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Gay black activist helps organize vigil Saturday for Trayvon Martin

Last week I lamented that not a single white or Hispanic LGBT activist attended one of the largest black LGBT rallies in Dallas’ history last month. This Saturday may offer a chance to make up for it. An organizer of last month’s rally, black gay activist Brandon Horsley-Thompson, is co-organizing a vigil for Trayvon Martin on Saturday, July 20.

Horsley-Thompson, a 28-year-old Navy veteran, said he got involved in the local “Stand Up For Justice for Trayvon Martin” movement after he attended a rally at the JFK Memorial in downtown Dallas on Monday. “I was really overwhelmed by the number of heterosexual black men that just embraced me,” Horsley-Thompson said. “I’m finding people and networking with people that are normally out of my comfort zone.”

Horsley-Thompson said the African-American LGBT community has also been supportive, and he hopes non-black LGBT activists will attend Saturday’s vigil as well.

“I don’t dress as though I’m the stereotypical gay man,” he said. “I dress in hoodies and hats and Jordans, so I’m constantly being seen as a black man — and gay later. Yes, I want to fight for equal rights, marriage equality, but I’ve got to deal with just walking down the street first and being OK. My sexuality takes a back seat to my color. Saturday’s vigil begins at 1:30 a.m. at the JFK Memorial, at 646 Main St.

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‘We’re never gonna go away’

With charges dismissed from arrests last year, Major and Beau are again denied a marriage license — but this time they’re considering a lawsuit

ANNA WAUGH | News Editor
waugh@dallasvoice.com

Dallas couple Mark “Major” Jiminez and Beau Chandler had cause for celebration this week with Jiminez’s two arrests at marriage site-sits dismissed in court.

But the celebration was short-lived Tuesday when the couple went to the County Records Building after the hearing to apply for a marriage license for a fourth time and were again denied. However, this time they requested the reasoning they were denied in writing, “just in case we decide to take this to the next level,” Chandler said.

The couple was arrested for criminal trespassing last July after they refused to leave the County Records Building without a marriage license. Chandler’s case was dismissed last year after he completed community service.

Jiminez was arrested a second time for the same class-B misdemeanor in August. His cases had been postponed before eventually being combined. Jiminez was offered a lesser charge of disturbing the peace, a class-C misdemeanor, if he pleaded guilty. But he refused because he said he wouldn’t plead guilty to something he didn’t do.

Instead, he agreed to take the conditional dismissal plea deal the district attorney’s office offered. He has until Sept. 16 to complete 50 hours of community service. But if he is arrested before then, his two cases will go to trial.

Jiminez said he was pleased with the outcome because he wanted his two cases combined and a dismissal offered.

“We’re satisfied,” Jiminez said. “I am, like Beau, happy that they are dismissing the cases and they’re not going on our records.”

After the hearing, Jiminez and Chandler headed to the County Records Building to apply for a marriage license again. The couple applied twice last year and in February with a proxy, making this their fourth time to apply.

A clerk’s representative again explained to them that state law prohibited her from issuing them a license. They then requested the denial in writing. They haven’t decided whether they will file a lawsuit but wanted the documentation.

“We’re thinking about it because we can’t just go on our records,” Jiminez said.

“We’re never gonna go away”

Meanwhile, in Galveston this week, retired nuclear engineer Domenico Nuckols withdrew his marriage lawsuit challenging the state’s ban and had his case dismissed. He filed the suit two weeks ago and was looking for pro bono legal representation, but he said after discussing the case with the American Civil Liberties Union and receiving a letter from Lambda Legal, he decided to dismiss the case.

Nuckols said legal experts explained they’re targeting states where they believe they have the best chance of winning the freedom to marry, whereas Texas would be a challenge. He said he thought he could win in the district court but would likely be unsuccessful in the court of appeals.

“It’s not the time to do it in Texas,” he said. “I don’t care if you have standing or not, it’s going to be very politicized.

“I’m disappointed but when you have so many people telling you you’re beating a dead horse, you should listen,” he added. “There’s a fight out there, but you can’t pick it in Texas.”

Legal experts also doubted the case would move forward because of standing. Nuckols hadn’t ever been denied a marriage license in Texas and didn’t have any plans to marry his partner.

Jiminez and Chandler have standing on their side, but would still face a long fight in the state.

Chad West, the couple’s criminal defense attorney, said he wouldn’t represent them in a marriage lawsuit because he doesn’t work in constitutional law. However, he cautioned against lawsuits being filed in places where those laws could be upheld in conservative courts.

“At least they want to get married, so that’s the first step,” West said. “The marriage issue is tough because I still think we have a long way to go.”

Rebecca L. Robertson, legal and policy director at ACLU of Texas, said the couple’s actions aren’t surprising as more and more Texans grow impatient with the lack of equality and evaluate how they can change it.

“It’s not surprising that LGBT Texans are impatient for change, and would be asking their government for equal treatment,” she said. “In our state, we lack basic civil liberties that other states afford LGBT residents — not just marriage equality, but protection from being fired from your job or kicked out of your apartment. Mr. Jimenez and Mr. Chandler are highlighting how much work we have to do in Texas.”

Mark ‘Major’ Jiminez, left, and Beau Chandler apply for a marriage license at the Dallas County Clerk’s Office on Tuesday, July 16, after charges against Jiminez were dismissed from his arrests last year for trespassing in the clerk’s office after being denied a marriage license. Jiminez and Chandler didn’t get arrested this time, but they did request documentation of the denial in case they decide to file a lawsuit. (Anna Waugh/Dallas Voice)
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Former Dallasite murdered by suspect he met at Austin gay bar

Police were still searching Thursday, July 18, for the man who killed David Villarreal, an Austin resident who lived in Dallas for several years.

Detectives released video this week of a suspect who may have killed Villarreal after the two met at a gay club. Villarreal, 36, was found dead inside his condo late Monday. Police believe he met a man at the gay club Oilcan Harry’s before heading back to his condo Saturday morning. Footage shows a man in his 20s or 30s entering the condo early Saturday, then leaving hours later. Police have not released Villarreal’s cause of death.

