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The Premier Media Source for LGBT Texans | Established 1984 | Volume 32 | Issue 20 | FREE | Friday, September 25, 2015



A Good Shepherd

Fort Worth's Celebration Community Church honors Pastor Carol West

by James Russell, Page 8



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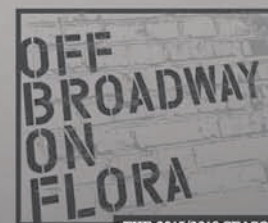
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The Rev. Carol West, photographed by Tammye Nash
Design by Kevin Thomas



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Blake suffered numerous injuries when he was attacked after the Pride Parade Sunday.

Hate crime victim overwhelmed by support from community

A fundraising page, GoFundMe.com/er4rfdg, has been started for Blake, the man who was attacked on Wycliff Avenue after the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade last Sunday, Sept. 20. Blake has asked that only his first name is used in media reports until the men who assaulted him have been caught.

Blake said he spent 24 hours in the hospital and needed 40 stitches on his face to repair the injuries inflicted in the attack. Fortunately, he is expected to fully recover.

The GoFundMe page set up by his friends should cover his hospital bills from Sunday night. Donors covered the \$3,000 initially requested to cover the emergency hospitalization within the first 24 hours after the page was set up. The total so far doesn't cover the additional expenses Blake will face while he recovers.

In a correction to the original story, Blake said he was on a side street near Cedar Springs when one man hit him from behind with a baseball bat, while two others began kicking him. Because he was temporarily blinded by the attack with the bat, he was unable to give a clear description of his attackers.

He was then thrown in the assailants' car and driven to the intersection of Wycliff and Sylvester streets, a few blocks away, where he was dumped on the street in a pool of blood. The attackers took his cell phone, but not his wallet or money. While laying in the street, Blake said he was able to call for help before going unconscious. Someone from one of the neighboring houses called 911.

An ambulance transported him to Parkland Hospital, and, Blake said, "The whole team there was great." He has followup appointments with his doctors next week.

Because the attack happened after the Pride parade and because of anti-gay language used during the attack, police are investigating the assault as a hate crime.

Blake just moved to Dallas a few weeks ago and was supposed to have a final job interview on Monday. He was able to postpone the interview until he recovers.

Rather than focusing on the attack, he said he's been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from the LGBT community, the Dallas Democratic Party and the community in general.

— David Taffet

Joel Fitzgerald named new Fort Worth police chief

Joel Fitzgerald, head of the Allentown, Pa. police department since 2013, the third-largest municipal police department in Pennsylvania, has been selected as the new Fort Worth police chief, succeeding Jeff Halstead.

He is slated to receive the 2015 Champion of Equality Award from the Bradbury-Sullivan Center, a LGBT community center in Allentown, on Oct. 11 for requiring a LGBT cultural competency training for all police officers and "an impressive policy" regarding police interaction with transgender individuals.

He is expected to begin work in Fort Worth on Oct. 19.

— James Russell

Dallas could jeopardize perfect MEI score by announcing it early

Dallas received a preliminary perfect score of 100 on the Municipal Equality Index, but could jeopardize that score by announcing it early.

The MEI is not released until November, but after City Council received the new scores on Monday, Sept. 21, Dallas Morning News and Dallas Observer ran with it.

The Human Rights Campaign, which administers the MEI, distributes preliminary scores in advance to cities across the country so that employees and LGBT groups could review and comment ahead of publication.

Scores were adjusted to account for changes stemming from the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on marriage equality. Without Texas blocking Dallas from being the city it wanted to be, the MEI score became 96. Additional recognition, including sponsoring the Coalition for Aging LGBT's conference, appointing the group's Cannon Flowers to the LGBT Task Force, formation of a new employee resource group and recognition of the task force gave Dallas an additional four points.

The only other city with a score of 100 is Austin. Of course, publishing this information could give Dallas a penalty. Even a one-point penalty puts Dallas behind Austin but it still means we are one of the most inclusive cities in the country.

— David Taffet

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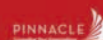
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THE GAY AGENDA

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

214-521-1278. For more information call or e-mail Candy Marcum at 214-521-1278 or candy@candymarcum.com.

SEPTEMBER

• **Weekly: Lambda Weekly** every Sunday at 1 p.m. on 89.3 KNON-FM; **United Black Ellument** hosts discussion on HIV/AIDS in the black community at 7 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month at 3116 Commerce St., Suite C; **Fuse** game night every Monday evening but 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. For more information call or e-mail Ruben Ramirez at 214-540-4500 or rramirez@myresourcecenter.org.

• **Sept. 25: Resource Center 5 Factor Awards**
Annual celebration of five Resource Center volunteers from 7-9 p.m. at 7 for Parties, 150 Turtle Creek Blvd., #107, with appetizers, wine and entertainment. \$50 per person. For more information, including sponsor opportunities, visit Myresourcecenter.org/5factor.

• **Sept. 26: Greater Dallas Walk to End Alzheimer's**
Alzheimer's Association of Greater Dallas hosts its annual three-mile walk at 9 a.m. at AT&T Plaza at the American Airlines Center, 2500 Victory Ave. Day-of registration begins at 7 a.m. followed by 8:30 a.m. ceremony. To register visit Bit.ly/1U3ZlbZ. For more information contact Erica Goldberg at 214-540-2412 or er Goldberg@alz.org.

• **Sept. 25-26: Couple Communication Workshop**
Candy Marcum, LPC and Jimmy Owen, LPC conduct a two-weekend workshop for couples. 5-7 p.m. on Sept. 25 and Oct. 2 and 10 a.m.-noon on Sept. 26 and Oct. 3 at 3500 Oak Lawn Ave., Suite 260. \$440 per couple includes two workbooks and eight hours of instruction.

• **Sept. 26: Dallas-Fort Worth Gay for Good Volunteer Project**
DFW Gay For Good's monthly volunteer project meets from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. to

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Miley is a spayed Australian cattle dog mix estimated to be about four years old. She has a salt-and-pepper coat. Her Dallas Animal Services ID number is A904457.



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**Alex Sanchez to speak
at Fort Worth Public Library**

Alex Sanchez, the critically acclaimed and openly gay author of eight award-winning young adult books, including *Rainbow Boys*, speaks about growing up gay, and emigrating from Mexico to Texas at a book signing at Fort Worth Public Library, 500 W. 3rd, Fort Worth. Tickets are free. For more information, contact 817-392-6012 or TeenScene@fortworthtexas.gov. (HitzPhoto.com)



prepare the science garden and paint exterior doors at Lee Elementary School, 2911 Delmar Ave. Register at Bit.ly/1OuQ1ue. Lunch follows at Libertine Bar, 2101 Greenville Ave. For more information contact Rob Peters at 781-472-0745 or robpeters70@gmail.com.

**• Sept. 27: Gay Author Alex Sanchez Speaks
at Fort Worth Public Library**

The critically acclaimed author of eight award-winning young adult books speaks about growing up gay, emigrating from Mexico to Texas and signs books at Fort Worth Public Library, 500 W. 3rd, Fort Worth. Tickets are free. For more information, contact 817-392-6012 or TeenScene@fortworthtexas.gov.

• Sept. 29: Transgender 201: Beyond Jenner
Dallas Stonewall Young Democrats host workshop to discuss transgender issues from 7-9 p.m. at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Rd. A \$100 Starbucks gift card will be raffled. For more information contact Scott Payne at board@dtsyd.org.

**• Sept. 30: Tarrant County
Gay Pride Week Kick-off**
Kick-off for Tarrant County Gay Pride with Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price at Trinity Park Arts Pavilion, 2401 University Dr., Fort Worth.

OCTOBER.

**• Oct. 1: Trans Pride Initiative Board
Meeting**

Open to the public. 6:30 p.m. at Brazos Room, Center for Community Cooperation, 2900 Live Oak St. For more information e-mail Nell Gaither at nell@tpride.org.

• Oct. 1: Fort Worth PFLAG Meeting
Meets every first Thursday of the month from

7-9 p.m. at First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1959 Sandy Lane, Fort Worth. For more information, call 817-428-2329 or visit PflagFortWorth.org.

• Oct. 2: Fort Worth Teen Pride

Youth and young adult event includes free food, entertainment, drag show, prizes and more from 6-10 p.m. at Agape MCC, 4615 E. California Parkway, Fort Worth. Free for teenagers 13-18 with valid ID. \$5 suggested donation for accompanying adults. For more information contact info@RLC365.org or LGBTQ Saves@gmail.com.

**• Oct. 2: Brandon Michael Fugate
Memorial Golf Tournament**

Golf tournament benefits The BMF Project for Search and Rescue, which provides funds and resources for search and rescue agencies and provides emotional support for families during the process from noon-6 p.m. Tee off at 1:30 p.m. and dinner at 6 p.m. at Riverchase Golf Course, 700 Riverchase Dr., Coppell. \$100 before Sept. 28 or \$125 after. For more information and to register online visit Thebmfproject.org.

**• Oct. 3: DFW Trans Ladies Monthly
Meeting**

Meets from 7-8:30 p.m. on the first Saturday of every month at Agape MCC, 4615 E. California Parkway, Fort Worth. For more information, email info@dfwtgladies.org or visit DFWTGLadies.org.

**• Oct. 3: Tarrant County Pride Parade
and Street Festival**

Parade begins at noon in downtown Fort Worth followed by a street festival until 6 p.m. at Main Street and 9th Street featuring live entertainment, vendors, and food.

