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Straining family ties

Denise Lee, Quinton Jones
star in Uptown's 'we are continuous'

By Rich Lopez, page 8



A photograph of two shirtless men embracing. The man on the left is Black and has a thin necklace. The man on the right is white with a beard and is holding a red rose. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a gradient of pink and red.

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WHAT'S THE TEA: DallasVoice.com



Judge Staci Williams

101st Court offering free weddings

Judge Staci Williams of the 101st District Court in Dallas County is offering to officiate free wedding ceremonies from noon to 4:15 p.m. on Valentine's Day, Friday, Feb. 14.

This is for couples getting married for the first time as well as couples looking to renew their vows.

The 101st District Court is on the sixth floor west of the George L. Allen Sr. Courthouse, 600 Commerce St.

Couples wishing to wed for the first time must first obtain a valid Texas marriage license at least 72 hours prior to the ceremony (although the 72-hour waiting period may be waived under certain circumstances, it is better not to take that chance) from any County Clerk's office.

You can complete an online application and pick up the license at the Records Building, 500 Elm St., Ste. 2100, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Then just present the marriage license on the day of the ceremony.

Weddings will be performed on a "first-come, first-served" basis. If you have any questions, email 101court@dallascounty.org.

— Tammye Nash

Trump signs EO banning trans athletes in school sports

Donald Trump on Wednesday, Feb. 5, signed an executive order banning transgender athletes from participating in girls' and women's sports.

"With this executive order, the war on women's sports is over," Trump declared in signing the order.

Transgender advocates, however, say that the "war on women's sports" is nothing more than

right-wing propaganda, and that this order and other actions from the Trump administration are, in fact, a war on transgender people at the most basic level.

Rodrigo Heng-Lehtinen, executive director of Advocates for Trans Equality, said in a written statement: "This executive order is a malicious and baseless attack on trans girls and women nationwide. Every child deserves a quality education, including the opportunity to participate in school athletics, which teaches students of all ages the value of teamwork, dedication, and ambition.

"This executive order isn't about protecting women and girls in sports — it does nothing to address the real issues facing women and girls in athletics, such as unequal access to funding and facilities, abuse by coaches, physicians, and other trusted adults and the unconscionable gender pay gap in professional sports," Heng-Lehtinen said. "This executive order targeting transgender children is part of Trump's campaign to erase transgender people from public life. While American families struggle with real issues — wages that can't keep up with the rising cost of living, housing insecurities, and dwindling access to health care — the Trump administration is ... doubling down on their extreme anti-trans agenda, targeting youth who just want to play sports.

"Our leaders should be focused on solving real problems — not scapegoating a marginalized community for political gain," they concluded.

— Tammye Nash

Hidden Door's then-owner Jim Robert simplified the process by establishing a cash-only policy.

"We've looked at taking debit/credit cards through the years, but we couldn't find the right combination of technology and cost to make it work for the Hidden Door and allow us to serve a customer in the same time or less" as it took when customers pay cash, Meissner said.

He said Hidden Door bartenders have been testing out the new system for accepting plastic payments and learning how to use it most effectively, so they will be ready to switch come Monday.

But, he added, traditionalists among us needn't worry: "For those who like their change, we'll still accept cash. And the ATM machine will always be handy."

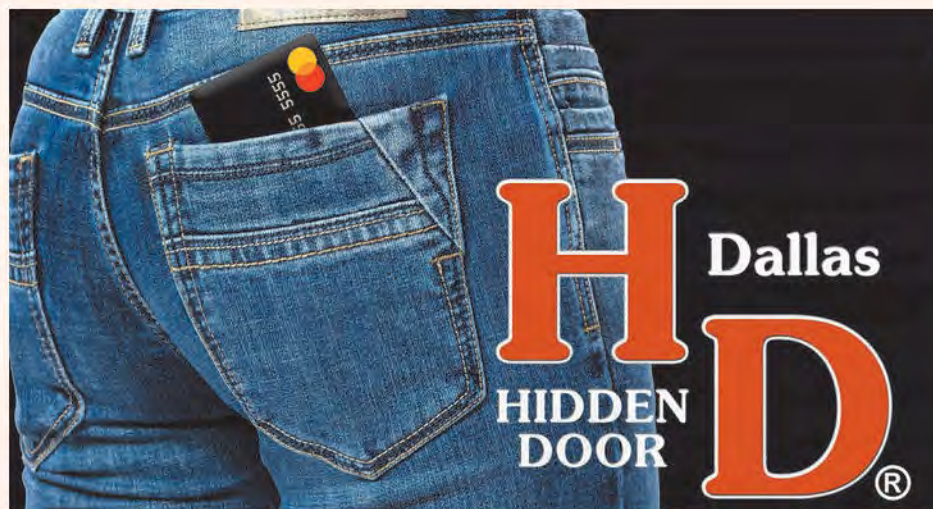
— Tammye Nash

1 dead following shooting in Oak Lawn

One man is dead following a shooting Wednesday, Feb. 5, at about 6:50 a.m., in the 3900 block of Rawlins Street. Police have identified the man as Carlos Manuel Rivera, 45, and have said the investigation into the shooting is ongoing.

Anyone with information on the shooting is asked to contact Dallas PD Detective Josue Rodriguez at 214-605-1557 or by email at josue.rodriguez@dallaspolice.gov.

— Tammye Nash



Hidden Door to start accepting plastic

After decades of being a cash-only business, The Hidden Door will begin accepting credit card payments, effective Monday, Feb. 10, when the bar opens.

"Things change after half a century," noted Hidden Door President and General Manager Harvey Meissner, explaining that 45 years ago when the bar first opened in 1979, when customers were paying with credit cards, bars had to call via a modem, key in their card information manually then wait for authorization, then write it all down a couple of times.



Gov. Greg Abbott

Equality Texas launches ads during Abbott's 'State of the State'

As Texas Gov. Greg Abbott was delivering his "State of the State" address Sunday evening, Feb. 2, Equality Texas launched a statewide ad campaign focused on transgender lives and rights.

The 30-second ads feature three trans individuals — Ashton, Gio and Nadya — talking about life in their own words. Between the ads, Governor Abbott threatened to fire all LGBTQ-affirming teachers and threatened to scrub DEI practices from every corner of the state.

The ads, developed by GLAAD and GROUND Media, ran in Abilene, Amarillo, Austin, Brownsville, Dallas, El Paso, Harlingen, Houston, Lubbock, Midland, Odessa, San Angelo, Tyler, Waco and Wichita Falls.