Although Villarreal lived in Austin, he had ties to Dallas. After attending Bishop High School in South Texas, Villarreal attended Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science in Denton before later attending the University of North Texas and the University of Texas at Dallas, according to his Facebook profile.

Israel Luna met Villarreal through a mutual friend. He said they kept in touch after Villarreal moved to Austin about five years ago. The news of his death was a shock to Luna, who said Villarreal was more of the stay-at-home type than the kind of person to go out to a bar alone. He said he’ll always remember his friend’s loving personality. “He was just sort of the quiet, smiley type,” Luna recalls. “He would always just sit there and smile while watching people.”

Watch the video at DallasVoice.com.

Death

Chris Thein, 66, passed away July 8, 2013, in his Dallas home from natural causes.

He was born Dec. 25, 1946, in Oklahoma City. He attended Moore High School and studied at Texas Christian University.

Chris was prominent in the beauty salon business. He was passionate about service work having volunteered his time at Resource Center Dallas and more recently at Dallas Intergroup Association.

Chris could light up a room just by entering, and he will be missed more than words can adequately describe. There were smiles and laughter when Chris was around, and he showed all who knew him what happy, joyous and free truly meant.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 3, in Cathedral of Hope’s Interfaith Peace Chapel.

pet of the week / DORY

Dory is a 2-year-old spayed and microchipped kitty whose owners moved and couldn’t take her with them. She’s very affectionate and cuddly and her adoption fee has been waived.

The Adoption Center is open 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday to Saturday and noon till 5 p.m. on Sunday. All adopted pets are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. Standard adoption fees are $85 for dogs and $55 for cats, but right now the center is offering $30 adoption fees for pets on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. We also offer discounts on adoption fees for pets that have been at the Adoption Center more than four weeks, for pets over 6 years of age, and to anyone adopting more than one pet at a time. For more information, visit DallasanimalServices.org or Facebook.com/DallasAnimalServices.

Photo contributed by Judy Babinski.
Residents along a stretch of Hall Street near the Cedar Springs strip are trying to prohibit clubgoers from parking on their block on weekend nights, while a new parking plan at ilume has some residents frustrated.

Residents at the Reserve on Reagan, a complex of townhomes at Hall and Reagan streets, reportedly would like to see the street rezoned for Resident Parking Only or RPO. They’ve tried and failed in the past, but according to one neighbor who lives in a different building on the block, they’re trying again.

Jim Musick lives on Hall Street and said he was approached in June about the idea of turning the block into an RPO as he was walking his dog. “I told them that I was tired of people moving into Oak Lawn and then trying to change it,” he said. “Without free, close, safe parking, Oak Lawn would lose customers on the weekends.”

Musick said that because he supports the local businesses, he would not sign the petition. The next day, he was approached again and told they, too, support the local businesses, but they were just trying to create additional parking for residents. He told them they should have known the parking situation when they bought the property. “I also said that if they want a suburban living experience, then there are a dozen different neighborhoods where they can find that experience in Dallas,” he said. “There’s nowhere else that I could move in Dallas to find a neighborhood like Oak Lawn.”

City of Dallas traffic engineer Kerry Elder said no petition has been submitted to the city yet. He said two-thirds of residents on the block would have to sign that they wanted an RPO on the street. Once the petition is received, the office reviews it and does a parking study on the block to make sure residents are not already using the available spaces. If approved, residents would have to pay for signs and permits.

Each resident could purchase up to six permits at $6.50 annually, which may be used by residents or their guests.

One block of Throckmorton Street adjacent to the retail strip became an RPO zone in 2008. According to former City Plan Commissioner Neil Emmons more than half the block must be zoned single family to qualify for an RPO. Townhouses count as single family if owners own the land under them, he said, but not if they are part of a condo association.

He said there’s a delicate balance to attract residents to the area and maintain retail, restaurant and bar business. “The challenge is how to keep commercial vibrant without killing it,” he said.

Because providing additional spaces for Cedar Springs customers could be expensive, the street is one of several with a special status in Oak Lawn allowing them to charge for parking. A number of ideas have been floated including the possibility of a high-rise pay lot at the Melrose Hotel, but that is not currently in the plans.

Meanwhile, ilume resident Kyle Spence said the complex recently changed its parking plan for the fourth time in 13 months. “Right now we have assigned, free parking spaces,” he said.
But to keep his assigned space, Spence said he’ll have to pay $50. If he wants to continue parking for free, it will be on a different floor than he lives. He said management is catering to retail on the first floor. Spaces that residents formerly used are now reserved for valet parking.

Ilume property manager Andrew Croson said the biggest complaints have been due to the way the valet operated. “They run. They drive fast,” he said. “People were afraid they were going to hit their dogs.” And because they were parking beyond the residents’ gate and leaving the gate unlocked, the building wasn’t secure.

But he said those problems have been addressed. Ilume developer Luke Crosland agreed the problem has been resolved. “There’s plenty of parking for everyone, and it’s all straightened out,” Crosland said. The property was designed with enough parking for the entire first floor to be restaurants. City code requires twice as many spaces for bars and restaurants as it does for other retail.

Inside the ilume garage, the first 245 spaces are for valet parking for the restaurants and retail. A gate separates that area from resident parking on higher levels. Residents are assigned spaces past the gate. Some residents preferred lower level spaces because they live on lower floors. Crosland said they can reserve those spaces now for a fee. Parking below the gate was never in the leases, he said. “If you want a space closer to your unit, you can have it,” he said. “We have extra parking.” He called ilume and its residents very green. The property was built to accommodate 1.5 cars per unit.

“We’re only using 1.18 spaces per unit,” he said. That’s because so many people use DART, walk to Kroger across the street and even walk to work.