FROM DIRECTOR ROLAND EMMERICH
AND WRITER JON ROBIN BAITZ

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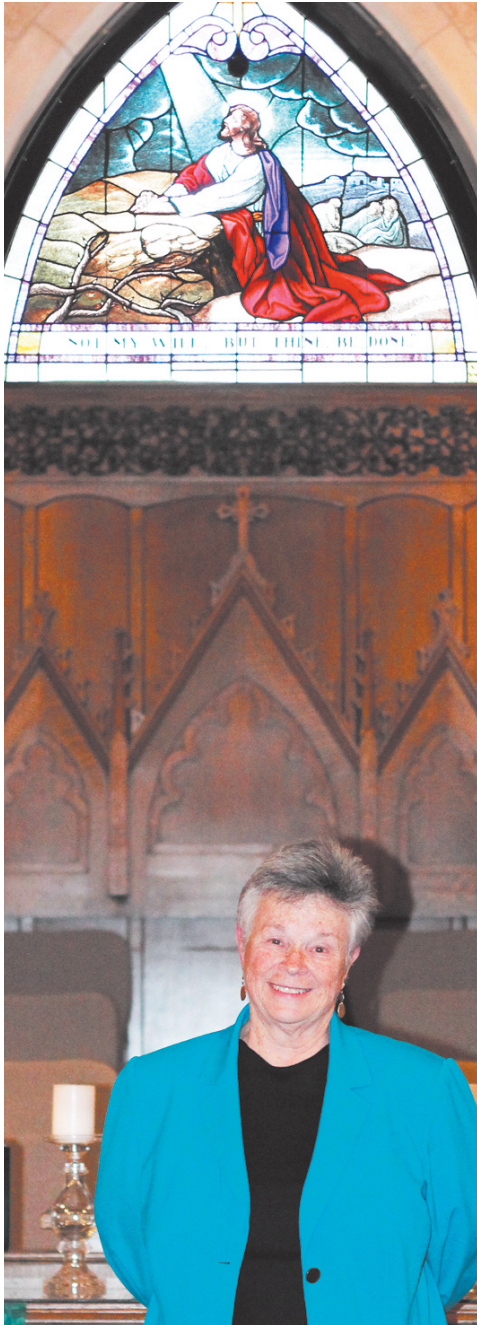
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The Good Shepherd

The Rev. Carol West is Celebration Community Church's first and only senior pastor, and now the church is saying thank you for her years of service



The Rev. Carol West is proud of Celebration Community Church's sanctuary, which dates back 100 years. (Tammye Nash/Dallas Voice)

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

Wednesdays are fellowship night at Fort Worth's Celebration Community Church, the largest LGBT and allied nondenominational church in Tarrant County. It's always packed on Wednesdays.

That says something for a church founded in 1993 as a satellite campus of White Rock Community Church in Dallas. The 35-member congregation grew fast enough that it quickly became its own church.

In May 1998, the growing congregation rented space at 908 Pennsylvania Ave. At the time the property was still owned by St. John's Evangelical and Reform Church, founded by German immigrants in 1882.

After a membership spike, the historic church located on the city's Near Southside since 1915 saw its membership dwindle, and St. John's merged with First Congregational Church in west Fort Worth in 1999.

Meanwhile, Celebration was growing. It needed more space as its programming grew. The church was so successful that the congregation decided to hire its first full-time pastor, and called West to lead the flock.

When the board voted to purchase the building, the Rev. West stepped up to the challenge of raising money. But she didn't seize the pulpit and threaten hellfire and brimstone on those who didn't donate. Instead, she led by example, entering a 10K fun run to raise \$50,000 for a down payment. She raised double that amount.

For the past 17 years, Celebration has continued to grow, and once again, the church needs more space. Members and staff agree it's all because of the leadership of their founding pastor.

To honor her service to the church — and to the greater North Texas LGBT community — the board decided to name its new community center for West. Not only will the Rev. Carol West Community Center create the first permanent LGBT community center in Tarrant County, it will also be the first facility named for an out lesbian in Tarrant County, according to a review of Tarrant County historical records.

(Van Cliburn Recital Hall, named for the late pianist, is the first facility in the county named for an out LGBT person.)

The decision to name the community center for West was unanimous.

"When the board told me, I was surprised," West said. She was just as surprised when told by the Dallas Voice it is the first building named for an out lesbian in the county.

When completed, Celebration will have more gathering spaces for congregants after worship services, additional parking spaces and a columbarium for members who wish to be buried on the church's property.

West may have been surprised, but the Rev. Lisetta Thomas was not. Thomas, who has worked with West for 15 years, described West as perceptive, politically aware and spiritually grounded.

"I have a seminary education, but she has taught me things you don't learn in seminary," Thomas said. "She has the ability to convey wisdom in a tangible way for others."

Indeed, in a time where church attendance across the country has plummeted, Celebration has seen its membership swell to 650 members.

"[It has grown] because she knew from the start what was necessary to build the church. She had a vision and made it happen," Thomas said. "Not everyone has that ability."

Spiritual, but not religious

West's path to pastor of Celebration was paved in part by the AIDS crisis. Before joining Celebration, she was trained, ordained and worked for what was the Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas, now Cathedral of Hope.

She didn't grow up spiritual however. Raised in Irving by "liberal and open-minded" parents, West said she only sporadically attended church services.

"They really didn't attend after they got married. We'd occasionally go to a Methodist church and visit churches of other denominations," she recalled.

After obtaining an undergraduate degree from University of North Texas, then North Texas State University, in Denton and graduate degree from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, West taught English at Irving High School for 20 years. Around that same time, she began attending a small MCC fellowship in Fort Worth.

It was the 1970s, and being gay and Christian wasn't exactly welcomed by most denominations.

"[The MCC] was a wonderful experience. I felt like a hypocrite [attending other churches then] because you were told you couldn't be LGBT and Christian," West said.

MCC was wonderful enough, in fact, that she decided to pursue ordination. At the time, MCC-Dallas was the region's go-to church with a LGBT outreach. She trained as a student clergy member and was ordained under the Rev. Michael Piazza.

"I was the first woman ordained under Piazza," she said.

But West didn't have time to recognize her historic moment; the AIDS crisis was at its peak and the congregation was dying off.

Student clergy members weren't permitted to conduct services, but they could do funerals.

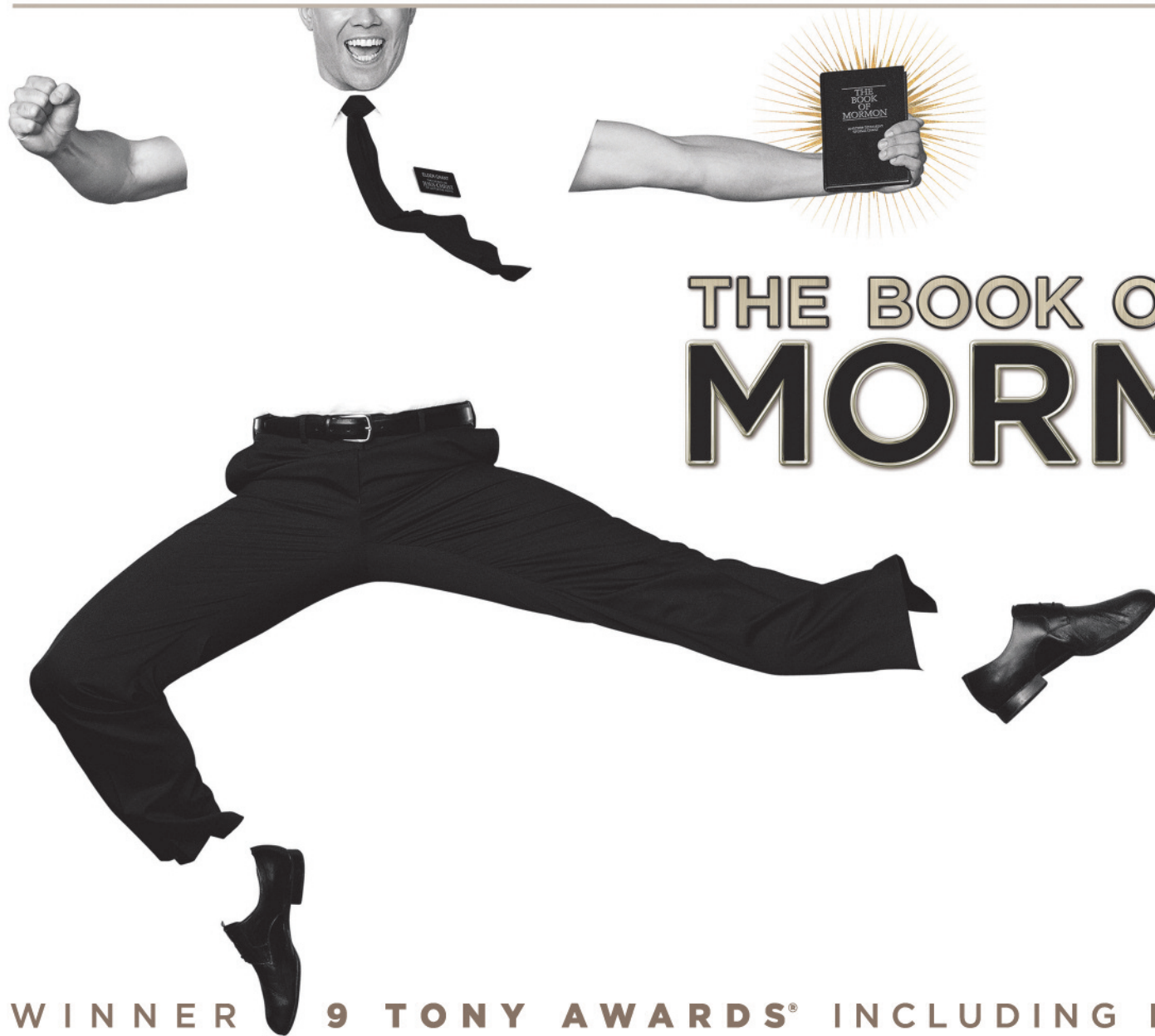
"The MCC was the only church doing funerals" for those who had died of AIDS, West recalled. Even after she was ordained, she continued to conduct funerals, basically a necessity for any clergy member ordained by the MCC.

But she also took on a special role: she was the church's AIDS chaplain, making hospital and home and hospice visits that few others would make at the time. Nurses and doctors wouldn't even deliver meals to patients, West said. Those trays were placed outside of a patient's room.

West gets why people are still horrified by the inhumane treatment toward those dying from the disease that was initially called GRID, or gay-related immune deficiency. Still, she said, "[People didn't respond] out of meanness but fear, because they didn't know its origins."

