Roller disco lives in Addison!

Campy musical ‘Xanadu’ opens at WaterTower Theatre

Choreographer Jacob Brent rolls into town for dancing-on-wheels production

STAGE, Page 28

Making a splash

Rainbow Roundup social group, which offers support and plenty of fun to LGBT families, has grown to more than 400 members in less than a year

PLUS: Marriage rulings create chaos for Dallas couple; LGBT parents fight for custody; and more

FAMILY LIFE special section begins on Page 11
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  Monica Moran and Alma Garcia play with their 3-year-old daughter, Sarayu, at W.J. Thomas Splash Park in Carrollton earlier this month. (Anna Waugh/Dallas Voice)

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To find more information, visit dallasvoice.com, the Premier Media Source for LGBT Texas.
AG Abbott argues DOMA ruling doesn’t allow gay divorce in TX

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, a Republican who’s running for governor in 2014, argued in a brief filed last week that the U.S. Supreme Court’s recent decision striking down a section of the Defense of Marriage Act doesn’t allow same-sex divorce in Texas.

Abbott has intervened to block two same-sex couples who were legally married in Massachusetts from obtaining divorces. Appeals in both cases are now before the Texas Supreme Court, which requested a new round of briefs in the wake of the high court’s ruling in Windsor v. United States, which struck down Section 3 of DOMA as unconstitutional.

Abbott’s office filed its brief July 18 in State of Texas v. Angelique Naylor and Sabina Daly, a case involving a lesbian couple that was granted a divorce by a Travis County district judge.

“Windsor does not empower one State to force every other State to recognize the marriage licenses it chooses to issue,” Abbott’s office wrote. “Only by ignoring Windsor’s extensive reliance on the States’ primary authority over marriage could Windsor be employed to attack Texas’s longstanding marriage policy.”

Meanwhile, attorneys representing a gay Dallas couple seeking a divorce filed their brief in the other case, known as In The Matter of the Marriage of J.B. and H.B.

In 2009, Dallas County Judge Tena Callahan ruled she had jurisdiction to hear the couple’s divorce petition. But after Abbott intervened, an appeals court reversed Callahan’s decision.

J.B. is an uncontested petition for divorce. However, J.B. and H.B. argue in their brief that the case is about divorce, not marriage. They argue that the amendment would violate the amendment to the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in Windsor.

Scheske and Steed wrote that under Windsor, “any Texas law that targets same-sex couples, seeking to ‘impose inequality’ on them by treating their legal marriages as ‘second class,’ is unconstitutional.”

“Thus, the Court should either (a) hold that Texas law does not preclude Texas courts from hearing and granting J.B.’s uncontested petition for divorce or (b) hold that Texas law is unconstitutional to the extent that it purports to preclude J.B. from obtaining a divorce,” they wrote. “Either way, the Court should reverse the court of appeals’ decision and remand to the trial court with instructions to consider J.B.’s petition for divorce.”

Response briefs are due in the two cases by July 29.

— John Wright

2013 Voice of Pride finalists to compete Aug. 11 at Rose Room

Contestants who have been vying all summer to be crowned the 2013 Voice of Pride got whittled down to a final 10 on Sunday, July 21, at the Round-Up Saloon. These 10 will compete on Aug. 11 at the Rose Room in the final showdown of the year; the winner gets bragging rights and the chance to sing at the Festival in Lee Park following the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade, plus $3,500 in cash and two round-trip airline tickets and a hotel stay at a luxury Hilton.

Congratulations to all the finalists, listed here in alphabetical order: Joey Arias, Walter Cunningham, Colby Geyer, Vanessa Guzman, Matthew Harrington, Zack Hicks, Tony Jackson, Carlos Saenz, Steve Stallings, Eric Way.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Skivvies opens outlet location on Inwood next to Zeus Comics

Skivvies, the longstanding gayborhood destination for sexy underwear and swimwear, isn’t just in the gayborhood anymore. In the planning stages for a while, the gay-owned retailer now has a second location — one of the outlet variety.

The new storefront, at 1336 Inwood Road, is next door to gay-owned Zeus Comics and across the street from the Crate & Barrel outlet. The neighbors don’t seem to mind.

“A men’s underwear/clothing shop is opening next door,” Zeus owner Richard Neal posted on Facebook recently. “If my wardrobe shifts to club wear, you’ll know why.”

— Arnold Wayne Jones
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Convention controversy?

National gay chamber brings annual gathering to Dallas’ Omni Convention Center Hotel, despite uncertainty about company’s LGBT-related policies

OMNICOLORED | The Omni Convention Center Hotel, shown in August 2012, is owned by the city but operated by the company, which recently moved its headquarters to Oak Lawn. (Stephen Masker/Dallas Voice)

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffett@dallasvoice.com

Before Omni Hotels won a contract to manage the city of Dallas’ $500 million convention center hotel in 2009, no one inquired about the company’s LGBT-related policies.

When it became clear Omni was one of the few major lodging chains that doesn’t offer domestic partner benefits to its employees nationwide, North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce CEO Tony Vedda enlisted the aid of then-Mayor Tom Leppert. The company eventually agreed to offer DP benefits at the Dallas property, which also joined the GLBT Chamber.

Today, Vedda said, Omni Hotels offers health benefits to spouses of all its married employees, gay and straight, regardless of their state of residence. Omni representatives didn’t return phone calls seeking to confirm that policy.

Because Omni Hotels doesn’t participate in the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index, the full extent of its LGBT policies remains unknown.

But representatives from the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, which brings its 10th annual convention to the Omni Dallas next week, said the company’s progress is a prime example of the organization’s impact.

“Part of what we do is help companies become better corporate citizens,” said Justin Nelson, president and founder of NGLCC. “It’s our job to build the business case. This is not a cultural statement.”

Nelson said Omni might not be where it ultimately needs to be, but after the convention is over, NGLCC will continue to work with the company.

“The conference may leave,” Nelson said, “but the push for equality does not.”

Omni Hotels currently operates 56 hotels and resorts in the U.S. and Mexico. Earlier this month, Omni expanded by purchasing five resorts, including Barton Creek Resort & Spa in Austin.

Omni is privately held by TRT Holdings, which is owned by Robert Rowling of Highland Park, whose $7 million donation to American Crossroads, founded by Karl Rove, ranked him as third-largest donor to that PAC.

In the 2012 election, American Crossroads spent $96 million for negative ads against Democrats and another $8 million supporting Republican candidates.

Because Omni is privately held, the company doesn’t disclose its equal opportunity policies or specifics on its benefit plans.

In addition to Omni, TRT owns Gold’s Gym, Tana Exploration and has investments in a number of other companies. TRT’s corporate headquarters is moving to a new building under construction on Maple Avenue in Oak Lawn on the Old Parkland Hospital campus where the lesbian bar Buddies II was located.

TRT Holdings also does not participate in the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index.

Human Rights Campaign spokesman Michael Cole-Schwartz said he had no information on LGBT policies and practices at Omni or TRT.

“We don’t have any information on them other than they have not responded to our requests to provide information or participate in the CEI,” he said.

Other hospitality companies such as Hyatt and Sheraton received perfect scores on the most recent CEI. Marriott received a score of 90 percent.

Although the CEI survey is sent only to Fortune 1000 companies, Cole-Schwartz said other privately held companies voluntarily participate in the CEI.

Rowling has said his contributions to American Crossroads were about “fiscal sanity” and had nothing to do with social issues. The company tried to distance itself from the donation as personal rather than corporate, but half the money came from corporate accounts.

As a result, a Gold’s Gym franchisee who owned four locations in San Francisco pulled out of the chain, while another franchisee in Los Angeles published ads saying the gym was locally owned.

Since Gold’s Gyms are franchised, the corporate policy is, “Gold’s Gym offers a variety of employee benefits which may vary by location,” according to the company’s website.

Regardless of the controversy involving Gold’s Gym, Nelson said he’s confident about what convention-goers will find at the Omni Dallas.

This is the first major LGBT conference to be held at the hotel since it opened in 2011, and its employees will go through diversity training before attendees arrive, Nelson said. During the conference, gender-neutral bathrooms will be designated.

