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JULY '19

HOUSTON'S LGBTQ MAGAZINE

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SYMPHONY McKNIGHT CAPRI

Pg.70

ARTS CENTER CURATOR

DENNIS NANCE

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GALVESTON POET

JIM BOONE

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PLUS

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Welcome to OutSmart's July 2019 issue, an edition put together with love by our small staff suffering from a huge Pride Month hangover.

In this issue, new writer Sam Byrd interviews John Huckaby, the new CEO of AIDS Foundation Houston (AFH). Huckaby is no stranger to the honorable work of AFH. In the '80s, he was one of the organization's original case managers caring for AFH clients living with AIDS.

Writer Gregg Shapiro talks with the handsome and talented Texas native Matt Bomer about his new movie, *Papi Chulo*. Writer Don Maines also chats with queer actors Dennis Draper, Milo Michael, and Clarity Leigh Welch about their upcoming parts in *Museum of Dysfunction XI: The Best Decade of Short Plays*, where they will reprise their roles from past shows at Spring Street Studios in July.

Elsewhere in this issue, writer Andrew Edmonson reviews the documentary *5B*, a film that celebrates the unsung heroes of the AIDS crisis. Edmonson also writes about Marlon Riggs' *Tongues Untied*, which returns on July

26 for a 30th-anniversary screening and panel discussion at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, as part of QFest.

Writer Karen Derr shares her experience at the Festival Hill Institute, the site of the Round Top Music Festival, where young symphony musicians from all over the world train for professional careers. These performers are the heart of this Texas musical festival, and their performances are legendary.

Lourdes Zavaleta, OUTSMART's new assistant editor, chats with queer black Lutheran preacher Lenny Duncan about his new book, *Dear Church*. Duncan says his book asks "the whitest church in America" to boldly address society's injustices and end white supremacy.

Art curator and critic Bill Arning, another new OUTSMART contributor, discusses the global perspectives seen in queer artist Philip Karjeker's work. Arning writes that "Karjeker's voice is both matter-of-fact yet also able to engage with the grander mythic iconography of queer images."

Be sure to check out our Queer in Galveston section, where writer Brandon Wolf profiles the legendary Robert's Lafitte bar,

which celebrates its 50th year on the island in August. We also feature stories on activist couple Danny and Christin Roe, Galveston Arts Center curator Dennis Nance, chef Daya Myers-Hurt, performer Symphony McKnight Capri, and island poet Jim Boone.

Get ready for the 2019 Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards—nominations begin July 15 and run through July 25, and voting is July 26–Sept. 1. Go to outsmartmagazine.com to nominate your favorite community members, businesses, and services.

We hope you enjoy reading this month's issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you!



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Harris County Adds LGBTQ Employee Protection

Sexual orientation and gender identity are now explicitly listed in its nondiscrimination and harassment policy.

By LOURDES ZAVALETA

Days after Houston celebrated its annual Pride festival and parade, Harris County showed its support for the queer community by enacting a policy to protect its LGBTQ workers.

In a 3-2 vote during a meeting on June 25, the Harris County Commissioners Court approved revisions to explicitly add sexual orientation and gender-identity protections in its nondiscrimination policy. The court's new Democratic majority—county judge Lina Hidalgo, along with commissioners Rodney Ellis and Adrian Garcia—voted in favor of the pro-equality measure.

Ellis, a longtime LGBTQ ally, first proposed adding LGBTQ protections for Harris County employees.

“It’s fitting that we [did] this during Pride Month,” said Ellis. “We have come a long way from the Stonewall Uprising of 50 years ago, but we still have work to do to ensure full equality for LGBTQ people. [Adding this policy language] is an integral step toward equal protection for members of the LGBTQ community.”

Six people testified at the commissioners’ meeting, and most were in favor of the addition of LGBTQ protections. Five members from Houston’s queer community, including activists, an attorney, and a former Harris County employee, urged the Commissioners Court to pass the measure.

“I would like to think that Harris County is one of the most progressive and inclusive counties in America, and our internal policies should reflect that,” Mike Webb, president of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, told the court. “I want to encourage our amazing commissioners to vote not just with the commissioner who brought this motion to the table, but with the [many County employees] who would feel more comfortable being out.”

There is no national law that protects



Local Equality Advocates

The Harris County Commissioners Court passed a measure 3-2 on June 25 to add LGBTQ protections to the county’s nondiscrimination policy. County judge Lina Hidalgo (l), along with commissioners Rodney Ellis (r) and Adrian Garcia, voted in favor of the revisions.

LGBTQ employees, and Texas is one of 30 states that lacks workplace protections for queer workers. Attorney Fran Watson, who spoke in support of Ellis’ measure, believed that an update to Harris County’s nondiscrimination policy was essential for the 23 municipalities that lie within the county.

“This revision is a necessary step to ensure that all employees working for the third-largest county in the country are protected,” Watson said. “Additionally, it shows that Harris County is committed to creating a work atmosphere in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, by promoting equal opportunities and prohibiting unlawful discriminatory practices.”

The only opponent of the LGBTQ employee protections was Houston Area Pastor Council founder and president Dave Welch, who led the effort to repeal the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance in 2015.

“These lifestyle-driven agendas—sexual orientation and gender identity—have no established definition in the law, so they’re undefinable,” Welch said, later stating that the new nondiscrimination policy would be used against those who do not support the LGBTQ community based on their religious beliefs.

Welch also noted that there were no documented reports of LGBTQ discrimination in Harris County, and that protections were unnecessary. But Candice Webber, a former employee of Harris County, recalled LGBTQ discrimination happening at work, and said that a new policy would allow queer folks to finally come forward with their stories.

“[There were] countless times when my directors and coworkers spoke anti-trans rhetoric, and treated trans women differently. I constantly had to go to battle for my

NEWS CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

community,” Webber said. “It came to the point where I started to look like I was the problem—the one who was always stirring up trouble. The reality of it is, LGBTQIA people don’t have to stir up trouble. Trouble comes to us in the form of hate, bigotry, and discrimination.”

Both Republican commissioners Jack Cagle and Steve Raddack voted no on the nondiscrimination policy’s revisions. Cagle countered Ellis’ proposal with a separate resolution that would remove all language from the policy that identified specific protected groups, and instead replace it with a policy that prohibited harassment of all employees.

Ellis said that all legal policies need specificity in order to prove crimes. Hidalgo sent Cagle’s proposal to the Harris County legal department so that attorneys could weigh in on the pros and cons of removing specific language from the policies.

After the 3-2 vote, Ellis’ proposed measure became effective immediately, adding sexual orientation and gender identity into the Harris County nondiscrimination policy.

“Not sure why we needed to have a debate about this,” Hidalgo tweeted to OUTSMART. “Remember it, write it down, take a picture: we will not tolerate discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in Harris County!”

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The Victory Fund Backs Buttigieg

Group aimed at electing LGBTQ public officials endorses Mayor Pete.

By DAN MERICA, CNN
PHOTO By DALTON DEHART

The Victory Fund, a national political-action committee whose sole aim is electing LGBTQ politicians to office, endorsed South Bend, Indiana, mayor Pete Buttigieg, validating the mayor's rise from a small-city mayor who was not out when he was first elected to an upstart presidential candidate and gay political icon.

The endorsement of the first top-tier LGBTQ presidential candidate comes on the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, a seminal moment in the LGBTQ movement where members of the gay community rioted against mistreatment at the hands of the police.

In an emotional event that doubled as a belated birthday celebration for the mayor's husband, Chasten, the candidate opened up about his coming-out and marriage. His remarks centered heavily on the progress that the LGBTQ community has made since Stonewall.

"We haven't seen equality come to the land—not by a long shot. But think about what it means that 50 years after Stonewall, we could be gathered in a room with a top-tier candidate for the American presidency, and be in a room with his *husband*," Buttigieg said to cheers.

Annisie Parker, the head of Victory Fund and a former mayor of Houston who was the first gay mayor of a major U.S. city when she was elected in 2010, opened the event and announced the endorsement, telling the audience of primarily white gay men that Buttigieg is "redefining what is possible in American politics, and the LGBTQ Victory Fund is ready to stand with him."

Parker called the mayor's candidacy "revolutionary—not just transformative" for the LGBTQ community.

"Who here thinks tonight, on the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, we should go one step further?" Parker said. "This moment is important for our community, but this moment is important for our country. America needs us to step up, just as it needs Mayor Pete to step forward. Mayor Pete's progress is our progress. His journey is our journey."



On May 4, openly gay 2020 presidential hopeful Pete Buttigieg visited Houston to do a round of campaign events, including an intimate conversation at the home of LGBTQ Victory Fund board chair Richard Holt. Photographed at the event are (l-r) the Fund's president and CEO (and former Houston mayor) Annise Parker, Mayor Buttigieg, his husband Chasten, and Holt.

Buttigieg seemed more at ease at the event than at his more traditional campaign events, hugging Parker after the endorsement was announced. Chasten joined the candidate onstage, too, and helped people ask questions by picking written questions from the audience out of a bowl, including questions about which one of the two proposed marriage, and whether the mayor's style improved when they started dating.

"Well, my socks match, so that is progress," Buttigieg joked, adding that Chasten sometimes "threatens to take away my gay membership card" because of his style.

Buttigieg's candidacy, especially early in his campaign, benefited from considerable support from gay activists and donors, many of whom helped fill his campaign coffers before he caught momentum. The Victory Fund's endorsement comes a day after the mayor used his closing statement in the first Democratic primary debate to remind people that his marriage exists only "by the grace of one vote on the Supreme Court.

"By the way, anyone catch the debate last night?" Buttigieg said to cheers. "How did I do?"

Parker, in an interview before the event, touted the historic nature of Buttigieg's candidacy.

"Victory Fund has a singular mission, and that is to help LGBT people succeed in the political process," Parker said. "He is what we work for. He is the embodiment of the mission."

The endorsement is the first time that Victory Fund has endorsed a presidential candidate.

Parker noted, however, that the organization did not get behind Buttigieg until he showed some viability in the presidential race.

Parker said she told Buttigieg in a private conversation that he needed to "go out and compete" and "do your absolute best" before the group got behind him.

"We have watched him thus far in the race, and we believe that he has earned our endorsement just as he has earned the support of hundreds of thousands of Americans all across the country," Parker said. "He is a capable, competent, experienced leader, ready to move up in politics."

Buttigieg came out in a 2015 essay in the

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By LOURDES ZAVALETA

QUEER THINGS to DO

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'Before Stonewall'

Clockwise from left: Barbara Gittings and protesters in Philadelphia, circa 1960s; two male soldiers, circa WWII; and Audre Lorde (r) and friend in New York City, circa 1950s. *Before Stonewall* is one of many films to be shown this month at Houston's QFest.



COMMUNITY

July 20

An Evening of Big Band, Country, and Everything in Between

Celebrate America's independence month with the Texas Gay Rodeo Association (TGRA) at Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon. The event features entertainment, an auction, and a battle between the rodeo association's local chapters.

tinyurl.com/y334bxu6

FEST

July 25-29

QFest 2019

It's that time of year again! Houston's LGBTQ film festival is back, and this time it's bigger than ever.

The 23rd annual QFest takes place all over Space City, with screenings and events at Aurora Picture Show, Brasil, Holocaust Museum Houston, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Rice Cinema, and the Station Museum of Contemporary Art. Presented by Spectrum South, a queer Texas-based online magazine, QFest 2019 is dedicated to presenting films by, about, and of interest to the LGBTQ community.

On the festival's opening night, take in the restored version of *Paris Is Burning*, a 1990 documentary that focuses on New York City drag queens and their "house" culture, which provided a sense of community for performers who were

often socially shunned. On the closing night, watch *Why Can't I Be Me? Around You*, a thought-provoking character study of Rusty Tidenberg, a mechanic and inventor who navigates her identity as an out trans woman living in New Mexico. Other screenings include *Casandro! the Exotico*, *Pasolini*, *Tarnation*, *Tongues Untied* (see page 86), *Angel*, and *Before Stonewall*.

Although a complete QFest 2019 schedule had not been announced at press time, a full list of films and events will soon be available at qfest.com, where attendees can also purchase passes to the festival.

qfest.com



MUSIC

July 24

The Rhapsody Tour

The band Queen and its new frontman, Adam Lambert, will take to the Houston Toyota Center stage this month. Lambert, the openly gay runner-up of American Idol Season 8, had big shoes to fill stepping in for the late Freddie Mercury, but active Queen members Brian May and Roger Taylor seem to think he's done a fabulous job. The trio has had a partnership since their first collaboration on the Fox TV show in 2009.

tinyurl.com/yyojrwz

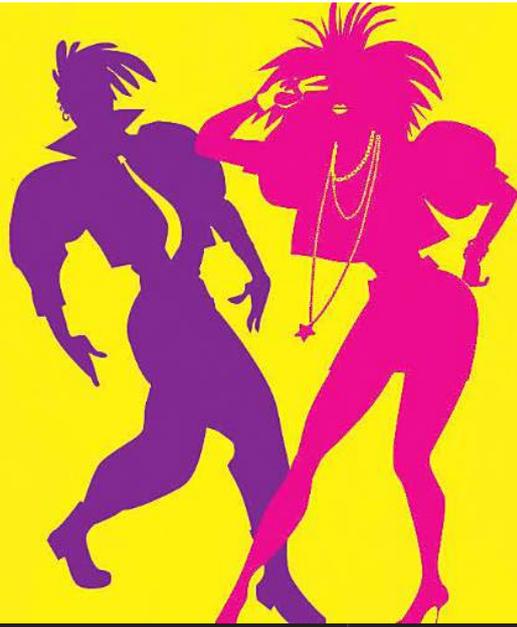
COMMUNITY

July 21

Mint Julep 2019

Bust out your neon jazzercise clothes and shoulder pads for Mint Julep 2019: Girls & Guys Just Wanna Have Fun—an '80s-themed fundraiser party at Rich's Houston. Admission is free, but be sure to tip your entertainers generously, as every dollar collected benefits HIV/AIDS programs and services at Legacy Community Health's Montrose clinic.

tinyurl.com/y2ctxzfd



SOCIAL

July 5

LGBTQ VETERANS SOCIAL

Join the Lone Star Veterans Association LGBT Affinity Group for a social at Guava Lamp. The recurring event takes place at the queer Houston bar on the first Friday of the month. tinyurl.com/y5v28bxw

COMEDY

July 8

GAY SHAME PARADE

The Secret Group has billed this event as "standup comedy by gays, probable gays, and people we wish were gay." Pair that with a pay-what-you-can ticket deal, and this gig looks even better. thesecretgrouphtx.com

COMMUNITY

July 12

HOUSTON VIGIL AGAINST DENTENTION CAMPS

Folks across the nation will gather in various locations on July 12 to take a stand against detention camps and the human-rights abuses of ICE. Houston's protest will occur at the Southwest Key Detention Center on Emancipation Avenue, where migrant children have recently been placed. tinyurl.com/y28mvlra

COMMUNITY

July 15

GAYEST & GREATEST VOTING BEGINS

Here's your chance to tell us about your favorites, from Gay to Z. There are two rounds of voting this year. Nominate your favorites from July 15-25. Come back and cast your vote for the winners starting July 26-September 1. Winners will be announced in the October issue. outsmartmagazine.com

COMMUNITY

July 16

NOURISHING YOUR QUEER BODIES

The Lesbian Health Initiative invites you to the Montrose Center for its monthly Nourishing Our Queer Bodies roundtable. The LGBTQ health discussion will encourage you to learn, share, and grow through the complexities of maintaining your health. tinyurl.com/y5j47qp3

COMMUNITY

July 18

LIVING IN COLOR

Explore the intersectionality of living the LGBTQ African-American experience during the Mahogany Project's Living in Color event. The forum, which occurs bi-monthly at the Montrose Center, provides personal insight on topics such as social issues, mental health, and community engagement. tinyurl.com/y4nbpugc

COMEDY

July 21

QUEER IMPROV JAM

Head to Station Theater for an LGBTQ comedy event where queer and ally comedians of all experience levels are invited to network and participate in comedy improv onstage. tinyurl.com/y4szs8u5



FACEBOOK STATION THEATER

COMMUNITY

July 21

TEXAS IMPACT HOUSTON INTERFAITH ADVOCACY TRAINING

Hear a panel of Texas faith leaders speak at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church for an Advocacy 101 training. The instructional event will prepare you to speak in front of the Texas Legislature about topics such as immigration reform, climate and energy legislation, and healthcare policy. tinyurl.com/y2opt2bs

COMMUNITY

July 25

LAMBDA NEXTGEN HOUSTON/ EPAH HAPPY HOUR

Mix and mingle with other LGBTQ professionals in Houston at a Guava Lamp Happy Hour hosted by Lambda NextGen Houston and the Executive and Professional Association of Houston (EPAH). The free event is open to the public, and is sponsored by Deep Eddy Vodka. tinyurl.com/y5d2ah9y

COMMUNITY

July 25

INPRINT WRITING WORKOUT WITH STONEWALL 50

Join Inprint, a creative-writing nonprofit, for an interactive activity at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston's Stonewall 50 exhibit. Writer Justin Jannise will lead a workshop that guides attendees to create written responses to the LGBTQ exhibit's photographs, paintings, videos, sculptures, and more. tinyurl.com/y6lvax8d

THEATER

August 8

ACTOUT: MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Join OutSMART at the Alley Theatre for ActOut featuring Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, which tells the story of a lavish trip through Europe that quickly unfolds into a race against time to solve a murder aboard a train. Meet our staff at a complimentary reception following the play. alleytheatre.org/actout

MORE QUEER THINGS TO DO →

QUEER THINGS to DO

SAVE the DATES

MUSIC

August 2

The Dedicated Tour

Queer fan-favorite Carly Rae Jepsen brings her new concert series, The Dedicated Tour, to the House of Blues Houston next month. Just months after the release of her fourth studio album, *Dedicated*, Jepsen's tour is going to give "the gays" everything they want—bubblegum pop, an array of rainbow visuals, and (hopefully) some songs from her critically acclaimed album *E-Mo-Tion*. The Dedicated Tour will be opened by American singer Phoebe Ryan, and Jepsen has partnered with PLUS1, a social justice nonprofit, to donate \$1 from every ticket sold to support Crisis Text Line, a free 24/7 support system for those in danger.

tinyurl.com/yxqv4zwa



THEATER

August 6

'RENT' 20th-Anniversary Tour

RENT has wowed audiences across the globe for over two decades, and Houstonians have another chance to see the rock musical live at the Hobby Center. Written by Jonathan Larson, a little-known composer when his first musical debuted on Broadway in 1996, *RENT*—a re-imagining of Puccini's *La Bohème*—follows an unforgettable year in the lives of seven artists who struggle to follow their dreams without selling out. The Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning musical returns to Houston for only five days in August, so try to snag some tickets while you still can.

tinyurl.com/y5mgtang

COMMUNITY

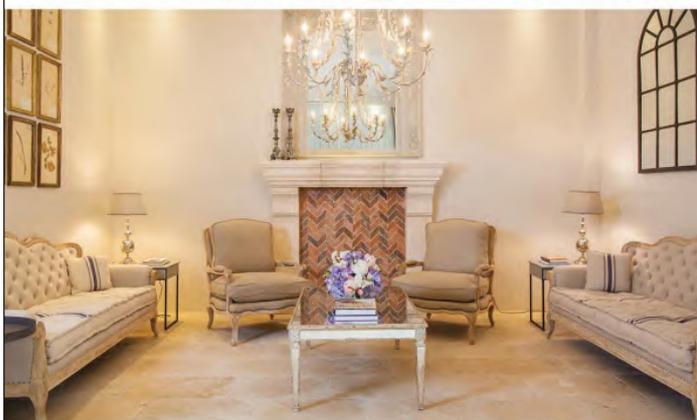
August 17

UH Graduate College of Social Work Celebrates 50 Years

Join the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) to celebrate its 50th anniversary at the UH Hilton Hotel. In honor of 50 years, the GCSW will recognize 50 alumni who have embodied the school's social-justice image. Registration to attend the event is now open online at bit.ly/50Celebration, and if you'd like to purchase a full table for multiple guests or have questions about the event, you can email [Renia S. Butler at rsbutler@uh.edu](mailto:rsbutler@uh.edu).



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Washington Whack-a-Mole

Pence and Pompeo do their part to keep up the crazy.

Living in America today feels like playing a game of Turbo-Whack-a-Mole. Just when you think, “Oh, that’s just the craziest thing ever,” up pops something else to best it, and then another, and another, and by then it’s lunchtime. You get a tuna salad sandwich, and then you have to start all over again whacking crazy crap.

I know you all saw the picture of Donald Trump at Buckingham Palace in a tuxedo with a white vest that was the same length as a lab coat. I think he wore it just in case we suddenly needed someone immediately to cure Ebola. Because he knows all the best formulas, Trump could simply duck into a phone booth, remove only his jacket, and instantly become SuperTech: Man of Test Tubes and Legendary Larceny.

Truth be known, I know for a dead-certain solid fact that somewhere out there is a tuxedo tailor and a gay stylist who are slapping each other on their backs and laughing their butts off.

Then the very minute I stop rolling my eyes over that, vice president Mike Pence pops up outta nowhere, swinging his Bible around and shouting some damn thing about your private body parts. Pence has been called a mediocre man, but that is unwarranted flattery. He is a man of monumental littleness.

Pence is so narrow-minded that he can see through a telescope with both eyes. He is one of those Super-Deluxe Brand Christians who refers to his wife as Mother, which I think is kinky as hell, but not the fun kind of kinky. The fun kind of kinky would be if she called *him* Mother.



Trump & Satan

Is Satan (I) going to run against Donald Trump in the 2020 campaign?