But the crisis also often brought out the best in many people. Some parents of young men with AIDS wound up attending MCC-Dallas. Gaining their support during a volatile time brought peo-

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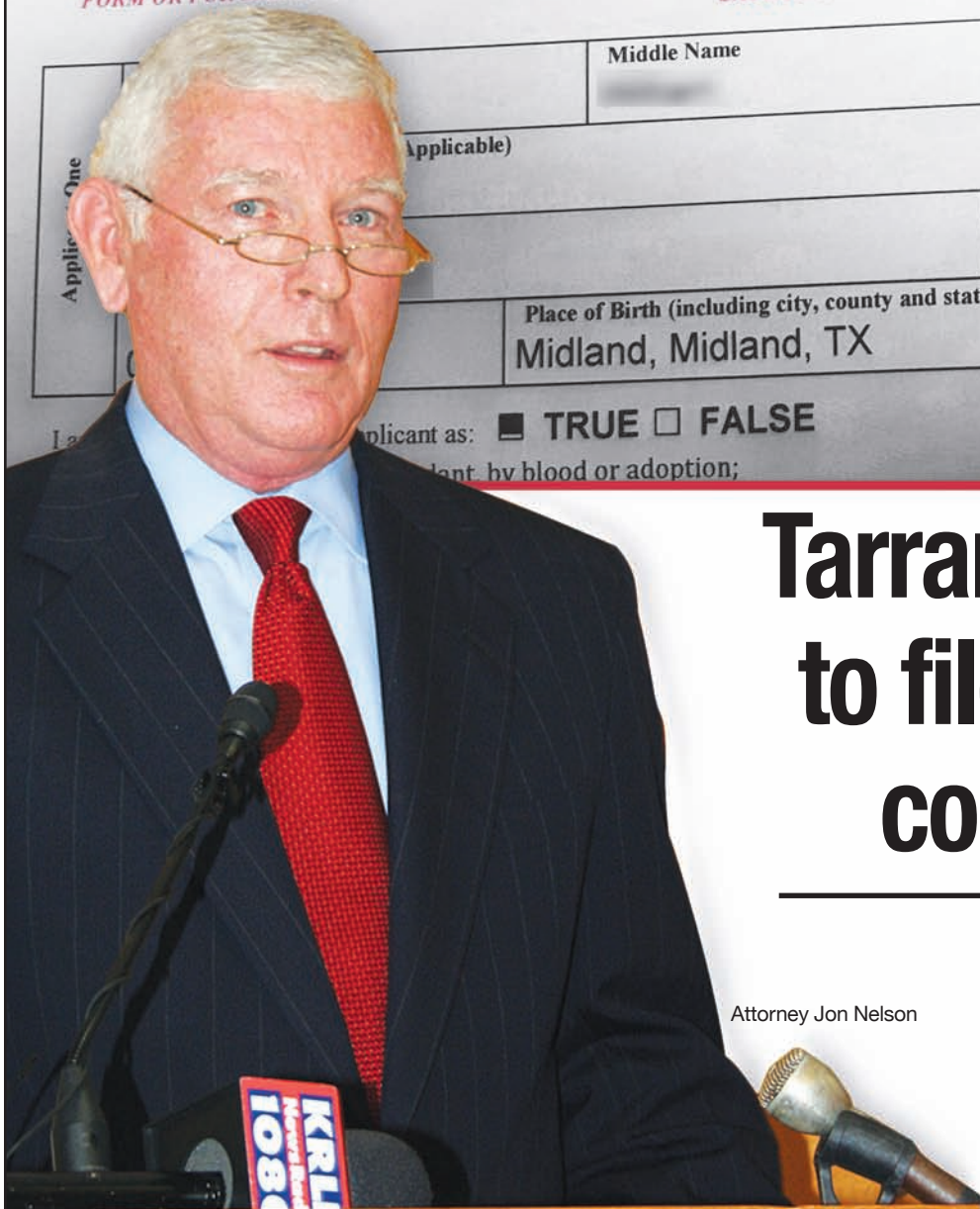


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Attorney Jon Nelson

Tarrant County Clerk refuses to file a same-sex couple's common law marriage

At Arlington sub-courthouse, a clerk is told to only accept documents that date the marriage as of June 26

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

A gay couple trying to file an affidavit of common-law marriage with Tarrant County say they were stopped by a clerk at the Arlington Sub-Courthouse, who refused to accept the filing.

The men, who asked not to be identified at this time, have been together 23 years. The Texas common-law marriage code allows a couple who has presented itself as married to file a common-law

claim rather than applying for a marriage license.

The clerk at the Tarrant County office, reportedly acting under instruction from someone else, would only accept the document if the men changed the date to June 26, 2015.

Their attorney, Jon Nelson, disagreed for a number of reasons.

"This is an affidavit," he said. "What the state of Texas is asking my clients to do is file a false affidavit and subject themselves to criminal penalties."

Rather than apply for a currently dated marriage license, this couple needs to prove they were married in 2009 to access retirement benefits.

One of the men worked for the city of Dallas and retired six years ago. When the Dallas Employee Retirement Fund was discussing extending benefits to same-sex couples last year, board members discussed current retiree and agreed that legal out-of-state marriages would be recognized.

When Councilman Lee Kleinman addressed common-law marriage, there wasn't agreement, but Kleinman insisted in all cases same-sex couples would be treated equally with opposite-sex couples.

The board agreed that retired employees in same-sex relationships who can prove they were married at the time of retirement would receive benefits equal to other married couples.

Texas is one of just nine states that still has common-law marriage, and there are two kinds of common-law marriage accepted here.

The first is informal but accepted by the state: The couple must agree they are married, cohabit within the state and represent to others they are married. At that point, the state recognizes the marriage as legal.

A pension board, however, doesn't have to recognize that marriage. So a couple in Texas can file a declaration of marriage with the county clerk's office.

That's what this couple decided to do.

Nelson said his clients' affidavit stated they

lived together as a married couple and presented themselves as a married couple for the past 23 years. During that time, neither was married to another person.

Nelson said the clerk is asked to swear that the couple is who they say they are and have presented a form that is properly filled out. The clerk is not asked to interpret the document in any way, he noted.

Nelson had another problem with the county clerk's office asking the couple to change the date on the document and perjure themselves.

"When a court declares a law unconstitutional, it, in effect, never existed," Nelson said.

Since the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision that legalized same-sex marriage came into effect, marriages performed before the decision are valid from the time of those marriages.

Common-law marriage in Texas may be declared at any time and the affidavit filed at any time and the marriage is recognized from the date the couple declared they were together.

In addition to pension benefits, common-law marriage may be preferable for couples to file for purposes of proving parental rights and placing names on a birth certificate.

In the case of Jim Obergefell, the U.S. Supreme Court decision made his marriage legal, even though his husband had died more than a year earlier. He had sued for purposes of a death certificate.

LAWSUIT, Next Page



ple together.

"We didn't have a support system during the crisis, but we created an amazing community. If anything good came out of the crisis, it's that the fear and loss brought the best in people," she said.

West believes in hope, and the power of faith to instill hope.

"My faith was strengthened during the crisis. My sermons became more real because I learned what pain was. We all became more real," she said.

The AIDS crisis also proved to West and those around her that she believes in people.

"I've just seen what happens when people work together," she said.

A flock needs a good shepard however, especially a flock looking for light in the darkness.

Ron Hill, president of Celebration's board and the capital campaign for the West Center, has attended the church for 11 years. Growing up gay, other churches spiritually beat LGBT people up for their faith.

"This church has grown because of her ability to make everyone feel comfortable," he said.

The congregation can feel comfortable, too, knowing that their pastor won't leave them in a lurch. Noting that she is 66, West said she will be retiring someday — but not during a capital campaign.



The groundbreaking for the West Center at Celebration brought generations together. (Courtesy Celebration Community Church)

West is grateful to lead a thriving church with outreach to the LGBT community. And certainly Tarrant County is long overdue for a LGBT community center. But this is a shepherd who has

grander visions — visions of justice for all.

"I look forward to the day where LGBT churches don't exist," West said. "When that day comes, the faith will be so much better." ■



A related case was settled earlier this month in favor of recognizing the marriage of an Austin lesbian couple.

Sonemaly Phrasavath and Stella Powell had been together eight years and had a union ceremony that was not legally recognized at the time. Powell died of cancer in 2014 and her family tried to take property from the estate.

Phrasavath filed a lawsuit to have her marriage to Powell recognized by the state of Texas as a legal common-law marriage. A Travis County probate judge declared the marriage legal and Phrasavath becomes the legal heir when the suit is finalized on Oct. 5.

Nelson said common-law marriage is useful when the status of two individuals has to be established prior to a court decision. In addition to pensions and probate, he said other cases include those dealing with birth certificates and custody.

In the case of birth certificates, a couple may have legally married in Texas this summer or in another state over the past few years. But a couple had to be married at the time of the birth or adoption of their children to automatically be placed on a birth certificate.

An affidavit of common-law marriage may cut the amount of other legal work required to have both parents' names placed on a Texas birth certificate. ■

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Creep of the Week: Mike Huckabee makes much ado over Eric Fanning's gayness

Trust out the rainbow M16 assault rifles because things are about to get *fabulous!* The United States Army is about to become the world's biggest Pride parade, thanks to President Obama's nomination of Eric Fanning for secretary of the Army. The only thing you need to know about Fanning is that he's a gay. What other qualifications does one possibly need to essentially be the CEO of the U.S. Army?

Well, lots, actually. And Fanning's credentials are pretty impeccable.

He's currently serving as the undersecretary of the Army, and his list of qualifications is so long it would take up this entire column space. But if you ask Mike Huckabee, R-Will-Never-Be-President, Obama just picked the first guy to come up on Grindr.

On Sept. 19, Huckabee took to Facebook to criticize Fanning's nomination: "It's clear President Obama is more interested in appeasing America's homosexuals than honoring America's heroes," the Huckster wrote. "Veteran suicide is out of control, and military readiness is dangerously low. Yet Obama is so obsessed with pandering to liberal interest groups he's nominated an openly gay civilian to run the Army. Homosexuality is not a job qualification."

I'm not sure what Huckabee means when he says that Obama is all about the gays at the expense of "America's heroes." Is he saying that Obama should have nominated a military officer instead?

The secretary of the Army is a civilian position,



D'Anne Witkowski
Creep of the Week

bullshit.

On a Fox Business morning show, host Sandra Smith asked Huckabee what his deal was with criticizing Fanning, since he "is widely seen as very qualified for the job."

"He may be very qualified for the job," Huckabee said, "and if he is, then nominate him because he's qualified to lead the Army, not because of his sexual orientation. Why are they making such a big deal and talking about it?"

By "they" he means the Obama administration. There is, of course, no evidence that Fanning was nominated because of his sexual orientation, nor is there any evidence that Obama just can't shut up about how gay Fanning is.

Huckabee, on the other hand, cannot shut up about it: "I had people who were gay who worked on my staff, who have served in my administration when I was governor. I never went around saying, 'Hey, I've got some homosexuals

which Huckabee should know. I guess he's saying that the mere act of nominating a homo is a dishonor to our troops.