National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce spokeswoman Laura Berry expects the 10th annual chamber conference to be its largest. At least 26 of the 38 regional LGBT chambers in the U.S. will be represented with more than 600 members already registered.

A number of special events are planned through the week, including an opening night reception at the Perot Museum.

On July 31, they’ll screen the HBO special The Out List with Dallas Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Twiggy Pucci Garcon and Wade Davis, who appear in the...
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at the Omni Hotel in Dallas Texas!

CONVENTION, From Page 6

The keynote speaker is Les McKeown, author of Predictable Success and an adviser on accelerated business growth, who brings 30 years of experience starting and sustaining businesses.

At the plenary luncheon on July 31, three chief diversity officers — Karyn Twaronite from Ernst & Young, Wanda Brackins from RBC Wealth Management and Cuc Vu from HRC — explore diversity and inclusion as a market-driven business imperative.

In breakout sessions, a variety of topics will be addressed. Wells Fargo executives will discuss the financial impact of the Defense of Marriage Act decision on same-sex couples.

The conference is broken into two tracks. Not only will chamber members interact, but chamber organizers will have their own breakouts with experienced leaders like Vedda discussing how to start a local affiliate chamber and organizational sustainability.

National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce holds its annual business and leadership conference at the Omni Dallas Hotel Dallas, 555 S. Lamar St., July 30-Aug. 2. For more information or to register, go to NGLCC.org.

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PET OF THE WEEK

Balto

Balto appears to be a purebred Siberian Husky. He was transferred from a city shelter, where he arrived as a stray and no one claimed him. Now he’s here with us at Operation Kindness, where he’ll have another chance at a loving home. Balto needs a home where his physical needs will be met, as well as necessary grooming and a cool place to spend Texas summers. He is a calm dog and walks well on a leash. Come meet this big baby and give him the home he needs.

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Black Tie Dinner taps Zach Wahls, Dustin Lance Black

Scouts for Equality founder to receive Elizabeth Birch award; ‘Milk’ screenwriter will be guest speaker

ANNA WAUGH | News Editor
waugh@dallasvoice.com

LGBT advocate Zach Wahls will receive the Elizabeth Birch Equality Award at Black Tie Dinner, and Academy Award-winning screenwriter Dustin Lance Black will attend as a guest speaker, event co-chairs announced Thursday.

Wahls, an Eagle Scout who founded Scouts for Equality, led the national campaign for including gay Scouts in the Boy Scouts of America and has remained vigilant in urging the organization to extend the policy to welcome gay leaders.

An outspoken supporter of marriage equality, Wahls wrote the national best-seller My Two Moms: Lessons of Love, Strength and What Makes a Family, and his testimony about being raised by two moms before the Iowa House Judiciary Committee was YouTube’s most-watched political video of 2011.

At 22, Wahls is the youngest recipient of the award. “It’s a big honor,” Wahls said. “I feel very lucky and very honored.”

The Elizabeth Birch Equality Award is given to an individual, organization or company that has made a significant contribution of national scope to the LGBT community.

It is named in honor of former Human Rights Campaign Executive Director Elizabeth Birch, who received the first award. Past recipients of the Birch Award include Showtime Networks/Robert Greenblatt, Alan Cumming, Sharon Stone, Bishop V. Gene Robinson, Judy Shepard, American Airlines, decorated veteran Eric Alva and, last year, Chaz Bono.

“You may not recognize him by name, but Zach Wahls is known by millions as the teenager who gave powerful testimony to an Iowa House committee in support of his two moms,” BTD Co-chair Mitzi Lemons said. “Zach offers fresh, bold thoughts on the issue of gay marriage. You’ll walk away with a new and thought-provoking perspective after hearing Zach speak.”

Black, a Texan native who grew up in San Antonio, won an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for the 2008 film Milk, a biopic of gay rights champion Harvey Milk. Black is a founding board member of the American Foundation for Equal Rights and the writer of 8, a staged re-enactment of the federal trial that led to a ruling overturning California’s Proposition 8.

“Over the course of the last decade, Dustin Lance Black has evolved into one of the most critically acclaimed of all Hollywood screenwriters,” BTD Co-chair Ken Morris said. “From his position at the top of the Hollywood hierarchy, he consistently issues a call for equal rights, and he has been one of the rare voices from within the film industry to speak so passionately and openly about gay activism.”

Black Tie Dinner is scheduled for Nov. 2. For more information, visit BlackTie.org.

To view photos from Thursday’s Sneak Peek Preview Party, go to DallasVoice.com.
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CARROLLTON — As Monica Moran and Alma Garcia played with their daughter Sarayu at W.J. Thomas Splash Park on a hot July day, they said they were glad other LGBT families were out in the sun with them.

The couple brought their daughter to the splash park for an outing with the local LGBT family group Rainbow Roundup, a social Facebook group.

Moran and Garcia heard about the group last year and have enjoyed surrounding 3-year-old Sarayu with other children that have two same-sex parents.

“I think the best thing about it is to give her an opportunity to see other families that look like hers and just to get to meet other families as well,” Moran said. “It’s kind of hard to have venues where you can just hang out with GLBT families.”

The group is the first of its kind the couple has found, and they enjoy the social gatherings where they and their daughter can make friends with kids and other parents, as well as share advice and parenting information.

Garcia said that while their daughter is still too young to understand her family’s dynamics, she hopes time in the group will help her see as she grows up that her family is just as normal as others.

“I think just having an opportunity for her to socialize with other kids who have two moms is good,” Garcia said. “If she doesn’t get it now, later on it’ll be like ‘OK, my family’s not weird or different.’”

Kimberly Kantor, the group’s founder, started the group in September to help unite LGBT families and help them and their kids in North Texas to meet the needs of LGBT families.

Kantor said the group has been good for her two daughters, Carlie, 8, and Kaia, 3, who will grow up knowing other kids with families like theirs and make friends that they’ll have throughout their grade school years.

The Facebook group started with 19 members and has grown to more than 400 members.

“I wanted it to be a safe place for all of our kids to be with other kids that have families just like theirs as they’re growing up and so that they have support and unity,” Kantor said.

As the number of same-sex couples raising children continues to soar, the group is one of several that have sprouted up in North Texas to meet the needs of LGBT families.

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The Facebook group started with 19 members and has grown to more than 400 members.

“He’s a blessing to be able to see that she’s not alone,” Rhodes said. “From a mom’s perspective, I love hanging around with these other moms because they know what it’s like to be a lesbian with children so it’s a good place for us to build friends.

Shannon Rhodes brings her daughter, Zoe 3½, to the group and likes that she can communicate with kids her age about having two moms. She also enjoys the friendships she’s built with the other parents in the group.

ATX Parenting: 8 ways to encourage gender self-awareness in kids
When Chris Chapo moves to California in August, he’ll still be married to his husband, Don Chapo. But Don, who plans to remain in Dallas for the time being, won’t technically be married to Chris. That’s because California will recognize Chris’ marriage to Don, but Texas will not recognize Don’s marriage to Chris. And there’s no telling how the federal government will view the couple.

Chris and Don Chapo have been together 13 years and were married in California in 2008 during the six-month window before Proposition 8 passed — halting same-sex marriages in the state. After four years of state-recognized marriage in California, they moved to Dallas where they are legally single. But when Chris moves back to California to start a new job, his marriage will be recognized. Don will remain in Dallas for a few months to sell the house and his half of the marriage won’t be acknowledged.

Dallas couple’s case illustrates confusion created by high court’s marriage rulings

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer

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Once Don sells the house, Chris will have to fly back to sign the papers or execute powers-of-attorney. None of that would be necessary if Texas recognized their marriage because one spouse could sign for the other on those documents.

Don wonders if Texas even recognizes his name change.

Because all of their legal papers are in place, Don knows that if anything happens to his husband in California, the hospital would contact him. But he’s worried a Texas hospital wouldn’t call Chris if something happened here, despite listing his husband as next-of-kin.

After more than four years of marriage, the couple noticed the difference when they moved to Dallas.

“It’s very messy when you try to buy a house,” Don said.

In California, their house was community property. “Here, we created a trust and a will,” he said. “We were legal strangers.”