Anyway, Pence was put in charge of making sure we can’t fly the rainbow flag at our foreign embassies around the world during Pride month—because, you know, flags are so damn dangerous. You could be walking by and accidentally get one of those suckers wrapped around your arm and be catapulted into next Tuesday (or at least into the nearest building) and make a helluva mess. I’m sure that happens all the time, but the fake news doesn’t report it all that much because of the gruesome nature of death by rainbow.

Pence made certain that everyone understood that the rainbow flag absolutely cannot be flown under the American flag in foreign countries. I haven’t checked the rules, but since America is forsaking gays in the eyes of the world, I suspect that means every LGBTQ American can be whatever nationality they want during June of every year. It might be fun to be Finnish for a month. Maybe you could legitimately walk like an Egyptian for a month and drive everybody at the office slobbering mad. Or you could be Canadian and act polite

for the first time in your damn life—and don’t argue with me because you know it’s true.

Honey, nothing can be said about Mike Pence that hasn’t already been said about hemorrhoids.

And since we’re talking about old straight white men who work every day to up their jackass quotient, there’s secretary of state Mike Pompeo. He admits that there is climate change, which is a big deal considering no one else in the Republican Party will admit to it. But the bad news is that he doesn’t think there’s a solution other than moving to Mars or maybe Oklahoma (because, you know, not much difference between ’em). According to Pompeo, “The climate’s been changing a long time. There’s always changes that take place. Societies reorganize, we move to different places, we develop technology and innovation. I am convinced that we will do the things necessary as the climate changes.”

First of all, I think that for the past two years the United States could only vaguely be called a “society.” We’re more of a festering

burp of outright nose-punching. Honey, for me, talking to a Republican is like trying to fold a fitted sheet. I finally just want to quit and wad them up in a pile. That’s not a society, that’s chainsaw wrestling.

If we go with Pompeo’s theory that we’ll all move to a “safe” place not decimated by climate-change storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, pollution, fires, floods, and drought, we quickly discover the only safe place is Tedious, Ohio. The downside is that Tedious is not that big. The upside? Brand-new bowling alley.

I gotta tell you that the best campaign idea I’ve heard in a while is that Satan should run in 2020 in order to split the Republican vote.

It’s July! Fry an egg on the sidewalk, and fry your butt on the beach! Until August, just remember: it’s how you show up at the showdown that counts.

Susan Bankston lives in Richmond, Texas, where she writes about her hairdresser at The World’s Most Dangerous Beauty Salon, Inc., at juanitajeans.com.

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By MONICA ROBERTS

The Meaning of July 4

... for black trans Americans.



One of my favorite Frederick Douglass speeches is one he gave on July 5, 1852, entitled *The Meaning of July 4 for the Negro*. That speech pointed out the glaring hypocrisy of America celebrating Independence Day while enslaving millions of African-descended people. Since the 4th is upon us, I decided to write this column in the style of Frederick Douglass' famous speech, but apply it to what is happening with black trans Americans here in Texas and elsewhere in this country.

My fellow Americans.

Once again, we pause to celebrate another birthday of the nation we love. July 4 is also the day when the Declaration of Independence was signed by 56 brave men who put their lives on the line for the principles they believed in.

But there is a group of Americans for which this day that many of you celebrate seems hollow. In this dark time, our transgender siblings are not feeling the national love or

pride in this nation. In fact, we feel there is nothing to celebrate on this day when we have already lost 10 people to anti-trans violence this year.

Say their names. Dana Martin, Ashanti Carmon, Jazzaline Ware, Muhlaysia Booker, Michelle Washington, Claire Legato, Paris Cameron, Chynal Lindsey, Chanel Scurlock, and Zoe Spears.

Their black trans lives have joined the ancestors far too soon because of the anti-trans hate speech and rhetoric coming from the Oval Office, evilgelical church pulpits, and the mouths of right-wing media pundits.

Black trans Americans are dismayed and angered by the silence of both our politicians we helped to elect and our legacy organizations like the NAACP concerning the genocidal levels of violence

being aimed at us.

Why should a black trans American be proud of this nation when they are demonized for being African-American and transgender? Why should we feel proud of a nation that gleefully denies us the ability to earn a decent living by making it easier to prevent us from getting a job?

"WHY SHOULD WE BE PROUD OF A NATION THAT WON'T ALLOW US TO SERVE IN ITS MILITARY BECAUSE A BUNCH OF EVILGELICAL BIGOTS ARE ADVISING THE HISTORICALLY UNQUALIFIED PERSON CURRENTLY OCCUPYING THE WHITE HOUSE TO KEEP US FROM SERVING?"

Why should we be proud of a nation that seeks to deny us medical care or get housing? Why should we be proud of a nation that seeks to pass dehumanizing modern-day Jim Crow laws regulating where we poop and pee?

Why should we be proud of a nation that won't allow us to serve in its military because a bunch of evilgelical bigots are advising the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

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Finding ‘The One’ Later in Life

Are you and your partner a good financial match?



As a 20-something, it is likely that your time revolved around securing a good job and living for the weekend, when you could spend time with friends, relax, and possibly even start to set a little money aside for “the future.”

When we were younger, there wasn't really all that much to lose—at least from a monetary standpoint. But fast-forward the clock a few decades, and our world is a much different place—not just in terms of our cool electronic gadgets and space travel, but also with regard to what we look for in an ideal partner . . . physically, emotionally, and financially.

So if you've worked hard throughout the years and built up a sizeable nest egg, you don't want anything to pull you off track. That includes the way you plan financially when you enter into a new relationship later in life.

Are you and your partner a good financial match?

Money Matters Change as We Age

While starting a new relationship when we're older can be refreshing, there are some important concerns to address if you and your partner intend to move forward together.

For those who are now in “middle age,” there are likely more assets to preserve—not just from market volatility, but also in the event that a spouse or partner doesn't manage money the same way that you do.

Communicating about Money Matters

It's often been said that talking about money with a new partner is taboo. But if your relationship is getting serious, discussing financial matters is an absolute must. This is

particularly the case if the two of you do not necessarily see eye-to-eye on saving, investing, and overall money management.

Financial planning can be a difficult task, especially when you add another person into the mix. Because of that, open communication about financial matters should ideally be at the top of your new relationship's to-do list.

In fact, having in-depth discussions about money can often reveal what your partner's ultimate goals are, as well as why they have (or have not) saved, invested,

and planned in a certain way.

Other Items to Consider

In addition to discussing financial goals,

Because financial planning can be a difficult task, open communication should ideally be at the top of your new relationship's to-do list.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



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- who are failing their current antiretroviral therapy.

It is not known if TROGARZO[®] is safe and effective in children.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

TROGARZO[®] can cause serious side effects, including changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Inflammatory Syndrome), which can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system might

get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. This may result in an inflammatory response which may require further evaluation and treatment. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after receiving TROGARZO[®].

The most common side effects of TROGARZO[®] include diarrhea, dizziness, nausea and rash. These are not all the possible side effects of TROGARZO[®].

Before you receive TROGARZO[®], tell your healthcare provider:

About all your medical conditions.

About all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements.

If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if TROGARZO[®] may harm your unborn baby. Tell your

healthcare provider if you become pregnant during treatment with TROGARZO[®].

If you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you are receiving TROGARZO[®] as it is not known if TROGARZO[®] passes into breast milk. You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

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

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PATIENT INFORMATION

What is TROGARZO?

TROGARZO is a prescription medicine that is used with other antiretroviral medicines to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus-1 (HIV-1) infection in adults who:

- have received several anti-HIV-1 regimens in the past, **and**
- have HIV-1 virus that is resistant to many antiretroviral medicines, **and**
- who are failing their current antiretroviral therapy

HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

It is not known if TROGARZO is safe and effective in children.

Before you receive TROGARZO, tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if TROGARZO may harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant during treatment with TROGARZO.

Pregnancy Registry: There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiretroviral medicines, including TROGARZO during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.

- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you are receiving TROGARZO.

- You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
- It is not known if TROGARZO passes into breast milk.

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How will I receive TROGARZO?

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- **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you stop receiving TROGARZO infusions or stop taking any other antiretroviral medicines.**

What are the possible side effects of TROGARZO?

TROGARZO can cause serious side effects, including:

Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Inflammatory Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system might get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your health care provider right away if you start having new symptoms after receiving TROGARZO.

The most common side effects of TROGARZO include:

- diarrhea
- nausea
- dizziness
- rash

These are not all the possible side effects of TROGARZO.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

You may also report side effects to  **THERA patient support**™ at 1-833-23THERA (1-833-238-4372).

General information about the safe and effective use of TROGARZO.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. You can ask your healthcare provider for information about TROGARZO that is written for health professionals.

What are the ingredients in TROGARZO?

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For more information, call  **THERA patient support**™
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historically unqualified person currently occupying the White House to keep us from serving?

Why should we be proud of a nation that has rolled back President Obama's positive policies and executive orders that were designed to help our community?

You claim to respect the rule of law, the Constitution, and the Bible, but ignore all of those things when it suits you to do so for conservative political advantage.

I already know what you MAGAts are going to say: If you don't like America, leave it.

I will do no such thing. I love this country more than your Fox News-watching behinds ever will. I will not leave, because my ancestors shed four centuries' worth of blood for us to be here in this moment, living better lives than they could have imagined for themselves. I love this country enough to fight for its soul and make it better than it was when I arrived on the planet.

I am not leaving because it would dishonor the memories of all the trans people we have lost to anti-trans violence. It is for their sakes that I must fight with every fiber of my being to create an America that recognizes the fact that the "We the People" in our Constitution unequivocally includes black transgender Americans.

Our nation is increasingly accepting the fact that black trans people not only exist, but the violence being aimed at us must stop. Our people are also increasingly coming to the realization that black trans women are women, black trans men are men, we are an intertwined part of the black American family, and we have much to contribute to make the black community better.

We black trans people exist, and are proud of all the intersections that are housed in our black trans bodies. If some of you in black cis world don't like that, get over it, because we are beyond caring what your loud and ignorant opinion is about that.

You will give us the respect that we are due. We aren't going away, or back into the closet. We black trans Americans are going to work to the best of our ability to make a better world for the trans kids coming behind us. And if that work to make a better world for our trans kids creates a better world for ourselves in the process, then we will consider that as a blessing.

And when that day finally becomes a reality, that will be a July 4 worth celebrating.

Monica Roberts, a native Houstonian, is the founding editor of the GLAAD award-winning blog TransGriot. Her ongoing mission is to educate people on the lives of transgender people and fight for everyone's human rights.

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July 21: Mint Julep is a one-of-a-kind Montrose show benefiting Legacy Community Health. INFO: legacycommunityhealth.org/mintjulep

SAVE THE DATE

August 8: ActOUT at the Alley Theatre presents Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. Pre-curtain event (included with ActOUT ticket) 6 pm, show at 7:30 pm. INFO alleytheatre.org/actout

August 24: Kindred Spirits Celebration Dance. LGBTQ Houston's largest annual dance! INFO: Montrosecenter.org



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there are some other key items to consider as a later-in-life relationship grows stronger. For instance, do you and your partner have adequate health insurance to cover the health issues that older people typically deal with? Have you considered how you would pay for a long-term care need that may arise?

If one or both of you currently owns a home, how will your living arrangements change over time? Will one of you sell your home and move in with the other person? Or will both of you sell your respective homes and purchase a new property together?

If you or your partner are currently receiving income from Social Security, there are several issues you'll need to consider. For instance, marriage will usually impact the amount of benefits that each of you receives. And if either of you is receiving widow or widower's benefits from Social Security, tying the knot could cause this income to stop.

Do you have legal documents in place to take care of and protect each other? Are there other family members to consider? For example, is your partner a caregiver to an elderly parent? These are all things that need to be considered and planned for, as they can have a big impact on your financial health.

Getting a New Financial Plan in Place

Regardless of whether or not you and your partner decide to combine your finances, it is important to know where you stand financially in terms of your short- and long-term goals. For instance, do you know how much you'll need in order to create sufficient long-lasting income down the road? With people living longer today, this is a top priority, as you will probably need your investments to generate an income stream for 20 or more years in retirement. On top of that, a plan should be put in place that can help you deal with a costly healthcare need, inflation, and taxes.

Finally, you should look at the possible reduction in retirement income for the surviving partner when the other partner passes away. Will this become a major problem that needs to be addressed now?

Working with an experienced financial advisor who is also adept at planning for the LGBTQ community can help ensure that your financial plan is aligned with the most recent legislation and qualifies you for the Social Security income and other benefits that you and your partner are entitled to.

Grace S. Yung, CFP, is a certified financial planner practitioner with experience in helping domestic partners plan their finances since 1994. She is a principal at Midtown Financial Group LLC in Houston and was recognized as a "Five-Star Wealth Manager" in the September 2017 issue of Texas Monthly. Yung can be reached at grace.yung@lpl.com.



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AFH's John Huckaby has been named CEO.

The Race to Zero

AIDS Foundation Houston welcomes new leadership from a not-so-newcomer.

By SAM BYRD

Photo by THOMAS ROBINSON, AFH

A familiar face has assumed the helm at AIDS Foundation Houston (AFH). John Huckaby recently accepted the title of CEO, after having been associated with the organization since the early '90s. He took this leadership position after a stint with the American Red Cross in Houston and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"The opportunity to come home to AIDS Foundation Houston brought me back. I have watched this organization grow [over the years]," he says. "I remember the people who have worked here, the thousands of volunteers, the people who show up for the annual AIDS Walks and AIDS Luncheons. Their courage always inspired me, and it was a great joy to come home and serve this great organization when I saw the opportunity."

Huckaby's initial desire to get involved with the nonprofit stemmed from his experiences at a young age. He cites his family's values as a large component of his passion for community service.

"Our parents instilled in us a sense of

social responsibility—caring for one another, and a sense of looking beyond ourselves to the needs of the greater community. We were taught to see our lives as a sense of vocation—a calling to do good," Huckaby explains.

He also recalls the AIDS-related death of a family member, and reading the obituaries of deceased Texans, as factors in his calling.

"We grew up in the age of the trauma and crisis of HIV/AIDS, and I remember all the pioneers who inspired me, and feeling the need to be a part of this effort. I wanted to fight this disease and bring dignity to the people who suffered, and I still feel strongly about that today," he says.

Huckaby first started working at AFH as a case manager handling direct client care. He says he would meet people in their homes and help them navigate their needs. "I helped put together a plan of care for them to live their best lives, until the end of their lives. That was the great majority of what we did in the late '80s and '90s, when HIV/AIDS progressed quite rapidly and people died quickly," he said.

Since then, his job responsibilities within

AFH have shifted as treatments—and the needs of HIV/AIDS-affected communities—have evolved. "Some things have changed, and some things have remained the same. We have medicines today that have the ability to help people [who are at risk for] HIV to remain free from the virus. PrEP is easy to take and adhere to [as prevention] therapy. With the advances in social media, we have new ways of reaching out to target populations that we didn't have 30 years ago," he says. "We have advancements in the treatment of HIV itself so that patients can achieve undetectability. If [the virus is] undetectable, it's not transmittable. This is a huge benefit in the fight."

He added that one battle AFH still fights is the stigma of HIV, and the fear of getting tested and learning the result.

"Seventeen percent of people with HIV in Houston don't know they have HIV, and that's a huge concern for us," he emphasizes.

With such a history at AFH, Huckaby has seen the changes throughout the years and has plans for guiding the organization in its mission to lead Houston to zero new infections. →



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John Huckaby (l) with his partner, Sheng Chung, who is a UH art professor.

From its humble beginnings, AFH has always been a grassroots organization that is supported and elevated by the LG-BTQ community. Huckaby credits the group's leaders and activists with making AFH what it is, and helping it to join the national conversation about the AIDS crisis.

"This is how we were founded, and we've never forgotten our roots," he says.

Over the years, with its Ryan White CARE Act and other national funding, AFH has grown in its ability to further commit to AIDS prevention and client care. Robust programs include a variety of community-testing opportunities, a PrEP clinic, and targeted community intervention in the city and beyond. AFH has also bolstered its ability to provide supportive housing and wellness services for the area's most vulnerable groups, which include people living in poverty, homeless populations, and the incarcerated.

Now that he is leading AFH, Huckaby looks to the future with even sharper focus and drive.

"First of all, we want to ensure that our prevention teams have all the resources they

need as they go out into the community and conduct outreach programs to provide testing and [promote PrEP treatment] for people who need it, and to make sure we are partnering," he says. "Partnerships are key. I see us partnering closely with the community and [its healthcare] providers so that we are offering all the wrap-around care to make sure people remain in care. We want to be fully engaged with people who support us."

He emphasizes that partnerships, especially within the LG-BTQ community, are vital. "[AFH values] good partners in the LGBTQ community because we know where we have come from, and we know that support is so critical."

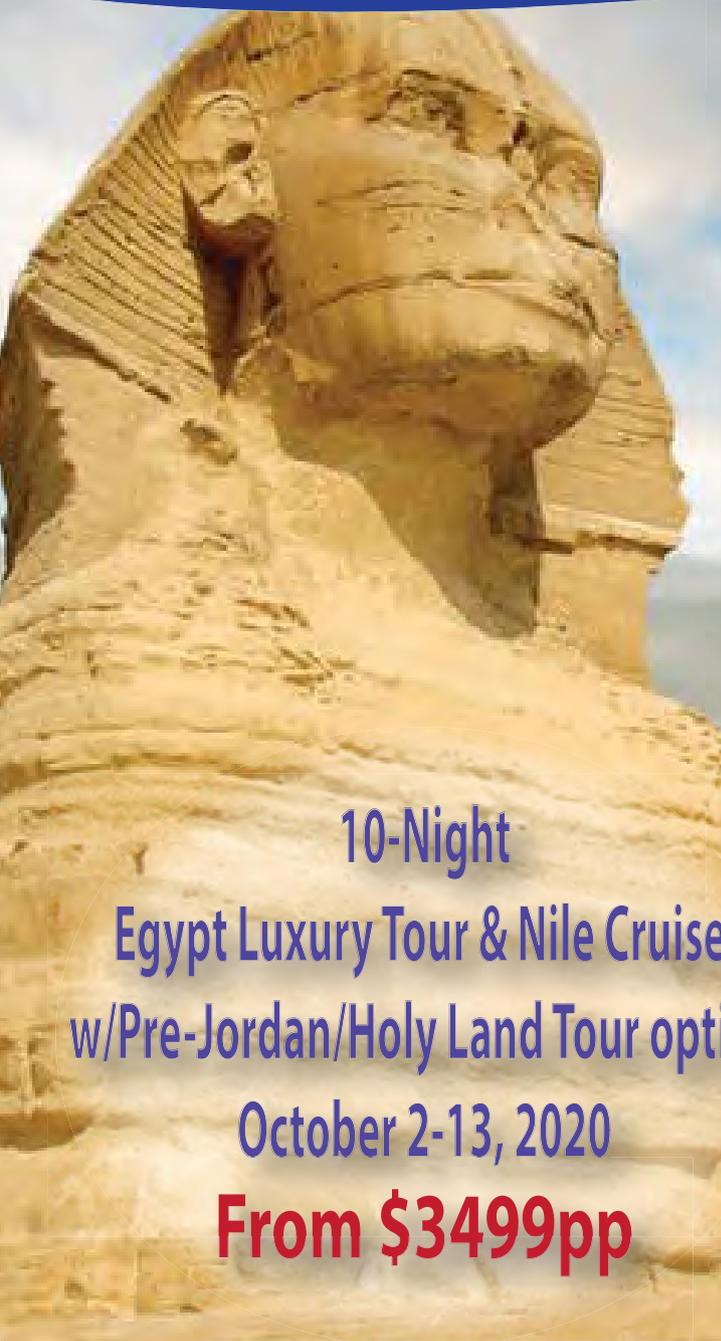
In addition to the bridge-building that AFH fosters throughout the area, there's one special partnership that keeps Huckaby going—the one with his lover, Sheng Chung, who is a professor of art education at the University of Houston. The Montrose residents enjoy gardening and the outdoors, traveling, the company of family, and the companionship of their dog, Baby Girl. ▼

“WE WANT TO ENSURE OUR PREVENTION TEAMS HAVE ALL THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO CONDUCT OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND TESTING.”

—John Huckaby

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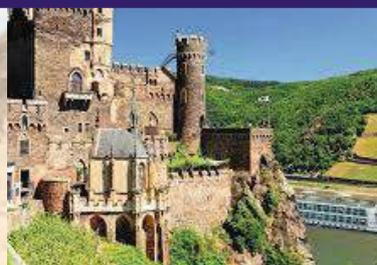
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This is only a brief summary of important information about DOVATO and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and treatment.

What is the Most Important Information I Should Know about DOVATO?

If you have both human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Resistant HBV infection.** Your healthcare provider will test you for HBV infection before you start treatment with DOVATO. If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B, the hepatitis B virus can change (mutate) during your treatment with DOVATO and become harder to treat (resistant). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in people who have HIV-1 and HBV infection.
- **Worsening of HBV infection.** If you have HIV-1 and HBV infection, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking DOVATO. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before. Worsening liver disease can be serious and may lead to death.
 - Do not run out of DOVATO. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your DOVATO is all gone.
 - **Do not stop DOVATO without first talking to your healthcare provider.** If you stop taking DOVATO, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your liver.

What is DOVATO?

DOVATO is a prescription medicine that is used without other antiretroviral medicines to treat HIV-1 infection in adults: who have not received antiretroviral medicines in the past, **and** without known resistance to the medicines dolutegravir or lamivudine. HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take DOVATO?

Do Not Take DOVATO if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine that contains dolutegravir or lamivudine.
- take dofetilide.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using DOVATO?