While much of the parking below the gate is still not being used, that may change. Crosland said a new sushi restaurant is under construction and will occupy part of the former Monica’s space. He said leases for two additional restaurants are in negotiation. That will fill the complex’s retail space and, if successful, bring more vehicles into the parking garage.

Croson said during hours the valet is operating, anyone coming to ilume can have their car parked for free. During other hours, one gate is open for self parking.

Across the street at Kroger, store manager Norcona Doxey said a dispute with ilume involving the store’s parking lot has been resolved. Doxey said the Kroger spaces closest to the store are reserved for customers until 1 a.m., but club-goers can park near the street and the library. She said the previous manager of ilume complained of noise, littering and illegal activity in the parking lot, so Kroger added security until 4 a.m.

Doxey acknowledged there’s still some noise, but said that’s going to happen in a neighborhood where people are going to bars.
Parkland, Dallas VA get perfect scores

Two local hospital systems receive 100 percent ratings on Healthcare Equality Index, but HRC calls overall participation in Texas ‘disappointing’

ANNA WAUGH | News Editor
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Parkland Health and Hospital System and the VA North Texas Health Care System received perfect scores on this year’s Healthcare Equality Index from the Human Rights Campaign and were recognized as leaders in LGBT healthcare equality.

HRC saw an increase in hospital participation for this year’s HEI, and Texas was no different. Nationwide, 718 hospitals participated, compared to 407 last year. In the past, only the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Legacy Community Health Services, both in Houston, have participated, but this year 38 facilities in Texas completed the survey.

Parkland’s 28 facilities and the Dallas VA were the only North Texas hospitals to take the survey, which analyzes inclusive policies, such as employment, patient and visitor nondiscrimination, and provides training to participants.

Shane Snowdon, director of HRC’s health and aging program, said the HEI has grown in popularity since its creation in 2007, adding that participation has increased dramatically over the last few years with awareness about LGBT health issues and many medical associations advocating for inclusive policies. However, she added that even though Texas saw an increase, the state should have more participants because it has more hospitals than any other state.

“If you take Parkland out, Texas is not a strong performer. We want that to change,” Snowdon said. “For that to be the Texas showing, it’s disappointing.”

The U.S. Veterans Health Administration encouraged the 152 VA medical centers across the country to participate, of which 120 did. In Texas, six of the seven VA healthcare systems participated and received perfect scores. Amarillo VA Health Care System was the only system to not participate. The VA Michael E. DeBakey Medical Center in Houston also participated.

Laura Kiewicz, manager of the LGBT Program at the Dallas VA, said she was proud of the high marks on the survey. “Our group worked hard with hospital management to ensure veterans receive the best possible care and that LGBT employees are able to work in a nondiscriminatory environment,” she said.

Snowdon said HRC wants to see the number of hospitals continue to grow over the years as medical staff examines training needs and reviews policies to become more competitive. She also said many hospitals should change their policies before an incident occurs.

Transgender woman Paula Witherspoon got a ticket for using a women’s restroom at Parkland last year. The incident helped prompt the hospital to add trans protections to its policies, which also extend to visitors.

Dr. Roberto De la Cruz, a gay member of Parkland’s board, created a task force to address LGBT issues and is working on a countywide assessment of LGBT health needs. Parkland added domestic partner benefits for employees in 2011.

“I am very proud that Parkland has received this designation,” De la Cruz said. “We want to provide a safe, respectful and caring environment for all of our patients. This designation indicates that we are inclusive to everyone at Parkland — patients, visitors and staff.”

Cece Cox, CEO of Resource Center Dallas, said she hopes more hospitals in North Texas participate in the future.

“Two local hospital systems receive 100 percent ratings on Healthcare Equality Index, but HRC calls overall participation in Texas ‘disappointing’”

Leaders in healthcare equality

These facilities received perfect scores on HRC’s 2013 Healthcare Equality Index:

- VA West Texas Health Care System, Big Spring
- VA North Texas Health Care System, Dallas
- Parkland Health & Hospital System (28 facilities), Dallas
- VA El Paso Health Care System, El Paso
- VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System, Harlingen
- The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston
- Reproductive Medicine Associates of Texas, San Antonio
- VA South Texas Veterans Health Care System, San Antonio
- VA Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, Temple

For full results of the 2013 HEI, visit www.HRC.org/HEI.
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• Fri 7/26 - Special Live Jazz - 8pm

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An Oak Cliff church that had been affiliated with the Metropolitan Community Churches since its founding in 1997 completed its transition to the United Church of Christ this month.

Promise is the second church in Dallas formerly affiliated with MCC — the historically gay denomination — to join the UCC, an LGBT-affirming mainline denomination. Cathedral of Hope went from MCC to UCC in 2005.

But in the case of Promise, no controversy led to the transition. Senior Pastor Jon Haack said the congregation voted unanimously to change affiliations for a number of reasons.

"Better name recognition," he said. "Outreach to the LGBT community, but also to the straight community."

Practical concerns also were part of the decision. UCC offers health insurance for clergy as well as property and casualty insurance for the congregation.

Haack said UCC also offers more resources for the congregation that should aid in its growth, including a printing house, colleges and seminars.

He said there were no disagreements with the former denomination and he and Associate Pastor Leonard Dacy hold MCC credentials, but both are in pursuit of UCC credentials. That happens at a local level, Haack said.

UCC has geographical associations that determine who should be credentialed within the denomination.

"They want the local association to get to know and support local clergy," he said. He expects he and Dacy to have their UCC credentials by the end of the year.

"The process has been energizing to our church," Haack said. "Church members will see a unity and enthusiasm we haven’t seen before."

But they won’t see a change in services.

"There will be no change in the order of worship," Haack said, calling it a blended style including contemporary music and traditional hymns. "Our style of worship will remain the same."

He said many LGBT people in Dallas are comfortable in more diverse congregations, especially younger people who have no trouble openly identifying themselves.