In his speech, Abbott committed to ending all DEI practices in K-12 schools, reiterated his commitment to exclude trans students from school sports and insisted that any teachers who affirm or support trans young people "should be fired on the spot."

— Tammye Nash

Adoptable / BAYMAX



Baymax, 1-year-and-3-month-old boxer mix, is fantastic with kids and gets along wonderfully with other dogs. At 45 pounds, Baymax is just the right size. He's also incredibly smart and a fast learner and has a loving, friendly personality.

Like all pets from the SPCA of Texas, Baymax has been neutered and microchipped and is up to date on all his vaccinations. He resides at the Dallas Animal Care Center, 2400 Lone Star Drive, so come by any day between noon and 6 p.m. to meet him. Animals are available for adoption at both the SPCA Dallas Animal Care Center and the Ellis County Animal Care Center, 2570 FM 878 in Waxahachie.

Demand respect, inclusivity from your vet

DR. JOSH TALKS ANIMALS

Welcome to my monthly Woof column, Dallas Voice readers. What a month January was!

Unfortunately, things don't seem like they are going to improve anytime soon. I think many of us across our nation are genuinely concerned for our well-being.

In light of everything that is happening, I have decided to discuss how pets help our LGBTQ community and the importance of having inclusivity at our veterinary care facilities.

Whenever we come home after a rough day, we are always greeted by our furry kiddos, because no matter what and no matter who we are, they love us and they get us.

They don't judge; they don't care about labels; they don't try to erase our existence, and they love us exactly as we are.

For many in our community, pets aren't just companions; they have literally saved our lives. On top of that, they can give us a sense of stability in a chaotic world that isn't always accepting of who we are.

As we all know, our LGBTQ community has higher rates of anxiety, depression and suicide than most of the rest of the communities. We are often dealing with family rejection, discrimination or just the stress of everyday life.

Pets are there to provide us with unconditional love, the kind of non-judgmental love that is healing. They also provide us with structure and a routine, which can be grounding, especially during challenging times. Things as simple as feeding them, walking them and caring for them create a routine that can be vital for some of us.

Scientific research shows that spending time with pets lowers cortisol (stress hormone) and increases oxytocin (feel-good hormone). This can also help many of us with different levels of anxiety. In fact, there are pets that can even be trained to be different types of emotional support partners.

Something as simple as allowing us to connect with other people through our pets as conversation starters can be



Dr. Josh
Woof

beneficial. This is especially important for those of us feeling isolated.

The bond between LGBTQ people and our pets is strong, and for some, our pets are part of our chosen

family.

Unfortunately, there are many public and private spaces or businesses that do not welcome our community members or even literally reject us. This can unfortunately extend to even our health providers, including veterinary hospitals and clinics.

I will say that I am proud that most of us in the veterinary medical field are welcoming and accepting because we are often considered outcasts within our families for different reasons (which is why we help animals because they always accept us as we are!).

I truly believe inclusivity is extremely

important, not only in public spaces, but everywhere we go.

As a veterinarian, I've seen firsthand how important it is for our LGBTQ pet parents to feel welcomed at my hospital. I remember having a conversation with a client who was "in the closet" and was terrified to come out because they had no one to talk to. But they felt comfortable discussing it with me because of our welcoming environment.

No one should have to worry about being misgendered, judged or feel awkward when they're just trying to get care for their pet.

An inclusive veterinary experience should respect names and pronouns, allowing the experience to be focused on the pet's well-being instead of making someone feel uncomfortable because they don't feel accepted, seen or heard.

There should also be understanding and acceptance of nontraditional family structures, because we all have different life experiences and perspectives. We should also provide a safe zone where every human family member can open up and feel comfortable discussing their

concerns about their pets.

Unfortunately, when some of our community members feel discriminated against, it can even lead to them not sharing the concerns they may have about their pets, as they might even be eager to leave an uncomfortable social scenario. A welcoming veterinary clinic or hospital makes a safe space for honest conversations, whether it's about behavioral issues, financial concerns or just figuring out the best treatment options.

Even little things — like a rainbow flag in the window, a non-discrimination statement on the website or having inclusive bathroom signs — go a long way. They show LGBTQ pet parents that they're safe and welcome.

I even make sure all of our team members are welcoming of all of our community members and understanding of the fact that we are all different. As long as there is mutual respect and acceptance, we should always find a happy medium and focus on taking care of our furry patients.

If you're an LGBTQ pet parent, know that you deserve a veterinary medical team who respects and supports you, just like your pet does. You should never be afraid to ask questions before booking an appointment, to make sure they have an inclusive and welcoming practice. Look for hospitals and clinics that openly support inclusivity and check reviews from other LGBTQ pet parents.

And if you do not have an inclusive and welcoming veterinary team, you can always visit my hospital in Addison!

Our kiddos make our lives much better by helping us feel seen and loved. We should expect the same from our medical providers and from everyone around us.

We are living in a time when we must stand up for ourselves — respectfully but confidently — and be vocal about basic values like acceptance, diversity, equality and inclusivity. Yes, these are stressful and uncertain times but let us stay united and visibly defend our rights. Do not let anyone bring us down! We have been fighting for years, and we are not going anywhere.

Hang in there, and, as always, abrazos fuertes!!

Dr. Josh owns Isla Veterinary Boutique Hospital, 14380 Marsh Lane, Ste. 110 in Addison. Call him at 972-738-1111 or visit IslaVet.com.

Learning to love ... yourself

Homophobia can increase our insecurities, but loving yourself can keep that at bay

When it comes to love, it seems we often focus on finding it in a romantic sense. Many yearn to find “the one,” and sometimes, in that journey, we forget to focus on self-love.

It can be a journey to find that self-love, especially when we belong to a community that is currently under attack. But believe me, self-love and acceptance are two of the most important relationships we will ever have.

As members of the LGBT community, it can be hard for some of us to learn to love ourselves after years of ridicule, harassment and bullying. And that doesn't even include the constant political attacks on our human rights.

Many in our community are looked at as “less than” by those same people who have caused much of these issues. Sadly, when this happens, it can cause many to feel like they truly aren't good enough.

But that's a lie. You are good enough. We are good enough.

As I was growing up in West Texas, it was obvious I was “different.” My mom even said, “When you were born you had the loudest cry I had ever heard.” (To this day, apparently, I still do.)

She said at that moment she knew I was going to be different. And she was right.

I remember being that kid who often couldn't sit still, was very talkative and loud in class, would sometimes say very random things and (heaven forbid) had more feminine interests than most boys my age. It's not that I didn't want to be “one of the boys,” it was that when I tried, I was met with homophobic slurs.