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have or have had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- have kidney problems.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. One of the medicines in DOVATO (dolutegravir) may harm your unborn baby.
 - **You should not take DOVATO if you are planning to become pregnant or during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.** Your healthcare provider may prescribe a different medicine if you are planning to become pregnant or become pregnant during treatment with DOVATO.
 - If you can become pregnant, your healthcare provider will perform a pregnancy test before you start treatment with DOVATO.
 - If you can become pregnant, you should consistently use effective birth control (contraception) during treatment with DOVATO.
 - Tell your healthcare provider right away if you are planning to become pregnant, you become pregnant, or think you may be pregnant during treatment with DOVATO.

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you: (cont'd)

- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed if you take DOVATO.**
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - One of the medicines in DOVATO (lamivudine) passes into your breastmilk.
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Some medicines interact with DOVATO. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with DOVATO.
- **Do not start taking a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take DOVATO with other medicines.

What are Possible Side Effects of DOVATO?

DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the “What is the Most Important Information I Should Know about DOVATO?” section.
- **Allergic reactions. Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with DOVATO. Stop taking DOVATO and get medical help right away if you develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms:** fever; generally ill feeling; tiredness; muscle or joint aches; blisters or sores in mouth; blisters or peeling of the skin; redness or swelling of the eyes; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue; problems breathing.
- **Liver problems.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with DOVATO. Liver problems, including liver failure, have also happened in people without a history of liver disease or other risk factors. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your liver.
Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems: your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice); dark or “tea-colored” urine; light-colored stools (bowel movements); nausea or vomiting; loss of appetite; and/or pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area.
- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms that could be signs of lactic acidosis:** feel very weak or tired; unusual (not normal) muscle pain; trouble breathing; stomach pain with nausea and vomiting; feel cold, especially in your arms and legs; feel dizzy or lightheaded; and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Lactic acidosis can also lead to severe liver problems,** which can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the signs or symptoms of liver problems which are listed above under “Liver problems.” You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female or very overweight (obese).**



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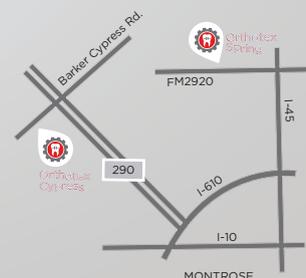
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On June 13, Macy's celebrated Transgender Pride with a fashion show. Pictured are the models.



On June 14, Mayor Annise Parker hosted a reception benefiting Senator Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona at the home of Annise Parker and Kathy Hubbard. Pictured are Senator Kyrsten Sinema, Mayor Annise Parker, and Harris County Democratic Chair Lillie Schechter with elected officials and supporters.



On June 7, Pride Houston held its Pride Grand Marshals Reception at Hamburger Mary's. Pictured are Harrison Guy, Judge Shannon Baldwin, Mike Webb, Greg Griffin, Lo Roberts, Monica Roberts, Constable Alan Rosen, Atlantis Narcisse, and Dee Dee Watters.



The Houston Pride Band performed "The American Journey" concert at MATCH on June 15. Pictured are Jimmy Huynh, Judy Hsiang, Kevin Molander, and Jaunetta Cooper.

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A Magical Place that Music Built

Young symphony musicians form the heart of this Texas musical mecca.

By KAREN DERR

Patrons of the Round Top Music Festival will tell you that renowned concert pianist James Dick built a magnificent concert hall in Round Top, Texas. But James Dick (who will tell you to call him Jimmy) doesn't demand top billing. Even though he is the founder and artistic director of the Festival Hill Institute, it's clear that this Texas musical mecca has taken on a life of its own.

Founded almost 50 years ago with the encouragement of the legendary Miss Ima Hogg, the first performances were held in rented space on the Round Top town square, and then outdoors on a transportable stage. In 1981, construction began on the grand concert hall where orchestral performances now take place. There is also an historic chapel where chamber music is performed during the festival. The chapel also serves as a wedding venue throughout the year.

In the tiny town of Round Top, which claims to be the smallest incorporated town in Texas, the concert hall seems to have been transported from another world in a bygone era. Set in the land of quaint "painted lady" churches, the concert hall's old-world craftsmanship on a grand scale would dwarf every other structure for miles around—if it weren't totally hidden from passersby on Highway 237 by a dense forest planted by the institute decades ago. Thousands pass by it twice each

year to attend the Round Top and Warrenton antique shows, barely noticing the small Festival Hill sign at the corner of Jaster Road.

The ornate concert hall's carved-wood interior (the work of local Czech artisans and wood carvers) is not just stunningly beautiful to look at, but also enhances the building's acoustics. It is said that being inside the carved wooden interior is like being inside a large musical instrument. The Texas State Senate, in a 2017 commendation of Dick's achievements, described Festival Hill as a "European-style campus which is a gem of the state's thriving cultural arts community."

Each year, top-tier students from universities and conservatories across the United States and around the world compete by blind audition for full scholarships to the Festival Hill Institute's six-week program of master-level instruction and performances alongside the distinguished faculty. The "flag plaza," located in the formal gardens, flies the flag of each country represented by that year's students and faculty. For six weeks, the young artists and faculty live on campus, take meals together, and rehearse in the concert hall and the chapel (a circa 1883 Methodist church moved to Festival Hill from nearby LaGrange). Master classes and rehearsals during the week are open to the public, and tickets to the weekend symphony and chamber-music performances start at just \$25 for adults.

The Festival Hill Institute students, whose average age is around 22, are referred to as young-adult artists. Total immersion in world-class instruction and an intense rehearsal schedule allow the students to achieve a level of professionalism beyond their years. New repertoire is learned and performed each week, sometimes with different conductors. Dick designed the program to prepare gifted musicians for the rigors of real-world performance careers. He explains, "That's the kind of important professional work they're getting here, which cannot, for so many reasons, be achieved at a conservatory or university. I'm proud of that." This is attested to by the alumni (now numbering in the thousands) who have gone on to join prestigious orchestras throughout the country, including the New York Philharmonic. Several have returned to Festival Hill over the years as faculty members.

Eight renowned conductors will work with the Texas Festival Orchestra during this summer's program, presenting 30 concerts in just six weeks. July performance dates are July 1-12. For a full schedule, go to FestivalHill.org. Tickets are available online or by calling the office at 979-249-3129. Tickets may be purchased at the door, subject to availability.



Falling in Love at Festival Hill

By KAREN DERR | Photo by DALTON DEHART

Back in early 2015, designer Fernando Shannonhouse was planning a weekend trip to the Round Top Antiques Fair when he happened upon the Festival Hill Institute website. Intrigued, he told his husband, Hugh Shannonhouse (whom he was dating at the time) that they should check it out while they were in the area. Although the music festival was not in season, they pulled into the Festival Hill campus and were greeted by Richard Royall, who passed away in April of this year after serving for almost fifty years as the Institute's managing director. Fernando says they could not have run into a more perfect person to introduce them to Festival

Hill. He gave them a private tour of the campus, including its historic buildings, concert hall, and gardens. "Richard kind of put his arm around us that first day," recalls Hugh. "We're always looking for a fun day trip, and that's why we were out there. It touches so many elements that are attractive to us. The concerts, the grounds, the rural environment, the beautiful architecture, the stonework of the plaza—it's just so unique," explains Hugh. "And that magnificent concert hall. We still love to walk in and just stand back and marvel."

When Hugh and Fernando returned to Festival Hill the next year, they became engaged there in a beautifully restored circa-1883 chapel where chamber music →



COUNCIL QUARTET

Pianist Matthew Everett (l), festival founder James Dick, and Fernando and Hugh Shannonhouse are key members of the Festival Hill Institute's Founder's Council.

is performed.

Since discovering Festival Hill and its yearly Round Top Music Festival 4½ years ago, the couple also became friends with founder James Dick and associate managing director Lamar Lentz, who curates the Institute's museum collections. Hugh, who is CEO of Preva Surgical Partners, joined the Festival Hill Institute's Founder's Council this year. He describes the council as "a broad group of folks of all ages and backgrounds who are asked to participate by James Dick and are looked upon as the core supporters of Festival Hill. It's a mix of local patrons and Houstonians, with one member coming from as far away as Atlanta. Some of the members have been on the council for 35 or 40 years." He says once you fall in love with Festival Hill, you don't fall out of love.

Pianist Matthew Everett is a Round Top alumnus who also joined the Founder's Council recently. He shared, "What I learned as a student at the Round Top Festival Institute—without a doubt—shaped me as a musician. But it's the mission of the organization that inspires me and has helped me to clarify my own purpose and

vision as an artist. While I am extremely grateful to have been a student at the Festival Institute, and for how I benefited from that experience, the organization's contribution to our society and culture is what excites me. So when I was asked to be a member of the Founder's Council, I was thrilled and honored." Matthew will be competing this month in the Windsor International Piano Competition near London.

While Hugh and Matthew are involved in fundraising and outreach, Fernando has focused his expertise in landscape design on the vast gardens and grounds of Festival Hill. He says, "We've become such friends with the Institute that they trust us enough to get us involved where they need help. That's such an honor for us."

Approximately 40 acres of the 210-acre campus are in formal gardens that include many rare specimens and herbs. The site is host to an Annual Herbal Forum each March, which celebrated its 25th year this past spring. Fernando is currently organizing gardening groups to adopt designated portions of the grounds. Groups can either support monetarily or by volunteering to work at the

campus, planting and maintaining the gardens and trails. The grounds, the historic buildings, and the stunning concert hall are all a part of the Round Top Music Festival experience. Normally peaceful and bucolic, Hugh says that during the festival "it's just alive. You've got all these young people there, and there's an electricity in the air. The average age of the young artists is 22, so you can imagine."

Lately, Fernando and Hugh Shannonhouse are spending more time in Round Top and say they'd even like to own a country place in the area some day. They enjoy the restaurants and shops, and there are plenty of bed-and-breakfast inns and cabins to rent when they make a weekend of it. Hugh's advice is, "If you want to have a great, fun day trip, go to Round Top, kick around the town, have some good food to eat, and then go to a concert at Festival Hill." Visitors are certain to be inspired by the music and the setting—and, like the Shannonhouses, may even fall in love. After all, there is an inscription just outside the chapel entrance where the couple became engaged that reads, "Why dream the ordinary?" ▼

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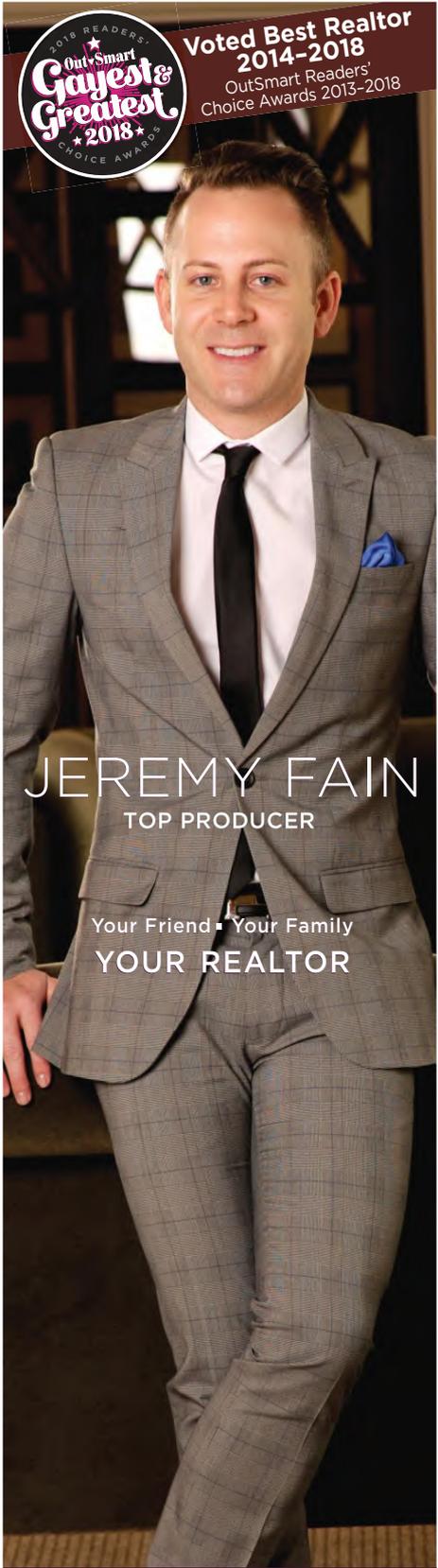
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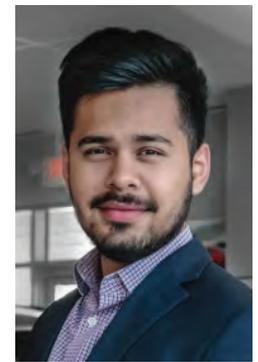
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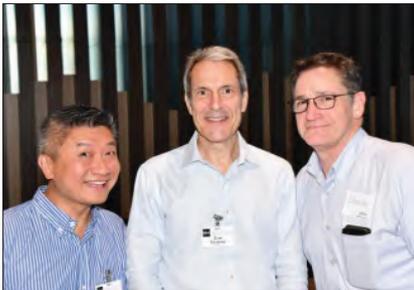
On May 29, **Theatre Under The Stars** held Out@TUTS night (sponsored by OUTSMART) after a performance of *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*. Pictured are Regina Blake-Dubois with members of the cast.



On May 30, the **Contemporary Arts Museum Houston** (CAMH) held a night of dance commemorating Stonewall 50. Pictured are some of the performers.



On June 2, **The Houston Gaymers** held their 10th-anniversary meetup event at Houston Sharespace. Pictured are Christian Wyman, Kevin Quam, and Rod Scheirman.



On June 6, EPAH held its Open Social Rush Membership Drive at the Latitude Medical Center. Pictured are Ken Ng, Tom Seymour, and Charles McFerrin.



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South Bend Tribune at the age of 33. His essay nodded to the fact that the Supreme Court would soon decide on whether same-sex marriage was legal nationally by writing that he thought his public coming-out “could do some good” for people struggling with their sexuality.

“It took me a while to come out—a long while, even to myself. It was a long road of self-awareness and struggle and denial,” Buttigieg told an audience in Iowa in June. “Even after I did come out to myself and started to tell friends and was elected mayor of my hometown, it was easy to drag my feet about telling anyone else.”

Buttigieg’s rise from small-city mayor to standout presidential candidate has turned him into a gay icon, a position that even the mayor has said was unlikely for him just a few years ago.

“It’s a huge factor,” James Olearchik, a 42-year-old educator from Brooklyn, said about the mayor’s sexuality. “It is a real moment for our community to sort of take the national stage in a way that says, yes, he is a gay candidate but there is a lot more to him. And I want to make sure I am supporting that and supporting my community.”

Buttigieg wrote in his 2019 campaign

memoir that by coming out later in life, he didn’t want to become “a poster child for LGBTQ issues.” And in speeches to LGBTQ groups on the campaign trail—including an emotional address at the Victory Fund National Champagne Brunch in Washington earlier this year—Buttigieg has said, “If you had shown me exactly what it was that made me gay, I would have cut it out with a knife.”

“Thank God there was no knife,” he added.

Other LGBTQ lawmakers, like former congressman Barney Frank, have watched Buttigieg’s rise with astonishment, bewildered by the fact that a gay politician would reach such heights.

“It’s a sign of enormous progress,” said Frank, who married his longtime partner, James Ready, in 2012, making him the first gay politician to be married in office. “I would have told you three or four years ago [that] a gay candidate will be OK, but I didn’t think it will be an asset.”

“It keeps moving quicker,” Frank added, cognizant that then-senator Barack Obama did not favor same-sex marriage during his 2008 run, and only backed marriage equality in 2012, a mere seven years ago.

Parker said Buttigieg’s candidacy, in and of itself, is groundbreaking.

“Every day that Pete Buttigieg is part of

this amazing campaign, he sets new standards and he breaks new ground,” she said.

But it’s also the unsaid moments—like when Buttigieg announced his campaign and was embraced onstage by his husband, Chasten—that reverberate beyond the LGBTQ community and normalize gay marriages for many Americans who may not see gay couples on a regular basis, Parker said.

“It is even more powerful when he stands up, hand-in-hand with his husband, and that image is beamed into American households all across America,” said Parker. “He is opening up who we are as LGBTQ people, he is changing the image of who we are, and he is broadening our representation.”

The couple closed the event by asking each other what made them smile today. Buttigieg said “the crowd,” but Chasten asked the audience to raise their hands if they had ever felt singled out or ostracized. Nearly everyone raised their hands.

Chasten then asked who would be willing to help a person who felt that way, and every hand shot up, leading the mayor’s husband to say that is what makes him smile every day.

Buttigieg smiled, turned to the audience and said, “Did I marry up, or what?”

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Calling the Church to End White Supremacy

Queer black Lutheran preacher Lenny Duncan discusses his new book on July 16.

By LOURDES ZAVALA

Photos courtesy of FORTRESS PRESS

Lenny Duncan was 13 when he ran away from his parents' abusive home and was forced onto the streets of West Philadelphia.

"I experienced homelessness until I was 19 years old," Duncan, now 40, recalls. "I traveled across the country, couch-surfing with friends. I struggled with alcohol abuse. I was incarcerated. My life was rooted in the cracks of society. The last thing you'd ex-

pect is that I would go on to become a pastor."

Duncan, a black man who identifies as queer, was standing in the back of a Grateful Dead concert in 2010 when he finally decided to quit drinking. "You're getting sober today," Duncan heard a voice at the show say, and he never turned back.

"For some reason I associated that voice with Jesus Christ of Nazareth," Duncan says. "I didn't immediately tell anyone that. I mean,

I'll be honest—it sounds a little unhinged. But I believed the voice. That was grace for me."

Duncan began visiting various Christian churches with Saturday-night services so his friends wouldn't suspect that he'd been worshipping on Sundays. He remembers showing up to a different service every week in a T-shirt and a baseball hat, singing and dancing off-key, and putting 10 percent of his earnings into an offering basket.

It wasn't until Duncan came across a Lutheran church that he finally decided to devote himself to one denomination. "The ELCA was the only church I'd ever been to that was up-front about being queer-affirming," he says, referring to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. "In other churches, there were always rules and restrictions about people's relationships, or whether they were giving enough. The ELCA told me that *nothing* would stop me from experiencing God. It was revolutionary."

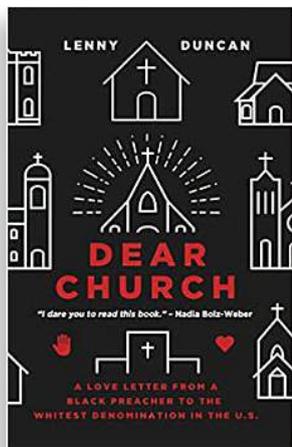
After being asked to preach at an ELCA congregation, "the entire game changed for me," Duncan says. He is now a rostered minister within the denomination, and preaches at Jehu's Table in Brooklyn, New York.

"I wanted to use my position as a preacher to [lead] the church's reformation," Duncan says, "to fight for the Black Lives Matter movement and for the complete acceptance of my queer siblings."

Duncan's latest project to transform the ELCA (a denomination with 65 American bishops, only four of whom are people of color) is the release of his new book *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.* Duncan will visit Kindred Montrose on July 16 to read and sign copies of the book, which is now for sale online.

"*Dear Church* calls the church to dismantle white supremacy," Duncan says. "White supremacy has led to all of the other ills in our society, including transphobia, queerphobia, toxic masculinity, and even the current presidential administration. If Christians led the way to stop this, imagine what this would say to the millions of people who have been hurt by the church."

Duncan originally began writing *Dear Church* as a personal memoir, but his publishers at Fortress Press suggested he write about where he saw the future of the ELCA going instead. "I was kinda pissed off," Duncan says. "I already talk a lot of shit on social media, and I constantly push the church to do things it doesn't want to do. I'm a young minister. If a book like the one they wanted from me got published, I'd likely have no friends left."



WORDS OF WISDOM

Pastor Lenny Duncan shares his spiritual journey and beliefs in his new book, *Dear Church*. The publication asks "the whitest church in America" to boldly address society's injustices.

After some back-and-forth emails, Duncan facetiously sent his publishers a sample table of contents for *Dear Church*, which included chapter titles such as "Dismantling White Supremacy and the Power of the Gospel," "The Church Is Queer," and "Resisting White Nationalism Is the Way of Jesus." Fortress Press greenlighted the project, and Duncan began writing.

"I truly believe that right now, the Christian church in America is in a very dangerous place," Duncan says, "but it is also a place full of hope. I think the church is ready to have these conversions, so that we can reorient and be more like Jesus."

Duncan invites OUTSMART readers to his July 16 book signing, where he will speak further on how the ECLA should approach white supremacy and other world issues.

"Come to the event," Duncan says. "Meet me in person, and see if I'm full of it."

What: Lenny Duncan free book signing and Q&A discussion

When: July 16, 7:00 p.m.

Where: Kindred Montrose, 2515 Waugh Dr.

Info: lennyduncan.com or kindredmontrose.org

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Art with a Global Perspective

Artist Philip Karjeker depicts queer complexity.

By BILL ARNING
Photo by RYAN ANDREW

In quintessential Houston style, Philip Karjeker has energized the queer arts community here with his global perspective, informed art-making practice, and his richly multicultural background. He is a cofounder of the gay multigenerational arts think tank Qollec-tive, with recent exhibitions at G Spot Gallery and Alabama Song. Karjeker's voice is both matter-of-fact (with its images reflecting the daily realities of gay men's lives) yet also able to engage with the grander mythic iconography of queer images.

Karjeker was born in Philadelphia in 1991, shortly before his family moved to Texas. His father is Indian and Cape Malay, the latter being a hybrid Muslim identity out of Capetown, South Africa. His mother can claim Russian, Jewish, and Filipino ancestry. Karjeker was raised Jewish by a mother who liked art and a father who preferred debating politics.