"It’s not as much of an issue as it was for people who came out in the 1970s," he said. "There’s not as much need to become part of a church that is separate."

But he said the church will always be LGBT-friendly and welcoming. With UCC, he sees more opportunities to broaden the congregation’s diversity to include gender identity, physical handicaps and race.

Haack said he hopes to partner with other UCC congregations on social justice projects.

"And we’re talking about joining in a Pride parade presence for UCC," he said. "Each church behind their own banner."

"This is a day of new beginnings for Promise," Dacy said. "There is a spirit of unity and excitement flowing through this congregation and we praise God for it."

Promise UCC, at 2527 W. Colorado Blvd., worships Sundays at 10:30 a.m. 214-623-8400. PromiseUCC.org.
Pro-lifers endangering lives

Texas’ new abortion restrictions were fueled by religious tyranny, but how will people respond when women start turning up dead?

Illegally small-government Republicans are working to scuttle immigration legislation by including astronomically expensive measures. This includes a Great Wall of China-style fence that fails to consider that many immigrants simply fly here on airplanes and never land. However, traffic at the border may soon be headed in the other direction, as poor women in Texas flee the state to get abortion pills in Mexican pharmacies (or stay home to clandestinely get them in Texas flea markets).

Led by Gov. Rick Perry, who is opportunistically ramping up for another doomed presidential run, the Texas Senate just passed one of the most draconian anti-abortion bills in the nation. The bill would prohibit abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy, and has no exception for victims of rape or incest. It would also force abortion clinics to adhere to prohibitively expensive regulations that would force most of them out of business.

Clinics would be compelled to have hallways that are as wide as those in surgery centers, so stretchers could fit through in cases of emergency. Proponents of the restrictive bill absurdly argue that the rules need to change in order to protect women and save lives.

“It is time these clinics put patients ahead of profits,” Republican Rep. Jodie Laubenberg, the House bill’s author, cynically regurgitated, as if women dying in abortion clinics were an actual crisis.

For a reality check, let’s look at Whole Woman’s Health Clinic in McAllen, a center that performs 1,900 abortions a year. They may be closed down because the hallways won’t meet the new guidelines. Yet, nine years and roughly 17,000 abortions later, the clinic has sent only two clients to the hospital, who were both successfully treated for bleeding.

The disingenuous concern from dissembling tea party members, like Laubenberg, highlights the underlying religious tyranny that is really driving this debate. They understand that science is not on their side. After all, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Texas Medical Association opposed the Texas bill. The lobbying slogan used by these groups was, “Get out of our exam rooms.”

What these busybodies care about is imposing their religious viewpoints on all Americans. If they truly gave a damn about women, they would be in favor of comprehensive sex education and providing birth control. They would vote for economic measures that would lift families out of abject poverty so they could actually afford to raise children. But, as the adage goes, fundamentalists only care about the unborn — but once you pop out of the womb you can go to hell.

Which brings us back to Mexico, the neighboring country where some Texas women may soon have to travel to terminate unwanted pregnancies. In desperation, they will purchase abortion medication at pharmacies that promise to “bring back a woman’s period,” according to a report in The New York Times. As of yet, there is no word from Laubenberg on whether she is concerned that the Mexican pharmacies or Texas flea markets are unlikely to meet the standards of surgical centers.

The anti-abortion lobby is, perhaps, the filthiest of all social issue activists. They laughingly call themselves pro-life, yet create a climate where zealots feel it is sometimes justified to murder an abortion doctor. They pretend to be concerned about women, but habitually harass and heckle young teenage girls as they seek medical services. These extremists profess to be Christians, yet chronically lie by tricking vulnerable women into entering virulently anti-abortion pregnancy crisis centers. It is ironic that for groups so uptight about sex, all their political tactics are below the belt.

What the anti-abortion movement really wants is to turn women into helpless baby factories that have no future. This is why the Family Research Council just hired Joshua Duggar as its spokesman. His parents, who have a reality TV show, have 19 children, and he wants a similarly sized family. Which is fine if he has the means to feed, clothe, house and educate these children without being on the public dole. But it is irresponsible for this family to be a role model for the general public.

Fortunately, there are still responsible people who understand that family planning matters, and the best chance children have at succeeding in life comes from being born into homes with parents who are prepared to take care of them.

The anti-abortion movement is enjoying its heyday and is probably at the pinnacle of its success — because the threat to women is largely theoretical. Wait until a few American women float north on the Rio Grande in wooden boxes because they ingested poison they thought were abortion pills. Wing nuts, such as Laubenberg, won’t seem so pro-life after a couple of these high profile funerals occur in the Lone Star State.

The Texas Legislature is treating women like piñatas. Those who voted for the measure should stop pretending they care one tamale and state the truth: A few dead or damaged women is a price worth paying to impose their fundamentalist beliefs on all Texas citizens.

Wayne Besen is founding executive director of Truth Wins Out, a Vermont-based nonprofit organization that fights anti-gay religious extremism. He can be reached at WBeser@TruthWinsOut.org.
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In its short lifespan, casual neighborhood joint Full Circle Tavern has emerged as a go-to haunt for dwellers in the funky Cedars enclave just south of downtown. Owners Jennifer Bonner and Lara Whittington — a couple behind the counter and in life — greet neighbors, foodies and concertgoers drifting in from shows at the nearby Palladium with a homely menu of craft beers, specialty cocktails, sandwiches and sides designed by executive chef Bonner. (Whittington handles more of the business/marketing side of the operation.)

Considering how well their venture has started, it’s remarkable that both women took circuitous routes to becoming restaurateurs.

“I was in advertising for 12 years prior to six years ago, when we started the business,” Whittington says. “I started 50 Foot Woman while I was still in the advertising game, which is our event planning company. And I started moonlighting with 50 Foot Woman, and then Jennifer got laid off due to the bad economy in 2008.”

After the layoff, Whittington delayed her plan to quit advertising to run the event company full-time while Bonner honed her kitchen skills, eventually providing box lunches at a friend’s salon. This avenue led to Whittington recommending Bonner’s catering for her client’s event and craft-services needs.