So I found myself dancing with the girls at recess or isolating myself from my peers in the school library or writing in my journal.

These things may not seem too strange to a lot of people these days. But when you're a young boy in a small town, you



Mathew Dominguez
Contributing Columnist

are expected to meet certain standards. You can't be feminine. You can't show affection towards your male peers.

Honestly, years hearing things like “Stop being such a sissy” and “Why can't you butch it up?” messed with my head. I'm being very vulnerable about this for the first time because it wasn't until a few years back that I finally began to realize there is nothing wrong with loving myself for being my true self.

One thing I love about living here in Dallas is the amount of people I see walking down Cedar Springs, on any given day, expressing themselves through their clothing, their makeup, their art. It reminds me of why so many try to get out of their small towns: to feel free to truly be themselves. I know that was a big reason why I moved.

Thing is, some people often try to make it seem as though the things that make some of us stand out the most, the things that our true loved ones enjoy most about our company, are always negative.

Sure, there are times when if you're just naturally loud (like me) it might be best to talk with a lower tone of voice or maybe not curse as much in certain settings. But learning to love our own quirks, especially when people have insulted these quirks, can definitely be a long journey.

That journey didn't really, fully begin for me until I relocated to Dallas.

There was a big part of me that had



trouble being confident in my true self when I first got here. Most of my life, I was criticized for being loud and random, for dressing a bit different, for wearing makeup and painting my nails black — just marching to the beat of my own drum. I turned a bit shy because I worried how others would perceive me once they got to know me.

I also struggle with a major anxiety disorder that people don't understand. I was called “crazy” many times, which led me to believe for the longest time that I wasn't worthy of love or even true friendships.

I remember one person who, after a few months of good friendship, began showing a lot of gaslighting tendencies. He knew which buttons to push and all the things to say to upset me. Then when I would get upset, he would sit there with a smile and say things like, “Stop being such a f****t.” Unfortunately, I was so attached to him and his toxicity, so afraid to lose his friendship, that I began to believe it was all my fault.

I began to believe, once again, all those things people used to call me.

But here I am, years later, continuing my journey of self-love. So many in our community are met with negativity, even within our own community. People can truly be extremely nasty and rude, whether in person or on the apps.

Don't get me wrong: I have behaved that way in the past; I'm not going to

act like I didn't. I think many of us have, whether it was fueled by insecurities, trauma, liquid courage or whatever.

But as I've grown, I've learned that you catch more flies with honey. Yes, it's cliché. But even though it's a crazy and cruel world out there, we should be kind to each other.

Why did I kind of change the topic a bit? Well, first, because as I mentioned earlier I can be extremely random sometimes. And second, because once I started learning to be kinder to others, to smile, to practice empathy more, I began to see how many of those insecurities I had slowly began to fade away.

That's not to say I don't still have bad days. I'm human. And so are you, and it's okay if you have some bad days.

Even though my journey to self-love has been an extreme roller coaster, I have realized that when you put positive energy out there, it can become easier to learn to love yourself. It doesn't matter if people say negative things; let them talk.

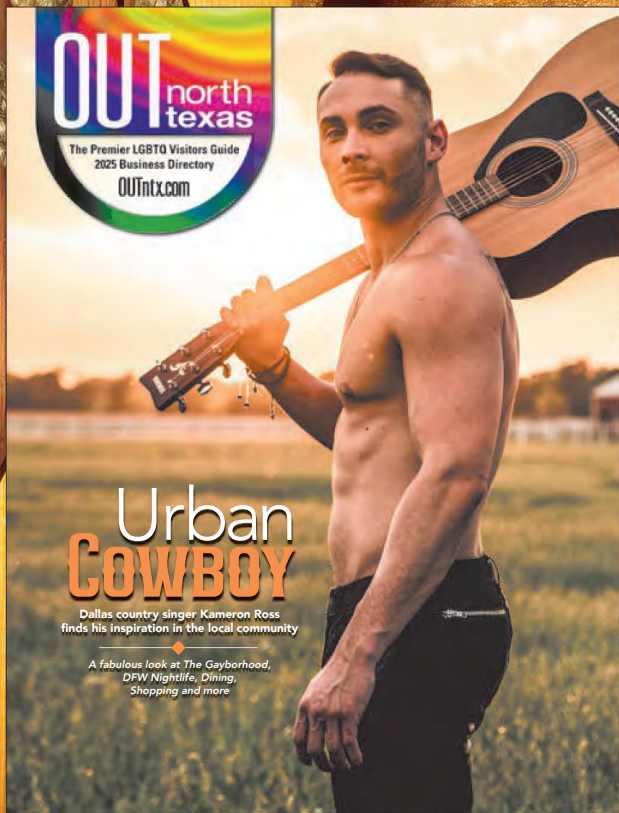
As long as you can look at yourself in the mirror, be happy with yourself and tell yourself that you're worthy of love and respect, that is a success. The relationship with yourself is the one you should be focused on.

Never allow anyone to make you think that you're not good enough. You are. As RuPaul says, “If you can't love yourself, how in the hell are you going to love somebody else?” ■

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BEYOND THE STAGE

Quinton Jones, Denise Lee explore the relationship between a gay son and his devout mother in Uptown Players' 'we are continuous'

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
Rich@DallasVoice.com

Family matters are heavy in playwright Harrison David Rivers' *we are continuous*, and those family matters unfold at Uptown Players beginning Friday, Feb. 7.

The drama centers on Simon, who comes to terms with his devout mother, Ora, while tempering the situation with his husband, Abe. Directed by Natalie King, Rivers' story details the struggles of acceptance and forgiveness through the lens of Black perspectives.

The show runs through Feb. 23 at Theatre Three's Norma Young Arena Stage.

Actor Quintin Jones (he/him), who plays Simon, says that while he can't speak for all families, there can be some commonality among the coming out experience.

"In most Black families, there is at least some connection to faith and religion, and when I came out, that was certainly brought up," Jones said. "Now, growing up, we loosely practiced and could be considered Easter Christians. It certainly wasn't my parents' favorite thing though."

His costar Denise Lee (she/her), however, agrees that while there are the similar experiences, it's not monolithic.

"While we can have a lot of common experience, there also has to be a true understanding for the individual perspective," Lee said. "For Ora, she's a mother faced with choices she hoped she'd never have to make regarding this child she loves and gave birth to." *we are continuous* is a heavy show,

Theater chat

After *we are continuous* performances on Sundays, throughout the run of the show, Denise Lee will host talkbacks about the show with her organization, Visions for Change, of which she is executive director. The mission of Visions is to create equitable spaces and dynamic programming that disrupt systemic and social biases and to foster a community where diversity is foundational, and all voices are empowered to contribute. Audiences are invited to stay after the show for the talkbacks.