Karjeker's complex professional biography helps account for the many different influences that inform his art. He first studied the history of art at the University of Texas in Austin as an undergrad. Then queer art inspired him to write his honors thesis on Robert Rauschenberg's early work, based on the album of Carmen Jones. Karjeker then aimed for a life in museum work, and enjoyed a summer abroad in Tuscany before attending the Sotheby's Institute in London to study the visual-arts business, including intellectual property law. He then lived in Barcelona to work with antique furniture before moving to New York to work as a gallery guide at the Guggenheim Museum in 2016.

Two shows he got to explicate for visitors were those of the Italian artist Alberto Burri and the Swiss collaborative team Fischli/Weiss. Burri was a mid-century European master famous for memorial paintings with

burnt surfaces evoking Europe's post-World War II devastation. Fischli and Weiss are conceptual pranksters known for their laugh-out-loud results. Both are clear influences on Karjeker's sensibility.

Karjeker recalls with amusement his encounter with film-celebrity John Waters, who visited an exhibit and told Karjeker to "f--k off" when Karjeker told Waters how much he loves Waters' camp-classic *Pink Flamingos*—only to realize much later that no director wants to hear that their earliest film experiments are still the ones most loved by the general public.

Surviving in New York is always tough on young artists, so after three particularly lean months Karjeker returned to the more-affordable Houston and its supportive art world. He had come out in his teens to his high-school art teachers in Clear Lake, and never considered himself to be closeted. The art he made when he first returned home was a series of joyful

abstractions resembling the glorious Kandinsky paintings that he saw during his time at the Guggenheim.

Karjeker's desire to make beautiful paintings, and his critical eye in studying cultural artifacts that reflect his hybrid identity, led to a series of works that have established his reputation as one of the foremost queer image-makers in Texas. Individual objects are adoringly presented on either gold, royal blue, or rainbow grounds. While he is not formally trained in the tradition of Indian miniature painting, it's hard to not think of these bejeweled wonders when looking at his work. His love of cartoons and anime is equally apparent.

Karjeker's gay Jewish persona is seen in a beautifully described study of a loaf of challah bread. Another work shows the iconic cartoon scene with Bugs Bunny in drag as Wagner's Brünnhilde. That animated masterpiece turned a whole generation of gay men on to both drag and opera. (When that cartoon was shown at G Spot Gallery, scores of gay men over 50 shared their stories of seeing this cartoon as kids and being forever changed by it.)

In the Stonewall 50/50 exhibition that I curated in New York City this summer, I included two works by Karjeker. One was a



STONEWALL 50/50

One of two Karjeker works that Arning included in his New York exhibit honoring the Stonewall anniversary.

shrine to poppers on a gold ground that reflected the artist's interest in the type of sexual license that is implied by visibly carrying poppers. The piece is called Socrates Swallowed

Hemlock (2018) and ambivalently evokes an historical moment of valiant queer self-sacrifice. Karjeker notes that if Socrates was indeed found guilty of corrupting the youth of Athens, the poppers similarly "corrupted" the artist by vanquishing his once-conservative views on acceptable sexual expression.

Karjeker's second work from Stonewall 50/50 is entitled Cupid and Psyche (2019), in which two Truvada pills nestle in the middle of a gold circle. If the poppers relate to the artist's exploration of anal pleasure, the adoring representation of Truvada as PrEP treatment conjures a whole generation's gratitude for the reclaimed sexual pleasures that had been banished for three decades.

Yet as much as Karjeker is by and large a celebratory image maker, tragedy appears in his profoundly moving Pulse memorial work, titled simply June 12, 2016. Small gold triangles mark the death of each victim who was killed in the Pulse nightclub massacre. In its joyful colors and subtlety, the painting serves to remind us that our greatest sorrows are interwoven with our most resonant pleasures. ▼

Bill Arning is a curator, critic, and founder of Bill Arning Contemporary Art Consultants.

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On June 6, Pride Houston held the Pride Superstar Finale at Rich's. Pictured are Angelina DM Trailz, Danie Ward, Jeremy Fain, and Lo Roberts.



On June 12, the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce held their monthly "Brewing Up Business" and ribbon-cutting at SignatureCare Emergency Center in Bellaire. Pictured are some of the Chamber's board members with the SignatureCare staff.



On June 8, Round Top Music Festival's 2019 opening-night concert featured the Texas Festival Orchestra with internationally known pianist and festival founder James Dick. Pictured is James Dick with musicians and supporters.



The Houston Pride Band performed "The American Journey" concert at MATCH on June 15. Pictured are (front row) Leslie Jared, Paul Norris, (second row) Fernando Arteaga, Jason Stephens, Jeffrey Taylor, Deborah Hirsch, (third row) Ryan Fountain, and Jorge Gutierrez.

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On June 14, the Harris County Democratic Party held a fundraiser for Senator Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona at the home of Tommy O'Neill and Brent Whitely. Pictured are Council Member Mike Laster, Judge Jason Cox, Judge Beau Miller, Judge Kelli Johnson, Judge Shannon Baldwin, Senator Kyrsten Sinema, Harris County Democratic Chair Lillie Schechter, Judge Steven Kirkland, and Judge Jim Kovach.



On June 18, Pride Houston celebrated Dine with Pride at the Montrose Shake Shack. Pictured are Rochelle Hudson and Venita Howard-Curtis.



On June 20, Microsoft presented an in-store panel discussion and mixer at Microsoft Galleria. Pictured are Anthony Ferrell, Jen Martinsen, Sallie Wyatt-Woodell, Angelina DM Trail, Atlantis Narcisse, and Kennedy Loftin.



On June 21, the Diana Foundation held a luncheon at American Grill with a Dianas History Book presentation to Mayor Sylvester Turner and the City of Houston. Pictured are Nathan Wright, Tanner Williams, Kim Cooper, Mayor Sylvester Turner, John Heinzerling, Marc Matejowsky, Michael Liebbert, Brandon Wolf, Terry Hamman, and Michael Broderick.

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Queer actors gear up for outlandish play collection at Mildred's Umbrella.

By DON MAINES

Three LGBTQ actors—a gay man, a transgender male, and a nonbinary person—will perform in two rounds of *Museum of Dysfunction XI: The Best of a Decade of Short Plays* at 8 p.m. July 18–20 and 25–27 at Spring Street Studios.

“Since 2008, Mildred’s Umbrella has celebrated the dark, quirky, and absurd with a collection of short pieces submitted by emerging and established playwrights,” says Jennifer Decker, the artistic director of Mildred’s Umbrella Theatre Company. “For the 11th annual short-play festival, the company is revisiting their favorites from the last 10 years in a ‘best of’ edition that features many of the original directors and casts.”

The festival’s director, Leighza F. Walker, explains that she felt compelled to host the “best of” show while in rehearsal last year for the 10th annual *Museum of Dysfunction (MoD)*. “Fans can experience these shows again, and a new generation of fans can be born. I asked past participants, ‘What’s the first *MoD* piece that springs to mind?’ and received a variety of answers with themes that captured the imaginations of a wide collection of creatives.”

Dennis Draper, Milo Michel, and Clarity Welch jumped at the opportunity to reprise their roles from past shows.

Dennis Draper

The last time fans saw Dennis Draper onstage, he wore “an adult onesie,” portraying a baby in “Syllogistic Infantilism” by Abby Koenig.

After that *MoD* in 2015, Draper took a hiatus to become a foster dad to his teenage



says Draper, who is busy in his 19th year as the director of events and operations at the Alley Theatre. “This show is the first real thing I’ve done, besides readings at the Alley. I love acting, I love directing, so hopefully I will start doing more theater. I have missed it as an artistic outlet, so I’m crocheting, and I am one cat away from becoming that cat lady.”

Draper grew up in Henderson, Texas, where he began acting in school and community-theater productions.

“The Henderson Civic Theatre was my home,” he says. “I wasn’t out till college, but the older people at the theater could tell; they knew. It was a safe and protective, comfortable place.”

Draper was involved in every play at school, including his especially memorable turn as Victor Velasco, the lecherous neighbor who courts a newlywed’s lonely mother in Neil Simon’s *Barefoot in the Park*. To play the aging Albanian playboy, Draper says, “I died my hair jet-black. It was hilarious.”

Next, Draper spent two years at nearby Kilgore College before transferring to the University of Houston. As the first person in his family to go to college, he graduated from UH with a bachelor of arts degree in theater.

cousin, Blue, who has since graduated from Bellaire High School and moved out on his own.

Serving as a foster parent “has been a challenge,”

“I moved to Houston in 1992, so I was here for Edward Albee premiering *The Lorca Play* at UH,” Draper remembers. “I was offered free tickets to the Alley, but I lived on campus my first year and I was scared to drive downtown.”

For several years, Draper worked in the Alley’s box office. When he moved to group sales, he helped create Night OUT at the Alley, which became ActOUT.

A favorite gig for Draper was directing Paul Rudnick’s *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, with biblical couples named Adam & Steve and Jane & Mabel frolicking in a très gay Garden of Eden. That 2010 show for Unhinged Productions was performed at a playhouse on Navigation Boulevard.

“It was exciting for Houston to have gay theater,” says Draper. “Who knows? Maybe it will happen again.”



Milo Michel

There’s a reason that transgender Milo Michel’s acting résumé doesn’t reflect his vast experience on stage as a youth.

“I feel uncomfortable listing roles where I played the wrong gender,” he says. “Some of them were leads. But if I tell people I played Penny Pingleton in *Hairspray*, they can’t believe it.”

On the other hand, getting to play some gender-neutral parts while growing up “gave me an opportunity to explore my identity. It

gave me some perspective,” says Michel, who graduated from Brenham High School in 2012 and studied theater for a year at Blinn College in Brenham. Blinn is where he met his fiancée, Sunni Lee, who grew up in Grapeland.

“We met that first semester,” he says, explaining that they moved together to the Houston area in 2014, a change that coincided with his transition journey. “She’s been with me through thick and thin. I love her so much. I’ve been lucky in a lot of ways. My mother started going to PFLAG in Brenham, and she helped me with a lot of the icky legal paperwork that you have to do to get a driver’s license and correct your birth certificate and things.”

Lee portrayed Hero opposite Michel as her love interest, Claudio, in last fall’s production of *Much Ado About Nothing* at Shakespeare in the Park in The Woodlands.

“At the same time,” says Michel, “I was playing Ben Hecht in *Moonlight and Magnolias* at Playhouse 1960 in Houston.”

The couple teaches theater in an after-school program for youngsters.

For *Museum of Dysfunction XI*, Michel reprises his role from 2018’s *MoD* in which he played an art instructor whose private lesson with an older woman gets heated.



Clarity Leigh Welch

A nonbinary person, Clarity Leigh Welch appears in two pieces that are featured in *MoD XI*: a woman who gets offended

when a man she doesn’t know hugs her without consent in “Free Hugs” by L.H. Grant, and a woman who emerges from an abusive marriage in “The Bullet” by Leighza F. Walker.

Welch uses gender-neutral pronouns, including the singular ‘they,’ ‘their,’ and ‘them,’ in referring to herself and other nonbinary persons.

For example, Welch’s *MoD XI* bio states, “You may have seen them as Charlotte in *Everything Will Be Different* at Catastrophic Theatre, or Ophelia in *Hamlet* with the Trebuchet Players.”

The lingo isn’t that hard to pick up, they say. “When somebody cuts you off in traffic, you say, ‘How dare they.’ You don’t say ‘How dare he/she.’”

While attending Sam Houston State

University, Welch played several callers in a production of Eric Bogosian’s *Talk Radio*, including Ruth, the woman who delivers the last line of the show.

“I have been queer as long as I can remember,” says Welch. “I was three years old when I asked my mother if I could marry a lady. I am somewhat bisexual. I typically say that I am pansexual because people seem to have heard of that. I am all things. I love my name because it is unique and it has sort of a feminine sound, but I can pretend it’s masculine, too.”

Regardless of Welch’s preference for gender-neutral pronouns, they completely understand, regardless of who they’re speaking to, when someone in the queer community reacts with the sudden utterance of “Girl!”

No worries, Welch laughs. That’s one term that fits anyone and everyone.

What: *Museum of Dysfunction XI: The Best of a Decade of Short Plays*

Where: Studio 101 @ Spring Street Studios, 1824 Spring Street #101

When: 8 p.m. July 18–20 (Round One), 8 p.m. July 25–27 (Round Two)

Info: All Tickets Pay-What-You-Can (Suggested: \$25)

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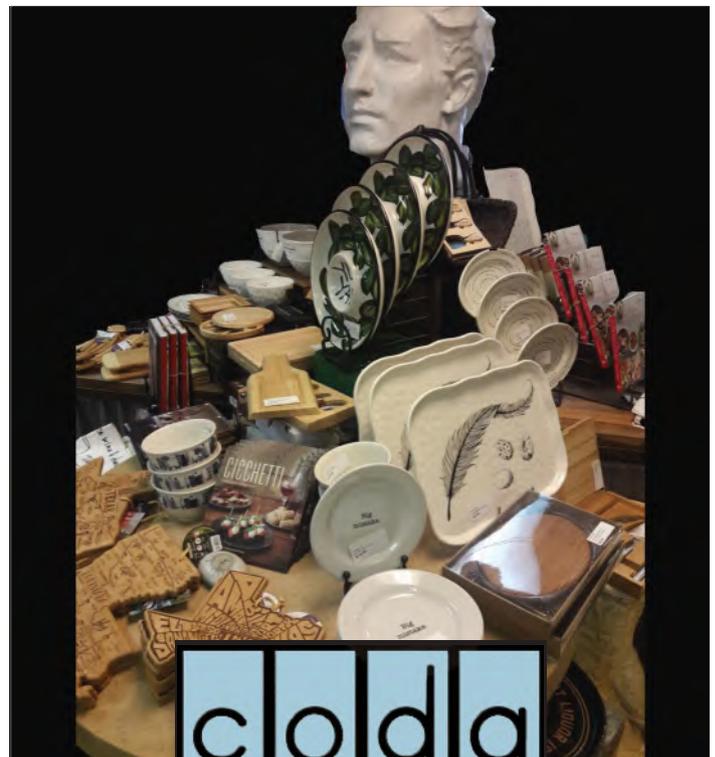
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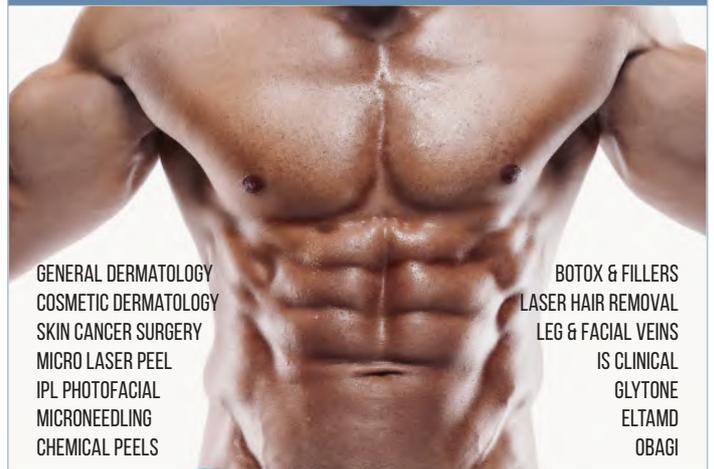
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QUEER IN GALVESTON

LGBTQ life on the island is extraordinary. If you didn't already know that, then let *OUT-SMART*'s July issue be your guide to being queer in Galveston. First, we feature activist couple **Danny** and **Christin Roe**, who work together as a team on projects to strengthen the island's queer community.

Then meet the Galveston Arts Center's curator **Dennis Nance**, a sewing maven who uses thread to stitch up outlandish art. Next, fall in love with the life story of our July cover girl, chef **Daya Myers-Hurt**. We also feature drag performer **Symphony McKnight Capri**, who's been dubbed "Da Eyez of Galveston." We also introduce you to U.S. Poet Laureate nominee **Jim Boone**, who is just as unique as the island itself. Then, learn more about **Robert's Lafitte**, the historic queer bar in Galveston that turns 50 next month.

Lastly, whether you live in a G-town beach house or only plan to visit the shore once this summer, check out our **Queer Things to Do in Galveston** column for a roundup of upcoming events you won't want to miss.



PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Advocates Danny and Christin Roe have created multiple LGBTQ social groups.

By **LOURDES ZAVALA** | Photo by **ARTURO CORRAL**

DANNY ROE

When Dallas-born and -bred Danny Roe moved to Galveston 10 years ago to attend the island's Texas A&M University, he began to explore his gender identity and expression.

"College allowed me to break out of my shell and accept myself as a transgender man," Roe recalls.

"I was able to come out to everyone safely and unapologetically in Galveston. My experience inspired the work that I do there today."

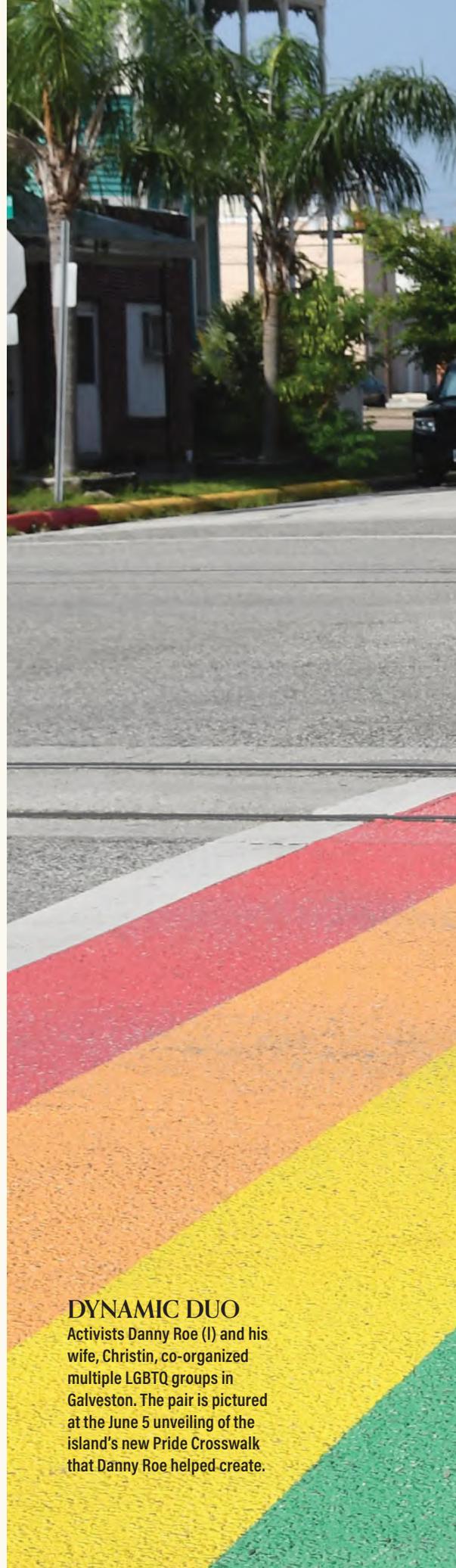
After graduating with a maritime-studies degree in 2013, Roe stayed on the island to advocate for LGBTQ issues. In addition to his full-time position as the assistant director for student diversity initiatives at his alma mater, Roe is heavily involved in several queer organizations, and is the founder and organizer of Trans Support Galveston and the LGBTQ Community Coffee Hour.

Trans Support Galveston launched in September 2017 to bring together the transgender community and create a support network. The group, which currently consists of about five active members, meets twice a month for public and private meetings at Access Care of Coastal Texas, a Galveston nonprofit for people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Roe says he answers messages sent to Trans Support Galveston's Facebook page all day long to inform trans, gender-diverse, and questioning individuals south of Houston where to find healthcare and counseling. "Sometimes it feels like there's not enough hours in the day," Roe admits. "There never is for someone who wants to be out there on the field [helping others], but it gives my life a lot of passion and meaning."

In the future, Roe hopes to mold Trans Support Galveston into a nonprofit that provides a network for all queer people. For now, he's happy organizing the LGBTQ Community Coffee Hour every first Friday of the month at Mod Coffeehouse in downtown Galveston.

"While talking to some community members, we realized that the only place LGBTQ people were meeting each other was in bars," Roe says. "There wasn't a space for people with families, who are sober, or who just don't want to be in a bar setting." →



DYNAMIC DUO

Activists Danny Roe (l) and his wife, Christin, co-organized multiple LGBTQ groups in Galveston. The pair is pictured at the June 5 unveiling of the island's new Pride Crosswalk that Danny Roe helped create.

A friend inspired Roe to ask the owner of Mod if a queer social event could be held at the shop, and she was delighted to host the gathering. Roe created a Facebook post for the event and expected only a handful of folks, but at least 28 people showed up.

“Since we thought our group would be small, we were given Mod’s tiny upstairs section,” Roe says, “but we had so many people, we were filing down the stairs.”

The LGBTQ Community Coffee Hour has met three times so far, with about the same number of attendees at each event. The group’s next meeting will take place at Mod on July 5 at 6 p.m.

Roe grew up in a conservative Dallas-area town, and he questioned everything. “My sexuality, my gender—everything” he says. “I didn’t know whether I could be myself, live with my family, and be happy being who I was.”

At Texas A&M Galveston, Roe became outspoken about LGBTQ issues and devoted much of his time to being a leader in the university’s student government and its Gender and Sexuality Advocates group. He also regularly



SUPPORTING THE CAUSE

When he was 19, Danny met his wife, Christin, at an LGBTQ Galveston bar. The two now work together as a team to strengthen the island’s queer community.

visited the island’s queer bars, where he made many friends whom he now considers part of his “LGBTQ family.”

When he was 19, Roe went to a bar and met his wife, Christin. The couple now works together doing HIV prevention and treatment advocacy for Access Care of Coastal Texas, along with co-organizing Trans Support Galveston events. “My wife is a huge asset,” Roe says. “She’s my number one, and always by my side for everything.”