But it's not like Obama just nominated Nathan Lane. Even Fox News saw through Huckabee's homophobic

that are working for me.' What's the point? If they're qualified, hire them."

Oh, so Huckabee has worked with known homosexuals, eh? Well then he couldn't possibly be homophobic.

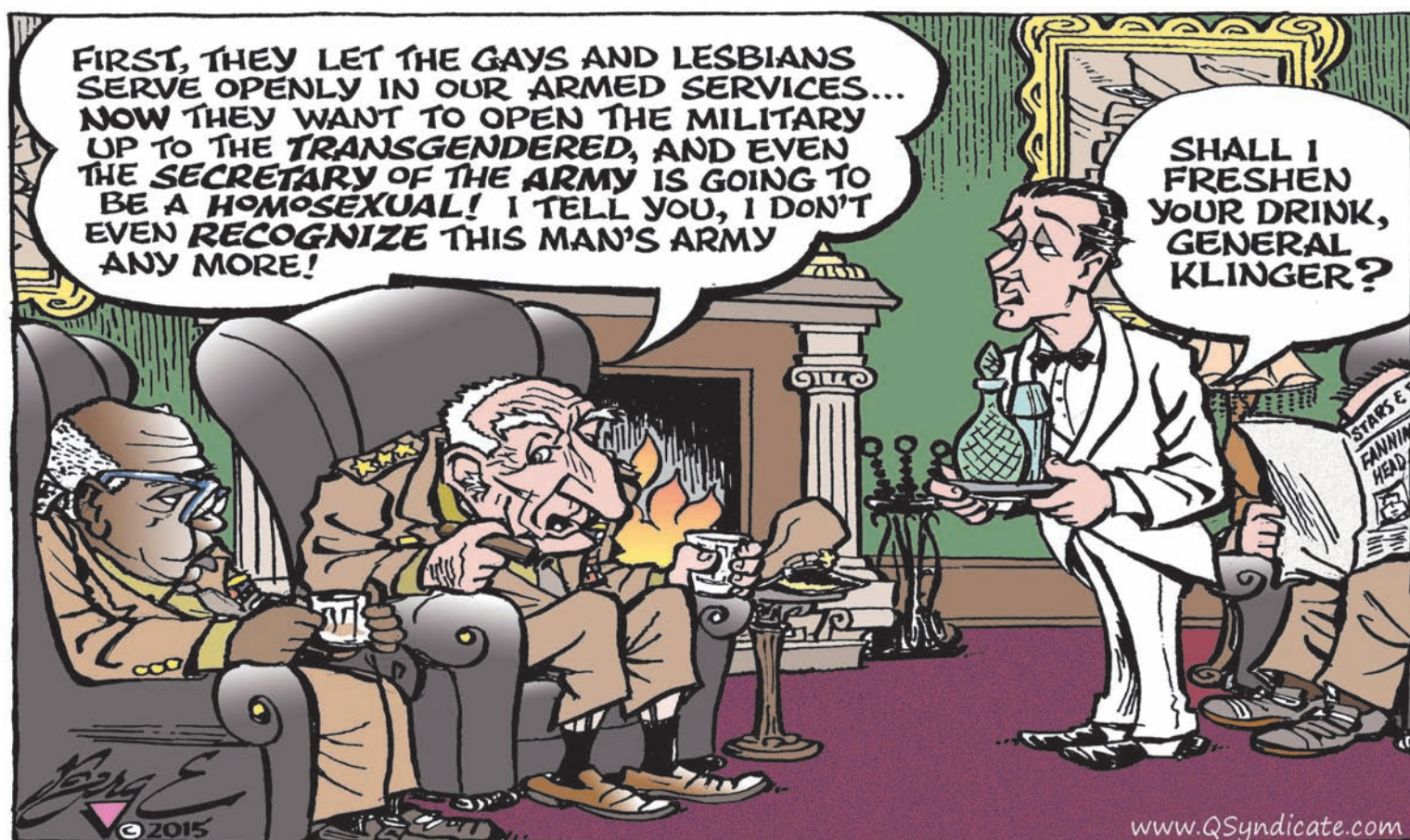
"I just think this president is so into symbolism, so into trying to prove to everybody that he's this open-minded guy," Huckabee said. "Maybe he's trying to make up for the fact that until, gosh, what, just three years ago, he still took the position that many of us do, and that is that marriage, for example, is a biblical issue, and it is between a man and a woman. He had this sudden revelation that it is not that way anymore."

In other words, Obama is trying to make nice with the gays by throwing them a nomination or two.

"I just feel like that the president has made this such an agenda," Huckabee continued, "and the agenda for the military is to focus on the best qualified people, because we're talking about life and death issues. And if he thinks Eric Fanning is the best for the job, nominate him, but leave his sexual orientation out of it."

You hear that, Fanning! Back into the closet for you, for the good of the country. And so Huckabee can find something else to obsess about other than how super gay you are.

D'Anne Witkowski is a freelance writer and poet and a writing teacher at the University of Michigan. She writes the weekly "Creep of the Week" column for Q Syndicate.



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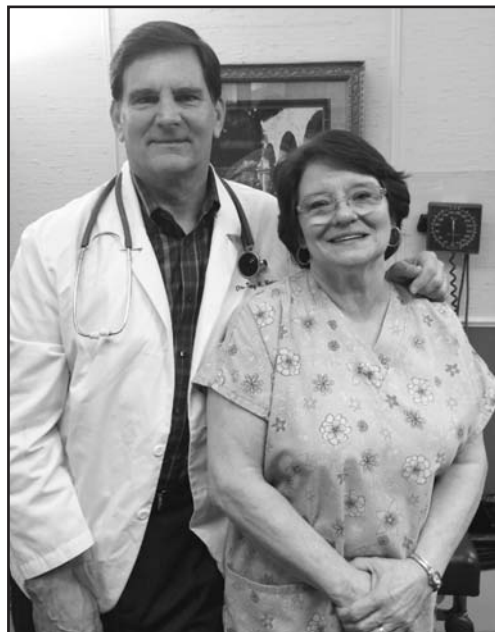


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JEEPERS CREEPERS

Donald Fowler's undertaking in bringing his world premiere musical 'Creep' — about Jack the Ripper — to stage taught him about collaboration, creativity ... and himself

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

SCENE: It is four months before opening night, and in a nondescript rehearsal space in Addison, Texas, a dozen singers, a rehearsal pianist, a composer, director and various assistants are assembled, many sight-reading as new lyrics are introduced into three-ring binders filled with multi-colored pages of dialogue, music and lyrics. It is the beginning of the rehearsal process ... but it is also the end of a very long creative journey for Donald Fowler.

Ever since he began stalking the women of London's Whitechapel District in the 1880s, the mystery and myth of Jack the Ripper have fascinated generations. So it's surprising that Donald Fowler — who has spent the lion's share of a decade writing **Creep: The Very, Very Sad and Unfortunately True and Completely Fabricated Tale of Jack the Ripper**, a musical about the world's most famous serial killer — wasn't really all that interested in the story or the era in which it takes place. His inspiration, like Jack himself, stalked him ... then pounced.

"I know it sounds clandestine, but I didn't find the story — it found me," he says. "I had a smidgen of an idea for years — I collect them — but it didn't go anywhere. So I put it away."

The ideas he "collects" are musical themes and tunes. Although he's never taken a piano lesson or written a note of music on a bar staff, Fowler discovered he has the capacity to *write* music. And one day, as he puts it, "my fingers got itchy." He purchased a Casio keyboard and started noodling around with melodies. The bones were there, but not the flesh.

Then it so happened he turned on the TV and saw a movie with Johnny Depp — *From Hell*, about the Jack the Ripper case. And it was as if a light went on.

"I said, 'That's it — but what else?'" Fowler recalls. "We don't need another literal Jack the Ripper story. What about ourselves is in this whole sit-

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK | Donald Fowler is secretive about the twists and thrills in his Jack the Ripper-inspired musical 'Creep,' which receives its full-sized premiere next month at WaterTower. (Photo by Terry Thompson and Arnold Wayne Jones)



COORDINATED ENSEMBLE | Among the actors in the cast of 'Creep' are local favorites Janelle Lutz, left, Linda Leonard, right, and Seth Womack. (Photo by Kelsey Leigh Ervi)

uation? So I thought, 'What if *this* person was the killer. Why would that person do it? Why would this happen?' Then it just plummeted forward."

The result is now *Creep*, for which Fowler has written the book, music and lyrics, and which — following several stagings, readings, workshops and countless rewrites over more than five years — will receive its world premiere full-scale production next month at WaterTower Theatre. But despite all the tears, sweat and especially blood Fowler has poured of himself into its creation, the process has proven to him one thing: You can't make this kind of art alone.

"Donald is no stranger to WaterTower," says Terry Martin, the producing artistic director at the theater and an early backer of the musical when he directed the first staged reading of it in 2010. "I was attracted to *Creep* initially because the story was not one I had heard before. The plot is in no way formulaic. These were new and compelling characters in situations full of conflict."

He's also had the support of the creatives behind the scenes, from director Kate Galvin to choreographer Kelly McCain to orchestrator Dan Kazemi, as well as the entire cast. And he's especially indebted to Patty Breckenridge and Nicholas Even, who've "literally been there since the beginning," he says.

"From the onset, these were my friends who've built trust with me — the kind who you know won't lie to you. I was super-shy about sharing any music with anyone — my family was not and still is not supportive of my music

and didn't know if I had any talent. But I played a song for Patty and she loved it. The first thing she said was, 'How do you go about making this happen?'"

Having Breckenridge — one of North Texas' most dynamic actress/singers — never hurts, but Even added an element Fowler has little familiarity with: Money.

"Nick headed up the fundraising," he says. "He raised the \$15,000 for the workshop [produced by Uptown Players] a few years ago. The workshop was paid for before it took place. I am so over-blessed."

The blessings have continued since WTT announced its support, mounting a capital campaign for the premiere and tapping a large and talented slate of professionals for it.

"Linda Leonard is *in my ensemble*. Janelle Lutz is too!" Fowler oozes about the powerhouse performers who clamored to be in the show. And the off-stage professionals add even more to the show.

"The heads on this are super-smart — there's some really out-of-the-box thinking," he says. Take, for instance, the orchestrations. Fowler will tell you he's a control freak, but knew he would have to relinquish a lot of authority to others, including Kazemi, who turned the basic score into musical theater arrangements.