"The show speaks to our mission, and we want to have these conversations where people can come into a safe space and leave stronger or with their minds opened to new ideas," Lee said.

The organization began in 2016 in response to police shootings of Black citizens. But after a prolonged tenure as "accidental executive director," Lee was considering dissolving the organization — until recently.

"I'm not in this for anything, and I was just tired of fighting. People had asked me to begin our Community Conversations again, but it was hard," she said. "Then James Williams gave us this large donation, and, really, I had to take that as a sign that there was more work to be done."

The organization connects arts with social justice usually through cabaret performances. For Lee, music is a meeting point for everyone. For Uptown Players' show, Visions for Change connects theater to today's topics on race, justice and equality.

"We are more separated now than ever, but I think art hits everyone in the room, and we can start there to maybe be respectful and mindful of others," she said.

For more information, visit VisionsForChange.org.

and as Jones approaches the role, he's working through the drama with a positive outlook so as to not get emotionally weighed down.

"I'm focusing on gratitude the whole time. I'm able to find moments that Simon is grateful for as well, and if I can focus on those things, I won't get moored by the heavy stuff," he said.

"I'm trying to have a healthy separation from the show when I'm not in rehearsals," Jones added.

But he's also thrilled by the challenge of *we are continuous*

"There are so many Black gay men



Denise Lee and Quinton Jones star in Uptown Players' *we are continuous*.

like myself who had this process of coming out, and to explore that has been really exciting," he said. "The story is written so beautifully. I feel oddly connected to Simon in some ways. We had similar coming out experiences, and he lost a partner as did I. For me, this is an opportunity to honor him as well.

"So yeah," he continued, "I love Simon. He's flawed and funny and driven, which I think are all admirable qualities."

Jones touched on the parallels this

show has with his own relationship with his mother. He found similarities but also some realizations.

"I grew up obsessed with my mom. She was my favorite person," the 34 year-old said. "In coming out, I think things got in between my feelings for her. Then I wanted to pursue theater as a career and that was another thing.

"The show touches on those moments when the rift begins to develop and how both make assumptions about the other person. I feel that," Jones ex-

Red Tie Gala returns

EAST TEXAS NEWS



Celebration on the Lake Church holds its annual Red Tie Gala on Feb. 15.

Celebration on the Lake Church holding 2025 fundraiser

CAROLINE SAVOIE | East Texas Writer
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CEDAR CREEK LAKE — Red Tie Gala, an annual Valentine's-themed LGBTQ fundraiser, is now in its fifth year as a public event. And its organizers at Celebration on the Lake United Church of Christ are gearing up for a night of celebration to raise money for local organizations.

The event will be held Saturday, Feb. 15, at the CR Legacy Event Center in Gun Barrel City.

Muddy Moxley, outreach chair at the church and longtime organizer of the event, said a church youth group inspired the gala when they approached Moxley and said they wanted to do something special for the LGBTQ folks in the congregation. Moxley said it was such a success that she helped open the gala to the public in hopes of involving more of the community.

"We're a small church, but we're open about being an LGBTQ church, and I've seen a good response," said Moxley, 78, who has lived on Cedar Creek Lake for 25 years. "People loved the experience, and it allowed them to see our involvement in the community."

Moxley, who has chaired the gala for five years, is stepping down this year and passing the role to Bradley Scott, the chairman of the board at the church. Scott, an interior designer who moved to the lake six years ago, said he is excited to bring a fresh perspective to the event.

"She does so much for our church, and someone needed to take something off her plate," said Scott, 56.

Scott emphasized the unique atmosphere of the gala, describing it as a "safe place in East Texas where two guys or two girls can dance together."

Moxley said allies also join in the festivities, making it a welcoming space for the entire community.

"Most people understand now that our community thrives on loyalty. Not only are we given things, but we give back," Scott said in reference to the local businesses and sponsors who support the gala.

Proceeds from the Red Tie Gala support various outreach programs in the Cedar Creek Lake community, including local food pantries, women's shelters and animal welfare organizations. Moxley remarked on how fulfilling it is to see the impact of the event, especially when presenting checks to the nonprofits in person.

"It's so affirming because we really feel the impact of the money we raise," Moxley said. "People give back to us, not just financially, but with their time."

The 2025 event will feature a three-course dinner, a silent auction, and en-

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RED TIS, Page 15

Skipping the state

SINGING FOR SAFETY

NTTN is helping families that must leave Texas to receive gender-affirming care

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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Later this month, “seven faith congregations in Tarrant County will be raising their voices in song in an interfaith concert benefiting NTTN, the North Texas TRANSportation Network, which grants funds to families who need to travel out of state or relocate to access needed gender-affirming medical care,” Cantor Sherri Allen said in a recent press release.

Allen is among the organizers of the Feb. 20 concert.

NTTN has already made more than 50 grants and expanded its mission since it was founded just a few years ago, according to its executive director, Cynthia Daniels.

The organization was created as a direct response to SB 14, which passed in the 2023 session of the Texas Legislature. The law prohibits physicians and other licensed medical professionals from providing gender-affirming medical care to minors.

The project was the idea of the Rev. Katie Hays of Galileo Church in Kennedale, a small enclave between Fort Worth and Mansfield.

“We were on defense testifying in Austin,” Daniels said. “We needed to find a way to go on offense.”

She said Hays asked if she’d like to be the new group’s executive director and find a way to help parents who were suddenly being investigated for child abuse for simply getting medical care for their children.

“Nothing about the bill said we couldn’t be good neighbors and get them the healthcare they needed out of state,” said Daniels, who has an adult



daughter who is transgender.

“We’ve been in this with her for the past five years,” Daniels said. “We didn’t have any trouble getting her the healthcare she needed that was recommended by doctors and psychologists.”

She said she’s seen the difference getting that care made for her own child and has become passionate about helping others get that same kind of lifesaving healthcare for their kids.

Daniels said both she and her husband were raised in religious families, and their daughter knew the anti-LGBTQ stance of the church they were attending at the time. “So, she was scared, but she came to us and our response was, ‘We love you and how can we support you?’” Daniels said.

And support her they did. Daniels said she started doing research and found a psychologist to see her virtually, because this was at the beginning of the pandemic. And they started attending Galileo Church.