Before buying their house in Lakewood, they contacted Dallas attorney Rebecca Covell. She made sure they had the necessary paperwork to make their relationship safe and secure. That involved wills and a trust, as well as powers of attorney and guardianships — everything they automatically had with a simple marriage license in California.

Don said heterosexual couples get those protections in exchange for the $50 license fee.

“And we already paid our 50 bucks,” he said. Covell has been producing these documents for same-sex couples for 25 years. Since the U.S. Supreme Court’s historic ruling striking down a section of the Defense of Marriage Act, she said, her office has never been busier. Her phone has been ringing off the hook from many of those couples she’s helped over the years wanting to know what they need to do now.

The biggest question from many of those couples is whether they should go to another state to marry and whether it matters where they marry.

After a same-sex couple marries in a state where it’s legal, Covell said the spouse who wants to change names should amend federal documents, such as a passport and a social security card. Texas would accept those as identification to amend a driver’s license or a voter registration, she said.

While many like to think marriage is about love, the DOMA case proved that the license issued is mostly about financial benefits.

Carol Meyer with Merrill Lynch Global Wealth Management.

While many like to think marriage is about love, the DOMA case proved that the license issued is mostly about financial benefits.
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TYLER — After 14 years of marriage and two kids, Scott Morrison found himself fighting to see his sons.

Following a divorce in 2009, Morrison came out to his sons, now 12 and 14, and his ex-wife started to turn the boys against him. Morrison said she accused him of being a pedophile and took him back to court last year to get full custody.

"After I came out, my ex-wife started a campaign to humiliate me and try to hinder my relationship with my kids," Morrison said.

He hired an attorney and went to the court in conservative East Texas prepared for a fight. After psychological evaluations and several months in court, the case was settled in May, with a judge naming Morrison's ex-wife the custodial parent and keeping the visitation schedule — the same arrangement that was decided during their divorce.

"I basically spent $9,000 to keep things the same, but she didn't win and that was the main point," Morrison said.

Dallas attorney John McCall Jr., who represented Morrison, said he sees cases like this all too often when straight exes become angry that their marriages end because their spouses are gay.

McCall said it's still common for gay parents to have their sexuality used against them by an ex-spouse, but "unless there's a legitimate legal issue, it doesn't hold up in court." He said as long as LGBT parents can prove they've been good parents and care about their children's welfare, the courts are on their side.

"The bottom line is that judges don't seem to care who dad is sleeping with or who mom is sleeping with, [being gay is so] commonplace now," he said.

That wasn't the case a few years ago. McCall said there's been a shift in the last three years where judges evaluate gay parents on how they care for their children, instead of basing decisions on their sexuality.

McCall said he represented a lesbian mother five years ago in Tyler and her outcome wasn't as good as Morrison's — an example of how a few years has changed mindsets.

McCall said in more conservative areas like Hunt County the "super-right religious mindset" of the judges will change when new judges are elected.

"No matter the county, a judge that's been in office five years or longer is in the old mindset," he said.

But he said parents should still challenge the claims that they aren't a good parent because they came out, no matter where they live in Texas.

"It's always in the child's best interest to be with the parent," McCall said. "A gay parent is still a good parent."

Unfazed by conservative venue

Morrison and his ex-wife met at Christ for the Nations in Dallas and later settled down in Tyler. The couple started a nonprofit ministry in Uganda and lived there for seven years.

Despite knowing he was gay and coming out to himself in 2006, Morrison said he stayed in the marriage because he loved what he did in the ministry. He had already told his ex-wife before they married that he'd struggled with homosexual attraction. She encouraged him that it would go away.

But he said things changed in 2008 when his wife had an affair with a staff member in their ministry and became pregnant with the other man's child. They decided to divorce, and his ex-wife was granted primary custody of their sons.

Morrison moved to Oklahoma to start fresh, but continued to visit his sons and have them come stay with him. As the months passed, he said his ex-wife told their sons bad things about gay people and told them to be careful around Morrison and his friends because they were pedophiles. He said she often threatened to take the kid back to Uganda so he couldn't see them.

That led to her filing a custody modification last year, citing his sexual orientation and saying he was a pedophile and had abused the kids.

Despite having to fight in a conservative Tyler court, Morrison said he didn't back down because his kids mean the world to him and he refused to let his ex-wife keep them from him because he's gay.

"I easily could've walked away," he said. "That
ANNA WAUGH  
News Editor

same, but she didn’t win and that was the main naming Morrison’s ex-wife the custodial parent conservative East Texas prepared for a fight. After campaign to humiliate me and try to hinder my rela-
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TYLER — After 14 years of marriage and two
years has changed mindsets.
good as Morrison’s — an example of how a few
on their sexuality.
care for their children, instead of basing decisions
where judges evaluate gay parents on how they
care who dad is sleeping with or who mom is

Morrison and his ex-wife met at Christ for the
Nations in Dallas and later settled down in Tyler.

Despite knowing he was gay and coming out to
himself in 2006, Morrison said he stayed in the

Hunt County the “super-right religious mindset”

McCall said it’s still common for gay parents to
continued to visit his sons and have them come

McCall said in more conservative areas like

McCall said he represented a lesbian mother
That wasn’t the case a few years ago. McCall
"The bottom line is that judges don’t seem to

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Tips for a Smart, Safe Summer
It’s summertime. And that means more fun with kids out of school and tons of family vacations planned. Unfortunately, summertime also means a spike in crime. Here at the district attorney’s office, we’re doing a lot to keep you safe and smart on crime. Below is a list of our top summer safety tips. We want you to have a fun and safe summer and that starts with being aware.

Meet your Neighbor — Get to know the people on your street by organizing a block party or community event — Have a neighbor check mail and pick-up your newspaper when you are out of town.

Never Leave Children Alone in the Car — Children left in the car alone are more likely to be abducted than when in the care of an adult. Bring your kids inside with your or in the care of another trusted adult. — Hot Texas temperatures are amplified in a sitting vehicle. Children are more susceptible to heat-related injuries, like stroke or even death when left alone in a car.

Walk with a Friend and Know Your Route — Criminals prey most on teenagers, college-aged adults, and senior citizens in entertainment districts. When socializing around the city, plan on having a partner with you in case of an emergency. — Enjoy the outdoors responsibly. If you’re going for a hike, plan your path beforehand and stay on the plotted course. If you get lost or injured, rescue can come to your aid more quickly.

Park in a Secured, Well-Lit Lot — Car thieves are deterred by secured, well-lit lots with attendants. Find a parking space in an area that leaves your vehicle in plain sight. Take all personal items of value with you or hide them from sight.

Keep your Cell-Phone Charged — Program important numbers into your favorites or speed dial and label emergency contacts for emergency responders to use. Save your contact’s name with the label ICE. In Case of Emergency. — Know where charging stations are in public facilities or bring a charger with you. When possible, keep your phone battery far from red.

Have a Meeting Location for Family Outings — Designate a meeting spot before your outing in case someone from your group gets separated during the day's activities.

Lock Outdoor Containers and Garages — Thieves are also on the lookout for valuable lawn equipment such as lawn mowers in the summer. Secure your garage and outdoor containers like a shed to prevent theft.

Carry Keys, Money and Identification in a Pocket — Robbers often target individuals with purses and backpacks. Avoid carrying these items by keeping valuables like cash and identification in a pocket that is hard to reach and secure.

Never Hesitate to Report Suspicious Activities — Help police officers better patrol neighborhoods and businesses by reporting any suspicious activity to local authorities. Dial 9-1-1 for emergencies and 3-1-1 for non-emergencies.

Communicate with Family and Friends — Dallas County has curfew hours for children 17 and under. Communicate with your kids about when it’s time to come home. During the week (Sunday-Thursday), city curfew is 11 p.m. On the weekend (Friday-Saturday), curfew is midnight.

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Lesléa Newman writes about happy families, functional relationships and well-adjusted children. That’s earned her a place on the American Library Association’s list of most banned writers.

Author of 60 children’s books, Newman wrote the iconic *Heather Has Two Mommies* in 1989 so her friends’ children could read a story about themselves. But she said the book isn’t just for kids with two moms.

She said it’s important for children from traditional families to learn that not every family looks like theirs. And no matter what those families look like, those children are loved.

