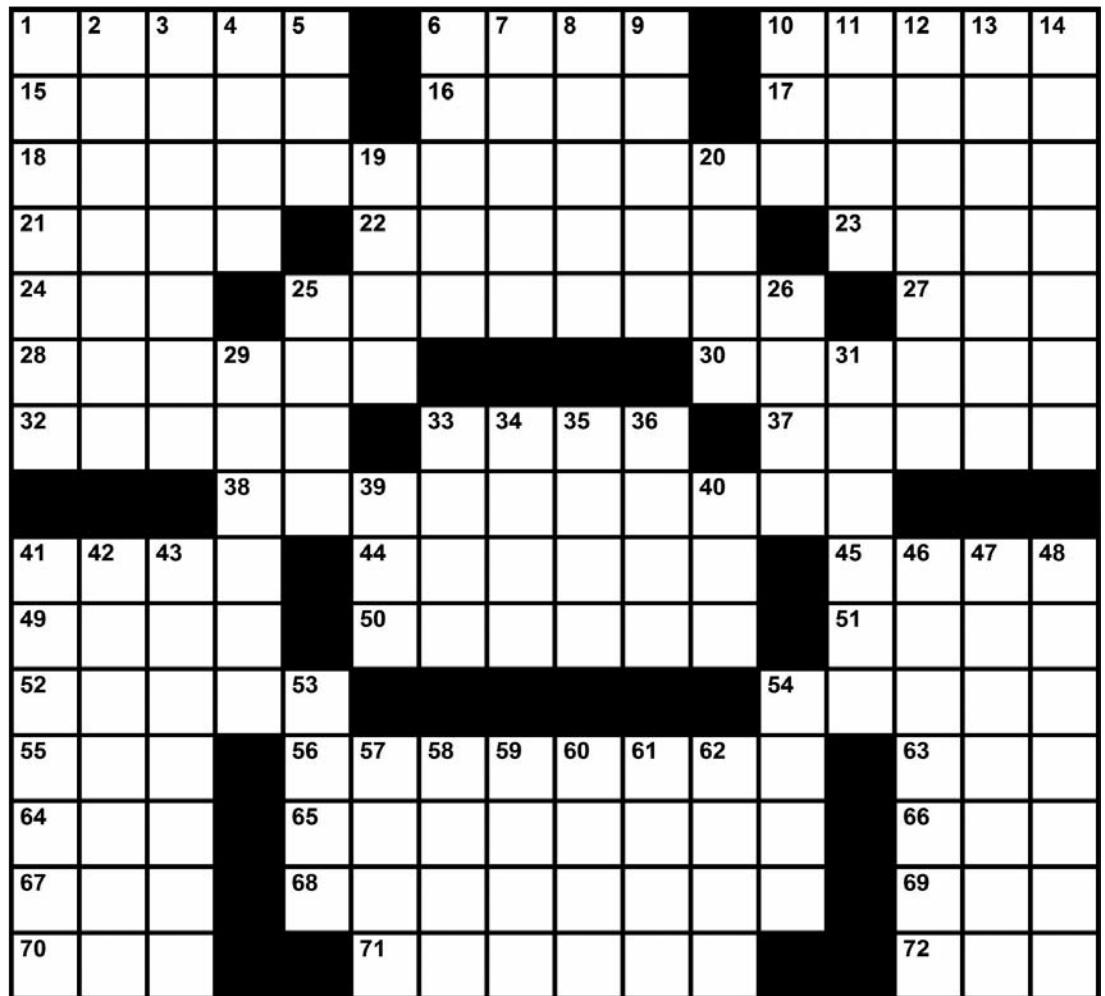
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Sign of the Times

tSolution on page 33

Across

- 1 Race site in Auden's land
- 6 Express pleasure orally
- 10 *Rat Bohemia* author Schulman
- 15 Dutch resort isle
- 16 Painter Bonheur
- 17 Board material
- 18 What they call discrimination in Indiana
- 21 Test the weight of
- 22 "There ___ be a law!" (anti-gay motto of Indiana?)
- 23 Coldcock
- 24 Gasteyer of *SNL*
- 25 While you're doing it
- 27 Arkansas Gov. Hutchinson
- 28 Layer of some balls
- 30 Journalist Ted
- 32 River of Auden's land
- 33 Pioneer automaker
- 37 Twenty Questions turn
- 38 With 56-Across, sign in the window of any place that discriminates, per *SNL*
- 41 Start to pea?
- 44 Stonewall Jackson, and others
- 45 Montagues and Capulets, e.g.
- 49 Assholes
- 50 Begins to take notice
- 51 ___ *Enchanted*

- 52 Roundup rope
- 54 Moo juice source
- 55 Says, "Let's do it!"
- 56 See 38-Across
- 63 McCullers' *Ballad of the ___ Cafe*
- 64 Cup material
- 65 Signs of using a rubber?
- 66 Singer Di Franco
- 67 Islands instrument
- 68 Way to get a bone up?
- 69 Creepy Chaney
- 70 Former Russian orbiter
- 71 Felt in one's bones
- 72 Three of Napoli

Down

- 1 Swank, in a 2009 flick
- 2 Peacock, e.g.
- 3 Ingredient in dye or fertilizer
- 4 Memorial column
- 5 *The Advocate*, briefly
- 6 Tile surround
- 7 Type of trade
- 8 Question about a cross-dresser, perhaps
- 9 1993 treaty acronym
- 10 Get a load of
- 11 City north of Des Moines
- 12 Bureaucratic tangle
- 13 Makes moist or hard
- 14 Pew books at Metropolitan Community Church
- 19 Burial site of Macbeth
- 20 Place for pool players' balls
- 25 ___ *The Woods*
- 26 Deli request
- 29 Take into the body
- 31 Did not wait to exhale?
- 33 R.E.M.'s "The ___ Love"
- 34 Target of discrimination in Indiana
- 35 Buck's mates
- 36 George Takei's role on *Star Trek*
- 39 Apr. 15 letters
- 40 Cooking meas.
- 41 Package pouch
- 42 Beach of Bette's home state
- 43 *AIDS: Profile of an Epidemic* narrator
- 46 Aging first mate, perhaps
- 47 She loved Franklin and Lorena
- 48 Tin fish
- 53 In the sack
- 54 Cold War rival of the USA
- 57 Creator of Sal Mineo's *Exodus* character
- 58 Letter enc.
- 59 "The doctor ___"
- 60 Whoopi and others in *Sister Act*
- 61 Follies costume designer
- 62 Rank Mauresmo, e.g.

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