“We met Katie and talked to her about our family,” Daniels said. “She introduced us to another family and helped us navigate.”

Daniels credits Hays with helping them become the best parents they could

be, and she also credits Hays with creating some of the services that saved their daughter’s life.

Galileo Church founded Finn’s Place, which bills itself as “a community center in Fort Worth for trans and gender-diverse people to gather, grow, and flourish.” And the church started a gender-affirming parent’s group to share stories and resources and “commiserate about what was going on.”

Anti-transgender legislation had been proposed before, but by the time the Legislature met in 2023, Daniels said, the atmosphere was really scary. That was the year NTTN issued its first travel grant.

Daniels said seeking medical care out of state is expensive, so NTTN helps by distributing \$1,000 grants that can be used toward any expenses related to travel, including gas, airfare, lodging, food, the medical care itself or even child care for other siblings.

The closest state to get such medical care is New Mexico, but, she said, many are having to travel as far as New York or California.

Her own daughter is attending college locally, but is thinking of moving to Washington state after graduation.

To date, NTTN has awarded more

than 50 grants of \$1,000. A family may receive up to two grants per year and can live anywhere in 19 North Texas counties.

Daniels said a lot of individuals have donated to the fund, as well as affirming churches. Last year, the organization was a Black Tie Dinner beneficiary and HELP Center, the Trans Justice Funding Project and Texas Pride Impact Funds have granted funding.

Since December, NTTN has begun issuing \$3,000 one-time grants to families who’ve needed to flee the state to safer parts of the country. She said she knows of a number of families who left Texas after receiving threats. One family moved to Uruguay, she said, and another moved to New Zealand to escape the threats of violence.

As for her own family, she can hardly believe just a few years ago, her daughter had to worry about whether she’d be accepted for who she was.

“Our oldest is cisgender and straight and dating a bisexual, and our youngest is pansexual,” Daniels said. But they’re a family filled with love. (For her family’s safety, she asked that we don’t include pictures.)

Passing the torch

BUSINESS NEWS



David Richardson, left, and Todd Seaton, right, are handing the reins at Skivvies over to new owner Ben Kelley, center. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

A look back at Seaton and Richardson's business history; a look forward with the new owner of Skivvies

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
Taffet@DallasVoice.com

David Richardson and Todd Seaton have sold the last piece of their Cedar Springs retail empire to the store's former manager. Ben Kelley, who has been with Skivvies since 2015, took over ownership at the beginning of the year.

Richardson and Seaton's retail conglomerate extended way beyond The Strip to Oklahoma City and Austin. Houston was ruled out as an expansion city years ago when other Cedar Springs merchants warned them off. Lobo, Union Jack and Nuvo all tried and failed at opening Montrose branches, so the couple looked elsewhere to expand.

Richardson began his retail career with his then-partner Steve Freeman at TapeLenders on Cedar Springs Road. They opened a card and gift store called Jungle Red inside the Habana Inn in

Oklahoma City.

Although they had a house in Oklahoma City, making visits to the city easy trips, they sold the store shortly before Freeman died from complications from AIDS in 1992.

Freeman was a serial entrepreneur who opened a limousine company, a bar and a travel agency in addition to his retail ventures. He passed that entrepreneurial spirit along to Richardson.

After Freeman's death, Seaton joined Richardson as his new life partner as well as business partner.

The first new store they opened together was Outlines. The menswear store was originally located in the rear of the building now home to Havana. The store expanded to street-front and later moved down the street to its current location. In 2007, they sold it to Dale Holdman.

They opened a second TapeLenders, this one in Dobie Mall on the University of Texas campus in Austin. That store later moved closer to the bars on 5th Street and featured a clothing boutique.

Richardson and Seaton sold both TapeLenders to Chris Lynch and Art Milburn, and both stores now operate as Package. Although the name on the Dallas store lingered longer than on the Austin location, the new owners changed the iconic name because they no longer had anything in the store re-

TORCH, Page 14

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OUT ON STAGE

Pride is everything for 'Ain't Too Proud' actor Bryce Valle

RICH LOPEZ | Staff writer
rich@dallasvoice.com

Actor Bryce Valle (he/him) has a lot to be proud of at the moment. He's starring in the musical *Ain't Too Proud — The Life and Times of The Temptations*, but he's also been gushing with pride for numerous other reasons, too.

And he'll show that all off when the show opens Feb. 11 at Bass Hall.

Valle, hailing from Queens, N.Y., is making his national tour debut with *Ain't Too Proud*. He's been with the

show since August, but it's been a long wait since his auditions for the first tour in 2021. In the show, he plays original Temptations member Paul Williams.

"The big thing with Paul was that he was the choreographer, and I related to that because I'm also the dance captain here," the 28-year-old said. "He had a joy of performing and doing what he loved, and I got to explore him through myself." Williams "wanted to do what he did best even when surroundings prevented him from that," Valle added. "To me, he embodies the artform of the Temptations."

In his first national tour, Valle is also experiencing his first lead role and, as he said, the dance captain role. So this has been a big learning process.

"I've surprised myself because, all at once, I'm being stretched artistically in



Bryce Valle

the best ways possible," he said.

While *Ain't Too Proud* has no queer undertones, Valle did find at least a parallel to his own experiences as a gay male. He described a scene where Temptations member Otis is confronted by two others serving "street energy." In

a unique way, Valle said, that triggered him.

"I related to that because I've been approached by that high level of someone opposed to me who othered me without knowing anything about me," he explained. "It's a moment, but I couldn't



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Peter Triporo, NP
named Top 10 in America's
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help being triggered by it.”

When asked what he's proud of as an actor, he goes back to that first audition four years ago: "I auditioned with two others, and they ended up getting it. Coming around 2024, Paul was the part I felt closest to, so I only auditioned for that. And it turned out to be my time.

"I'm proud I stayed on the path I was on and didn't hear that first 'no' as forever."

As a person, though, Valle finds pride in his emotional intelligence to be receptive and find connection. "I'm very open, I'd say. You never know what's ahead, so I choose to be open to those things coming my way."

But when it comes down to what he's really most proud of in the moment, it's *Ain't Too Proud*.

"That we get to share real Black stories of real people in real time is up there," he said. "There are a lot of changes happening up and down this country, so it's important to share the stories of people of color because those are always needed to open doors and spark inspiration for others to share their stories." ■

For tickets, visit BassHall.com.



SKIPPING, From Page 10

Interfaith coalition

Allen is the cantor and cofounder of Makom Shelanu, an inclusive and affirming Jewish congregation in Tarrant County whose name means "A Place for Us."