Newman knew she wanted to be a writer from early on. What might not have been apparent when she was young was that she’d make a name for herself portraying non-typical families.

“I grew up on Dick and Jane,” she said. “As a kid, I was being fed gender roles.”

Newman knew she didn’t fit those roles. As a child, he hated playing with dolls.

While *Heather* may be her best known book, *A Fire Engine for Ruthie* may be her most personal.

“[W]hat would be me as a child,” she said. “Ruthie challenges gender stereotypes for girls because she has no interest in dolls but loves to play with fire trucks.”

The prolific writer has had a tremendous impact on how families are depicted in children’s books.

“Now, girls are encouraged to be anything,” she said.

And gay children are accepted by their parents, and kids with same-sex parents can read stories about other families like theirs.

And banned or not, for it’s 25th anniversary, *Heather Has Two Mommies* will be released next year with new illustrations. — David Taffet
as much as it is for our kids to build friends.”

While Rainbow Roundup is more social, another group, the local HRC Family Project Committee, combines events with a focus on advocating for the rights of LGBT families and providing them with resources.

Tempest Redding, co-chair of Family Project Committee, said the group plans workshops and panels on family planning and resources for LGBT families.

Its members are organizing a first-ever family-friendly area at Dallas Pride in September. Vendors and activities will be geared toward families in a fenced-in area at the Festival in Lee Park. Redding said the committee heard from people with children who don’t attend Pride because of the drinking and some of the attire that’s on display, so they planned something for everyone.

“We wanted to have a place for families at Pride where they felt comfortable,” Redding said.

Mia Talbot joined the committee a couple of months ago because she loves families and works as a family educator in Rockwall. While she’s only been involved for a short time, she said she’s excited about the Pride event and looking forward to learning about resources.

“I’d love to gain some tools for myself and tools to share with the community at large,” she said.

Talbot said she and her partner, Stephanie, have been looking into starting a family of their own.

“We’ve been thinking about it but hadn’t had the tools for getting the ball rolling” she said.

She hopes her involvement with the group will teach her about cultural diversity among LGBT families because she and her partner are African-American.

“For me, what’s important is cultural diversity in families,” Talbot said. “We’re wanting to know how to start a dynamic family.”

The Family Equality Council is a national organization that plugs LGBT families across the nation into resources and advocacy opportunities.

Andra Oshinsky, senior programs associate at FEC, said while it’s been a decade since Dallas had an active chapter, Texans can still benefit from the organization’s national outreach of webinars, workshops and panels that educate people on how to start parent groups and advocate for rights.

“These LGBT parent groups are very fluid and very hard to formalize,” she said.

Oshinsky said FEC is working more with Texas groups and will be at Austin’s Pride in September, adding that the organization would want to come to Dallas’ Pride as well.

Texas doesn’t have a CO-LAGE chapter either, which is a group for kids with same-sex parents.

But Oshinsky said FEC launched a program last year called Outspoken Generation that allows young adults with gay parents to connect and discuss their families and experiences growing up in an LGBT family.

“It’s really great to hear from young people themselves because they know what it was like growing up with LGBT parents,” she said.

No matter what group families join, Oshinsky said LGBT family groups help members surround themselves with others who understand the challenges their kids and parents may face, whether they be legal issues or societal encounters at school or other events.

“It’s really helpful for children to see family units, models that reflect their own,” Oshinsky said.

“To see that they’re not alone and that there’s a family like theirs is really beneficial.”

Getting connected
To be invited to the Rainbow Roundup Facebook group, email info@rainbowroundup-DFW.org.

Rainbow, From Page 11

GOING WITH THE FLOW | Monica Moran and Alma Garcia play with their 3-year-old daughter, Sarayu, at W.J. Thomas Splash Park in Carrollton earlier this month. (Anna Waugh/Dallas Voice)
Some of the fun activities may include: Jump Houses, Face Painters, Balloon Art, Magicians, Clowns, Arts & Craft Projects, Family Portraits, Puppeteers, Cake Walk, Photo ID Cards, Photo Booths, Bubble Machines and tons of games – just to name a few.

Sponsorships and Vendor booths are available. For more information visit our website: www.dallasprideparade.com.

If you have any questions, contact Leo Cusimano at 214.754.8710 ext. 114

Family PRIDE Zone Co-chairs: Leo Cusimano | Tempest Redding

The Family PRIDE Zone is hosted by the HRC Family Project and Dallas Voice

For the Chapos, their changing marital status have to settle. That’s his husband won’t. And Covell thinks that’s where Don called that humiliating for a married couple. But more than that, it’s requires time-consuming and careful packing before returning. Because they were required to go through the immigration line separately, they packed separately, dividing purchases and receipts to avoid paying duty. But more than that, it’s requires time-consuming and careful packing before returning. Because they were required to go through the immigration line separately, they packed separately, dividing purchases and receipts to avoid paying duty. Because Don was self-employed in California, he got his health insurance through Chris’ company. Furthermore, Chris’ company. Furthermore, there was never a question of survival. While his marriage remained valid, many more people wanted to get married since then. "We were part of a privileged class," he said. "And that was wrong."

After Prop 8 passed, he said, many forms in the state changed, and he was forced to call his husband a domestic partner, even though they remained married.

Overseas travel will become more comfortable for the couple as a result of the DOMA ruling. "We don’t tend to travel all that much, but when we do, it’s a big, international trip," Don said.

Whenever they returned to the U.S., they were required to fill out separate customs cards, even though they are legally married.

Don called that humiliating for a married couple. But more than that, it’s requires time-consuming and careful packing before returning. Because they were required to go through the immigration line separately, they packed separately, dividing purchases and receipts to avoid paying duty.

A married couple simply packs together, presenting one combined customs form and may bring in one combined total.

After the DOMA ruling, married same-sex couples should be treated the same as opposite-sex couples for customs purposes since immigration law recognizes place of celebration rather than state of residence when it comes to marriages.

Covell said while the DOMA ruling makes things easier for many married couples, in the Chapos’ case, things may be more confusing than ever. Other couples will either get certain rights — or not — based on where they live.

For the Chapos, Chris may get certain rights from the DOMA ruling. Management said there’s still a great deal of uncertainty, but same-sex couples should benefit from the DOMA ruling — even in Texas. If there’s a disparity in income, same-sex couples who begin filing jointly will save on their income taxes. The Chapos said they will benefit from this and plan to refigure their taxes for the previous three years.

The IRS has not ruled on whether married same-sex couples or only married couples living in marriage-equality states may file jointly.

Spouses can take advantage of gift tax law as well. Gift tax law sets annual and lifetime limits on the amount of money someone can give to or receive from another person without paying taxes. But between spouses, the amount is unlimited.

Annuities left to spouses continue uninterrupted and with the same benefits. Currently, same-sex couples are treated as beneficiaries inheriting the asset.

No taxes accrue from an IRA or 401K left to a spouse that gay and lesbian couples were paying inheritance tax on previously. Covell said that if it was discriminatory for a gay couple to pay inheritance tax when a straight couple doesn’t, the basis of the DOMA ruling, it’s discriminatory for a gay couple to pay tax on health benefits when a straight couple doesn’t.

“Taxes will not be due on DP benefits,” Meyer agreed.

Because Don was self-employed in California, he got his health insurance through Chris’ company. That coverage was taxed as income. Over the years he received DP benefits that amounted to an extra $50,000 in taxable income. A heterosexual couple wouldn’t pay taxes on that benefit.

“Things will hopefully become more simplified” as the IRS and other agencies issue guidance, Meyer said.

For the Chapos, their changing marital status isn’t just about money. It’s about security and peace of mind.
Trans woman ‘lost everything’

Not every LGBT parent wins their custody case when their ex targets them for being LGBT.

Transgender woman Jessica Lynn hasn’t seen her son since 2009, when she transitioned after her ex-wife moved to Plano to be near family. But when Lynn wanted to see her son last year, her ex refused to let her see him. Lynn hired an attorney last September when she felt she had to fight to see her son.

Despite her ex having been supportive of her transition, Lynn said that changed when she wanted to see her son after she had gender reassignment surgery.

Late last year, Lynn was evaluated by a psychologist, who recommended she be granted primary custody of her 3-year-old son. Lynn’s ex-wife filed to take away her parental rights because she was a sexual deviant and had committed moral sins.