“We quickly realized that the catering company made a lot more money a lot faster than big events,” Whittington says. And thus a push into the food biz began. Whittington finally left advertising in 2009 to tackling the sales and business aspects of their venture EdiblEnvy.

“Two years ago, we started talking, ‘If we were going to do a brick-and-mortar [restaurant], what would that look like and what would we want it to be?’ I think it was always quickly decided that it’d have to be a pub/tavern-style place,” Whittington says.

For her part, Bonner wanted to dive into the restaurant world with a sandwich shop.

“I remember calling Lara and I was like, ‘I wanna open a sandwich shop,’ because I love sandwiches and I love chips. And so I called her, and she was like ‘Really? OK.’ And then we talked about it, and it ended up being this.”

Both women had a love of hanging out at great bars and pubs, which led to them adding the watering-hole component into the Full Circle mix.

“I knew no matter what we opened, we were going to be there 28 hours a day, so we needed it to be a place we always wanted to hang out in,” Whittington says with a laugh.

That sense of festivity and fun is evident not just in the menu, with items sporting names such as the Italian Stallion,
the Badass Burger and Redneck Peach Bellini, but in the cool, eclectic style that dominates the restaurant’s décor. Staying evermindful of the needs of their customers, the Tavern not only stays open late for those aforementioned Palladium showgoers, but even plays a music mix in the same genre as the concert of the evening. It’s an atmosphere that’s so far proven inviting to many visitors.

“I’ve been so pleasantly surprised at the amount of regulars we have,” Bonner enthuses. “We seriously have some that come in four, five times a week. I wish I would’ve moved down here a long time ago — it makes me feel like I live in the city. I love the diversity down here. It feels us — it fits us as people, it fits us as a couple, it fits us as business owners.”

In addition to having heads for the culinary industry, Whittington and Bonner have a heart for volunteerism in the LGBT community, with a history of contributing time to Youth First Texas; Whittington also works behind the scenes at the Pride Gala, which raised funds and awareness for YFT. The current pace of their lives with the opening of the Tavern has curtailed their involvement some, though in support of the community, Whittington says, “We go to Black Tie and DIFFA.”

And they love the fact that, without being “a gay restaurant,” Full Circle Tavern provides a welcoming environment for everyone; they have already noted a lot of support from the gay community since opening last April.

Amid juggling all aspects of maintaining the eatery, the two face melding their partnerships in business and life with a hefty dose of positivity.

“It doesn’t feel like work the majority of the time,” Bonner says. “We fight, we bicker like every couple. But at the end of the day, there’s no one else I’d rather do this with, as a person, as my partner and a professional. I got the best of what someone would want in a business partner and in a partner, so to be able to marry the two ... I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

TASTING NOTES

Komali has just introduced “Sangria Sunday,” with master mixologist Leann Berry, pictured below, from 4–10 p.m. The restaurant usually closes after brunch on Sunday. Among the specials will be $2 mimosas (or $10 by the carafe), house margaritas of course (red or white — $5 by the glass, $15 by the carafe). And it’s also service industry night, so all food industry workers get half off food — including the very spicy spiced ribs from chef Anastasia Quinones. The ham-banana-glazed St. Louis-style ribs are pretty high on the Scovell Scale, but the buttery mashed potatoes with queso fresco will cool them down a bit.

The list of participating restaurants in DFW Restaurant Week is out, and among those taking part in the fundraiser are Al Biernat’s, Belly and Trumpet, Five Sixty, Eddie V’s, Dish, Fearing’s, The French Room, The Grape, Hattie’s The Mansion, Meso Maya, Nobu, Nosh, Seasons 52, Salum and Komali. The “preview weekend” runs Aug. 9–11, with the official “main” week Aug. 12–18, though some restos will offer extensions through Sept. 1. The price is $35–$45 per person for a three-course meal, with 20 per-cent going to the North Texas Food Bank or Lena Pope Home. You can see the entire list and make reservations at DFWRestaurantWeek.com.

Mico Rodriguez, the creator of Mi Cocina, Taco Diner and, most recently, the excellent Mr. Mesero, has a new concept opening next month. Mesero Miguel will open on Henderson in August with chef Jon Stevens (Nosh) offering a creative hand on the menu. The cuisine will be Mexican, but the décor will pay tribute to a Spaniard: gay filmmaker Pedro Almodovar. Pyramid, the famed restaurant inside the Fairmont Hotel, finally has a new chef, Andre Natera, who had built the kitchen impressively over the last few years, took over earlier this year at Marquee Grill. The new exec is Brian Armstrong, formerly with the Scottsdale Fairmont. Oak in the Design District also has a new executive chef: Richard Gras.

Chef Graham Dodds at Central 214 inside the Hotel Palomar has rolled out his new summer menu, featuring new flatbreads as well as a Berkshire pork chop with creamy cheese grits, bacon-wrapped trout and Crenshaw melon salad, pictured above. At The Grape, chefowner Brian Luscher is hosting a come-as-you-are wine dinner showcasing the wines of Italy on July 24. Cost is just $48. TheGrapeRestaurant.com. Perry’s Steakhouse celebrates its anniversary with the 444 promotions: a four-course meal after 4 p.m. for $44. It’ll be available throughout July. Chef Antonio Marquez will be back in the kitchen at Lazaranda’s in Addison for the Mexican diller’s second-ever tequila dinner on July 25. (July 24, by the way, is National Tequila Day.) The cost is just $34.95.

— Arnold Wayne Jones
Can’t control your binge eating? Nick Tseng has a solution

Most stories about food deal with the delights of eating — even when something’s bad for you. But this one is about not eating.

Nicholas Tseng was an electrical engineer working at Texas Instruments, enjoying his life at the ilume, when his brother Ryan called from California. A mutual friend, Dave Krippendorf, had an idea for a product and needed some help with the design.