She and her congregation are members of the Justice Network of Tarrant County, an interfaith coalition of congregations that works on a variety of issues including environmental justice, reducing gun violence, voting rights and more. Allen chairs the LGBTQ Action Team.

Her interest in LGBTQ issues is due, in part, to her three children who are all LGBTQ.

Allen was the one who approached Daniels about becoming the beneficiary of the Feb. 20 concert featuring a group of singers from seven churches of the interfaith coalition.

She said the theme is travel and described the selection of songs as "uplifting music celebrating freedom, hope and joy." Among the selections are "True Colors," "Take Me Home Country Roads"



and "Imagine."

Daniels said she hopes proceeds will help them fund a number of new grants for families who want to provide their child with necessary gender-affirming healthcare. ■

Tickets are \$5 and are available online at Zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/interfaith-concert-and-fundraiser. Donations can be made at the online address as well. The concert will be held Feb. 20 at All People's Church, 1950 Sandy Lane, Fort Worth.

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sembling “tape,” and they didn’t lend anything.

“We were selling so much underwear at Outlines and even at TapeLenders that our manufacturers encouraged us to open a new store,” Seaton said. That’s how Skivvies came about.

Richardson said they were selling so much, their manufacturers came to them and asked what they could do to make their products better. He told them to get away from so much black, white and grey. Try stitching in bright colors and make the pouch in a variety of colors, he suggested.

Those innovations, Richardson said, boosted sales for a number of lines — not only at Skivvies but in stores around the country.

Richardson even designed his own line of underwear and found a manufacturer to assemble the goods. He said he hasn’t done that in a few years, but he has continued with some private label items.

They were doing so well in their new

store, they decided to sell Outlines and open a Skivvies outlet. The new store was in an outlet center on Hampton Road near I-35W.

“We thought the outlet would create additional sales, but it was taking away from our Cedar Springs sales,” Richardson said, so they closed the outlet.

But they weren’t done. Richardson and Seaton opened a store in the West Village called Gender that lasted about two years. Richardson described it as a men’s and women’s clothing store but said it never really took off. Gender and the Skivvies outlet are their only retail ventures that aren’t still open.

Kelley said the only retail experience he had before coming to work at Skivvies was a year-and-a-half at the Gap. He’s been with Skivvies for 10 years now.

“Ben expanded our online presence,” Seaton said, and that kept them in business during the pandemic.

“When COVID happened, that was a big push,” Kelley said. “Customers would have more ways to purchase



Ben Kelley took over as owner of Skivvies at the first of the year

from us.”

He was also instrumental in adding outerwear, athletic wear, jeans and shorts as well as expanding the adult products.

Seaton said Kelley asked him at some point whether there was any opportunity for advancement with the company, so he made him assistant manager.

“About four years ago, we began letting him do more and more,” Seaton said. That included doing some of the buying.

As for Kelley’s plans for the store, he doesn’t want to mess with success. But, he said, the space does need a facelift. And he said he’s always looking for hot new lines.

But the focus will still be on underwear.

“Underwear makes it Skivvies,” he said.

As for Richardson and Seaton, they’re planning to begin their retirement with at least six months’ of travel, starting with a cruise. ■

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plained.

For Lee, she can understand Ora's conflict, but says the conflict wouldn't exist for her. She's been a perpetual ally to the local LGBTQ community. In real life, she's almost the opposite side of the same coin as Ora. Her daughter and Jones are similar in age; she has a strong faith.

But unlike Ora...

"I wouldn't care how they identified. I would love them no less," she said. "There's never been that challenge for me. But in this role, I have to find that conflict and align with my husband's ideals. But this has its funny moments with very real moments. Ora sounds a lot like my mom. I knew she loved me."

Jones described working with Lee as exciting. He felt a familiarity with her just in the parallels with her daughter, and he said his mother is close in age to Lee.

But there is also the fact that Lee is a longtime professional, and the honor of

sharing the stage with a local icon isn't lost on Jones.

"It's funny because she and I have known each other for years, but we never got to work together. Being paired with Dallas royalty is incredible. I feel that maternal energy from her, and, in some ways, the things I get to say to her onstage as Simon feel good, because I can say the things I didn't know how to say to my own mother."

If there's one parallel that Jones doesn't quite find between the play and real life, it's in Simon's marriage to Abe, played by Micah Brooks. Being in a relationship again — even if it is just onstage — could have been a daunting task. But Jones credits King with helping him develop an easy working relationship with Brooks.

"Natalie did a lot of table work with this, and I think, because of that, Micah's and my relationship worked itself out naturally. Micah's kind and warm and so present, and, of course, he's this tall,

gorgeous guy. So it's very easy being married to Micah," Jones said.

Jones isn't shy about his hopes for a change in relationship status, suggesting, "Maybe this article can find me a husband!"

But Jones knows what his priorities are, and he is invested at the moment in this show and what it means in the bigger picture of celebrating Black History Month at a time when DEI policies are being stripped away at a rapid pace.

"Getting this opportunity to tell queer Black stories is important right now — this very minute," he said. "As a queer Black man, I see these shows, and it helps me with introspection.

"We have such a heightened level of fear that we'll just be erased and that these stories won't be told," Jones added. "So, as a Black gay man and actor, it's important to me that I take these opportunities where I can and put this out in the world."

For tickets, visit UptownPlayers.org.



tainment by Two Danes Productions. Guests can expect an array of games, including a 50/50 raffle and a bowtie contest, adding to the evening's festive atmosphere.

Looking ahead, Scott hopes to expand the gala's reach and continue building connections with other LGBTQ organizations across Texas.

"We're maxed at 225 tickets, and, while it would be heartbreaking to leave CR Legacy, it would also be affirming to see that much support," Scott said.

Both Moxley and Scott said the importance of the gala is more than just a fundraiser; it's a beacon of support for LGBTQ individuals in the area.

"There are so many youth and adults who think they're the only ones," Scott said. "We need them to know they're not alone, that they have a community." ■

For tickets or more information, visit RedTieCelebration.com. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and single tickets are available for \$100. Tables for eight are priced at \$800. Donations are also accepted through the website for those unable to attend the event.

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Kiana Lee, pictured, along with Salem Moon, Nia Courtland and more, star in Claws Out Comedy's Galentine's Day Brunch on Feb. 8. See listings for details.

Weekly: Frontrunners

Running club for the LGBTQ community and allies of DFW. Meet at 7:15 p.m. on Wednesdays and 8:30 a.m. on Saturdays at the corner of Hall Street and Turtle Creek Boulevard in Turtle Creek Park for a one-hour walk/run on the Katy Trail.