"When Dan and I talked about orchestrations, we said how it could have gone *Sweeney Todd* very easily," Fowler says, referring to another

CREEP

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■ CREEP Page 18

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■ **CREEP**, From Page 15

musical set in the fog-blown streets of Victorian London. "I was not interested in that — I wanted to play around with soundscape. Dan has a 10-piece orchestra [to work with], and when you hear it, it sounds like 30. We're bowing a gong and a vibraphone."

"I knew that it was important that I facilitate getting all the right people in the room to take this show to the next level," Martin says.

The choreography, costumes, even the fog effect all represent huge advancements over earlier versions and even what Fowler had in his own head. And he owes a huge debt to director Kate Galvin for all of that.

"Absolutely the biggest example is Kate, who has a wheelhouse in new musicals," Fowler says. "When she first signed on, the next day I had an eight-page list of rewrites. There was a natural propensity for tension on my end, but after I got the wind back in me, I said, 'OK, one thing at a time. The theater didn't hire all these people not to listen to them.' I realized we looked at the piece from completely different sides of the world. I saw it a particular way and the Kate came in and said, 'This is how I see it.' Kate has researched about everything about Jack the Ripper and the period, but my thing is I care about those *people* ... I needed to find what made those characters so interesting. Kate really challenged me to whack at the script — it's lean and mean. It wasn't so much taking out as it was putting more in with less. She has really made sure that the word of this piece is clear."

The collaboration has led Fowler to a deeper

understanding not just of the theatermaking process, but about his show itself.

"I like leaving a way for creativity from a director's perspective, a designer's perspective... and from an *audience's* perspective. The other night we were talking about all these themes, some of which I just didn't see [before]," he says. "[*Creep*] is really about secrets and truth. It occurred to me that truth evolves — initially it can be frightening, then that truth gets accepted and becomes more comfortable and then it becomes something you're actually proud of."

Fowler — who has a long tenure in Dallas as one of its go-to leading men for musical theater (he's starred in productions like *The Wild Party*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *Chess* and *Nine*, among countless others) — says he developed a renewed enthusiasm for being part of an artistic community that puts itself out there for its audiences.

"Now is an incredibly exciting time for Dallas and for new work getting done, even underground," he says. "I like the idea of supporting new stuff — that's exciting. Theater is such a unique experience. In this age of keyboard and computers and streaming, theater is even more important — it's connective, that energy between an audience and an actor."

Martin feels the same way ... and feels that *Creep* is further proof of the power of theater.

"I believe *Creep* has great potential beyond its Dallas premiere," Martin declares. "Long after the curtain comes down, it will be remembered as one of the most exciting projects on our local stages this year." ■

QUEER CLIP: Francois Ozon's 'The New Girlfriend'

Here's one you haven't seen before. Still grieving the death of her BFF Laura, who died shortly after giving birth to a girl, Claire (Anaïs Demoustier) visits Laura's widower, David (Romain Duris), and finds him wearing Laura's clothes. David explains he's always been into cross-dressing, except while he was married to Laura; and whatever he's wearing, he's attracted to women. He asks Claire not to tell anyone, even her husband Gilles (Raphaël Personnaz, a ringer for Superman-era Christopher Reeve).

After the initial shock ("You're a pervert!") wears off, Claire finds she enjoys going shopping and having an occasional girls' night out, so she invents a new girlfriend, Virginia, to explain the time she spends with David in his — er, her — new persona. She still thinks there's something wrong with David but enjoys enabling him ... her?

The story could go in a lot of different directions from here, and it does. Between dreams, fantasies and reality, every possibility is explored, including some you might never think of. I won't spoil it with any details — just be prepared to be surprised... repeatedly.

Gay writer-director François Ozon, who has made some of the best French films of the last two



decades, adapted this script from a short story by novelist Ruth Rendell. It's mostly serious, and when it makes you laugh you'll have second thoughts about whether that was the appropriate reaction. (Screw political correctness — if it's funny, laugh!)

Think of *The New Girlfriend* as another nail in the coffin of labels for gender identity and sexual orientation. In a few more years, we may have no use for them. Meanwhile, enjoy watching Claire wrestle with the changes.

— Steve Warren

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Gay husbandry

'Polygamist' Britstar Leona Lewis on her new album, new label and why she keeps so many gay men in her inner circle

Leona Lewis is having a moment — a Mariah Carey moment, actually. She's singing, mimicking the ascending whistle notes that close out Carey's early-'90s hit "Emotions." It's not much — just a few notes, sung as the song comes up casually in our conversation — but this "moment" entails more than an impromptu Lewis performance via cell phone.

Lewis mirrors Carey more than vocally, though both have voices strong enough to knock you over. But the "Bleeding Love" belter's career is soaring with the same wings that Carey once spread back in 1997, when the legend emancipated herself personally and professionally. The U.K. *X Factor* star walked away from her label of seven years, Simon Cowell's Syco, in 2014, citing creative differences; now signed to Def Jam, Lewis' first studio album, *I Am*, flaunts her newfound independence.

Liberation certainly looks good on Lewis. The 30-year-old Londoner has never seemed more free... and fun. Who knew she played drag queen bingo? Or how growing up around her gay uncle helped her learn to be herself? And that she has "gay husbands" in major cities across the world? Well, now we do.

— Chris Azzopardi

idea. My uncle actually is gay, and when I was younger I remember he would wear makeup and eyeliner. It was the '80s, so you know — people were all out there. And it was always so normal to me; it was never something I questioned, never something that I found anything other than normal. So I had that experience growing up. And even though he's not a drag queen, I wanted to put that in the video. I wanted people to know that you can

be whatever you want to be.

What did you learn from your uncle about being yourself? He taught me a lot. When I was younger, it was to be accepting of anything; however people want to express themselves or present themselves is up to them. It's not something to look at weirdly or that should be shunned. And self-expression — he taught me that. Not being afraid to show who you are.

What does it mean to you to know that your songs are being fiercely lippped by drag queens? I love it! A couple of months ago I actually went to drag queen bingo and they were commenting on the ("Fire Under My Feet") video saying, "I love that you have a drag queen in there."

Did you win at bingo? I didn't, unfortunately. But I did get to call out some numbers, which was kind of cool!

Which line on the album means the most to you? On "I Am" it says, "Thought I would never rise again. But I am, I am." It's about going through times and thinking it's the hardest time and not seeing the forest through the trees but knowing that time is such a big healer and a big factor in so many situations. I feel like so many people give up

just as they're about to have a breakthrough, and sometimes you have to go through that. The line "I am, I am" is, I feel, a powerful affirmation to put out there when you're going through those times.

Your vocal abilities often draw comparisons to Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston and Celine Dion. What songs of theirs would you be most apt to sing at karaoke? With Whitney, definitely "I Wanna Dance With Somebody." I mean, everyone does that song at one point or another! Mariah ... it would have to be "Heartbreaker." It's just so cool and I love the video — she was in the movie theater, and I remember she had the pink top and her little denim jeans. And Celine: probably "All By Myself" or "My Heart Will Go On."

What's your favorite note that's ever been sung? I feel like it has to be during "I Will Always Love You" — the long-held note that Whitney does, and you're like, "What is she doing right now!? She's killing my soul."

Now that the album is finished, how are you feeling about the label changes you made in order to honor who you are as an artist? I feel amazing about it. I'm lucky enough to be in a position where I made that leap of faith and then, luckily, there were people at the other side to catch me and help me do what I wanted to do. I really count myself blessed because it does take a lot to walk away from such a big situation. But, again, I knew what I needed to

change and that I needed to do me and be very authentic to me, and so, this is it. I just feel lucky that I can do it; a lot of people don't get that opportunity.

You say you had to "do me." Did you ever feel like you'd strayed from your authentic self? I feel like I've definitely always been true to myself, but sometimes I feel like myself, as well as other people, get a bit lost by everything that goes on within music. The heart of what we do in music is

■ LEONA Next Page



Dallas Voice: You've played a lot of gigs in your life, been on a lot of stages. How did your set on the G-A-Y stage recently compare? Lewis: Oh, my god. Doing G-A-Y is one of the funnest shows I get to do, and that's why I always go back whenever there's an album. Literally — you can just do whatever you want. The more flamboyant, the more fun it is and the more the audience gives you so much energy. So yeah, there's always so much love and support there.

Are you used to being around that many gays in your everyday life? I mean, yeah. I obviously have so many gay husbands.

How many gay husbands do you have?! I have my L.A. gay husband, and I have my U.K. gay husbands. I've got a few there, and that just constitutes as my gay best friend. If I don't get married, then clearly we'll end up getting married. [Laughs]

I wonder, though: Can one gay husband get jealous over another gay husband? Sometimes they do. I definitely split my time equally. And I get jealous over my gay husbands with their straight wives! So they have to split their time with them for me. It's a partnership.

When were you first aware of your gay following? When I was doing *The X Factor*, every week we'd have people coming down to the show, and I found myself with a huge gay following. Again, just so much love. People were waiting for me after the shows, and I'd go and sign stuff, so it was really early on that I became aware of that.

In 2007, "Bleeding Love" elevated you in so many ways, including within the gay community. You know how we love our big, belty voices. I can't imagine what that song did for your gaggle of gay husbands. They were loving it! And they're always giving me opinions on what I am to wear on stage and what I am to do on stage. I'm like, "All right, guys; calm down."

How often do you take their advice? I mean, it depends on who it's coming from. I have my stylist — a very close friend of mine — who's an amazing stylist. He has suggestions on wardrobe and stuff like that. And I listen. But some of them are crazy. Sometimes I'm like, "Yeah, no; you wear that."

How do you think your gay fans will relate to *I Am*? I have a lot of fans who are younger and haven't even come out to their families yet. I do this campaign called "I Am Empowered" to share stories, mantras and affirmations, and I got one guy who wrote me saying he gets bullied a lot in school because he's gay. He says he just wants me to empower him to get through that and get through the torment, and so I know that it definitely is a very, very strong message to the gay community, especially being young and coming out and being open. It's very hard and it's a very difficult time, and you need to be empowered in that. You need to have the strength to stand true in what you are and who you are. And it's a very prevalent message on the album.

How did you end up with a drag queen in the video for "Fire Under My Feet?" It was my



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■ LEONA, From Previous Page

to connect with people and express ourselves and share that with people. But I feel like the hair and the makeup and the designer clothes takes over everything. The fame, the notoriety and letting that get to your head is so dangerous. My dad's always told me, "Don't believe the hype." That's something that's always stayed with me.