The problem was this: “Dave was overeating and kept snacking throughout the day,” Tseng says. He couldn’t exercise any self-control when it came to sweets.

Was there a way of keeping the temptation just that — a temptation — with no chance of adding calories? And thus the Kitchen Safe was born.

Tseng sympathized with Krippendorf’s dilemma (“I keep my Dove chocolates in there sometimes,” he admits) and saw the potential for a useful product.

It works this way: There’s something in your house you love but just can’t eat right now: M&Ms, donuts, cookies. Just take the food, drop it in the 3/5 quart tub, and spin the dial on top, which can be set for anywhere from one minute to 10 days. Press the button and voilà! You’re locked away from the temptation for as long as you selected … with no backtracking.

“We toyed with the idea of an override,” says Tseng, “but when we gave them to people that selected … with no backtracking.

“The original concept was to limit impulsive eating, but all these other ideas started coming up,” Tseng says. Put your credit cards, or cell phone, or cigarettes, or Xbox controller in it. The most creative suggestion?

“Quartz,” he says. “I have had a few of my college buddies say having [the Kitchen Safe] would have been great during finals to keep that away.”

Best of all? It would probably also help control the munchies.

To contribute, search “Kitchen Safe” at Kickstarter.com.
Food truck culture has been a hard sell to North Texas — in part because there isn’t one culture. Over in Fort Worth, food trucks set up exclusively in centralized parks: everyone knows where to go. But here in Dallas, the wheels keep a-turnin’, with trucks tweeting their location and moving around every day. It can get confusing.

Jason Boso, the owner of Twisted Root Burger Co., thinks Dallas is ready for its own food truck park to add to the renaissance currently being enjoyed over on Lower Greenville Avenue. In addition to the planned Aug. 9 opening of the first Dallas location of the California grocery chain Trader Joe’s (he of Three Buck Chuck wine), the recent opening of Walmart Market in the old Whole Foods space and Green Grocer up the street, Boso’s Truck Yard is helping evolve the neighborhood known for its bars and restaurants into something more diverse and foodie-centric. (The owners of the popular Goodfriends are also working on a new concept in the area, The Blind Butcher.)

“I’m trying to turn Lower Greenville into a bit of Austin,” Boso says. “We want this to be the new Bishop Arts District. I’m happy to be at the cusp of the change down here.” (He’s pioneered such renovations before, being one of the first new businesses to open in Deep Ellum nearly a decade ago.)

Consistent with his aesthetic, Boso wants to create a funky, friendly environment along the lines of the popular Katy Trail Ice House, with repurposed items like tires and industrial spools as furniture: hip, super-casual and foodie-friendly.

In addition to a rotating series of food trucks on-site (there’s room for up to three at a time), Boso will serve cocktails from mixologist Emily Perkins (including a bar built in an actual tree-house), and will maintain his own resto, Steak Me Home Tonight, which will serve signature cocktails as well as vegan fare (kidding — it’s a carnivore’s palace of Philly-style cheesesteak sandwiches). And there’ll even be an in-house ice cream shop.

Boso is looking for an August opening — “Augish” is the word they use on the construction site — just in time for the influx of Trader Joe’s fans across the street. But Boso admits he’s a little intimidated by the whole food truck concept.

“I’ve never worked with food trucks before,” he says. “It’s a little terrifying.”

lower greenville reclaims its rep with foodies with trader joe’s, truck yard

Arnold Wayne Jones | Life+Style Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

BISHOP ARTS NORTH OF THE TRINITY | Lower Greenville is in a renaissance with the opening next month of Trader Joe’s, above, and a new food truck park from Jason Boso, right with mixologist Emily Perkins. (Arnold Wayne Jones/Dallas Voice)
Pedro Almodovar has always been such an outrageous director, it’s easy to forget that he doesn’t make all that many comedies. Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown, which shot him into the international stratosphere in 1988, was his last out-and-out farce (despite wacky dark humor in films like Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down! and Talk to Her). So is it right to call his latest feature, I’m So Excited (Los Amantes Pasajeros), a homecoming? Cuz that’s exactly what it feels like.
Almodovar emphasizes the throwback quality, in part, with the casting of Pedro’s best alumni: In this one film, he features performances by Antonio Banderas (The Skin I Live In, Matador), Penelope Cruz (Volver, Broken Embraces), Cecilia Roth (All About My Mother), Javier Camara (Talk to Her) and virtually every other face onscreen has appeared in a prior Pedro movie. It gives I’m So Excited the energy of a labor of love, where everyone comes together to have a good time.
And oh, what a good time they — and we — have.
Peninsula Airlines is headed from Madrid to Mexico City, a flying Ship of Fools: Business class is populated by people with secrets. There’s the famous actor and lothario Ricardo (Guillermo Toledo); Norma (Roth), an aging madame of sorts; Bruna (Lola Dueñas), a psychic who is also a virgin; a businessman (Jose Luis Torrijó) on the
Almodovar goes back to farce in 'I’m So Excited'

run from the law; and the gayest flight crew since a Falcon Video shoot.

Early in the flight, however, things take a turn worthy of Stephen King. Everyone in economy is unconscious, and the gay flight attendants — Joserra (Camara), Ulloa (Raul Arevalo) and Fajas (Carlos Areces) — are drinking heavily. Something is definitely wrong with the plane. And it’s serious.

So serious, in fact, that the only way to deal with the horrors of what might befall them is with booze, jokes and a little bit of cabaret. When the flight crew wants to distract the passengers from impending doom, they do a lip-synched version of the Pointer Sisters hit, soaring through the aisles in elaborate choreography. It’s a drag show without boas.

It is, simply, insane.

That’s what makes a farce a farce, and you have to leave your sensibilities at the door with I’m So Excited. Assassination, ESP, suicidal girlfriends, the chance passing off of a cell phone … the coincidences run far outside the realm of the possible.