Facing a conservative court system in Greenville in Hunt County, where one of her ex’s lawyers was her father, she worried she would lose her son forever. She said if she’d never told her ex that she’d fallen in love with a woman, the custody wouldn’t have become an issue during the divorce.

“Instead of dumbfounded about what to do next,” she said.

McCall, who originally represented Lynn, said transgender custody cases are “extremely rare” because many parents can’t afford to transition if they are paying child support or have expensive legal fees before a transition. In Lynn’s case, he said she was never ordered to pay child support, so her circumstances were different.

Still, he said courts are “just pushing the envelope” on trans issues because the cases are so uncommon, but time and more cases will help trans parents win.

‘There’s no reason to let them win’

While LGBT people often fight their straight exes to see their children, Morrison said many parents give up because they don’t think they will win.

But with mindsets changing in the courts and as more LGBT people come out and leave heterosexual marriages, he hopes that will eventually become a thing of the past.

“There’s no reason to let them win. People give up and they walk away,” he said. “I think as more of us come out, people will realize that we’re here.”

Lesbian mom keeps up hope

Leigh Ann Scott also decided to fight. After she came out to her husband last year, he served her with divorce papers. She said her ex-husband told her she’d never see their 3-year-old son again because she was a sexual deviant and had committed moral sins.

Facing a conservative court system in Greenville in Hunt County, where one of her ex’s lawyers was her father, she worried she would lose her son forever. She said if she’d never told her ex that she’d fallen in love with a woman, the custody wouldn’t have become an issue during the divorce.

“I think it played a huge role in the custody,” she said. “It was very clear that this was about sexual preference.”

Scott and her ex-husband completed mediation in April and didn’t have to take the custody fight to trial. Her ex-husband was granted primary custody and she is allowed to see her son every other weekend. She said she settled for the arrangement because that deal was the best outcome, even with a trial.

But her fight to see her son more often is far from over. The custody arrangement has to remain in place for a year until she can contest it, which she plans to do next April.

“I’m in it for the long haul,” she said, tearing up. “It’s just hard. I went from being a full-time mother to losing him and just seeing him every other weekend.”

Scott said she hopes the coming months show her ex that being around their son has been a good thing and he will agree to joint custody next year.

“It’s not over as far as I’m concerned,” she said.

TRANSPARENT | Jessica Lynn’s ex-wife doesn’t want their son to know his father is now a woman.

what the psychologist had recommended and wanted to take the case to trial.

But Lynn, who’d spent $25,000 in court and attorney fees, couldn’t handle the financial burden of a trial, and ended up requesting a final hearing in late June where she represented herself.

Collin County Judge Scott Becker ruled in favor of Lynn’s ex-wife, terminating her parental rights on the grounds of abandonment, lack of child support and for being a danger to her child.

“I lost everything,” she said.

Lynn has 30 days to appeal the decision, but she must decide soon if she will move forward.

“I don’t know what to do,” she said. “I am kind of dumbfounded about what to do next.”

If she doesn’t appeal, she will have to wait another five years to see her son when he turns 18, a hard choice she wouldn’t have had to make if she hadn’t transitioned.

“All of this has happened because I had a sex change,” she said.

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Gay man aims to win back guardianship of partner after sister-in-law tore apart couple of 34 years

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Months after going public with his story of being forcibly separated from his partner of 34 years, Lon Watts is raising money and working with an attorney to help them reunite.

In a case highlighting the consequences of marriage inequality in Texas, Watts and Jim Heath were separated after Heath developed Alzheimer’s and his sister managed to obtain legal guardianship in court. She placed Heath in a nursing home. She got a court order evicting Watts from their house and banning him from the nursing home.

This week, Watts was able to talk to Heath for the first time in 18 months, thanks to a Facebook page that was started by a friend who snuck in to the nursing home.

“We chatted like it was yesterday,” Watts said.

Watts said Heath asked a lot of questions and realized for the first time what his sister had done to them.

“She stole our house,” Watts said Heath told him, understanding the situation better than he had before the call.

After they hung up, Watts’ Facebook friend said Heath began to cry.

After articles appeared in Dallas Voice and other media outlets in May, Watts began a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for legal costs. That effort netted more than $17,500.

Watts, who now lives in Oklahoma, contacted Austin attorney Dax Garvin, who is representing him pro bono. Garvin also represents Mark “Major” Jiminez and Beau Chandler, who have tried to obtain a marriage license from Dallas County four times, and Cd Kirven, who was arrested in Austin during a GetEQUAL TX protest supporting a statewide employment nondiscrimination bill.

“We expect to take appropriate steps,” Garvin said.

He said he’s exploring several unconventional angles he’s not ready to discuss but asked for help in finding a doctor.

“We’re looking for a doctor interested in doing an evaluation,” he said.

Garvin said he would prefer someone from the Dallas or Shreveport area, outside of East Texas, who is interested in the case and who would do the evaluation free or for a reduced rate. He asked any doctor interested to contact him at his Austin office.

Watts and Heath met in Houston in 1979. They moved to Pittsburg in 2000 to be near Heath’s family, and his sister helped them buy a house in town.

Although only in his late 50s, Heath began to show signs of Alzheimer’s disease in 2006 and Watts retired to take care of his partner full time. Although they had paperwork in place, Heath’s sister Carolyn obtained guardianship and placed him in a nursing home. She got a court order evicting Watts from their house and banning him from the nursing home.

When Watts’ Facebook friend snuck a phone to Heath this week, it marked the second time this month someone had gone to the nursing home to see Heath on his behalf.

Watts said he’d become more anxious about seeing his partner since a gay couple visited Heath a few weeks ago.

After the first stories about Watts and Heath appeared, the couple contacted Watts on Facebook and asked if there was anything they could do to help.

“If you could go to the nursing home and get a picture of Jim,” Watts told them.

The couple, who asked that their names be withheld, drove to Pittsburg. To avoid suspicion, one waited in the car while the other went into the nursing home. He had the room number, so a nurse at the front desk escorted him in.

He introduced himself to Heath as a friend of Watts’.

Heath asked how they met and he said on Facebook.

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“He told me if he met him in a diner, he would never have known he had any problems,” Watts said. “He was Chatty Cathy with these guys.”

Among the things Heath remembered was that Carolyn’s husband had died recently. He also talked about the upcoming East Texas Yamboree festival. That’s unusual because Heath was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, which affects short-term memory. Yet he remembered a recent and an upcoming event clearly.

That’s why Garvin would like Heath re-evaluated by a doctor with no ties to the local community.

“It could be a misdiagnosis,” Garvin said.

Watts said he’s waiting for his day in court, although he’s not sure that will ever happen.

He’s called the office of elder abuse in Texas and reported his partner’s maltreatment. He said the last time he saw Heath, he had a flat-screen TV. The couple who visited him said there was no TV in the room and no TV viewing room in the nursing home.

Watts noted in the picture the couple sent, there’s not even a pillowcase on the pillow.

“They shaved his mustache off and that just killed me,” he said. “They’re not taking care of him.”

Watts has been banned from the nursing home, the church and even the local newspaper, he said.

“My character has been slammed,” he said.

“But I don’t have any more anger or nightmares. I dream of getting Jim home.”

To contribute to Watts’ legal expenses, visit GoFundMe.com/3p2ep0.
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My son is about to start fifth grade. I’m excited to shop for school supplies with him and thrilled that he’s growing and learning — but like many parents, I also wonder what the school year will have in store for him. As an LGBT parent, I worry about whether this will be the first year he will be teased or harassed about having two moms, or will hear negative phrases like “That’s so gay.”

A number of LGBT organizations, such as the Family Equality Council, HRC’s Welcoming School project, PFLAG, and others, have created excellent guides and other materials to help parents, teachers, and others work toward a world that better includes students from LGBT families (and LGBT students). I recommend them heartily.

But they address only one facet of my concerns.

For all I know, my son will be teased for his glasses but not for having two moms.

Or he will struggle with an academic subject and self-doubt. Or he will encounter any one of the endless possible situations that can make kids feel excluded or socially awkward.