When you look out at the pop scene, do you see a lot of authenticity? You know what I see a lot of? Amazing artists. And I also see a lot of [them] seem to be a bit lost. But again, it's all part of an individual's journey and it's all part of learning about ourselves. You have to go through that learning process sometimes. There's a lot of very young people in the industry, and being so young and vulnerable and subject to ... I don't know... a lot of impressions, sometimes you can just get lost in it.

"Bleeding Love" was a colossal success, so I have to imagine it set the bar high for you. How much pressure have you felt to match the success of that song and what it did for your career? Definitely in the beginning I felt

pressure. There's definitely been a lot less pressure the past few years, but for my second album [2009's *Echo*], I felt a lot of pressure then.

When I was first recording my [new] album, even before I had a deal, there was never any pressure on me. It was just like, I'm recording music; this is what I do. With my first album, again, there really wasn't any expectations, so I didn't really have a lot of pressure. But then after the album blew up and went massive, there definitely was a bit of pressure. I was like, "Oh my gosh, this is happening; I've got to step up my game. I've got to be better. I've got to match it." I've learned over the past few years that that is definitely not conducive to creativity. You have to just go down a new path and blaze a new trail.

PETA named you Sexiest Vegetarian in 2008.

Where does that rank on your list of career achievements? Uhh. Quite high! Sexiest anything! I will take what I can get, soooo ... that ranks very high.

What's the sexiest vegetable or fruit? A peach.

That came to you a lot quicker than I thought it would. Right?! I surprised myself even. ■

Gay author goes to unsettling depths in story collection

Nothing Looks Familiar by Shawn Syms
(Arsenal Pulp Press 2015) \$15.95; 184 pp.

... And they lived happily ever after. Even today, years after you've outgrown fairy tales, those words make you smile. Oh, how you love a happy ending, even though (and maybe because) life doesn't always work out that way. As a matter of fact, in the short story collection *Nothing Looks Familiar*, sad endings don't always happen, either.

A job in a slaughterhouse, for instance, is just a job, and while Wanda would rather work somewhere else, there's no real reason to move on. Instead, in "On the Line," she takes lovers from everywhere but the kill floor. Nobody knows she does it, until she sleeps with the wrong man — a man whose wife is Wanda's co-worker.

Because he had few friends ("He'd never been good at keeping" them), Adam was surprised that Shaggy wanted to hang out. They never did much, just a little mayhem now and then, but in "Four Pills," the tables are about to turn.

Gimli, Manitoba, is a tiny town perched on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Sammy, who's 8 years old, and Cindy, who's just a baby, might have loved it there someday, but their mother had to get them away from there. The fumes from the drugs she made were no good for the kids; neither were the people she worked with or the tiny house where they mixed. In "Family Circus," the kids' mother starts making plans for escape.

People didn't have to like Brenda Foxworthy: she liked herself enough. As one of the popular girls, she got away with everything, including meanness to Dean and his friends, Preet and Rickie. Did Brenda hate their sexuality or their nerdiness? It didn't matter because, in "Get Brenda Foxworthy," the three had plenty of other reasons for revenge.

When Sean and Kate inherited a house from



Kate's dad, they also inherited an eccentric tenant that they rarely saw. In "Man, Woman, and Child," Les Montague was a harmless old guy ... wasn't he?

Unsettling. That's a good word to use when describing the 11 stories inside *Nothing Looks Familiar*. Reading this book, in fact, is a little like watching an accident that you're powerless to stop and can't un-see. For sure, what you'll read here will make you squirm. But that's not a bad thing. I found myself addicted to the stories Syms tells, even though they left me dangling, wondering what happened next. Another oddity: the characters in these stories aren't particularly likeable, which leads to a certain amount of Schadenfreude.

These are stories that will tap you on the shoulder, days after you've finished the book. They'll keep you awake, pondering. If you're not careful, *Nothing Looks Familiar* could haunt you ever after.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer

LIFE+STYLE

best bets

**Friday 09.25 —
Sunday 10.18**

Howdy, folks! State Fair kicks off!

Texans are proud about how big we do things, and few are bigger than the State Fair, which settles into Dallas for four weekends. There are tons of events and attractions, especially the fried foods, but we're really interested in Baconation, a booth inside the Tower Building that celebrates hot crispy pig parts! It's great to be a Texan!

DEETS: Fair Park Grounds at First Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Open daily at 10 a.m. For complete schedule, visit BigTex.org.



Friday 09.25

5 Factor celebrates North Texans who make life better for everyone

The Resource Center's annual 5 Factor was designed to recognize those in the community who contribute to something in a variety of disciplines. You can be part of the celebration, and raise money for the center, at a cocktail party cheering on Terry Loftis (for his role in the arts), Courtney Kerr (for her role in fashion), Brent Willmott (for his contributions in design), The Purple Party (for its philanthropy) and Pinky's Valet (for commerce).

DEETS: 7 for Parties, 150 Turtle Creek Blvd., ste. 107 (in the Design District). 7-9 p.m. \$50. MyResourceCenter.org.

Thursday 10.01 — Monday 10.05

Dallas Black Pride shows another side of gay culture

You might think Gay Pride is over in Dallas, but you'd be wrong. Because, for the 18th year, the gay black community is uniting for a weekend of events that encourage pride among people of color. But you don't need to be black to attend the many parties, events, speakers, shows and music that is black Pride — you just need to keep your Pride flag flying.

DEETS: Event scheduled at numerous venues. For a complete lineup, visit DallasSouthernPride.com.





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ARTSWEEK

THEATER

Moonshine: That Hee Haw Musical. World premiere musical from award-winning team of writer/composers, based on the variety show but camped up. Stars *American Idol*'s Justin Guarini. *Reviewed this week.* Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Oct. 11. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

The Droll. A world premiere, about a world where theater is illegal, launches Undermain's 32nd season. Undermain Theater, 3200 Main St. Sept. 26–Oct. 17. Undermain.org.

Dry Land. A regional premiere of the acclaimed new play. Upstart Natatorium, 2336 N. Beckley Ave. Sept. 25–Oct. 10. UpstartTheater.com.

The Dumb Waiter. Kitchen Dog Theater moves into its (temporary) new digs in the Design District for one season with this opener, one of Nobel Prize winner Harold Pinter's celebrated "comedies of menace." *Reviewed this week.* The Green Zone, 161 Riveredge. Through Oct. 10. KitchenDogTheater.org.

Fix Me Jesus. A comedy set at Neiman Marcus. Theatre 3, 2800 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through Oct. 11. Theatre3Dallas.com.

Catholic School Girls. Susan Sargeant directs this nostalgic look at girls' schools in the 1960s. *Final week-end.* Greenville Center for the Arts, 5601 Sears St. ContemporaryTheatreOfDallas.com.

Matilda The Musical. Tony Award-winning musical, based on the Roald Dahl children's classic, about a resilient little girl — sort of a Dickensian *Annie*. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Through Oct. 4. ATPAC.org.

How the Other Half Loves. Theatre Britain presents Alan Ayckbourn's comedy. Cox Building Playhouse, 1517 H Ave., Plano. Through Oct. 4. Theatre-Britain.com.

Murder for Two. A two-man musical, presented as part of the Off-Broadway on Flora series. City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. Sept. 24–26. ATPAC.org.

The Mountaintop. Play about the final hours of Martin Luther King Jr. *Reviewed this week.* Studio Theatre of the Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through Nov. 15. DallasTheaterCenter.org.

FINE ART

N.S. Harsha: Sprouts, reach in to reach out. A site-specific mural, the first in Dallas for the Indian artist, transforms the main corridor of the DMA. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through Feb. 21, 2016. DMA.org.

Best Books Ever Written: Texas. Artist/collagist Stuart Sheldon premieres the capstone of his new series of collages, including works in celebration of Texas authors

and marriage equality. ilume Gallerie, 4123 Cedar Springs Road. Through Oct. 17. ilumeGallerie.com.

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

FRIDAY 09.25

COMMUNITY

5 Factor. The Resource Center recognizes those in a variety of disciplines who make living in North Texas better for the LGBT (and broader) community. 7 for Parties, 150 Turtle Creek Blvd. (in the Design District). 7–9 p.m. \$50. MyResourceCenter.org.

State Fair of Texas. The country's biggest fair opens this week. Howdy, folks! Fair Grounds at First Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Sept. 25–Oct. 20. BigTex.or.

SUNDAY 09.27

DRAG

My Oh My Show. A new drag weekly show starts at the House of Blues, 2200 N. Lamar St. 10 p.m. \$10–\$18. MyOhMyTheShow.com.

TUESDAY 09.29

FILM

The Andromeda Strain. Robert Wise directed this sci-fi thriller, based on Michael Crichton's best seller, about a virulent pathogen. Screens as part of the Tuesday Big Movie 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.

LECTURE

Lee Berger. The lead scientist who recently discovered a new branch of hominids, *homo naledi*, will give his first North American lecture about the find at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, 2201 N. Field St. 7 p.m. \$25. PerotMuseum.org.

THURSDAY 10.01

COMMUNITY

18th Annual Dallas Black Gay Pride Weekend. Kickoff of the annual Pride celebration, which includes

REVIEWS: From 'Moonshine' to 'The Mountaintop'

The Dallas Theater Center has kicked off its season with two simultaneous but very different shows at the Wyly Theatre — one a world premiere musical, the other a two-hander about Martin Luther King Jr. Both have their pros and cons, but maybe not the ones you expected.

First is **Moonshine: That Hee-Haw Musical**, the much-discussed adaptation of the compe variety show from the 1970s. Aside from the name, it bears faint resemblance to its source material. Rather than kitschy Vaudeville set-pieces, it's a fairly traditional book-musical, about sweet Misty Mae (Rose Hemingway) of Kornfield County who heads off to the Big City (i.e., Tampa) and leaves doting but non-committal beau Bucky Jr. (Ken Clark) behind. But a scheming city slicker (Justin Guarini) woos Misty Mae into visiting her home with the hope of marrying her and mining valuable minerals from under her homestead. All that's missing is a twirled moustache and damsel on the train tracks.