But there’s always an undercurrent of tension with Almodovar. It’s not just the flight, but the emotional lives of the characters: Roth is excellent as the fading glamour goddess, and the queasy stewards reveal honest backgrounds that surprise you.

I’m So Excited won’t tickle every funnybone, but if nothing else, it’s a welcome return by Almodovar to a genre he has proven bona fides in. So much fare nowadays is about hormonal teenaged boys obsessed with big breasts; it’s nice to see one made for adults who aim higher … as well as a bit lower.

PUTTING THE ‘ASS’ IN ‘BUSINESS CLASS’ | Pedro Almodovar, far right, returns to his wheelhouse of true farce in the sexed-up gay comedy ‘I’m So Excited.’
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SPECIAL APPEARANCE TUESDAY TEASE IN VIXIN @ 11:15P
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2013
PINK PARTY

SUE ELLENS

2013
Friday 07.19

**Lovely Uranus back in orbit in ‘Forever Lovely’**

What’s it like to be the best third-rate drag queen in Dallas? Lovely Uranus knows. The campy character, embodied by Mark-Brian Sonna, is back in a new show by playwright Alejandro de la Costa, and Lovely enjoys a series of adventures — all with a queer appeal.

**DEETS:** Stone Cottage Theatre, 15650 Addison Road, Addison. Through Aug. 10. $18–$23. MBSProductions.net.

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**Friday 07.19**

**Edgy girl band CSS brings its new sound to House of Blues**

The lesbian girl band CSS has changed its sounds since moving from their home base in Brazil up to the sunny shores of Southern California, as their latest album, *Planta*, can attest. But the group is still on the cutting edge of modern music, which you can get a taste of Friday at their performance at House of Blues, where they will be performing with MDNR.

**DEETS:** House of Blues, 2200 N. Lamar St. 9 p.m. $20–$22. HouseOfBlues.com.

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**Saturday 07.20**

**Big Bad Gina performs in Fort Worth**

North Texas is flush with girl groups this weekend. Straight off their victory in the Battle of the Bands at Sue Ellen’s, the queer Big Bad Gina — recently the opening act for Indigo Girls — returns to Fort Worth for a concert courtesy of Open Door Productions. They perform their big, round sound at the MCC Agape Church on Saturday.

**DEETS:** MCC Agape Church, 4615 E. California Parkway. 7 p.m. $20-$25. ODPTexas.com.

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**The flyin’ king: ‘Fly’**

The last time I saw Peter Pan and company onstage (just last year), the Boy Who Never Grew Up was played by a post-menopausal woman, Capt. Hook was a foppish dandy in pristine Victorian garb and Tinkerbell was little more than a light-dandy in pristine Victorian garb and Tinkerbell was little more than a lighting designer’s wet dream.

Oh, how things have changed.

The last time I saw Peter Pan and company on stage, which was adapted by Rajiv Joseph, fiddles with that formula. Peter (Grant Venable, an actual tween boy, who never grew up) has long needed: it bitch-slaps the annoying little sprite into the modern era.

Originally, Peter Pan was an adventure tale, where children could fly away to a world without grownups ... until they realized grownups aren't so bad and returned home. But Peter kept soaring off, ready to live the life of a young boy who longs to leave his home and forget the death of his baby brother. Yep, the bespectacled tyke is now a career malaise.

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Along the lines, but not the same. Wicked benefitted from a magnificent score and even more magnificent lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. Joseph doesn't have a lyricist's ear, and the rhyme schemes are repetitive and banal (though Bill Sherman's tribal-rhythmed score is quite fun). And director Jeffrey Seller complicates many of the special effects (when you call yourself the flyin' king: 'fly' what this production does best: make complex characters out of stereotypes we had long stopped thinking about as real. Finally Peter Pan isn't just for the kiddies; it's for the adults who still wish they could have it all.

— Arnold Wayne Jones


FRIDAY 07.19
CONCERTS
CSS. The lesbian girl band from Los Angeles (by way of Brazil) performs in support of their new CD, Planta; with MDNR. House of Blues, 2200 N. Lamar St. 9 p.m. $20–$22. HouseofBlues.com.

COMMUNITY
Carmen Carrera. The RuPaul’s Drag Race contestant performs a show at The Brick, 2525 Wycliff Ave. 10 p.m.

SATURDAY 07.20
COMMUNITY
All Day of Beauty. A fundraiser for AIDS Arms LifeWalk, 100 percent of proceeds from services at Vixens Salon & More will be donated to the the Guys & Dolls Team. 509 W. State St., Garland. Call 972-272-7876 for an appointment.

Gaybingo. After a foray into Plano last week, the Dallas incarnation of Gaybingo returns with Fox4 consumer reporter Steve Noviello as the special guest for the Resource Center Dallas fundraiser’s 12th anniversary. This month’s theme: Beach Party Bingo. The Rose Room inside Station 4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Doors at 5 p.m., show at 6 p.m. $25–$40. RCDallas.org/gaybingo.

In the Heat of the Night. A fundraiser for Legal Hospice of Texas includes cocktails and hors d’oeuvres, prizes and silent auction and poker games. Dallas Contemporary, 161 Glass St. 6:30–10 p.m. $50. LegalHospice.org. 214-521-6622.

CONCERTS
Big Bad Gina. The gay all-girl band performs in Fort Worth. Agape MCC, 4615 E. California Parkway, Fort Worth. 7 p.m. $20–$25. ODPTexas.com.