I try not to let my worries get the better of me, though. The world has enough overprotective moms as it is. I’d rather rest easy knowing he has the resilience to get through whatever obstacles come his way, both LGBT-related and not. OK, maybe no parent ever/rests completely easy — concern for our children is part of the job description — but I try my best.

Part of that effort involves teaching him what I like to think of as the ABCs:

Awareness: By this I mean first and foremost self-awareness, a sense of his own feelings and perceptions. I try to ask him “How are you?” as well as “What did you do today?” when I pick him up after school, for example.

Coupled with self-awareness, however, is awareness of others. This can mean helping him understand how his actions affect the people in his life, but can also mean teaching him about the wider world of people, families, opinions and perspectives.

Just as I insist that others be inclusive of him and our family, I want him to be inclusive of others in return. I do this in part by discussing personal experiences with him, but also by exposing him to a wide array of people and viewpoints in books, movies and other media.

Bravery: I try to help my son be brave, whether that means answering in class, standing up for himself or others, or knowing when to walk away. I try to build his self-confidence through praise, encouragement and the assurance that everyone makes mistakes. I will love him no matter what. I hope he is always brave enough to be himself. I hope he is brave enough to admit when he is scared.

Communication: Twenty years of marriage has taught me (sometimes the hard way) that good communication skills are essential to avoiding and assuaging misunderstandings. I hope to pass the same lesson on to my son. And if confusion or conflicts occur with peers or teachers (not to mention his moms), I hope he is able to discuss them with his other mom and me and work toward a resolution.

In addition to the ABCs for my son, I try to keep this set of ABCs in mind for myself:

Allies: I am grateful for the allies I have on LGBT issues — and try to be a good ally to others in return, on the issues that matter to them. I know that although we are one of the few LGBT families in our school, we are not alone in wanting an inclusive, safe environment for all our children.

Bridges: We need to reach out, take risks, meet people halfway and find common points of connection even to those who may not be obvious allies. This applies not only to LGBT issues, but also to the great variety of matters that affect our schools.

In many ways, our ability to build bridges is a test of how well we ourselves have learned the lessons of awareness, bravery and communication. Sometimes I still get my feet wet.

Community: From allies and bridges can come a web of community. And a community in the strongest sense of the word — caring and connected — is a powerful force against many ills.

LGBT parents’ fears go beyond kids being harassed because of who we are, but these basic principles can help same-sex families navigate
We must never forget

Jimmy Lee Dean was beaten within an inch of his life in a brutal anti-gay hate crime near the Cedar Springs strip 5 years ago this month.

Mid all the recent victories for LGBT equality, it would be easy to grow complacent. It would be easy to forget where we started, how far we’ve come, and what we’re fighting for, to become so satisfied with a little progress that we let down our guard against those who still hate us and actively seek to harm us — politically and, all too often, physically.

So perhaps this is an appropriate time to recall that just five short years ago this month, a man was beaten within an inch of his life behind the Cedar Springs bars in a brutal anti-gay hate crime.

Jimmy Lee Dean survived the attack, which left him hospitalized for 10 days, but he told me this week he’ll probably never fully recover.

“I can’t even stand for more than 20 minutes at a time, because my equilibrium is still off,” Dean said. “There’s still no sense of smell. I haven’t smelled anything for five years.

“My jaw is still broken in at least two places,” Dean said. “It’s off the hinge on the left, and there’s nothing I can do about it. I’m stuck like this for life, unless I win the Mega Millions.”

Dean was walking home along Dickason Avenue, just on the other side of the bushes from the parking lot behind Station 4, in the early morning hours of July 17, 2008.

The two suspects, Jonathan Gunter and Bobby Singleton, approached Dean, and an argument ensued. Gunter and Singleton yelled gay slurs while they pistol-whipped Dean with a 9mm Glock handgun, then kicked and stomped his head, face and body as he lay motionless in the middle of the dimly lit street.

Gunter and Singleton, both of Garland, were arrested and charged with aggravated robbery because they were found in possession of Dean’s wallet and Zippo lighter.

They admitted to police they had been drinking heavily and traveled to Oak Lawn because they needed money and thought it would be easier to rob a gay man. It was an all-too-common occurrence at the time, with the Cedar Springs area ranked as high as No. 2 citywide for violent crime before the problem finally got the attention of Dallas police.

After emotional trials attended by a handful of LGBT activists in 2009, Gunter was sentenced to 30 years, and Singleton was sentenced to 70 years. The Dallas County District Attorney’s Office didn’t seek hate crime enhancements in the cases, because the charges were already first-degree felonies. However, prosecutors did use the element of anti-gay bias to try to convince jurors to hand down harsher sentences.

Prior to the attack, Dean was an aspiring musician who sometimes performed on Cedar Springs for tips. He said he was about three months away from “getting out there in the music industry,” but he’s since lost interest and no longer even plays his guitar.

“When I sit down and try, it’s just gone,” Dean said. “I still remember where the chords are, but for some reason, my hands don’t get it anymore.” (John Wright/Dallas Voice)
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How Jacob Brent went from small-town roller rink to choreographer for discorific ‘Xanadu’

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Life+Style Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

When a choreographer works on a show, he’s usually looking for actors who can dance. But when Jacob Brent was tapped to work on WaterTower Theatre’s production of Xanadu, the requirements weren’t that simple. Not only do the actors need to act, sing and dance, most of them also need to be able to roller-skate. And act, sing and dance while doing so.

Not easy.

Brent may very well be Xanadu’s secret weapon. He not only has substantial cred as a choreographer, he has been skating for years — and secretly working on Xanadu since he was a kid.

“I’m from a really small town in North Carolina,” Brent explains. “Really small — like, one-stop light and tobacco fields. But we had a roller rink and a movie theater, so Friday nights, we went roller-skating and Saturday, went to the movies.”

Little did Brent realize that weekend Friday adventure would serve him even after he studied ballet.

“I moved to New York to do ballet — well, that’s what my parents thought,” he laughs. “But I knew I wanted to be on Broadway. Luckily there was this role that required some skating.”

That role was Mr. Mistoffelees in Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Cats, which he performed for a staggering eight years. (“By now, I can play Old Deuteronomy,” Brent jokes.) Cats led eventually to another Webber show, the Las Vegas production of Starlight Express, in which the main characters are all choo-choo trains. And that’s the first time those Friday nights at the rink came in handy.

Being in Starlight helped Brent combine his skills at dance with his enjoyment of skating, though he had been long-brewing the idea of dancing to the music.

“The first record that I ever owned was the Xanadu movie soundtrack,” he says. “I had a cassette tape of that and used our garage as roller rink. I knew that show inside and out. Little did I know that would influence me years later.” When he heard WaterTower was looking for a choreographer, he threw his hat into the ring. “This show I got,” he says. He came to North Texas from his home in New York specifically to work on this show — his first foray into Texas.

Not all of Brent’s moves he worked on as a teenager make it into the stage production, however.

“The story has changed a little from the movie,” he says. For instance, in the film the song “I’m Alive” is known for the skater becoming a bolt of light. “Trying to take that and find a way to put it on a stage has been challenging — it’s a different kind of theatrical idea.”

But because the show takes place in 1980, Brent is having a ball putting in some great classic styles.

“It was this great dance era, when we still had disco and were coming into Thriller and Madonna. Researching the show was awesome — my job was to watch Paula Abdul videos. What’s wrong with that? Nothing.”

Brent was part of the audition process, and actually took auditions to a rink to see how well they skated. He was immediately struck by the all-around talent in the Dallas pool of performers.

“They have to be good singers, good dancers, good actors but also good skaters. And everyone [in the cast] is local — that was really refreshing,” he says.

He’s especially excited by the actress who plays Kira, the muse sent to earth to help inspire a dopey So Cal skater achieve his dream of opening a roller disco.

“Kira is on her skates the whole time, so we are so fortunate we got Britney Daniel,” Brent says. “She was like a junior world figure skater — she’s doing more amazing things than any other Kira I’ve seen. She does things even I can’t do! I see her [pull her leg above her head] and will say, ‘Let’s put that in the show!’”

For the rest of the cast, getting the skating aspect down is a process.