Predictable, yes, but also surprisingly fun and full of punny but make-you-think-a-bit one liners. ("Misty Mae! If your mamma was alive right now, what would she say?!" "Ummm, let me out of this box?") The subtle trick of the book, by Robert Horn, is that it doesn't make fun of the folks it's making fun of — it's more *Andy Griffin Show* than *Beverly Hillbillies*, brimming with affection for the backwater Brigadoon and the folks who live there. And it's made all the more enjoyable by a tuneful and sweet score by country stars Shane McAnally and Brandy Clark. There's gold in them thar hills.

There's gold, too, in **The Mountaintop**, playing in the smaller Studio Theatre through Nov. 15. You might expect a play set in the Lorraine Motel on the eve of MLK Jr.'s assassination would be a showcase for the actor playing the most charismatic speaker of the 20th century (here, Hassan El-Amin), but the revelation is newcomer (and SMU student) Tiana Johnson. Johnson, as a chambermaid who visits King hours before his death, is flirtatious, funny, impudent, exciting — you simply cannot take your



eyes off her, even for a moment. That's not exactly good news for El-Amin, whose characterization feels vague. He doesn't look much like King, and makes almost no effort to create the famous cadences of his speech. In fact, if this weren't about a real person, the play might seem like some short story by Joyce Carol Oates ... at least until the plot goes off the rails into paranormal fantasy that's less Ebenezer Baptist and more Ebenezer Scrooge. By the time of the "We Didn't Start the Fire" litany of pop culture since 1969, this Magical Mystery Tour has become a pretentious mess. No matter — it's worth seeing if only for Johnson's star-making performance.

— Arnold Wayne Jones



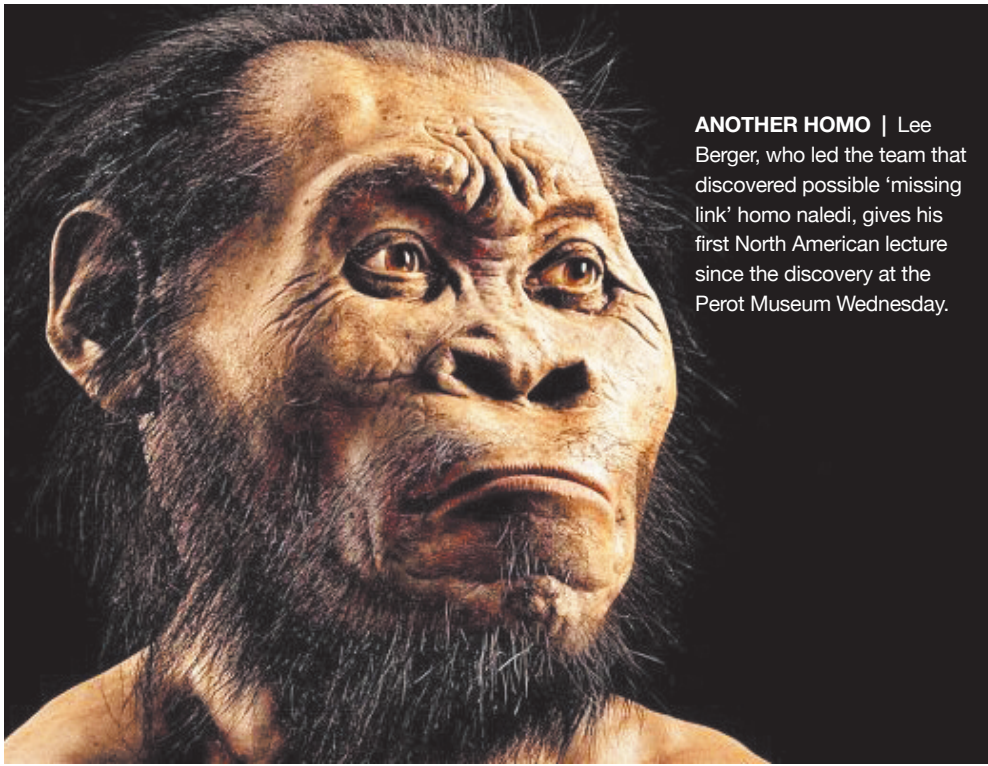
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ANOTHER HOMO | Lee Berger, who led the team that discovered possible 'missing link' homo naledi, gives his first North American lecture since the discovery at the Perot Museum Wednesday.

numerous parties, celebrities, cookouts, pool parties and more, many divided into "for him" and "for her" categories. For a complete schedule of events, visit DallasSouthernPride.com.

CABARET
Judy Chamberlain Jazz. The jazz vocalist's weekly cabaret performance in the back room of Zippers Hideaway, 3333 N. Fitzhugh St. 9 p.m.

THEATER
Bad Jews. A relationship comedy about family. Stage West, 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. Oct. 1–Nov. 1. StageWest.org.

BROADCAST
Project Runway. The latest season of competing designers is underway. Lifetime at 8 p.m.



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Girl on Girls

Jenny Block asks: Why do straight couples wanna 'join' lesbians?

I don't get it. It happens all of the time, but I still don't get it. All too often when I tell a straight man, woman or couple that I'm lesbian, I get invited to "join them" or asked if he/she/they can "watch." Ewww.

I try to seem flattered. It means they think I'm attractive or sexy or something, right? But it feels gross. It feels like my sexuality is a perversion. Or, at the very least, it feels like I'm a sideshow act or an exotic delicacy to be enjoyed by onlookers. What it doesn't feel like is that my sexuality is equal to and as "real" as, their own.

I want to think it's about curiosity and openness. I want to think it's about a straight man respecting his female partner's interest in exploring her bisexuality or even lesbianism. I want to think that they're wanting to explore their own boundaries, to expand their understanding of sex and sexuality and the many ways it can be expressed.

But I'm afraid it's that lesbians are still considered "pretend," like we're dick-desirers in waiting or, at the very least, we are still on the planet for straight male pleasure, still under the thumb of the male gaze. If only we saw what "real sex" looks like! If only we were "hot enough" for men to want us! If only. If only. If only.

In other words, to be lesbian is to be broken or less-than. It makes me wince.

I am fearful of that because I still hear straight men say, "Why do they have to look like dudes?" and "How can she be gay — she's so pretty." It's as if either they get to dictate the standard of beauty and/or if someone meets their standard, they should be granted sexual access to that person.

It's an extension of rape culture, to put it honestly — woman-as-object. A woman is to be looked at, taken, used as sexual fantasy despite her sexual orientation, despite her choice.

Here's the thing: Even if it's "meant as a compliment" (which is often the explanation given for offering such an invitation just as it is given for catcalling or other harassment), it isn't one. It just isn't. It's creepy and gross and no lesbian wants to be a straight couple's third and no lesbian couple wants to "let you watch."

And if you don't believe me, allow me to turn the tables for you. A gay couple walks up to a straight man and says, "Can we watch you and your girlfriend/wife have sex? I think it's so hot what y'all do in bed." The gay couple would very likely be in danger of at least verbal (if not physical) abuse. If something doesn't work when you flip it on its head, then it doesn't work at all.

We have to stop treating sexuality that is different from our own as less than or as some sort of novelty. Sexuality is sexuality. All of it. All the vanilla and the kink. All the publicly approved of and doomed to the closet. All of the mixes and matches and permutations.

We don't raise our own identity by putting down the identities of others and when straight people assume that lesbian women want to hook up with or perform for them, they are devaluing us as people — sexually and otherwise.



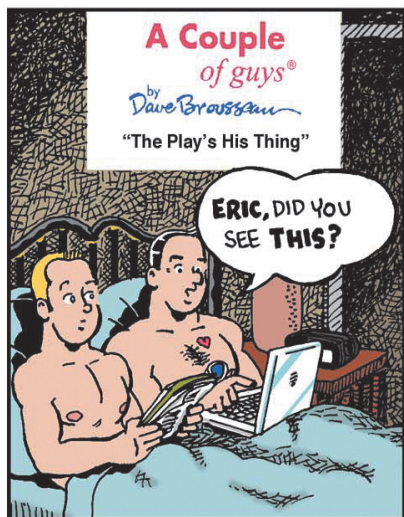
Treat others as you would like to be treated. Don't say something you wouldn't want your momma to

overhear. Would you want someone talking to your mom, wife, friend, sister, partner (fill-in-the-blank) like that? Think before you speak. Turn the tables. Pick your cliché. The message is all the same. It's time we start respecting each other and one another's choices. It might seem like a lark to the asker. But to those of us being asked, there is nothing fun about it.

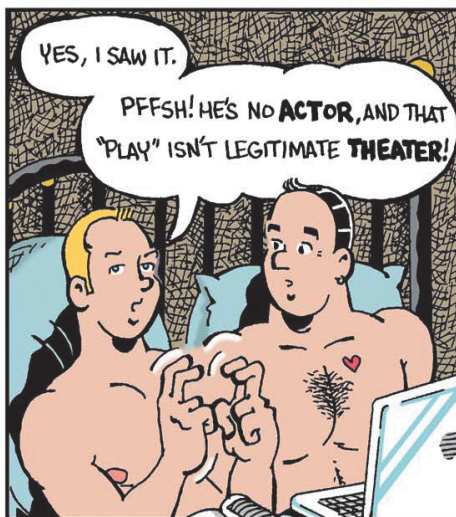
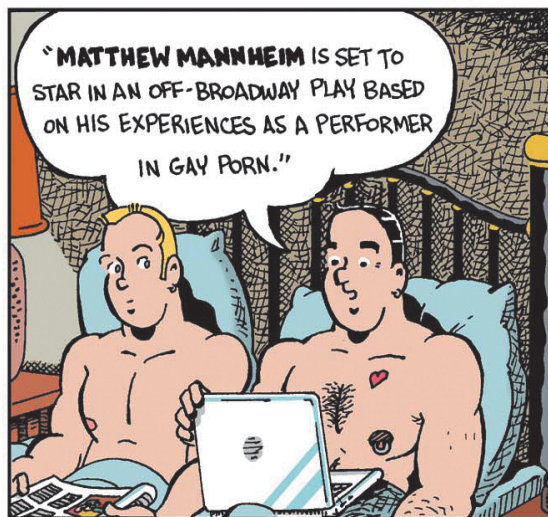
Jenny Block is the author of the new book *O Wow! Discovering Your Ultimate Orgasm*.

Have a question about sex you want Jenny to address? Email it to GirlOnGirlsJenny@gmail.com.