2025 February

Feb. 7-15: 'Orpheus and Eurydice'

The Dallas Opera presents this classic myth of unwavering love at Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Visit DallasOpera.org for times and tickets.

Feb. 8: Galentine's Drag Brunch

Claws Out Comedy presents an all-you-can-eat brunch buffet (alcohol sold separately) that includes a comedy drag show featuring Kiana Lee, Salem Moon, Nia Courtland and more at AT&T Discovery District, 208 S. Akard St., from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Visit DiscoveryDistrictDallas.com for tickets and information.

Feb. 9: The Big Game VIP Buffet

The Exchange Food Hall at the AT&T Discovery District, 208 S. Akard St., hosts a VIP all-you-can-eat buffet of gameday classics at 4:30 p.m. for the Big Game. Visit DiscoveryDistrictDallas.com for tickets and information.

Feb. 10: Alexandre's MOM

Alexandre's, 4026 Cedar Springs Road, hosts its Monday Open Mic (MOM) from 9-11 p.m. To guarantee a spot on the performance list sign up at Form.JotForm.com/222497530917058. Sign up

form opens one week before the event and ends at noon the day before.

Feb. 11: 'Broadway on a Tuesday' celebrates 10 years

Alexandre's, 4026 Cedar Springs Road, celebrates the 10th anniversary of its Broadway on a Tuesday open mic night, featuring Rebecca Lowrey on piano, plus special guest hosts and surprises throughout the evening. Starts at 8 p.m.

Feb. 12: Speed Dating at Crush

Crush, 2914 Oak Lawn Ave., hosts its first speed dating event at 9 p.m. Visit CrushDTX.com for more information.

Feb. 12: Caring for Our Own: Navigating Alzheimer's in the LGBT Community

Join Alzheimer's Association at 9 a.m. for this virtual seminar that helps guide participants through the progression of Alzheimer's. Visit Alznct.news/LGBTQ25 to register.

Feb. 13: 'Outspoken Voices' Virtual Storytelling Circle

Family Equality hosts Outspoken Voices, a virtual storytelling circle in which individuals are invited to share a five-minute story about a brave, joyful, unexpected, complicated or life-affirming love in their life. From 6-7 p.m. online. Register at FamilyEquality.org/Event/Outspoken-Voices-Love for information on logging in and more.

Feb. 13: Drink & Link: A Valentines Mixer

Pride in Dallas and Woody's Dallas, 4011 Cedar Springs Road, host this mixer from 6-9 p.m. for those looking for love, friendship,

or just a fun night out. Visit the event page on Facebook for more information.

Feb. 14: Valentine's Day Mixology Class

Learn to craft (and sample) delicious Valentine's-themed cocktails at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. at The Exchange Food Hall in the AT&T Discovery District, 208 S. Akard St. Visit DiscoveryDistrictDallas.com for tickets and information.

Feb. 15: Pop Icons and Divas Gaybingo

Resource Center presents Pop Icons and Divas Gaybingo in the Rose Room, inside S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Doors open at 5 p.m.; show and Bingo start at 6 p.m. Tickets start at \$35, available online at MyResourceCenter.org/Gaybingo; visit the Facebook event page for more information.

Feb. 15: Red Tie Gala

Celebration on the Lake Church hosts the Red Tie Gala at CR Legacy Event Center, 2205 W. Main St., Gun Barrel City, at 5:30 p.m. Visit RedTieCelebration.com for information and to RSVP.

Feb. 15: Royal Chili Cook-off

United Court of the Lone Star Empire hosts the Royal Chili Cook-off at The Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser St. Contestant set-up starts at 2 p.m. with tasting and judging at 3 p.m. and the awards ceremony at 5 p.m. Visit the Facebook event page for details.

Feb. 16: Celebrating Drag Sunday

Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road, hosts this event affirming those who use drag as an art form and their transgender siblings made in the image of God at their 8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m. services.

Feb. 16: 'Love, Jazz & Romance'

Bishop Arts Theatre presents *Love, Jazz & Romance* from 3-5 p.m. at The Music Hall at Fair Park, 909 1st Ave. Hosted by Jay Lamont and featuring Gerald Albright, Will Downing and Julian Vaughn. Visit BishopArtsTheatre.org for tickets and more information.

Feb. 19: Oxford House Pride Drag Show

The Oxford House Pride Committee presents its first Pride Drag Show, a fundraiser for the Oxford House DFW Pride Committee, at Hamburger Mary's, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, #101. The show features Belinda Bee, Ra'Maya and friends. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; show starts at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25. For information visit the Facebook event page. Oxford House is an LGBTQ sober living program.

Feb. 20: Love Connection

Package Dallas, 3926 Cedar Springs Road, hosts its Love Connection event from 6-9 p.m. with speed dating, cocktails and specials. Visit the event page on Facebook for more information.

Feb. 20: Interfaith Concert and Fundraiser

North Texas TRANSPORTation Network hosts this fundraising concert at All People's Church, 1959 Sandy Lane, Fort Worth, from 7-9 p.m. Visit the even page at Zefy.com for information and tickets.

Feb. 20: QUEERelate — Authentic Relating

QUEERelate, offering tools via Authentic Relating International to bridge the gap between surface-level interactions and meaningful relationships and connections, takes place from 7-8:30 p.m. at Oak Lawn United Methodist Church, 3014 Oak Lawn Ave. Visit QueerThrive.squarespace.com for more information.

Feb. 20-23: 'The Stamped Project'

Bishop Arts Theatre Center, 215 S. Tyler St., presents The Stamped Project, a collection of short plays by six playwrights inspired by Jason Reynolds' book, *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You*, adapted from the work of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi. At 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, and 3 p.m. Sunday.

Have an event coming up? Email your information to Mathew Dominguez at Mathew@DallasVoice.com by Monday at 5 p.m. for that week's issue.

Look for extended listings online at DallasVoice.com



Celebration on the Lake Church UCC presents the Red Tie Gala on Feb. 15. See listings for details.

Jenny Block

GIRL ON GIRLS

Time to love, and love hard

These days I feel both compelled and disinclined to write about love. With Valentine's Day a week away, as commercial as it may be, I want to write about love in all its many forms. I want to write about how cards and candy and over-the-top gifts are not necessary while taking the time to focus on those we love is.

But at a time when I am nothing less than disgusted and appalled by what is happening to our country, I feel a bit silly writing about making sure you do something special on the day of love. It's just another day, and, in some ways, it's just another way to sell us stuff by making us feel bad that we're not buying enough — and not buying as much as the guy next door.