Roe’s latest LGBTQ project was creating Galveston’s rainbow-colored Pride Crosswalk, which he did in partnership with Trey Click, Steven Crietz, and several other activist individuals and organizations.

“I love Galveston, I love its people, and I love being a trans man who lives here,” Roe says. “I hope everybody gets a chance to experience our LGBTQ life, and I invite everybody to see what the island has in store for them.”

For more information about Trans Support Galveston or the LGBTQ Community Coffee Hour, visit facebook.com/TranssupportGalveston/

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CHRISTIN ROE

Tireless activist organizes to take on LGBTQ issues.

By LOURDES ZAVALETA

After she began to work in LGBTQ bars 10 years ago, Galveston native Christin Roe learned that several of her friends and family members were affected by HIV.

“I didn’t know a lot about the virus, but it was important to me to learn more about it,” Roe says. “I started volunteering at an HIV nonprofit and found a passion for it. I’m now in a place where I can educate others about prevention and care.”

Roe’s volunteering turned into a full-time position doing community outreach and free HIV testing at Access Care of Coastal Texas (ACCT), a Galveston organization that provides assistance to people with HIV/AIDS.

Over 300 Galveston residents were diagnosed with HIV in 2017, according to the latest HIV Surveillance Report. “When I talk to folks, I always stress that 20 percent of Americans living with HIV don’t know they have it,” Roe says. “Getting tested, knowing your status, and being educated about the illness is the best way to end stigma.”

A Life of Activism

Outside of her work at ACCT, Roe’s activism continues as an organizer for several LGBTQ groups, including Drag Queen Story Hour of Galveston and Trans Support Galveston.

Drag Queen Story Hour of Galveston, a program that features drag queens reading LGBTQ-affirming picture books to children, held its first event in June 2018. Roe says that the group has hosted five Drag Queen Story Hours so far, with audiences of about 15 children and their families.

While similar storytimes have been controversial across the U.S., Galveston’s Drag Queen Story Hour has been met with only



positive feedback. “[Galveston] is very diverse and accepting of LGBTQ people,” Roe says. “We were prepared for some pushback, but fortunately we didn’t experience any. [In fact,] many parents have shared stories about how the story hours made their children understand the world better,” she adds, “or made them feel more comfortable living in their own skin. It’s a beautiful thing to see kids and their families enjoy the program.”

Twice a month, Roe works alongside her husband, Danny, to facilitate Trans Support Galveston, a resource group for transgender individuals. Danny, a trans man, launched the organization in 2017 to assist trans folks and their families through both public and private meetings.

During the open meetings, Roe, a cisgender woman, acts as an ally and speaks with family and friends who accompany trans group members. “When there are enough allies around, we break into groups,” Roe says. “We sit down and discuss the issues that our trans loved ones face, and how we can better understand and assist them.”

Combating “Queer Erasure”

Roe identifies as pansexual, meaning that she

is attracted to people regardless of their sex or gender identity. However, because her husband is trans and she is cis, Roe admits that it is frustrating when some people perceive her as straight.

“Because I’m married to a man, I am technically in a straight relationship,” Roe says, “but our relationship doesn’t take away from who we are individually.”

Like many LGBTQ folks, Roe recalls that it took time to explore different labels until she found one that suited her best. “I heard about pansexuality for the first time when I was about 23, and I adopted the label instantly,” Roe says. “I didn’t want to date people for any reason other than their personalities.”

Roe says when she tells folks that she is pansexual, many mistake it for meaning polyamory. “That’s obviously not the case,” Roe laughs. “Many people have never heard the word *pansexual* before. After I explain it to them, I usually get a more positive response.”

On the brighter side, Galveston’s queer community has welcomed Roe and her husband with open arms.

“LGBTQ life in Galveston is unlike any other place on earth,” Roe says. “We’re one big giant family, full of love and acceptance.”



CUSTOM THREADS

Dennis Nance enjoys his ambitious sewing projects, including the "Weird Wear" shirts that he and his partner, James Hays, have created.

THE HE(ART) OF THE MATTER

Galveston Arts Center curator stitches together unique contemporary art.

By SAM BYRD

According to the sage advice of Maria von Trapp, sewing is just a needle pulling thread. What she leaves out is that the thread can weave together wacky stories and ideas to create art. Enter Dennis Nance—an artist-turned-sewing-maven who has used the craft to rejuvenate his creative side.

When Nance is not busy showcasing the work of other Texas artists as a curator at the Galveston Arts Center, he creates his own masterpieces—mostly shirts and costumes—at his Houston abode in Glenbrook Valley, located near Hobby Airport.

Cacti. Pineapples. Pick out any object, and he'll sew it. Nance's craftsmanship extends so deep that he boasts he doesn't own a shirt he hasn't created. If he finds a print he's attracted to, he'll create something out of it. It's something he's done ever since getting his first sewing machine in his early teens. As an art enthusiast, he finds sewing tugs at his heart strings.

"I've been doing art my whole life, but I've played around a lot with sewing in the last 10 years. I try not to take it so seriously. I find when I try to make 'Art' with a capital A, it doesn't go there. But when you're having fun with it, it can be enjoyable and go down that road a lot easier," he says.

Nance's fashions are just as picturesque as they are fun. His take on Thanksgiving? It's a ham. And his impression of a Christmas feast is roast-worthy.

The artist's shirt-making skills took off when he met his partner, James Hays, seven years ago.

"Early in our relationship, I was new at sewing and making things, and he had 'Friday' shirts," Nance recalls, describing Hays' tat-

tered shirts reserved for the last day of the workweek. "I made him shirts as a gift, and I've been making them ever since. We call it Weird Wear by Dennis and James. It's a way for us to have our name on something together."

From there, Nance's artistic talent kept growing, resulting in costumes, impromptu photo shoots, and participation in the occasional parade. Recently, he created *Cast of Characters*, a calendar featuring a different

pushing the boundaries."

The Center holds three exhibit spaces, rotates eight shows annually, and is open year-round. The facility just wrapped up Jeffrey Dell's *Maquette Moon*, a series of screen prints that continue the artist's abiding interest in space, color, pattern, and perception. Currently on display is *Cat Butt Parfait*, a colorful fantasia inspired by the parasites that populate the domestic feline's digestive system. The humorous multi-media installation includes paintings, drawings, ceramics, and paper-mâché.

Nance's work at the Center is a way for him to bring art into a community he feels is sometimes overlooked by the art world. Houston is bustling with galleries and exhibit space, but he enjoys bringing some of that same experience to the island.

"It's a different landscape. There's a different rhythm. I get to go all over the state and bring artists to Galveston. It's an interesting environment to play in. You can get into serious topics, or get into humor," he says.

After spending so much time traveling the state in search of new artists, Nance says he enjoys getting to slow down and take in the island experience.

"It's a really nice place. I like looking at the horizon [over the water] and seeing a different landscape," he admits. "They've preserved their history, including the building I work in. They're really committed to preserving the architecture, which is nice to see."

Cat Butt Parfait: Chuck & George Explore the Ecosystem of Domestic Feline Digestion is on display through August 16. The Galveston Arts Center is open 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, and 12–5 p.m. Sundays at 2127 Strand in Galveston. For information, visit galvestonartscenter.org or call 409-763-2403. Admission is free.

“MY JOB IS WORKING WITH ARTISTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE. THERE’S CONSTANTLY A CREATIVE DIALOGUE HAPPENING. I WORK WITH CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS IN TEXAS WHO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES.”

— Dennis Nance

costume for each month. His work has been shown at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, BOX 13 ArtSpace, and the Menil Collection Bookstore.

It's all part and parcel of what the artist says is expression and fun, which he extends into his job at the Galveston Arts Center—a fitting playground for his unique style.

"My job is working with artists throughout the state. There's constantly a creative dialogue happening. I work with contemporary artists in Texas who push the concept of traditional media. It's not traditional, it's usually

SERVING UP GULF-TO-TABLE TREATS

Daya Myers-Hurt returns to Galveston with another popular eatery.

by MARENE GUSTIN

“Surround yourself with tacos, not negativity.” That’s Daya Myers-Hurt’s motto, and she has done just that. Fish tacos, to be specific. Really, really good fish tacos.

The 47-year-old chef is the proprietor of the one-year-old Fish Company Taco, a charming little eatery just a block from the beach on Galveston Island—so you know the fish is fresh and tasty. *Coastal Living* magazine last month named Fish Company Taco one of its Best Seafood Dives in America for 2019, and wrote that “they are the best fish tacos in the Great State of Texas.” High praise, indeed.

Born in Illinois but “raised” (since she insists she never really grew up) in Amarillo, Myers-Hurt came to Houston with her folks, trained at the Culinary Institute, and wound up opening a successful little restaurant in Galveston called the Lunch Box Café.

“After my dad died,” she says, “I came to Galveston a lot with my wife, Laura, to just stare at the ocean. It was therapeutic.” Finally, her wife and partner of 25 years said to her, “You do realize they have houses here?” That’s when they moved to the island for the first time and opened their first eatery.

Even though her café was successful, when she got the chance to work at Houston’s high-end Japanese/sushi restaurant Uchi, she jumped at it. The couple closed up shop, came back to Houston, and she went to work. Unfortunately, a scooter accident ended her Uchi career.

“I was out of work for quite a while,” Myers-Hurt recalls. “I broke every bone on my left side.” When she was able, she got a job as the pastry chef at State of Grace in River Oaks. But then in 2017, Hurricane Harvey made them change plans again.

“Our house flooded,” she says. “It was bad. To this day, we don’t say the word *hurricane* or *flood* around our son. He was just three at the time, but we don’t want to traumatize him. I mean, if you live on the Gulf Coast, these things are going to happen.

“Laura took that as a sign we should move back to our beloved Galveston, and that I should open my own place again. The day Fish Company Taco opened, I had \$200 in the bank

and I remember thinking, ‘I hope somebody shows up.’ But the worst that can happen is you fail.”

But that didn’t happen. And one year later, her tacos are garnering rave reviews and the eatery has flocks of fans—including the occasional seagull looking for a fresh fish handout.

The chef has five basic styles: Baha, Korean, Vietnamese, Hunan, and Dirty South (which pairs hot fish with cool pimento cheese, all served on house-made tortillas. “My dad loved pimento cheese,” she recalls. “So I made this recipe in his honor, and it’s very popular.” Another big hit is the corn cup, which is cold corn dressed with cream, cilantro, chili paste, and lime. And there are several other vegetarian items on the menu.

The restaurant is BYOB, there’s a liquor store across the street, and she haunts the docks at Katie’s Seafood Market daily (twice a day during the fall, when they do dinner service), selecting whole fish that she breaks down herself. She says you can really learn a lot about an animal when you break it down yourself. She uses most of the whole fish—filets as well as collars and cheeks, something else that makes her tacos stand apart.

“Dad loved fishing,” Myers-Hurt remembers. “I don’t fish, but I love fish—I love looking at them and learning about them.” One time a fishmonger tried to sell her a whole salmon, claiming it was caught wild and not farm raised. She pointed out that one side of the

fish’s muscles were more developed than the other.

“That salmon was raised in a tank where it only swam in a circle in one direction,” she laughs. “That, or else it had some weird neurotoxin. I didn’t want that either.” She is big on sustainability, which is good since her wife is finishing her studies on climate change and public policy. “She’s got a double major and a double minor—the slacker!”

The pair has a five-year-old son, David, and a cat named Franklin. “Of course he’s a rescue cat,” she says. “They would take away my L card if I bought a cat from a breeder.”

The couple’s time away from the restaurant is all about family. They recently celebrated David’s birthday with a two-day stay at Moody Gardens, where they have a family membership. And they like to hang out at the beach and stroll around downtown. They especially enjoy the Rosenberg Library on Sealy Street.

“The library is currently doing readings of the Mueller Report,” Myers-Hurt says. “And they have an incredible children’s book section. David is in the summer reading program, and they get a trophy when it’s finished. You want to motivate a five-year-old boy? Give him a shiny gold thing with his name on it!”

And we’re guessing he’s quite fond of his mom’s tacos, too.

Fish Company Taco, 1914 23rd St., Galveston, 409.220.3245



FRESH FARE

The fish tacos at Fish Company Taco win high praise from *Coastal Living* magazine.





GALVESTON GIRL

Trans drag star Symphony McKnight Capri pays tribute to her Island roots.

By **DON MAINES**

Photo by **MICHAEL ANDREW VOIGHT**

There is more to Symphony McKnight Capri than meets the eye. The veteran entertainer, known as “Da Eyez of Galveston,” is also a savvy business owner who parlayed her flood insurance payout from Hurricane Ike into a career as an entrepreneur.

“I lost everything I owned,” she says, recalling the deadly 2008 storm that devastated Galveston and parts of Houston. “The money I got, I invested into myself.”

Building on her experience as an aide in the nursing field, Capri now has two four-bed personal-care facilities that are located in Houston and Rosenberg.

Her own home in Cypress is a warehouse for crowns and sashes from a zillion drag competitions, including her current reign as Miss Texas Continental Plus.

Capri performs in the cast of Hamburger Mary’s Saturday brunch shows at noon and 3 p.m., as well as that popular eatery’s “Fire and Desire” show on Sundays at 8 p.m.

“Once or twice a month, I am in the Friday-night cabaret at Michael’s Outpost, and I travel every month to Club 212 in Amarillo,” she says.

Capri was 14 and a student at Ball High School in Galveston when she started performing in drag. “I wasn’t even supposed to be in the club, but I have always been mature,” she says. “I am not one to attract attention to myself. I didn’t drink because I was underage. I still

don’t drink unless it’s after my show.”

Offstage, Capri admits that she’s a loner. “When I do have time for myself, I like swimming. I like movies. I keep to myself, but I can also be flirty.”

About two years ago, Capri found a lawyer in Austin who helped her handle the legal process of changing her name and the gender on her birth certificate.

“I identify as female,” she says. “I go to work as a woman. I have an everyday look. I live my life cautiously and try not to stop and get gas late at night. You have to be careful. The next person you meet could want to hurt you, or they could be someone who wants to love you forever.”

As a “true drag performer,” Capri says, “I can take a slow number and make it look amazing. I can do ‘Over the Rainbow’ by Patti LaBelle and make you believe. I’m a talent girl. I can be losing a pageant, then I will pull out a talent that will have you amazed.”

At the end of June, Capri returned to Galveston to pay tribute to the late Jesse Garza, who owned Garza’s Kon Tiki nightclub on the island.

Garza, who died in 2006, “was one-of-a-kind,” says Capri. “He truly taught me how to be a showgirl. He told me to stay up on my words and to ‘make love’ to people by giving them a lovely stage presence. He taught me to be beautiful and glamorous and captivating.”

For more on Capri, go to [facebook.com/DaEyezOfGalv](https://www.facebook.com/DaEyezOfGalv)



Symphony McKnight Capri
performs at Hamburger
Mary's on Sundays



ISLAND POET

Galveston icon Jim Boone looks back on his amazing career.

By KIM HOGSTROM

There are very few regions in America that can lay claim to a place as unique as Galveston.

That 27-mile-long, 3-mile-wide Gulf-coast island is exceptional, and Houstonians are fortunate that it is so close. After a short 55-minute drive, we can soak up sunshine on the island's beaches, consume the freshest seafood, wander the Strand Historic District, Seawall Boulevard, the Pleasure Pier amusement park, or tour some of the most significant Victorian architecture in the country.

The island is also LGBTQ-welcoming, with festivities celebrating the community nearly year-round. Hell, there are even two much-loved gay penguins at Moody Gardens!

So it stands to reason that Galveston would attract equally unusual and interesting people to live there—people who have seen the world and then choose to make Galveston their home. There may be no better example of that than the eccentric and charming U.S. Poet Laureate nominee Jim Boone.

The Baby Poet

Boone was born in McKinney, Texas, outside of Dallas, in 1934. By the age of five, the youngster had outed himself to his parents as a gay boy who was only interested in other males. "My mother told me flatly that we do not say things like that in our house, and we will not discuss it. I learned quickly to keep my mouth shut," Boone remembers. "Then my parents sort of divorced me."

By his pre-teen years, Boone was inviting adult male visitors to descend into his home's storm cellar for private interludes. During these occasions, Boone's mother would simply draw the curtains.

Did Boone feel overpowered or violated by these men? "Well," he paused for a solid minute, searching for words. "A few were protective of me, and cared. The fact is, I was getting attention. That's it—I was getting attention! I will add that by my last year in high school, I decided that *I would do the choosing*, instead."

The Japanese Connection

In 1960, Boone received a draft notice from the Army. Although a relative taught the young

man how to get out of serving, Boone decided the Army offered an intriguing future after he realized he would be elbow-to-elbow with hundreds of other young men. "I had my first four boyfriends in the service," he laughs. "I didn't ask, and I didn't tell. I wasn't looking for boyfriends, but they showed up nonetheless."

Notably, Boone spent most of his time serving in Kyoto, Japan, which offered the poet an unusual opportunity. From a very young age, Boone had a strong sense that he had lived four previous lives. He was a geisha girl in one of those lives, which he says happened in the 1800s in Kyoto, Japan.

"My Army time in Japan was fabulous. I spent most of it in a lovely kimono and traditional Japanese wooden sandals, hosting and dining with the troops. It was wonderful. I had returned to my geisha roots!" he states proudly.

After leaving the military, Boone worked for Neiman Marcus prior to his employment with Houston architectural preservationist Bart Truxillo. The former soldier was soon managing a clothing boutique in River Oaks Shopping Center owned by Truxillo's partner, Dick Merrill.

Quickly recognized for his talent and warm personality, Boone was then asked to manage apartment properties for the couple. Over the next 20 years, the poet lived in Houston, worked with Truxillo and Merrill, and traveled the world.

Return to McKinney

As the 1980s wore on, Boone was losing friend after friend to AIDS as Houston's LGBTQ community was being shaken to its core, unable to fully mourn one loss before suffering the next.

"I had lived the same way my friends who were dying had lived," Boone recalls of those dark years in Houston. "I did nothing differently. It occurred to me that I was next, so I decided to return to McKinney so my family could take care of me when I got ill. Yet I never did.

"Instead, I wound up taking care of my mother in her final years, and here I am today. I am alive and well, but suffer from the horrible weight of survivor's remorse," Boone states, his voice fading into sadness. "It's dreadful."

Surprise! You're a Poet!

Throughout his unusual life, Boone had been writing poetry. Rarely did he share it with

anyone or read it out loud.

After returning to McKinney, the great niece of Boone's English teacher in elementary school read some of his writing and swooned. The clever woman set up an original poetry reading at the town's historic Ritz Theater and invited Boone—without telling him that he was the poet who would be presenting. The event was a smashing success, and provided Boone with a new level of confidence. He started publishing his work on several websites and blogs, and amassed quite a following.

"In 2011, I got a call from a gay man I didn't know in Castroville, Texas. The man said he was going to send my name in to the Library of Congress and nominate me for U.S. Poet Laureate in 2012.

"A few weeks later, I received a letter from the Library of Congress. They had accepted the nomination," Boone stated quietly.

After the loss of his mother, Boone's friend Bart Truxillo suggested the poet move into one of Truxillo's properties on Galveston Island. Boone jumped at the opportunity, and never looked back. It was a glorious fit.

Today, Boone has hundreds of friends on the island, and many are almost as interesting as he is. He has become something of a local celebrity. Galveston's newspaper even touted his Poet Laureate nomination on the front page of a Sunday edition, above the fold.

He is also the featured poet at the island's historic Rosenberg Library each April to celebrate Poetry Month. During this extremely successful event, Boone reads his poetry while a multimedia presentation illustrates his words.

Still, at 82, the poet is slowing down. He feels that he has one more trip to New York City in his soul, "without walking any great lengths," he adds. "I want to see one more Broadway show—*To Kill a Mockingbird* with Jeff Daniels. Then I would reserve a table at 54 Below (located in the basement of the old Studio 54) to see my dear friend Marilyn Maye's show. She's 91 years old and still performing!

"Then I would love to visit the Stonewall Inn and the Stonewall Memorial Park located across the street. That should do it. That would end my bucket list nicely," Boone concludes with a smile.

To see some of Jim Boone's poetry, go to www.poemhunter.com/jim-boone



Robert's Lafitte Bar Celebrates 50 Years in Galveston

Legendary club opened shortly after Stonewall.

By BRANDON WOLF

Robert's Lafitte bar in Galveston will celebrate their 50th year of operation during the month of August. "There will be lots of gold decorations," says the club's manager, Mark Kohr.

The club is the oldest Texas gay bar that has been continuously owned and run by the same person. An article in the August 1970 edition of *Nuntius* notes the club was purchased by Robert Mainor in May of that year.

The legendary Galveston bar is known for its warm and familial atmosphere—a direct reflection of Mainor's personality and values.

Leaving the World Behind

Located at 2501 Avenue Q, just a few blocks from Galveston's beaches, the club looks non-

descript from the outside. But walk through the doors, and you can easily leave the outside world behind.

Multi-colored mini lights are strung across the ceiling, adding to the glow of the video games and neon. A teardrop chandelier sparkles near a pool table. In front of the small stage is a near-life-size papier-mâché Betty Boop. That, and many items on the walls, were gifts from patrons.

Framed pictures of drag entertainers who have performed at the club are mounted on another wall. One of the photos is Mainor dressed in campy drag as Carol Channing in 1977.

Outside, shielded by a high fence, is a patio with a swimming pool. Bartender Lee Watts says that there is a two-drink minimum (alcoholic or otherwise) to gain access to the pool. Customers can lie in the sun on lounge chairs

swim in the pool, or sit at the full-service Lagoon Bar on the patio.

Bartender Matthew Pope says this patio is the nicest of any Galveston bar, with its clusters of lush tropical plants and water splashing down from a fountain. A shaded picnic area features a table painted in rainbow colors.