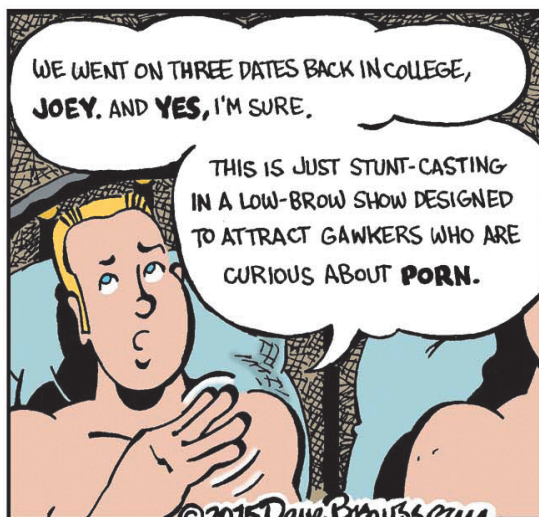
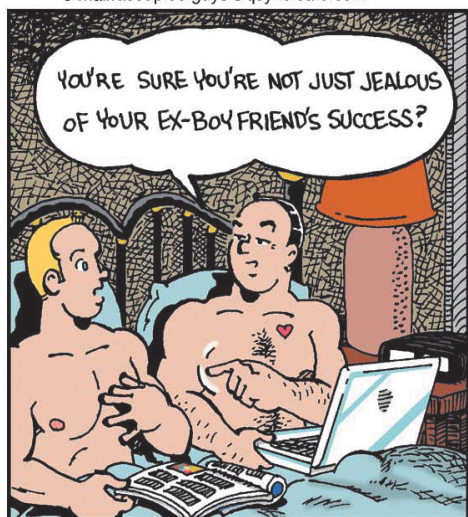
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this week's solution

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Scenes from
Dallas Pride
Parade & Festival,
Sept. 20, 2015

DALLAS
PRIDE



Making the SCENE the week of Sept. 25–Oct. 1:

- Alexandre's: Filter Kings on Friday. Jason Huff on Saturday. Chris Chrism on Wednesday. So Strung Out on Thursday.
- Brick/Joe's: Dallas Southern Pride Show with Suki the Furryan and the Beat King hosted by Ida Mae Watergate on Friday.
- Changes: Boys vs. Girls: Devil Wears Prada, an evening of turnabouts at 9 p.m. on Friday.
- Club Reflection: Trinity River Bears meeting at 2:30 p.m. and cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday. Imperial Court Mr. and Miss Imperial Pride Pageant on Sunday at 6 p.m.
- Dallas Eagle: The North Texas Council of Clubs presents a candidate show for Ms. Fall Frolick at 7 p.m. on Friday. National Leather Association Dallas presents Leather Perspectives from 1:30-5 p.m. on Saturday. Eagle Employee Turn-a-bout Show fundraiser for Resource Center Food Pantry from 7-10 p.m. on Saturday.
- Round-Up Saloon: Sasha Leigh Chambers hosts Project Furway finale on Monday at 9 p.m.
- Sue Ellen's: Country Night with Barefoot Hippies on the main stage at 9 p.m. on Friday. Women's Chorus of Dallas LifeWalk team Zumba at 2 p.m. and Kickback at 10 p.m. on Saturday.
- Woody's Sports & Video Bar: Atlanta at Dallas on Woody's HD at noon on Sunday.

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





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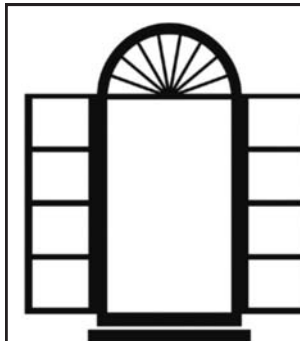
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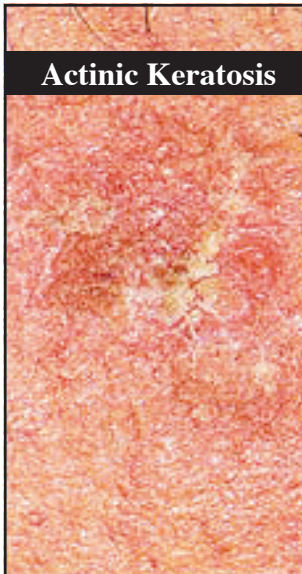
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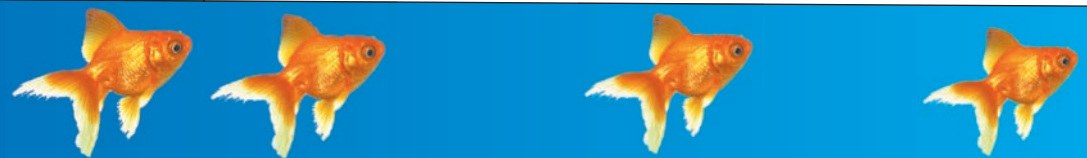
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Dallas, Texas 75209
 - LAMBDA GROUP
6:30 PM, Friday; 1 hour
 - OAK LAWN CoDA GROUP
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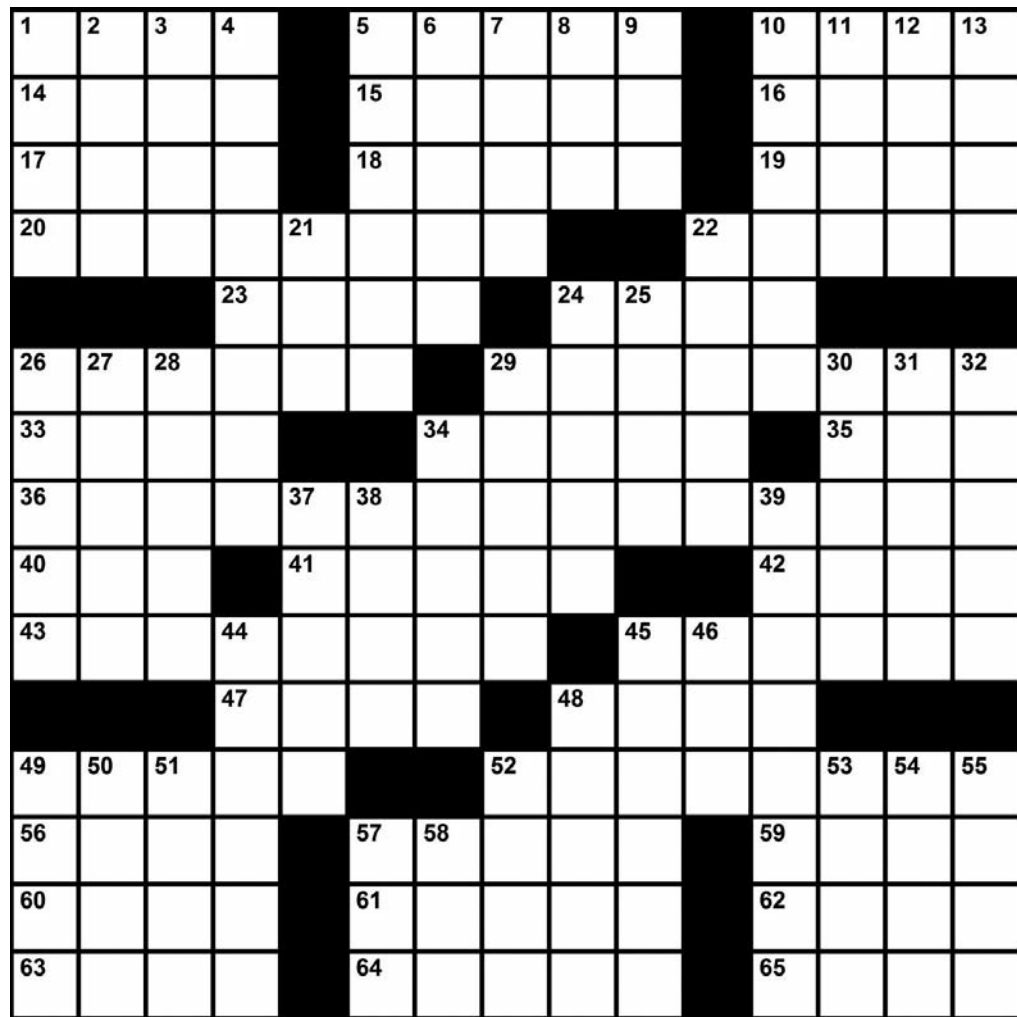
Pegasus Squares,

an LGBT Square Dance Club,
meets every Sunday from
2:30pm-4:30pm at the Dallas
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q-puzzle



The Thrill of the Right

Solution on page XX

Across

- Hit boxers
- Alexandre, who wrote about a male threesome
- Ty with a big stick
- Fine-tune
- Not straight
- Bars for gay chefs
- Where to see *Modern Family*
- Cagney's TV partner
- Elizabeth of *Transamerica*
- Title start of a rock anthem used without permission at a rally for 49-Across
- End of the title
- Daughters of Bilitis co-founder Phyllis
- Fruit flavor for gin
- Klein of underwear
- Be stunned by a hottie, e.g.
- Reed in a pit
- Funny Cheri
- Where to go for Carnival
- Item denied to gay couples by 49-Across
- And so on, for short
- Cole Porter title city
- Disney pictures
- Pirate, for one
- Short-legged dog

47 Caesar's girlfriend told them "Bite me!"

- Homer's boy
- Homophobe Kim
- Like some twins
- Dean Cain's role with Lois
- Georgia spread on the screen
- Tutti-frutti holder
- Japanese poem
- Vows now legal for the LGBT community
- Got a little behind
- Gawks at
- It's for Colette

Down

- Where a cobbler puts the tongue
- Express ride
- Opening amount
- What a cowboy shoots off
- 007 portrayer Timothy
- Brigham Young man, for one
- Disney's Mickey and Minnie, e.g.
- Tavern order
- Swine cooler?
- Reproduced nonheterosexually
- Jackie's designer
- Pasolini's well
- Wild male

- Murphy Brown's TV show
- Something to talk about
- Shaft from way back
- Petty of *A League of Their Own*
- Has the big O
- Let up
- Spanish castle city
- Gay rodeo target
- Beach birds
- Controversial path for same-sex partners, once
- Perform, to Shakespeare
- Shrek and others
- Transvestite boast?
- Golden years org.
- Tickled pink
- Blew it
- Foppish *Gilligan's Island* actor Jim
- Sacred chest
- Glenn who played for the Dodgers
- Style of many South Beach buildings
- Openly confess
- It crosses Hollywood
- Word with Mary
- Expressed, as farewell
- Love of Lesbos
- Right on a map
- Comedienne Margaret
- Fall behind



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