SUNDAY 07.21
WORSHIP
Cathedral of Hope. Traditional service at the United
Bromance at Court

Solution on page 25

**Across**

1. Hazard for Sheehan
2. Discussion venue
3. Computes the bottom line
4. Sally in space
5. River of Cologne
6. Theater chain name
7. Shakespeare’s stream
8. Push forward
9. Rick’s old flame
10. With 22-Across, star of 300
11. See 20-Across
12. Land of O. Wilde
13. Soap title character of the ’70s
14. Prepare to shoot off
15. Ship’s load
16. “I Got Rhythm” writer Gershwin
17. Like a bunch of blooming pansies
18. Push forward
19. Rick’s old flame
20. With 22-Across, star of 300
21. Like Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet
22. See 20-Across
23. Husband of 5-Down
24. Heartthrob’s fan
25. Painter Kahlo
26. Electrical unit
27. Headstone letters
28. One of “Fifty Million Frenchmen”
29. Type of toast
30. Hit the ground
31. Susan B. Anthony coin
32. Where Priscilla is queen
33. Insect groups ruled by queens
34. Girl in a Beach Boys song
35. Dorky
36. Opposite of fem.
37. Roadies’ burdens
38. Star of The Hangover
39. Red-brown
40. Caesar’s last question
41. Jockey strap?
42. Way out
43. KFC rank
44. Breakfast on Pluto actor Stephen

**Down**

1. Like Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet
2. Husband of 5-Down
3. Heartthrob’s fan
4. Elizabeth of Transamerica
5. Painter Kahlo
6. Electrical unit
7. Headstone letters
8. One of “Fifty Million Frenchmen”
9. Type of toast
10. Hit the ground
11. Susan B. Anthony coin
12. Where Priscilla is queen
13. Insect groups ruled by queens
14. Girl in a Beach Boys song
15. Dorky
16. Rub the wrong way
17. Reverend Perry
18. Opposite of fem.
19. Composer ___ Carlo Menotti
20. Roadies’ burdens
21. Like a bunch of blooming pansies
22. Push forward
23. Star of The Hangover
24. Animal populations
25. Emerald Isle province
26. Muscle Mary’s pride
27. Interior design
28. Rare sports result
29. Raise the price of, at Barneys
30. Like a bunch of blooming pansies
31. Composer ___ Carlo Menotti
32. Type of toast
33. Hit the ground
34. Susan B. Anthony coin
35. Where Priscilla is queen
36. Insect groups ruled by queens
37. Girl in a Beach Boys song
38. Dorky
40. Caesar’s last question
41. Jockey strap?
42. Way out
43. KFC rank
44. Breakfast on Pluto actor Stephen
45. Completely encloses
46. Brunch entree
47. Completely encloses
48. Lammy, for one
49. Break some rays
50. Be in a cast
51. P on Socrates’ paper
52. Bear necessity
53. Completely encloses
54. Tat word, often
55. Loa
56. Sports event where 20-Across and 38-Across were recently seen together
57. Brown known for colorful characters
58. Composer Bernstein
59. Aroused in bed
60. Pain in an orifice
61. New Jersey capital
62. Brown known for colorful characters
63. Composer Bernstein
64. Aroused in bed
65. Pain in an orifice
66. New Jersey capital
67. Brown known for colorful characters
68. Composer Bernstein
69. Aroused in bed
70. Pain in an orifice
71. New Jersey capital

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A Couple of guys

“A Levelheaded Decision”

Your got a job?!

You got a job?!

Yep, i figured with a baby on the way, we’re gonna need all the income we can get.

I’m so happy to see you acting like a mature, responsible adult.

Damn, i feel awful. You’ve been out job-hunting, and i assumed you were trying to bail us out before the baby arrived.

I’m sorry, Andy. It sounds like you’re serious about changin’.

You’re serious about changin’.

Yeah, in fact...

I’m thinkin’ about gettin’ rid of my mohawk.

Noo!

---

q-puzzle

Solution on page 25

Across

1. Hazard for Sheehan
2. Discussion venue
3. Computes the bottom line
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51. P on Socrates’ paper
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This Paper is 100% RECYCLABLE
Voice of Pride semifinals take place at the Round-Up Saloon on July 21.  ... Glitz & Glam with Carmen Carrera from RuPaul’s Drag Race with Eddie G on the mike and music by Sno White & Kayla Kruz and DJ Steve at the Brick on July 19.  ... Andrea Dewson performs at Alexander’s on July 19 and Mark Alan Smith makes an appearance on July 20.  ... Battle of the Bands winner Bad Bad Gina livens things up at Sue Ellen’s on July 19. The weekend rounds out with Ciao Bella on July 20 and Three Drunk Monkeys and July 21. Bella and Dari perform each Wednesday at 8 p.m.  ... Dallas Bears and Leather Knights hold a food drive for the Youth First Texas kitchen pantry at Dallas Eagle on July 19. Dry goods, snack foods and grocery gift cards also welcome. The biggest need is microwavable, not frozen, meals.  ... DFW Leather Corps hold a seminar on July 20. Then on July 21 Larry Finch hosts a United Court of the Lone Star Empire Idol Imitation show benefiting AIDS Interfaith Network.  ... William Bell from RuPaul’s Drag Race appears in the Rose Room on July 19. Then the Summer Masquerade Party on July 25 features raffles, food, performances, masks and more.  ... Spin, summer edition, features DJ Roland Belmares at TMC: The Mining Company on July 20.  ... Karmin Acapella single release party takes place at JR’s Bar & Grill on July 22. Then celebrate the release of the new dance album from Pet Shop Boys featuring the club hits Vocal and Avis on July 23. Free copies while supplies last.
Friends at Chick Happy Hour at JR.’s Bar & Grill.  

Morgan at Chick Happy Hour at JR.’s Bar & Grill.  

Craig and Lupe at Chick Happy Hour at JR.’s Bar & Grill.  

Donna, Chris, Rebecca, Dee and Lynn at Chick Happy Hour at JR.’s Bar & Grill.  

Craig and Lupe at Chick Happy Hour at JR.’s Bar & Grill.  

Donna, Chris, Rebecca, Dee and Lynn at Chick Happy Hour at JR.’s Bar & Grill.  

Chad and Shane at the Round-Up Saloon.  

John, Mike, Dean and Dimitry at the Dallas Eagle.  

Voice of Pride semifinals take place at the Round-Up Saloon on July 21.  

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• To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/Category/Photos.
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