The clientele is generally an older crowd, many of whom live near the club. Watts points out that "you can drive by the club and see only a couple cars parked out front, but inside the club is busy—a lot of customers walk or take an Uber. Some of our regulars are straight—they just like the atmosphere here." Drag shows are organized for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, as well as a Sunday matinee.

During the summer, people can walk in from the beach. "Shirts aren't mandatory, but shoes are," Watts says. There's a definite



NEIGHBORHOOD REFUGE

The bar's plain façade stands in contrast to the tropical poolside patio bar and the inviting glow inside.

uptick in business during Galveston's Mardi Gras celebrations, especially when the parade moves past the front of the club.

Galveston Pride also increases business at the bar, although that parade does not come past the bar. This year, the club was one of the official Pride Galveston host bars.

Hurricane Ike put 18 inches of water into the bar in the fall of 2008. There was no electricity, so Mainor asked people who had thawing meat to bring it over to the patio, where he grilled all of it and served meals for those without food.

Robert Mainor, the Heart of the Bar

Mainor was born in Houston in 1938 and eventually moved to Los Angeles, where he lived for ten years. He returned to the Houston area

to take care of his ailing parents, and finally settled in Galveston. In 1974, Mainor met his future partner, Hal, in Houston, and the two were a couple for 35 years, running the bar together. Hal died in 2009 at the age of 65.

Over the years, Robert appeared regularly in Lafitte drag shows under the name Robert the Mouth. He created a puppet show in which volunteer entertainers wore jumpsuits with puppet-like bodies sewn on. They could then work the arms, legs, and a large puppet head. The puppet shows ran for 25 years and were a unique invention of Mainor's.

Typical of his sense of humor, Mainor loved to superglue a quarter to the bar floor and, along with the regulars, watch the new customers try to pick it up.

By 2012, Mainor no longer had the stamina to appear in shows. He now lives in his fuchsia

and teal-colored Victorian townhouse just four blocks from the bar. Mannequins sit on chairs on the balcony, and Mardi Gras decorations (complete with pink flamingos) abound.

Mainor is challenged by diabetes and advanced arthritis, but he still stops in the bar once every two weeks for a few hours. Three friends stay with him in the townhouse, attending to his needs.

Before You Know It

In 2013, a documentary film about three LGBTQ elders from around the country was released. One elder was in New York City, a second in San Francisco, and the third was Robert Mainor.

TJ Raval, associate professor in the UT-Austin Department of Radio-Television-Film, →



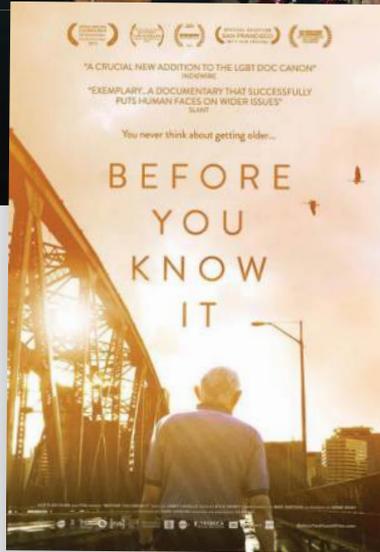
produced that film entitled *Before You Know It*. “When I was developing my documentary, I wanted to highlight the important role that bar/nightlife spaces have played in creating the first LGBTQ+ communities,” Raval explains. “At this point in time, we’ve all heard the stories of Stonewall, but I wanted to emphasize that these spaces existed everywhere around the country, and perhaps in places where their presence was even more crucial to forming a community, even today. So when I discovered Robert’s Lafitte, I was immediately struck by the bar’s inclusiveness and family feel. Robert’s Lafitte is more than just a bar, it’s a home to many [of the regulars]. They can be surrounded and supported by their loved ones and chosen families. And all of this is thanks to the amazing warmth of Robert Mainor, who understood the need for this space. What he and his partner, Hal, created surely saved many lives, and I wanted to highlight their story and honor the space they’ve created.”

Although Mainor was unavailable to be interviewed for this article, his comments in the documentary reveal a lot about the man. “Galveston is everybody doing their own thing—just don’t cause any waves. And we usually take care of our own problems ourselves. I’ve got an opinion about everything. I don’t care if it’s wrong, but I still got an opinion about it.”

Mainor continues: “Everybody is welcome, as long as you’re a lady or a gentleman. I don’t care if you’re gay or you’re straight, or if you’re bisexual, as long as you have fun.”

Mainor’s father was a deacon in a Southern Baptist church in Houston. Mainor says he used to attend services there until he decided the church was self-righteous and not Christian. “I’m 73 and still going strong. I keep telling everybody: Evil, evil, evil. Evil lives forever. That’s why I’m still here,” he jokes. “I haven’t terrorized enough people yet.”

Mainor’s sense of humor can sometimes take an X-rated turn. One of his drag personas featured a phallic nose, and after finishing his performance on stage, Mainor would walk through the bar dipping the “nose” in custom-



ers’ drinks and letting the liquid drip off.

On Thanksgiving, a Lafitte potluck feast is open to everyone. In a scene from the film shot on Thanksgiving Day, Mainor hams it up by chasing a friend dressed as a giant turkey down the street with a rubber axe.

In one of the documentary’s most touching scenes, Mainor sits on a porch swing looking at an old photo album. He tears up while showing a picture of his late partner, Hal. “When someone dies, you are left with a great big hole in your life.”

In a final scene, the Galveston Mardi Gras parade moves past Mainor’s home as he watches from his porch swing. “I wish I had more energy to do things. But that’s life. And before you know it, you’re dead and gone. Enjoy every day—after it’s over, you can’t relive it,” he reflects.

Near the bar’s front door, a framed movie poster for *Before You Know It* is surrounded by movie marquee lights.

A Galveston Institution

A Galveston club directory in the August 1965 edition of *The Albatross* contains the earliest known listing for Lafitte’s Bar in Galveston. A phone directory from that time lists the



address as 305 25th Street. An October 1965 article identifies the bar owner as Cal LeBlanc.

By summer of 1968, Lafitte’s had moved to 411 25th Street. In 1970, Mainor bought the club and renamed it Robert’s Lafitte. In 1975, he moved the club to 409 25th Street. After a fire in the summer of 1977, the club reopened at 213 22nd Street in the former location of the Red Witch and Paradise bars. By 1985, the club was located at its current address, 2501 Avenue Q.

The club was always fairly close to the Seawall, but the final move placed it just a couple of blocks from the beach. The location was also close to other gay clubs over the years—Crazy Horse, Kon Tiki, Opus I, Fruit Jar, Mary’s II, and the Dolphin Room.

It remains a mystery whether Mainor took over the club in 1969 or 1970, but the current management considers 1969 as the founding year. The traditional anniversary month is August, the same month as Mainor’s birthday.

Special appreciation to www.houstonlgbthistory.org, which was a rich resource for historical information. 360-degree photos of the club can be viewed at: www.houstonlgbthistory.org/misc-lafittes360interior.html.

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By LOURDES ZAVALA

QUEER THINGS to DO in GALVESTON

A roundup of LGBTQ events on the island.

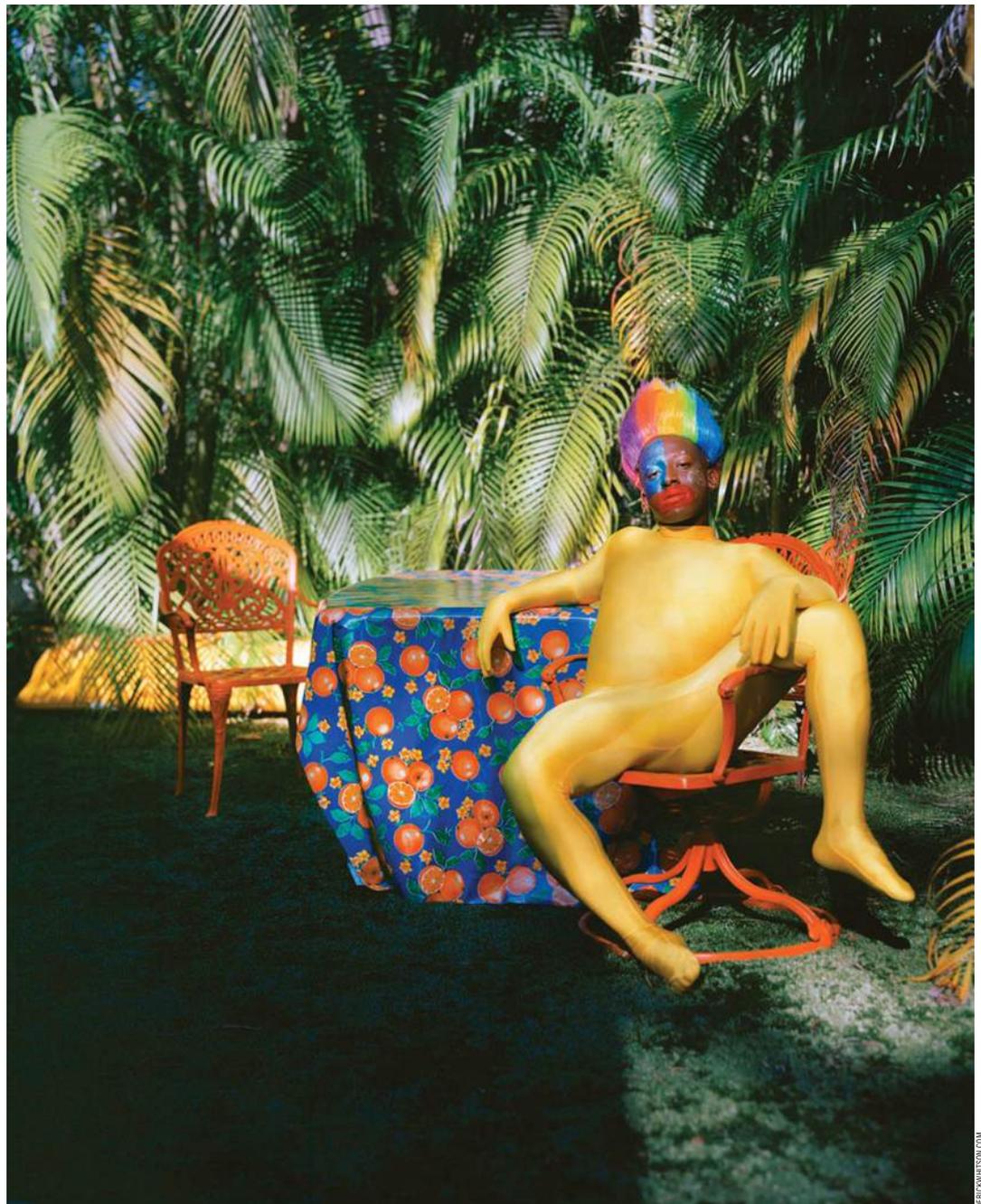
ART

Through July 20

Photography Exhibit

Head over to the Galveston Artist Residency and take in the work of Derick Whitson.

Whitson works primarily through photography and video to explore the history and relationships of clowning, drag queens, black/whiteface, and the social constructs of race, gender, and sexuality. For more information about Whitson, visit derickwhitson.com or galvestonartistresidency.org/events.



ART

July 13

Galveston ArtWalk

If you can't get enough art, then the Galveston ArtWalk is the perfect event for you. For over 25 years, the Galveston Arts Center (GAC) has organized ArtWalks on eight Saturday evenings each year in the heart of the island's historic district. ArtWalk takes place inside art galleries and other spaces such as cafés and shops. This month's exhibits will be showcased at GAC, Galveston Artist Residency, Galveston Art League, Island Real Estate Professionals, MOD Coffeehouse, Proletariat Gallery & Public House, and Therapeutic Healthworks Day Spa.

tinyurl.com/y4jo9d3h



GALVESTON ARTS CENTER

Out and About

One of the Galveston Arts Center's largest programs, Galveston ArtWalk promotes visual art and supports the arts-based community, offering alternative spaces to see and learn about art.

COMMUNITY

July 2, 16, 30

TRANS SUPPORT GALVESTON

The Access Care of Coastal Texas (ACCT) is home to Trans Support Galveston's series of bi-monthly support-group meetings that bring the transgender community together. On July 2, trans folks can bring their family, friends, and allies to ACCT for an open meeting. On June 16, trans and questioning individuals will discuss their issues privately in a closed meeting at ACCT. On July 30, join Trans Support Galveston at Mod Coffeehouse for a social that includes games, coffee, and networking.

SOCIAL

July 5

LGBTQ COMMUNITY COFFEE HOUR

Every first Friday of the month from 6-7 p.m., go to Mod Coffeehouse in downtown Galveston for an LGBTQ Community Coffee Hour. The social gathering is designed to help you spend time with your queer friends outside of the bars in a non-alcoholic setting. Grab a coffee and a pastry, and prepare to enjoy some wholesome conversations.

tinyurl.com/yxjgz7ch

ART

July 13

ART EXHIBIT AND ARTIST TALKS

The Galveston Arts Center debuts Exchange Rate on July 13, with artist talks beginning at 6:30 p.m. The new group exhibition features artists who incorporate coins and paper money in their work as the subject matter. Playing on the Arts Center's location in the 1878 First National Bank Building, and The Strand's history as "The Wall Street of the South," Exchange Rate addresses commercial systems of trade, value, and labor represented through paper, metal, plastic, and digital media.

tinyurl.com/yxfzcle9

COMMUNITY

Ongoing

PLANNING FOR GALVESTON PRIDE 2020

Galveston might have wrapped up its 2019 LGBTQ Pride last month, but that doesn't mean the island is any less queer year-round. In fact, you have the chance to help plan next year's celebration by joining the Galveston Pride Parade Committee. Online applications are ongoing, but Galveston Pride is looking to fill its chair positions from the applications that have been submitted by July 7—so act now if you're interested! Chairs and members will be expected to attend organizational meetings. To apply, visit tinyurl.com/y2f83gfu.

COMMUNITY

Ongoing

CROSSWALKS

Snap a photo at Galveston's new rainbow-colored crosswalks, which were installed last month just ahead of the island's LGBTQ Pride celebration. Located in front of Galveston City Hall along 25th and Ball and 25th and Sealy streets, the colorful crosswalks were a privately funded community effort to showcase the island's support and affirmation of the LGBTQ community.

GALVESTON LGBTQ BAR GUIDE

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

The most historic queer bar in Galveston is located just steps from the Seawall. Known for its close-knit neighborhood ambiance, Robert's Lafitte features a tropical patio and a pool. Enjoy drag shows Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights.

2501 Avenue Q
409.765.9092

23RD ST. STATION PIANO BAR

Situated in Galveston's charming East End Historical District, 23rd Street Station Piano Bar is a full-service bar and piano lounge. The recently renovated bar features a chic and cozy lounge inside and a tree-shaded courtyard patio outside.

1706 23rd St.
409.765.5678

RUMORS BEACH BAR

The new and improved Rumors Beach Bar is situated along the Seawall and offers a variety of events ranging from karaoke to drag shows. The bar offers Happy Hours daily and surprise drink specials every evening.

3102 Seawall Blvd.
409.497.4617

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COMMUNITY

Photos by DALTON DEHART and EDGARDO AGUILAR



Gay Men's Chorus of Houston held their 40th Anniversary Celebration Concert at Resurrection MCC on June 15. Pictured are members of the Gay Men's Chorus.



On June 26, artist John Palmer presented a check to **OutReach United** president Tim Stokes from the proceeds raised at the 50th Stonewall Anniversary Art Sale.



As part of Pride 2019, the Intercollegiate Pride Mixer and **UH Red Dinner** check-presentation event was held at Guava Lamp on June 21. Pictured are Brian Waddle, Aaron Wische, Kevin Hamby, Stacy Peterson, Liz Jaramillo, and Jenna



Access Care of Coastal Texas, Inc. (ACCT) was at Rumors Beach Bar for National HIV Testing Day on June 27. Pictured are (front row): Christin Roe, Jay Moreno, Alex Cantu, Diana Ulner, Madison Breau; (top row from left): Jesse Garza, Mark Hinson, Hugo Sanchez, Sara Hasting, and Micaela Schimank. Photo by John Nagy

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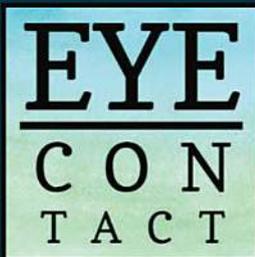
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 1217 Market
 3/2.5/2 2,546sf \$849,500



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WHAT DID YOU DO LAST WEEKEND?

GALVESTON
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COMPASSIONATE PIONEER

Volunteer Rita Rockett (l) visited countless AIDS patients in San Francisco General Hospital's Ward 5B.

KEN KOBRIE

MOVIES

Documentary *5B* Celebrates the Unsung Heroes of the AIDS Crisis

Dan Krauss paints a vivid portrait of a city under siege in the 1980s and '90s.

By ANDREW EDMONSON

June is Pride month, the time each year when the LGBTQ community celebrates its heroes and sheroes.

In New York City, a monument will be erected in Greenwich Village to honor transgender activists Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, who were at the vanguard of the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969.

In theaters across the country, some of the quieter, unsung heroes from the 1980s will be

memorialized: the nurses in the country's first AIDS unit, who went to extraordinary lengths to care for the dying and pioneer a compassionate model of care that was widely studied and eventually accepted as the national standard.

Although focused on San Francisco, the documentary *5B* paints a gripping portrait of the AIDS crisis nationally. The film takes its place alongside the 2012 documentary *How to Survive a Plague* as a key documentation of one of the darkest periods in American history.



MARY ASBURY



SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY CENTER AND SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

A SHIFT FROM CURING TO CARING

AIDS patient Shane Harjo (l) and his mother, Janet. Ward 5B nurses Sasha Cuttler and Mary Magee (above).

Last month, *5B* premiered at the prestigious Cannes International Film Festival in France to positive reviews, and it opened the LA Pride Festival on June 7. Actress Julianne Moore, an HIV activist, has championed the documentary, which will be available for online streaming on August 27.

The documentary takes its name from San Francisco General Hospital's Ward 5B, where AIDS patients were cared for. It is directed by Dan Krauss (twice nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Short Documentary category) and Paul Haggis, who won the Best Picture Oscar in 2006 for *Crash*, which he wrote and directed. Krauss and Haggis skillfully weave the individual stories of the nurses, patients, family members, and friends into a compelling larger narrative about the arc of the AIDS crisis. They were fortunate to be able to draw upon a deep trove of 1980s video shot in Ward 5B, when local TV stations did extensive reporting on AIDS care at San Francisco General.

The film begins in the wide-open world of San Francisco in the 1970s, when out, buff gay men enthusiastically embraced the sexual revolution. As the first cases of a "gay cancer" had begun to emerge in 1981, so little was known about how the disease was spread that health-care workers lived in terror of being infected. They wore uniforms resembling space suits and helmets when caring for AIDS patients, to minimize the possibility of airborne infection.

A poll conducted in the 1980s showed that 54% of Americans believed that people with HIV should be quarantined.

Cliff Morrison, a gay man who trained as a nurse and was the director of the forensic psychiatry program at San Francisco General, was incensed by the fact that AIDS patients were effectively being quarantined. Working with a team of nurses, he took it upon himself to develop the first special-care unit in the nation for people living with AIDS.

"It made me angry. We have to do something," he recalls in the film. "People were like, 'You're probably going to get AIDS, and you're probably going to die. I might have some anxiety about this, but I am more pissed off and angry than I am scared. We decided that if we can't save these folks, we're going to touch them.'"

For the nurses on the ward, it required a complete shift in mindset.

"You have to get out of the mode that you are here for curing people, and really get into the mode that you're here to care for people," remembers Mary Magee, an idealistic young nurse on Ward 5B. "This was a tangible thing you could do for them: wash them, put moisturizer on them. You were allowed to *love* your patients."

The documentary expands its lens to take in other key elements of the AIDS crisis: attacks by right-wing homophobic politicians such as former congressman William Dannemeyer, the criminal negligence of the Reagan

administration in failing to address the AIDS crisis as it exploded into an epidemic, and the toxic homophobia in American society that the AIDS crisis both exposed and normalized.

The film ends on a more hopeful note in the late 1990s, when drugs had emerged that would save the lives of many people with AIDS. Some individuals depicted in the documentary who were perilously close to death receive an unexpected, almost miraculous reprieve.

One of the most compelling figures in the film is Rita Rockett, a vibrantly joyous heterosexual woman with an over-the-top energy and exuberance. For sixteen years, she volunteered to prepare and serve brunch every other Sunday for the patients on 5B, providing friendship, human touch, and kisses on the cheeks of patients, some of whom had been abandoned by friends and families. She would come to 5B in flamboyant outfits to entertain the patients, sometimes by roller-skating through the ward.

In the film, she observes, "So much of what you do in life is not *what* you say or do—it's how you make people *feel*."

5B serves as an uplifting testament to the decency and bravery of a team of nurses, doctors, and volunteers—both straight and gay—who stepped courageously forward in a time of crisis and made a profound difference. ▼

Andrew Edmonson won the Award of Special Merit from the Texas Chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.



MOVIES

¡Ay, papi!

OUTSMART talks with Texas native Matt Bomer, star of *Papi Chulo*.

By GREGG SHAPIRO | Photos by TREASURE ENTERTAINMENT



In *Papi Chulo* (Treasure), written and directed by John Butler (*Handsome Devil*), gay actor Matt Bomer plays Sean, a TV weatherman who has an onscreen breakdown. His sensitive but ratings-obsessed boss Ash (Wendi McLendon-Covey) gives him a leave of absence. Unfortunately, the recently single Sean doesn't know what to do with the time. He repeatedly calls Carlos, his ex, and gets his voicemail. When he notices a section of his deck needs painting, he hires migrant worker Ernesto (Alejandro Patiño). But Sean

is so lonely and lacking companionship that he ends up attempting to socialize with Ernesto, in spite of the language barrier and the fact that Ernesto is a straight, married man. What initially starts out as a sweet and funny comedy takes an unexpectedly dramatic turn, but by then viewers will have grown so fond of this unlikely buddy-movie duo that they will gladly go where the characters lead. Bomer, who shines as Sean, was kind enough to answer a few questions about the movie and some of his other projects.