“I kind of layer it — it’s a little daunting if you throw everything at someone at once,” he says. “We learn the music, then we skate without putting the two together. Then we add the music and the movement. Hopefully they think of it as easy, but it is not an easy process. One guy has to tap — Oh, P.S., can you tap as well? — and musically there’s an Andrews Sisters section, there’s disco, some classic jazz, some Debbie Allen.”

In other words, a total hodgepodge. Which any choreographer will tell you is what’s fun about dance.

For tickets to the Aug. 7 LGBT Night, which includes a pre-show mixer and discounted ticket, purchase using the promo code LGBT.
Laid ‘Bear’

‘Bear City’ screenwriter and Voice contributor Lawrence Ferber turns novelist, and asks himself the tough questions

Editor’s note: When Dallas Voice gets the chance to interview a celebrity, we often turn to contributing writer Lawrence Ferber to hit them up with sassy and insightful questions. So when we heard that the hit gay rom-com BearCity — about a twink’s foray in the bear scene for a hairy daddy romance — had been fleshed out into the saucy, breezy book BearCity: The Novel (Bear Bones Books), we of course asked Ferber to speak with the author. And since Ferber himself is the author … well, we knew it was an interview op he couldn’t turn down.

Ferber, for Dallas Voice:
You and Doug Langway co-wrote the film BearCity, which spawned a sequel. Why a novel? Ferber, BearCity author: Well, Ron Suresha, author of bear-y books like Fur and editor of the Lethe Press imprint Bear Bones Books, approached Doug and me about a series of books based on the films. It seemed a good idea to me as a writer. There are so many things that you have to change and lose in developing and streamlining a feature script and film, like whole subplots, dialogue and characters, so it seemed a great opportunity to return to the first film’s sandbox and get to share those finally. It’s a real treat to go back and spend time with characters you created and love, and even right some wrongs and flaws. Whit Stillman did it with Last Days of Disco, and Tina Fey has expressed regret that she didn’t do a novelization of Mean Girls because there was a lot of stuff she could have included.

So what are some of those additions that set the BearCity book apart from the movie? Well, the character of Carlos meets up with his ex-boyfriend, who wants him back. A scene in which Simon and Tyler first meet, scrapped from the film, is in the book, plus a funny, dirty first introduction to Roger, and a more serious look into his bear community activism. Indeed, there is insight not only into the characters’ pasts and minds, but also the bear community and issues within. The book is really a mix of both the moments people love from the film, and a whole new experience to boot.

There are pictures, too? Yes. Each of the 16 chapters is started with a still from the film, and there is a whole trove of behind-the-scenes shots and dishy captions.

Ooh dish! Dish girl! “OK, I am in the background of the conga line dancing scene, wearing a friggin’ leather harness. We were short of extras, so Doug pointed at me and said, ‘Larry, take off your shirt and get over there and dance.’ I was like, ‘Doug, I’m the co-writer, I’m not taking off my shirt! I need to maintain some sort of professional decorum.’ Doug replied, ‘Then you can wear a leather harness’ … as if that was better. Then I look to my right and there’s a guy chained to a big cross in a kilt and nothing else, and to my left, a line of shirtless actors. So I felt like the guy in a bathing suit at a nudist colony. I opted for the leather harness.

Best reaction to the book so far? It hasn’t been out long, but Stephen Merritt of The Magnetic Fields and Future Bible Heroes got a sneak peek and said this: ‘Bear City: The Novel transforms the charming indie flick into a zippy travel guide to bear New York, interlaced with enough sex scenes to put the ‘oft and ‘score back in ‘softcore. ’Um … woof!’

I heard from a little birdie that BearCity has quite the international following. Yes, and it’s amazing. I do a lot of travel writing, and I have about every gay social app under the sun — Growlr, Scruff, 9Monsters, Jack’d, u4Bear … the list goes on. Wherever I am around the world, folks message me to say they loved the film. Weibo, China’s Twitter equivalent, has threads of folks discussing the BearCity films every single day! In China I mean, this isn’t Batman or Brad Pitt-level fame, but it’s amazing that so many people around the world have seen and think about it (even if they illegally torrent the film — which sucks! Please buy it legally, folks!).

Will there be a second book? Depends on how this one does to begin with!

Are you a narcissist? No!

Why do bears say woof when animal kingdom bears don’t actually make that sound? I was dreading that question. Er … oh, damn, phone connection is getting … [click].

BearCity: The Novel is available via TLAgay.com, Amazon.com, Smashwords.com and BearCity2.com.
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOP TEN FINALISTS!

Joey Arias
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CASEY WILLIAMS | Auto Reviewer
crwauto@aol.com

Latin American-influenced Nissan’s Maxima was once billed as a four-door sports car, and in its day, it was about as performance-oriented as a Japanese mid-size sedan could be. Since then, Nissan introduced the incredibly popular Altima and an entire line of rear-drive performance models known as Infiniti.

The question becomes, then: Is the Nissan Maxima still a 4DSC (as the sticker in the rear window says)? That depends on what you classify as a sports car. Yes, the Maxima is plenty sexy with bulging fenders, flared hood edges, fastback roofline, 18-in. alloys shod with low-profile tires and wing-shaped LED taillamps. It was purposely designed to resemble the 370Z sports car, from the angle of the fire-swept headlamps to the frump of its trunk. Even the chrome grille looks beefy.

Slide inside for a mix of the Nissan Z and Infiniti Q. Sporty and luxurious, the heated three-spoke leather-wrapped steering wheel, large analog gauges, sport shifter, heated leather seats and automatic climate control make driving like Andretti as comfortable as dressing like Armani. Touch screen navigation, premium audio, power sunroof, Satellite Radio, back up camera, USB and Bluetooth meet current standards. Dual front, side and side-curtain airbags enhance safety.

From behind the wheel, the hood curves, center console and steering wheel position could trick you into thinking you’re piloting a C5 Corvette. While definitely softer, the suspension has a firm float that is a facsimile of the touring setting on the old Chevy. A relatively long steering column stretches to one’s hand and is light to the touch at low speed with rapid progression in corners and on the highway. Typical front-end push, common in front-drive cars, is almost nonexistent in the Maxima. Out on the road, the Maxima is aging gracefully.

Under the hood and on the road, the 290-horsepower 3.5-liter V6 makes full use of the chassis. Power is smoothly routed through a continuously variable transmission (CVT) that uses no traditional gears, but infinitely changes ratios for the best setting. Sounding unsettlingly like a velvet WeedEater at first, you soon appreciate how it does its thing without any drama.

Four-wheel anti-lock disc brakes, traction control, electronic stability control, brake force distribution and brake assist (will throw you through the windshield if applied aggressively) give the Maxima agile legs. Fuel economy ratings of 19/26-MPG and a 20-gallon tank extend range to bladder-busting lengths. To get optimal power, Nissan’s grandest sedan appreciates top grade fuel.

Remember, this generation of the Maxima has been on the market for nearly four years. A lot of great cars have come on, and Nissan’s sporty sedan is starting to feel its age. As with all of us when we are no longer the club queens we once were, the car squeaks and creaks in ways newer cars don’t. While the Maxima may not be everybody’s idea of a 4DSC, it is a very good car.

An as-tested price of $40,005 puts it against the Buick LaCrosse, Toyota Avalon, Hyundai Azera and VW Passat.
By the sea
Our rundown of oceanfront getaways (part 2)

There’s still time this summer to enjoy the surf and sand, as these East Coast towns can attest.

**Tybee Island, Ga.**

Every bit as quirky, laid-back and personable as nearby historic Savannah, just a 20-minute drive inland, Tybee Island (VisitTybee.com) is one of Georgia’s famed barrier islands, an idyllic locale for beach-bumming, fishing or boating. In May 2013, this colorful beachside community hosted its first Tybee Gay Days, a weekend of parties and events that organizers plan as an annual gathering.

You’ll find plenty of condo and cottage rentals on this compact island, making it a popular destination for extended stays with groups of friends. One very good option is the LGBT-friendly Beachside Colony Resort, which has upscale one-, two- and three-bedroom condos set among eight buildings and adjoins the terrific, lesbian-owned restaurant and bar, Marlin Monroe’s Surfside Grill. Here you can feast on tasty seafood and minty mojitos while relaxing on the deck overlooking the sea. Also check out the sister restaurant, Fannies on the Beach, which is steps from the island’s colorful pier and pavilion. And off U.S. 80 as you enter the island, lively Coco’s Sunset Grille has occasional gay parties and is another sure bet for delicious seafood.