And then I realized there's nothing more important to write about, to talk about, to think about right now than love.

Love is what's missing right now.

A love of country, first of all: There is no way our supposed "leaders" would be doing what they are doing right now if they truly loved this country. We are a country founded on religious freedom, free speech and the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; a country that is supposed to be a shining example of liberty; a country that is supposed to be a beacon of hope, a refuge — to all.

A love of humanity: The current administration lacks kindness and empathy. It lacks understanding and joy. It lacks caring and thoughtfulness. It is willfully ignorant and selectively blind to the needs and sufferings of the very people who they purport to care about. They don't love "we the people." And "we the people" are this country.

A love of community: Those currently in power are doing their best to tear us down and tear us apart. A common enemy serves no one but those greedy for money and power. The one thing we need more than ever right now is each other. They want to create chaos and mistrust and hate in an effort to divide and conquer.

A love of the environment: There is only one earth, one place — at least for now — where humans can live. The



people who are "in charge" have shown nothing but disdain for this big blue marble to whom we owe everything. Without air and water, we cannot survive. Without spirit and grounding sky, we are nothing.

A love of love: The people in the rooms where it happens don't love anything other than money and themselves. They have no respect for love and those who have it — for themselves or others. They want us to hate. They want us to reject.

They want us to fear and to resign and to eschew love in any form. They want to judge and force conformity. Nothing shows less love than that.

Love is the one and only thing that can save us right now. Save our sanity. Save our country. Save our democracy. Save our freedom. Save our lives.

We have to love our transgender and non-binary siblings.

We have to love those who came to this country for a better life.

We have to love those who fought for our country.

We have to love those who cannot care for themselves.

We have to love those who cannot move through the world in the same way as others.

We have to love those who pray differently than we do.

We have to love those who speak differently than we do.

We have to love people for who they love no matter who they love.

We have to love love and what it can do for us, how it can fill us and change us and hold us.

They want us to hate. They want us to divide. They want us to fear. They revel in the chaos.

This Valentine's Day, buy the cards and the candy and the gifts — if you like. But refuse the chaos; call your representatives in Congress; shield those in danger; take to the streets — Because we must.

If we believe that there is no stopping what is happening, if we lose hope, turn a blind eye, resign ourselves — then it becomes true that there is no stopping them.

The only true inevitability is that when we don't stand with one another for freedom and justice, we fall together into the hands of despots and dictators.

This Valentine's Day, I want to tell you something: I love you. I love your strength and your kindness. I love everything that is weird and wonderful about

you. I love what you bring to the world. And I love how you love your community.

I love that you love.

We can show our love in all sorts of ways.

Right now, we must show it by resisting.

this week's solution

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browse

For a more complete Community Calendar online, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.

submit

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SCENE

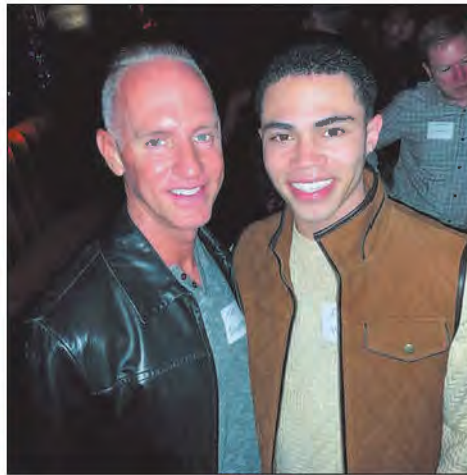
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Master baker at Oak Lawn Place



Oak Lawn Place residents



Dulce reigning in purple at 1851 Club



Planning for Pride in Dallas



Kiana Lee under the spotlight at 1851 Club



Priscilla, Lionel and Anne at Oak Lawn Place



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1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
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54					55			56	57					
58			59			60						61		
62						63						64		
65						66						67		

Solution on Page 17

Across

- 1 Pajama opening
- 5 What to do to
Ev'ry Mountain
- 10 Streisand's
A Star is ___
- 14 Baltic port
- 15 Hello, ___
(Tibetan musical?)
- 16 "Beat it!"
- 17 With 32-Across,
a quote from
The Color Purple
- 19 Lie alongside
- 20 O'Connor of *Xena*
- 21 Part of a fashion name
- 23 Hot time for Colette
- 24 Lure into wrongdoing
- 26 Blimp, for one
- 28 *Lady Sings the Blues*
star
- 31 "Later!"
- 32 See 17-Across
- 35 Dry as a bone
- 37 Not nutty as
a fruitcake
- 38 Porgy's lady
- 39 Source of the quote,
played by
Whoopi Goldberg
- 41 Sex toys, e.g.
- 44 Group in a kids' game
- 46 Porter's fuel?
- 47 Head, slangily

- 50 Lacking compassion
- 52 Broadway star Stritch
- 54 That, south of
the border
- 55 *The Color Purple* author
- 58 In the extreme
- 60 Words of empathy
- 61 Auto of Pasolini's land
- 62 Ancient European
language
- 63 Prejudice and
homophobia
- 64 Problem for skin
- 65 Brady Bunch prefix
- 66 George, who was
Mary Ann
- 67 Avoids family cooking,
with "out"

Down

- 1 Bonheur's brother
- 2 Pep up
- 3 One who often
screws actors
- 4 Fruit peeler
- 5 Ill. clock setting
- 6 *If I Were King of the*
Forest singer Bert
- 7 Former netman
Nastase
- 8 Unexpected help
- 9 In a major way
- 10 Eagle's org.
- 11 Austin Powers

- catchphrase
- 12 Bits by Cho, e.g.
- 13 What stenos scratch on
- 18 Long
- 22 Shrinking sea
- 25 Honey holders
- 27 Some A-List gays
- 29 Without a date
- 30 Type of boom
- 32 Untamed stallion,
for one
- 33 Farewell to fifty
million Frenchmen
- 34 Kiss from Kahlo
- 35 Attains
- 36 Stick it back in
- 40 *The gay ___ Bombeck*
(Michael Thomas Ford
nickname)
- 42 "A hard man is good
to find" quipster
- 43 Spicy stew
- 45 Salty tasting
- 47 La Femme
of espionage
- 48 Like a short one
on Broadway
- 49 Cruising quarters
- 51 Actor Williamson
- 53 Jude Law title role
- 56 ___ *Get a Witness*
(Marvin Gaye)
- 57 Ending with switch
- 59 Affirmative for Gomer

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