GS: Matt, what was it about Sean that made you want to portray him in the movie *Papi Chulo*?

Matt Bomer: There are a dozen adjectives you could list before you even mention the fact that Sean is gay. There's something inherently comedic and tragic about the contradictions in Sean. The fact that he's going through this terrible trauma and pain that he's not willing to acknowledge. The public persona that he affects, and how he tries to bury it and avoid it and subdue it. Those were all really playable to me.

Sean talks to Ernesto about his fears and then asks him, "What are you scared of?" and Ernesto answers in Spanish, "Immigration." Can you please say something about the timeliness of the undocumented-immigrant story line in the age of Trump?

I think this movie was written before Trump was even elected. It's a story of two very different men at very different places in their lives, from very different worlds, who come together because of their shared humanity and form a great and true friendship. We live in such divisive times [that] it's hard to make an apolitical film these days. It became more relevant as it went along.

Sean hires Ernesto, a migrant worker who speaks very little English, to paint the deck at his house. Part of the experience of the movie is watching them attempt to communicate. How is your Spanish?

I think you see it all on film. A lot of that was improvised. I would go through the script and try to figure out what I could try to say in Spanish at any given point. I'd run it by John [Butler]. Even though he is a writer/director, he's not overly precious about anything. He's willing to improvise and add things in that bring authenticity to a scene. We were fortunate enough to shoot it sequentially for the most part, with a few exceptions. Alejandro [Patiño, who plays Ernesto] and I were getting to know each other, as our characters were, and a lot of the stuff in the car, on top of the wonderful dialogue that John had written, was improv.

At one point, Sean says he's "completely opposed to nature" which made me think of the quote by the late gay humorist and writer David Rakoff: "If you want something green,



order the salad." [Laughs]

How do you personally feel about nature and the outdoors?

Oh, my gosh! I love it! I need it! It's a necessity in my life. I would argue that it's another example of Sean being completely out of touch with himself, because I think someone like him needs to be outside communing with nature. For me, it's incredibly relaxing, especially living in a big city. Even in New York, I try to get down to the West Side Highway and walk and exercise there, just to get a sense of the outdoors, even in a city like Manhattan.

Sean takes a lot of spills and pratfalls and gets kind of bloodied. What was that aspect of the character like for you?

I think he's nosediving toward rock-bottom. A big part of that is his physical journey. I think I did everything except for the one fall at the quinceañera, when he crashes the party drunk. They would not let me do that because it was a little riskier, and this was not the kind of movie that had the budget to shut down if I injured myself. If I injured myself, the movie was over, basically. [Laughs] I love that about indie filmmaking. There's something really renegade about it. Also, the stakes are sort of high in that regard. You get what you can get in the time you get. There's nobody who's going to sweep in and save the day and buy you an extra.

In *Papi Chulo* and the recent season of *Will & Grace*, you play a TV news weatherman and a TV newscaster, respectively. What do you think that says about you, and what do you think that says about TV news programs?

[Laughs] I would argue two very different things, depending on which character you're talking about. They're two distinctly different guys who both happen to be on camera on a daily basis, which has its own set of pressures and its own kind of odd celebrity. When I was auditioning for conservatories, I was living in semi-rural Texas. I had no idea if I was going to get into any drama schools. My backup was to apply to some broadcast-journalism schools. I was lucky enough to get into a few great programs, which I would have attended had I not gone into acting. I don't know if that's a weird way of [a profession in broadcasting] manifesting itself in my life. Now that I've

UNLIKELY FRIENDS

Sean (Matt Bomer, l) and Ernesto (Alejandro Patiño) don't let a language barrier stand in the way of their friendship.

played a couple of them, and co-hosted a couple of morning shows, that's a lot of pressure on a daily basis to have to be on, regardless of what's going on in your life. In *Papi Chulo*, we certainly see how that can catch up to you in the first scene with Sean.

Without giving anything away, there is an unexpected twist that occurs a little over an hour into the movie. What did you think about it, and how do you think viewers will react to the movie's change in direction?

Hopefully they'll all go down the rabbit hole. For me, that moment was kind of everything. That's where I had to start from with the character—what he's finally willing to acknowledge in that moment. My preparation for that role started from that place. All of his outward manifestations of behavior, and how he moves through the world, all come from an attempt to escape or deny that.

You grew up in Spring, Texas, and I was wondering if you would mind sharing any fond memories that you have of Houston?

I'd like to share something about the Alley Theater. That was a great oasis for me. [Growing up in] Spring had its own benefits, but it was nice to go down into the city and see people from all walks of life and get to see other people who wanted to do what I wanted to do for a living. I got to work with Michael Wilson and do an incredible production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. That was a great time of awakening for me. I would finish school and I'd race down to the theater and do my homework during intermission. It was such a thrilling thing to be able to do at that age.

You are also currently playing Larry Trainor/*Negative Man* in the DC Universe series *Doom*

Patrol. Would you consider yourself to be a comic book geek?

No. I grew up in a pretty strict household. A lot of secular material was not allowed in our house. I got a lot of the classics like *Superman* and the *Justice League* and *Spider Man*. But I remember when we had a copy of *Ghost Rider* in the house, it was so controversial. I think we had to get rid of that one. Like any kid, I was a fan of comic books. But I would say I only have a layman's knowledge of the different characters. What I love about *Doom Patrol* is that it's such a character-driven show. It's a big-budget show and there are amazing action scenes. But I would argue that it is one of the most idiosyncratic shows on television. Jeremy Carver and Greg Berlanti and the team of writers have done such a phenomenal job of making it about this group of people who don't see themselves as being heroes and don't even want to be, for the most part. And their journey to understanding and acceptance of themselves and how they can use who they are for good. They have their warts and all. I like that about any character. They're not bright, shiny, perfect superheroes.

Finally, we're speaking in early June, and I was wondering if you had plans to do anything special to celebrate Stonewall 50?

I'm bummed because I have to be in New York for work during L.A. Pride and then I have to be in L.A. for work during New York Pride. The timing of that was bad. But I'm looking forward to helping out with a few different causes and supporting from the sidelines and doing whatever little bits here and there that I can contribute. I'm happy to get the kids involved. They all went to their first Pride in New York last year and loved it. It was their first Pride parade. They were already asking about it this year.



MOVIES

TONGUES UNTIED RETURNS FOR A THIRTIETH-ANNIVERSARY SCREENING AT MFAH

A native Texan's controversial film
still inspires activists today.

By ANDREW EDMONSON
Photos Courtesy of CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL

When *Tongues Untied* aired on Public Broadcasting stations in 1991, it unleashed a firestorm of controversy.

Its raw, revelatory look at the most intimate aspects of the lives of gay black men, and their struggles against homophobia and racism, was shocking to some.

Filmmaker Marlon Riggs observed that he created the documentary to “shatter this nation’s brutalizing silence on matters of race and sexual difference.”

Tongues Untied, which had received a \$5,000 production grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, soon found itself at the center of America’s culture wars, which at that point pivoted around homosexuality, freedom of artistic expression, and public funding of the arts. Right-wing politician Patrick Buchanan, then running for president, attacked Riggs’ film by featuring it in an incendiary campaign ad. Archconservative senator Jesse Helms condemned the work from the floor of the Senate. Thirty percent of PBS stations across the country declined to air the film, concerned about its depiction of male nudity, men kissing, profanity, and racial and homophobic slurs.

Riggs, an out, openly HIV-positive 34-year-old artist, pushed back ferociously during the 1992 presidential campaign in a blistering opinion piece in the *New York Times*:

Needless to say, the insult in this brand of politics extends not just to blacks and gays, the majority of whom are taxpayers and would therefore seem entitled to some measure of representation in publicly financed art.

The insult confronts all who now witness and are profoundly outraged by the quality of political—one hesitates to say Presidential—debate. The vilest form of obscenity these days is in our nation’s leadership.

On Saturday, July 26, at 7:00 p.m., the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, will present a 30th-anniversary screening of *Tongues Untied*, followed by a panel discussion. The film is part of Q-Fest, Houston’s LGBTQ film festival, which runs July 26–28 at various venues.

So is a 30-year-old film that represents a very particular socio-political moment still relevant for audiences today?

According to two high-profile Houston activists, the answer is emphatically Yes.

“Marlon’s work is timeless and classic. And

the world still has not caught up with him,” says Harrison Guy, co-chair of Mayor Turner’s LGBT Advisory Board and this year’s Male Grand Marshal for Houston’s annual Pride parade. “When I found Marlon’s work, I felt like I had come home. It centered me in a way that is difficult to put into words,” he remembers. “Ultimately, it taught me that there is a place for me to tell the truth and to bring all parts of me to the table.”

For activist Brandon Mack, Riggs is “a visionary, both as an activist and as an artist. His art is a form of activism that draws attention to the experiences of being a black gay/same-gender-loving man in America, and the uniqueness of the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality.

“Many of the same issues explored in the film are still prevalent within the LGBTQ+ community and society at large,” observes Mack. “We still face racism within the LGBTQ+ community. We still [struggle to] reconcile our membership in two marginalized populations: black and LGBTQ+. We still deal with the desire for connection in the face of a society that tells us that we shouldn’t exist.”

Riggs was born in Fort Worth in 1957 and grew up in Fort Worth, Georgia, and Germany. He recalled his time as a boy in Georgia as particularly difficult: “I was caught between these two worlds where the whites hated me and the blacks disparaged me. It was so painful.”

He won a full scholarship to Harvard, where he studied history. He then moved to the West Coast to pursue a graduate degree in journalism, focusing on documentary filmmaking at the University of California at Berkeley. It was there that he met his life partner, Jack Vincent.

His 1987 documentary *Ethnic Notions* examined the history of racial caricature and stereotypes in American life. It was broadcast



Filmmaker Marlon Riggs (l) with poet and activist Essex Hemphill

nationally on PBS that same year, and won an Emmy Award.

Later, during a trip to Germany to visit his family, Riggs was hospitalized for kidney failure and tested HIV-positive. In 1990, his next film, *Tongues Untied*, was screened at the Berlin Film Festival with his mother, Jean, in attendance. He was too nervous to sit with her while she saw the film for the first time. She was indeed shaken and surprised by what she saw.

“To see the pain and suffering and the searching that he went through, it really hurt,” she later recalled. “It brought tears to my eyes, and I felt somewhat guilty. I said, ‘Why didn’t I recognize this? Why did I not know this?’”

Tongues Untied went on to win the Best Documentary Award at the Berlin Film Festival, as well as the Los Angeles Film Critics’ Best Independent/Experimental Film award.

In his home state of Texas, Houston Public Television declined to air *Tongues Untied*. In response, the Southwest Alternate Media Project approached the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, about organizing a screening so that the work could be seen in Houston. Peter Marzio, then the director of MFAH, agreed, and on August 1, 1991, the film played to a packed house. Immediately following the screening, Riggs called in to the museum and participated in a Q&A session with the audience by phone.

Riggs’ 1992 film *Color Adjustment* examined the representation of African-Americans in prime-time television, and went on to win a prestigious Peabody Award. That same year, he examined the stigma of having AIDS, and its impact on the black community, in the film *No Regret*. He died in 1994 of AIDS-related complications at the age of 37. His life and work continue to resonate 25 years later.

“As an activist, I believe his legacy is truth-telling, unfiltered and unapologetic,” says Harrison Guy. “As an artist, his legacy is a dynamic blend of creative disciplines with a conscience and a soul.”

“*Tongues Untied* reminds us that we come from a strong community of black gay men who laid a foundation for us to be who we are,” observes Brandon Mack. “And we need to continue that strong assertion of our identity [so that] the next generation continues to build up that foundation and build up our community.”

Andrew Edmonson has written about the arts for the Houston Chronicle, OUTSMART, the Houston Voice, and Houston Ballet News. He won the Award of Special Merit from the Texas Chapter of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.

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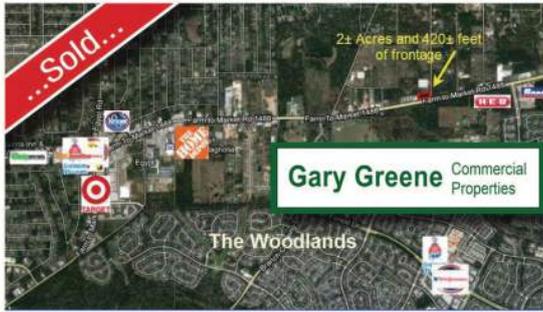
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WEDDING GUIDE



4 EVER

Sal Bonaccorso (l) and Leighton Brooks were married last year at the Galveston County Courthouse.

SPLISH SPLASH

Leighton Brooks and Sal Bonaccorso

By HENRY V. THIEL

Just as Sal Bonaccorso was finally falling asleep on his favorite lounge chair by his friends' pool, a loud and obnoxious couple sat down next to him. After trying to ignore them at first, he finally decided to join in on the conversation—and promptly met his future husband, Leighton Brooks.

Originally from Freeport, Brooks is a 24-year-old dental assistant. He thought Bonaccorso had a great sense of humor, and an amazing body. "He is obviously committed to a strict fitness regimen," he remembers

thinking when they met. Bonaccorso, 41, is an IT director who grew up in the Clear Lake area. He found Brooks to be very mature and caring—the exact opposite of his previous relationship that ended because of cheating and an assault. "To say that marriage was a nightmare would be an understatement," says Bonaccorso.

Very early on in their relationship, Bonaccorso and Brooks discovered that they share similar values when it came to intimacy, money, and love, so it was easy for them to decide that they would not get involved with the risky behavior that they saw their friends experiencing.

"I certainly didn't want a repeat of my last relationship," says Bonaccorso, "and I wasn't

sure if I was ready for something serious. I am grateful that Leighton was persistent, and that we could talk to each other as adults." Together, they were able to put Bonaccorso's fears and insecurities to rest.

"My only regret is that I wish I had found Leighton sooner," Bonaccorso admits. They also discovered that they have different communication styles, so they are still learning how to be respectful of each other with their words and actions. "I learned fast that relationships are a lot of hard work if you want to be successful and happy. Oh, and we don't keep secrets from each other," adds Brooks. "We are honest about how we feel, and do *not* hold things in. If something is bothering us, we say it when the time is right." →

Bonaccorso, ever the romantic, took Brooks to Italy—one of the most romantic places on earth. While they treasure the wonderful memories they created together sightseeing and indulging in the local cuisine, the memory they most cherish was created on a crowded beach near Bonaccorso's family home in Pozzallo, Sicily. On the spur of the moment, Bonaccorso picked up a seashell and wrote in the sand "Sal + Leighton 4 Ever" in big letters.

"We were amazed and deeply touched that passers-by, total strangers, stopped and insisted on taking a photo with us in front of the sign," says Brooks. "It was such a kind and welcoming affirmation of our relationship."

"Due to our age difference, everyone thinks I am the 'daddy' in this relationship," chuckles Bonaccorso. "The reality is that Leighton is more mature than others his age, so it makes relating to him easier. He actually goes to bed before I do, around 8 p.m., and he is an old soul. And I credit my lifestyle as the reason I look younger than my age. I have lived a very jovial and fruitful life, but with great responsibility and accountability to myself and my family.

No plastic surgery, no smoking, no drugs, ever," stresses Bonaccorso, "and definitely no Botox."

"I knew I wanted to be with him for the rest of my life very early on," says Brooks. "The whole 'getting married' idea was a bit overwhelming, but I knew that one day I wanted to call him my husband. I just didn't know when or how to get there. Thankfully, Sal had everything planned out."

Just three months into their relationship, Bonaccorso thought to himself that their relationship was what a relationship should be. He knew that all of his friends and family accepted them as a couple and also accepted Brooks into their social circles. So Bonaccorso took a leap of faith and proposed to Brooks.

"Leighton had told me that he wanted to propose to me when the time came, but I beat him to the punch with a simple question: 'Will you spend the rest of your life with me?'"

Brooks said yes.

"I was so surprised," he remembers, "because I wanted to be the one to ask *him* to marry *me*. But it was truly special, in our own little way. It wasn't the whole get-down-on-one-knee proposal. He just asked me one day, and I said yes."

On January 12, 2018, they tied the knot at the Galveston County Courthouse in League City. It was a simple ceremony because they wanted to be married quickly. They will have a big blowout ceremony when they renew their vows in a few years.



"I WASN'T SURE IF I WAS READY FOR SOMETHING SERIOUS. I AM GRATEFUL THAT LEIGHTON WAS PERSISTENT."

—Sal Bonaccorso

After getting hitched, they decided to celebrate at Twin Peaks. "We had the best time with the girls!" adds Bonaccorso. "They were so excited to see us, and kept coming to our table, sitting and laughing with us and asking all kinds of questions. We were also amused that the other guys in the bar were obviously perplexed as to what we were doing to get all the chicks in the bar to flock to us—so they could do it too!"

The couple celebrated their wedding with a honeymoon in Los Angeles, where they have many friends. "Our honeymoon was great fun, too," says Bonaccorso. "It felt like home to us. We had such a great time that we have moved to Los Angeles.

The newlyweds call Beverly Hills home.

Henry Thiel is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine. He loves the beach.

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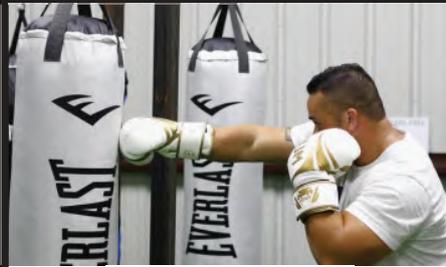
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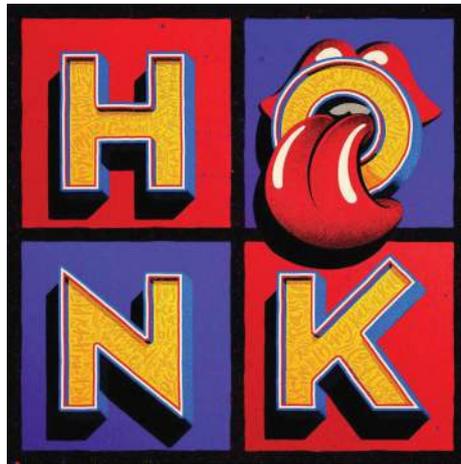


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Sounds Like the Past

Stevie Nicks, The Rolling Stones, and Dionne Warwick.



At this point in time, **Stevie Nicks** has half as many compilations to her name (both single- and multi-disc sets) as she does solo studio albums. The latest, **Stand Back: 1981-2017** (Rhino) consists of 50 songs spread out across three CDs. If anything, the set confirms Nicks' status as an underappreciated dance-music diva. Gay men of a certain age are sure to remember dancing in clubs to songs including "Stand Back," "I Can't Wait," and "Edge of Seventeen." In fact, the queer community's love affair with Nicks has been going on for years and includes the annual Night of 1,000 Stevies drag ball, as well as movies such as 1998's *Edge of Seventeen* and 2001's *Gypsy 83* (both written by Todd Stephens). The first of *Stand Back's* three discs features 17 tracks representing all of Nicks' solo recordings. The second disc mostly draws on Nicks' long history of collaborations, featuring songs she sang with Kenny Loggins, Tom Petty, Don Henley, Walter Egan, John Stewart, Natalie Maines, Chris Isaak, LeAnn Rimes, Lady Antebellum, Dave Stewart, and Lana Del Rey. Disc three is a mix of live recordings and selections from Nicks' contributions to movie soundtracks.

The **Rolling Stones'** ratio of hits collections to studio albums might not be as high as Stevie Nicks' (considering how long the band

has been in existence), but it's still considerable. The three-disc, four-LP (or digital) deluxe edition of **Honk** (Interscope/Rolling Stones Records) features 36 studio recordings, from 1971's *Sticky Fingers* to 2016's *Blue & Lonesome*. Coming as it does, 14 years after 2002's *Forty Licks* and seven years after 2012's *Grrr!* (two of the most thorough Stones compilations ever issued), *Honk* is a little lacking, especially given the band's 55-year recording history and the limited scope of the set. A third live bonus disc, consisting of 10 21st-century live recordings, is probably the main reason to add this set to your Rolling Stones collection.

The best periods of **Dionne Warwick's** lengthy career (almost 50 years) can be separated into the Scepter Records years and the Arista Records years. The Scepter period, which stretched from the early 1960s to the early 1970s, are probably best known for Warwick's association with the songwriting team of Burt Bacharach and Hal David. The string of hits that this creative partnership produced is legendary, and includes timeless tunes such as "I'll Never Fall in Love Again," "Do You Know the Way to San José?" "Walk on By," and "Say a Little Prayer," to mention just a few. Things slowed down throughout most of the 1970s, but when she teamed up with label-mate Barry Manilow (who did produc-

tion duty on her 1979 Arista debut album), her second phase was set in motion. During the Arista period she worked with producers including Barry Gibb and Luther Vandross, and later reunited with Bacharach (and then-wife Carole Bayer Sager) for "That's What Friends Are For," resulting in one of the biggest songs and albums of Warwick's recording career. It speaks volumes about the newer compositions on **She's Back** (Kind/eOne), her first studio album in five years, that she not only felt the need to dig into her past for material, but to also include a bonus disc featuring a remastered (and reordered) version of her 1998 disc, *Dionne Sings Dionne*. The biggest problem with the new recordings is that the various producers have made the songs sound already dated and lacking the staying power of her classics. For example, was it really necessary to rerecord "Déjà Vu"? More successful updates on the album include "Tears Ago" (by gay singer/songwriter Rahsaan Patterson), her sensitive reading of "How Do You Keep the Music Playing" (by Michel Legrand and the Bergmans), a snappy take on Patti Austin's "We're in Love," the timely Bacharach/David tune "What the World Needs Now," and the Warwick original "Two Ships."

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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'This One Looks Like a Boy'

Lorimer Shenher's gender journey to life as a man.

Looks aren't everything. There's a good chance that someone had reminded you of that fact during your dating years: the outside pales in comparison to the inner person you should love. Appearance rarely matters . . . except (as in the memoir *This One Looks Like a Boy* by Lorimer Shenher) when you're forced to live with the wrong one.

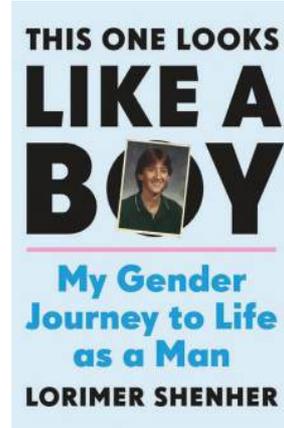
At four years old, Lori Shenher knew that lining up with the girls in kindergarten was somehow wrong. She wasn't a girl; she belonged with the boys.

But that wasn't the first inkling that something was different about Lori. Even her grandma had pointed out that she looked like a boy. As she grew, things got more complicated: as often as possible, she dressed in boys' clothing or androgynous fashions, because girls' clothes felt like a lie. She was okay with people thinking she was a boy, but it also made her uncomfortable.

She was a teenager before she learned that there were other people like her, and she devoured information about Renée Richards and Christine Jorgensen. During a summer job, she met a trans man and was fascinated. Was it possible that she might someday do what they did? Thinking that scared her.

To help deal with her feelings, Shenher threw herself into sports and attended college in Calgary, and then in Alberta, on sports scholarships. She was a shining star on the basketball court until she sustained several painful injuries and began drinking heavily. She was later diagnosed with depression, which may have also explained why she gave up a journalism career to move to Vancouver—first to check out a transgender clinic, and then to apply for work with the Vancouver police force.

And life settled down. Shenher met a woman she loved, and they had a commitment ceremony and started a family. But those old familiar feelings of inadequacy and misery kept nagging at Shenher, even as she tried



This One Looks Like a Boy
• by Lorimer Shenher
• 2019
• Greystone Books (greystonebooks.com)
• 304 pages
• \$26.95

hard to tamp them down.

While the idea of transitioning was terrifying, so was the idea of living as a woman for the rest of her life.

First thing you need to know: *This One Looks Like a Boy* is quite a detailed story, which can be both good and bad. Author Lorimer Shenher begins with his birth and recounts his life story in plodding, almost year-by-year detail that often seems tangential. It's entertaining for a while, but—fair warning—

don't be surprised if you eventually find yourself skimming paragraphs in search of more action.

And yet, this book is one of the better, more definitive explanations of the feelings of isolation that trans individuals might experience, and one of the finer accounts of the do-I-or-don't-I swings that sometimes linger

without resolution. Shenher's words ache, and readers get a real sense of what it's like to know-not-know whether you should live as a man or a woman.

Read or not? Ultimately, it'll come down to how much you crave action: *This One Looks Like a Boy* doesn't have much of it, but for the right reader it's definitely worth a look.

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was three years old, and she lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 11,000 books.



Author Lorimer Shenher

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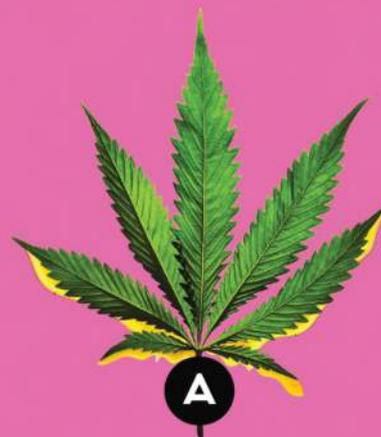
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QUEER QUOTES

Compiled by BLASE DISTEFANO

Taylor Swift & Cher

(CheatSheet.com, 6/19/19, Mandi Kerr)

Swift released the music video for her new song, “You Need to Calm Down,” off her seventh studio album, *Lover*, in the early morning hours of Monday, June 17.

In the first few moments of the music video, Swift is seen sitting in a mobile-home trailer, and on the wall is a framed quote by none other than Cher.

The quote, “MOM, I AM A RICH MAN,” is surrounded by flowers.

Later in the day, Cher, 73, took to Twitter to share with her 3.67 million followers that she had been referenced in Swift’s video. She posted a still of the framed quote from the music video with no caption.



Swift replied to Cher’s original tweet about the quote, saying, “When you have a song about being calm and the video has a Cher quote in it and she posts it—so henceforth you are not able to be calm anymore.”

Later, Cher tweeted about the origin of her famous quote:



Pete Buttigieg

(Axios, 6/16/19, HBO)

“I would imagine we’ve probably had excellent presidents who were gay—we just didn’t know which ones. I mean, statistically, it’s almost certain.”

So, who were the gay presidents?

“My gaydar doesn’t even work that well in the present, let alone retroactively,” he quipped.

Freddie Mercury & Lance Bass

(TheHuffingtonPost.com, 6/14/19, Curtis M. Wong)



SWIFFITCHER - SCREENSHOTS FROM TWITTER; BUTTIGIEG - SCREENSHOT FROM PETERAFERICA.COM; FLAMINGOS - SCREENSHOT FROM FACEBOOK; INFLUENCE - SCREENSHOT FROM EIGHT BY EIGHT; VIRAL VIDEO; CRANSTON - JOHN F. FLORES

Denver Zoo marked LGBTQ Pride Month by introducing the world to a pair of male flamingos who have been a “couple” for several years.

Officials posted a photo of the two birds, named after era-defining singers (and queer icons) Freddie Mercury and Lance Bass, to the zoo’s official Facebook page.

In an interview with CBS Denver, bird keeper Brittney Weaver said male-to-male pairings among flamingos are rare, but aren’t unheard of.

“They have plenty of choices to choose from, so we can’t really control what they choose,” said Weaver. “We started noticing them hanging out and spending a lot of time together. We saw them participating in all those courtship behaviors. When they finally built that nest, that’s when we knew.”

Megan Rapinoe

Megan Rapinoe is co-captain of the U.S. women’s national soccer team, Reign FC. She is dating Sue Bird, a professional basketball player for the Seattle Storm of the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA), and last June they were the first same-sex couple to appear in ESPN’s body issue.

When Rapinoe was recently asked by *Eight by Eight* magazine if she was excited about going to the White House if they were to win the Women’s World Cup [*the games were still under way at OUTSMART’s press time*], she replied, “I’m not going to the f--king White House.”

A few days later at a news conference, she said, “I stand by the comments that I made about not wanting to go to the White House, with exception of the expletive. My mom would be very upset about that.”



Bryan Cranston

(Tony Awards, 6/9/19, CBS)

Re: accepting the Tony Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in the play Network.

[Said in jest] Finally, a straight old white man gets a break!



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OUT-THERE

Photos by DALTON DEHART & EDGARDO AGUILAR



Sunday June 14

Artists, activists, and mental-health specialists packed the Ballroom at Bayou Place for **Feel My Pride: From the Root**. The official Pride Houston brunch featured entertainment, food, and bottomless mimosas. Created in partnership with Impulse Houston and the T.R.U.T.H. Project, the event celebrated life, family, and community triumphs.



OUT THERE



Thursday, June 13

Everyone wore rainbows to **Macy's Joy + Pride**, a transgender fashion show, at The Galleria. Hosted by trans activist Jessica Zyrie and wardrobe stylist Ashley Kahn, members of Houston's trans community were front and center as models for Pride-inspired looks based on the season's trends.



Sunday, June 2
The Houston Gaymers, an LGBTQ gaming group, celebrated its 10th anniversary with a **Homecoming Meetup** at Sharespace. The organization reminisced on a decade of memories with dancing, video games, snacks, and some special presentations throughout the event.



Sunday, June 9
Pride Houston took over Rosemont Houston for a **pop-up event**. Attendees got the chance to receive some free Pride Houston swag, along with a look at some exclusive merch, including this year's Summer of '69 T-shirts and #PrideFans.

OUT THERE



Sunday, June 2

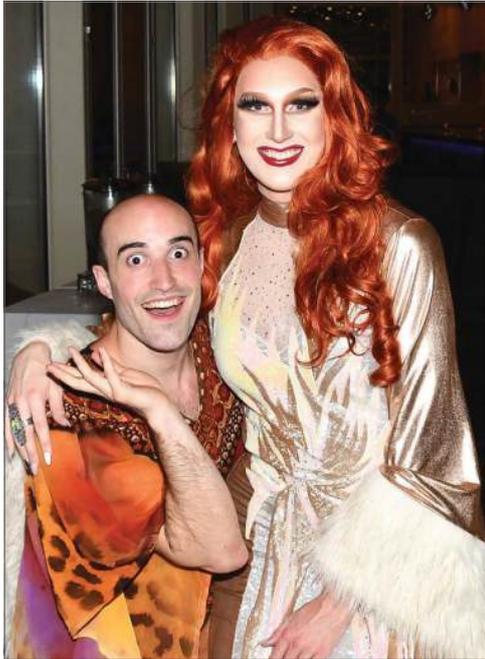
Queer kids ages 13–20 dressed all out in old-school garb for the **HATCH Youth LGBTQIA+ Prom** at Numbers Nightclub. Dance Through The Decades was free to attend, and on-site hair and makeup services were donated to guests by local stylists.



Thursday, June 6

Friends and supporters from across the Houston area gathered at Station 3 for **Equality Night Out**, Lambda Legal's LGBTQ Pride event. The keynote speaker of the evening was director of the Youth in Out-of-Home Care Project and Counsel Currey Cook, who shares Lambda Legal's mission to defend the rights of queer people.





Wednesday, May 29
OUTSMART invited readers, advertisers, and friends to Theatre Under The Stars for **Out@TUTS: Jerome Robbins' Broadway**. The LGBTQ mixer was followed by the performance, which honors the career highlights of Tony Award-winning director and choreographer Jerome Robbins.



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What is the best and worst holiday to work? Why?
Best is Christmas Eve when folks don't want to do the family thing yet. Worst is Biker Rally Weekend here in Galveston.

What is the best part about working at this bar?
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If you weren't a bartender, what career would you choose?
I would probably be in restaurant management.

Do you have any pets?
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What is the best part about working at this bar?
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teaching or attending classes, and connecting with folks from other cultures who have a different point of view. This is a very inventive time for you, and new ideas will be coming fast and furious—especially during the eclipses. You will be expressing your feelings and emotions more easily. The career or personal-obligations area of your chart will be very, very active this month, with lots of new ideas and directions opening up to you. It will be important to wait until August 8 before you put your fence posts in cement. Your patience will be short with those who repeat the same problems. This will be especially true for your coworkers. Life takes on a very personal meaning for you through mid-August. Relationships need some invigoration, and it will be easier to talk with your partner about improving all aspects of your relationship—even the scary parts! Take some time to get away and renew those bonds.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
 You have been in a sluggish period over the last month, but you'll have more energy and drive through July. You are having to make sure that the work decisions you make create happiness and fulfillment, and don't just pay the bills. You have been looking to live a life that has deeper

and more spiritual meaning for you. With the eclipse cycle in the areas of money, finances, and personal resources, you are exploring many ways to improve on what you have gained. With Mercury retrograde in July, you should be reconnecting with business associates, friends, and organizations that you have had ongoing relationships with. This can be a great time to find new customers and bolster your connection with people you've already had contact with. In the latter part of the month, you will need a break from all of the pushing you have been doing. This can be a great time for a vacation, or even a staycation!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
 This is an especially busy month for you as the eclipse cycle exerts a direct influence on your relationships. As career and long-term security are always the main items on your menu, personal self-expression and relationships take more of the spotlight this month. If there are problems in your relationships, Mercury retrograde will expose them so you can do something about them. You will need a solution, or your relationship may not survive. For those relationships that are doing fine, this is a good time to check in and refine those connections. This can be a very

good time to consider going into business with a partner. Final decisions on any of your ideas should wait until after August 8 when Mercury is direct. Toward the end of the month, your interest turns to finances and improving your investments. This is a great month for taking care of those old nagging problems that you have been putting off. Family demands are making you check your boundaries. Sacrifice can lead to resentment if you don't operate from your heart. Draw the line so you know where to stop!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
 You are focused on getting organized, cleaning up old problems at home and with coworkers, and taking better overall care of your health. You are reexamining your agreements about domestic responsibilities as you seek to lighten your load in this area. At work, you are looking for something that is more intellectually attractive—something that actually makes you want to come to work! Routines and old expectations are falling short, and this is your motivation to look for something different. You are also looking for more freedom from expectations in your partnerships. Relationships with long-term problems will have to find some resolution in July, or they may not last

through the fall. In the latter part of the month, relationships demand more attention. This may be a real test of the durability of your partnerships and some close friendships. You are not as patient as usual, so remember that long-term decisions need to be made after August 8, even if you know what you are going to do!

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20)
 You have been in a time of personal reflection, especially during this past month. Decisions may have been more difficult, and you may have avoided too much social interaction. You haven't had any extra energy or time to spend on people or causes that you are personally drawn to. Through most of July, you are in a creative time of looking to find some fun and joy in your activities. This can be a great time to reconnect with old friends or exes from your past. Career options are still good, but with Mercury retrograde it's better to make those choices after August 8. This is a very picky time for you, and you won't make decisions just to satisfy others or to keep the peace. Make sure you are happy first!

For more astro-insight, log on to lillyroddy.com.

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By LILLY RODDY

Illustration by JANIEWHATEVA



For All of Us . . .

this can be a rocky and enlightening month.

July begins with Mercury, our personal traffic director, going retrograde on the 4th and then direct on August 8. This retrograde will initially impact the fixed signs of Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius. Later in the cycle, after July 19, the cardinal signs (Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn) are more activated. Mercury retrograde is a good time to take care of what's on your plate before you add more to it. It's best to wait until after August 8 to start something new. We also have a solar eclipse on July 2 and a lunar eclipse on the 16th. Solar and lunar eclipses are cycles of new beginnings that repeat approximately every 18 years. This eclipse cycle is especially strong since it combines with Mercury retrograde, bringing past events and decisions into a time of review. We are also under the effects of a Saturn/Pluto alignment that began last September and continues through April 2020. This Saturn/Pluto alignment creates changes in governments, a shift in world power, and exposes the dirt behind the scenes. The solar and lunar eclipses intensify this ongoing energy and have the strongest impact on the cardinal signs.

ARIES (Mar. 21-Apr. 19)

Career, family, and home are at the top of the menu for you this month. This is a big time of review about possible decisions and new career directions. This can even be a time when you are considering starting your own business. You older Rams and Ewes may be considering retirement, or cutting back on your schedule and obligations. This can also be a time when you are considering relocating or remodeling.

Old family issues can resurface as well, especially issues with aging and family finances. This is a good month to consider your options, but permanent decisions are best made after August 8.

TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20)

Communications are in the spotlight this month as you review interactions you've had over the last three months. You may have to make your views clearer to the people in your immediate environment. This can be a time when you need more respect or validation. You will want people to take your boundaries seriously, and you will react strongly to those who don't. This is especially strong on July 7, 8, and the 11th. In the latter part of the month, your focus shifts to your home and family. This could be a great month for a family reunion, making your personal nest a more comfortable place, or looking for a new place to live. With Mercury retrograde in your area that rules legal documents, do not sign any papers before August 8 unless you have to!

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

With your ruling planet retrograde for most of the month, this is your time to reexamine your past choices, get your files cleaned out and organized, and take some time for personal reflection. As the month begins, you are focused on your finances, personal resources, and skills. You are looking at ways to cut some costs and increase your salary or fees. Relationships are still in a positive mode for you, despite your need for more personal time and less interaction. You are just trying to find some balance between your need for rest and the obligations you have to respond to. Driving may seem more difficult than usual this month, so give yourself extra time to get where you're going!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You are in a period of rest and retreat this month. Your psychic receptivity is very strong, especially with the eclipses adding to that power. You may need a respite from the physical demands you have been placing on yourself over the last couple of months. With Mars (planet of survival)

CANCER (June 22-July 22)
With the eclipses in your sign during July, this is going to be a busy month. You are more volatile and likely to express your feelings, rather than keeping all of those emotions locked up! The eclipses are strongly impacting your relationships. For some, this is a time to renew those bonds, while for others, it's time to consider upgrading your current commitments. If you are having problems with partners, those problems are going to come to the surface so you can talk (or maybe yell) about them. You must find some resolution, or some relationships will be coming to an end. With the eclipses so strong, you are doing some personal review and will find it easier to speak your truth. Toward the end of the month, you shift your attention to your finances and resources. This is a great month to take care of those lingering financial problems.

in your sign for the next 47 days, you will be putting yourself first in all situations. Your anger and impatience with others is very likely to show, despite your intentions to control it. This can be a great time to get away to the beach or the lake. Work can generate more stress than usual this month. Avoid the drama queens in your office who need too much attention—unless that is you! You are looking at new career directions that feed your passion and make some money. With Mars so active, you may not be sleeping as well as usual. By the end of the month, you are ready to act on what you have been planning.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Even with Mercury (your ruling planet) retrograde, this is a good time for you to get out and reconnect with old friends and business associates. Your energy level last month was very inconsistent, and made it difficult to complete tasks and meet with people (even those you liked) because of the strong psychic influences. That won't be as much of a problem this month, so you can follow up on what you had originally planned. Toward the end of the month, you are ready to take a less-busy path. The end of the month is great for taking a short vacation, visiting a spa or metaphysical retreat, and doing some journaling. The eclipses are activating your

creative juices. You are looking for new goals and directions in your career and in your avocations, and you are keeping all options open. Permanent decisions should be avoided until August.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

The eclipse cycle is impacting your career, your home, and your choices about long-term security. Of course, this has an impact on your relationships. You may feel that you are pulled in too many directions at once, and not really appreciated for all you do! Boundaries continue to be a major theme, especially with work as you attempt to make your work schedule more time-efficient. For those of you who are older, this can be a time to consider retiring or revamping your career. For others, this can be a time to contemplate doing something on your own. In the latter part of the month, friends and business associates will be supportive of any new endeavors. After August 8, Mercury will be direct and you will be ready to make some decisions. You are more socially active toward the end of the month!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

This is a busy time for you, even with the Mercury retrograde. This is an especially good month for writing projects,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 111

MINT JULEP 2019

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SCENE OUT

Photos by
DALTON DEHART & EDGARDO AGUILAR



On May 26, Lambda Nextgen held their monthly Happy Hour social at Yauatcha Houston. Pictured are (front row, l-r) Ryan Macmillan, James Spear; (back row, l-r) Nicholas Bryan Guidry, Mia Mundy, and Chris Cantu.



"Dance through the Decades" Hatch Prom 2019 was held at Numbers on June 2. Pictured are Hatch Youth leaders.



On June 6, Lambda Legal sponsored "Equality Night Out" at Station 3. Pictured are Avery Belyeu, Kathy Silver, Corey Devine, Travis Torrence, and Curry Cook.



On June 6, Pride Houston held the Pride Superstar Finale at Rich's. Pictured are Lo Roberts, Angelina DM Trailz, Jeremy Fain, Christina Wells, Danie Ward, Ernie Manouse, and Jeff Gremillion.



On June 8, Carl Han held his annual Love Party at Pearl Bar, benefiting Hatch Youth. Pictured are Viola Degradable Dion-Debris and Carl Han.



On June 9, Pride Houston sponsored the Pride Pop-Up Shop at Rosemont. Pictured are Lo Roberts, Corey Decuire, Amir Senemar, Ryan Wilson, John Lopez, Alfredo Gutierrez, and Dan Cato.



The Alley Theatre hosted ActOUT at the Alley on June 13 before the performance of *The Three Musketeers*. Pictured are (back row, l-r) Christopher, Orin Cullever, Sergio Silva, Fernanda Shannonhouse, Tina Berry, Front: Angela, M. Jane Orosco, Lauren Pelletier, Rachel Applegate, and Ezequiel Veliz.



On June 13, the Pride Forum held its inaugural forum with the candidates for Houston City Council District C. Pictured are (front row) Kevin Walker, Abbie Kamin, Shelley Kennedy, Greg Meyers, Kendra Camarena; (back row) Daphne Scarborough, Bob Nowak, Amanda Kathryn Wolfe, and Nick Hellyar.



Gay Men's Chorus of Houston held their 40th-Anniversary Celebration Concert at Resurrection MCC on June 15. Pictured are Joe Nadeau (board of directors, Gala Choruses); Kenneth Clayborne (director, Gay Men's Chorus of Houston); Matt Leslie (board president, Bayou City Performing Arts)



On May 16, the official Sunday Funday brunch "Feel My Pride: From the Root" was hosted by Pride Houston, Impulse Houston, and the T.R.U.T.H. Project at the Ballroom at Bayou Place. Pictured are Lo Roberts, Ian Haddock, and Kevin D. Anderson.



On June 19, a Dysport and Drag kickoff event with Dr. Forrest Roth was held at West Ave. on Kirby Drive. Pictured are Chloe Crawford, Dr. Forrest Roth, Cyn City, Ondi, Matt Curtis, and Chris Duzich.



On June 21, the Diana Foundation presented the Dianas History Book to the City of Houston and to Mayor Sylvester Turner at American Grill. Pictured are Diana Book Project Committee co-chair Tanner Williams, Mayor Sylvester Turner, Book Project Committee co-chair John Heinzerling, and author Brandon Wolf.



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