The fact that Tybee is so close to Savannah (VisitSavannah.com) makes it a great option if you’re keen on a vacation that mixes beach relaxation with touring historic homes, tony galleries, and upscale Southern restaurants — and, of course, you can always overnight in Savannah and visit Tybee as a daytrip. Charming properties like the snazzy yet historic Mansion on Forsyth Park, the stylish and art-filled Bohemian Hotel Savannah Riverfront and the sleek Andaz Savannah are all favorites with gay travelers, while Club One is a hot spot for dancing and drag shows, it being the home nightclub of Lady Chablis, of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* fame.

**Camden and Rockland, Maine**

To experience a ruggedly scenic part of New England, a two-hour drive north of Portland, Maine, lies the historic seaside communities along western Penobscot Bay, including Rockland and Camden. Maine’s Mid-Coast is a place for quiet vacations, ideal if you’re a hiker, photographer, fisherman or sailor. (MainesMidcoast.com). Camden is home to a fleet of Windjammer sailing ships, which can be booked not only on multiple-day excursions throughout the region but also for afternoon jaunts along Penobscot Bay.

The craggy, 1,000-foot peaks of Camden Hills State Park delight outdoors enthusiasts — you can scamper along more than 20 miles of rugged nature and hiking trails through this unspoiled paradise — there’s also overnight camping. The formerly workaday town of Rockland has come into its own in recent years, with several outstanding restaurants and cafés — don’t miss In Good Company, a dapper neighborhood wine bar with creative American cuisine, or Primo, where James Beard Award-winning chef Melissa Kelly turns out stunning farm-to-table Mediterranean-inspired fare. The key draw in Rockland is one of the country’s best small art museums, the Farnsworth, which focuses on noted regional artists of international acclaim, including Louise Nevelson, George Bellows and the Wyeth, who are celebrated with their own wing.

Among recommended accommodations, Camden is home to the GLBT-owned Camden Harbour Inn, which is situated across from a harbor and has 18 warmly appointed rooms and suites, plus a terrific restaurant. In Rockland, the gay-owned LimeRock Inn is a handsome painted-lady Victorian B&Bs whose rooms are outfitted with all the perks you’d expect of a modern hotel. A lavish breakfast is included in the rates, and downtown restaurants are within easy walking distance.

—and Andrea Collins

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When you first saw the documentary, and all that footage they’d compiled, what was going through your mind?

Merry Clayton: That film … it took me to another place. Let me say it this way: It took my breath away. I could hardly breathe. I made it through the whole film until they showed myself and my late husband and my band doing “Southern Man,” and then I lost it. I mean, totally lost it. I was crying. It just got to my heart.

Darlene Love: I didn’t even know it was gonna touch me, but I was very emotional watching it. A lot of my friends who know me personally, and family who've seen it, actually cried during the movie. There were friends who didn’t even know I went through that (career) struggle, because I wasn’t the type of person to ask for help. They were really surprised that I had gone through that and had never said a thing about it.

Darlene, when this project first came to you, what were your initial thoughts?

DL: I was the first person involved in it. [Producer] Gil Friesen went to Lou Adler, who is a very old friend of mine, and Dick Donner, who is the director of the Lethal Weapon movies, and he said, “I have this idea to do a story on background singers, but I don’t know where to start.” They told him, “Well, if you’re gonna do a story on background singers, you’re gonna have to get in touch with Darlene Love first.” And that’s what he did, because I’ve been doing background singing full time since 1958.

When Merry Clayton recalls the song most dear to her, “After All This Time”— one of many Carole King-penned tunes on Clayton’s self-titled 1971 solo album — she starts to recite the words: “Oooh, I get a feeling every night when you come home that life is sweet, yeeaaaah, baby.” But then, she can’t help herself. Clayton breaks out the song full force, her voice swooping into a belt. It’s in this moment of impromptu vocal prowess you wonder why Clayton never found the solo success she so deserves.

That mystery is documented in Twenty Feet from Stardom, a Sundance prize-winner that finally puts background singers (including the renowned Darlene Love) center stage. (It’s currently enjoying a successful run at the Angelika Film Center at Mockingbird Station.) And life from there, well, it really is sweet.

— Chris Azzopardi
ground ever felt bad about what they were doing.

MC: No, I don’t think I’m an underdog. I think I’m an after-dog. I think I’ve been totally recognized, if for nothing else but for the people I’ve performed with. You can’t be more recognized than being recognized for “Gimme Shelter” [Clayton sang on the 1969 track with The Rolling Stones.] That’s been all over. By presidents, queens and kings, I’ve been recognized. The thing is, you get recognition, but not the recognition you think you should have.

You gotta know that the gay community always puts our divas in the spotlight, right? MC: That’s right, baby. And I mean, when you got the gay community under your feet, you really don’t have too much of anything to worry about.

How would you describe your relationship with the gay community all these years? DL: If it weren’t for them in my audience, I wouldn’t have one. They’ve always supported me over the years. Ninety percent of my audience is white — it’s not black — and gay. So, you know, thank god! They know more about the background singers than anybody. They saw how we looked, they saw how we dressed, they saw how we moved around. They were looking at that too. A lot of people have come up to me, even before the movie, saying, “I saw you when you sang with Dionne Warwick” or “I saw you when you were with Tom Jones” or “I saw you with Elvis,” so they watch that. They don’t just want the lead singer; they want the whole thing — the whole performance in front of them.

MC: They’re always loved me. They always loved me and adored me and have allways supported me! When I needed clothes, when I needed things to wear for shows, I’d call my queens, baby. They’d be like, “Don’t you worry; we got you covered.” The children, they’d be there to see me, protect me. I loooove my gays, baby. I love the children and the children love me. But it’s always been that in my career. Always.

A diva doesn’t go without her gays. MC: Ever, Ever! From 5-years-old. What I’m saying is, when you start singing, there’s always a wonderful gay friend in your family — not a part of your family, but always a friend your parents know or somebody knows — and they’re always very protective of you. They make sure you have what you need, they make sure you get to where you’re supposed to go on time, and they make sure you’re cool. I mean, when I first started singing, please … there were wonderful gays who were like, “Oh, you need a gown for baby sister, for Merry? Let’s make her a couple of dresses, honey.” And I’d look good! We didn’t come with silver spoons in our mouth, so they would sit down and make me a dress, make sure my shoes matched my dress, that my hair was done and that I looked cute. So yes, I love my gays, baby.

What’s your fondest memory of recording “Cornflake Girl” with Tori Amos? MC: That’s my baby. I haven’t talked to my baby in a long time. I’m gonna have my co-manager find Tori because I haven’t heard from her in quite a while. But she calls me in the evening: “Merry, what are you doing?” I said, “Hey, who is this?” Tori, I said, “Hey, mama, what’s going on?” She says, “I need you to come and sing on this song with me.” I said, “Ok, now, you gotta pay me the lunch money.” So we did it and had a great evening. Tori was with me when I did the song for Dirty Dancing, “Yes.” Her ma and dad were in town and she called me and she said, “Well, what are you doing?” I said, “I’m going to the studio, girl, I got this thing for something they’re doing call ‘Dirty’ … something.” She says, “I want you to meet ma and dad.” So they came to the studio where I was and hung out while I did “Yes.” We had a wonderful time.

Darlene, in the movie you talk about cleaning houses to make ends meet. Tell me about the worst house you had to clean. DL: My own! To this day, I always say, “Lord, please let me make enough money for somebody to clean my house.” And so far, it’s been working out.

After doing this film, do you feel like the star you always wanted to be? MC: I feel that I am absolutely the diva that I’ve always wanted to be. Not necessarily the diva, but just the woman who has paid dues and had fun in the process and has had, basically, a wonderful life. I really feel blessed to have been a part of this. Honestly, it feels like I’m in a dream and I’m waiting for someone to pinch me and say, “Girlfriend, wake up. Come out of it, suga.” It really is just a phenomenal dream, and I hope to stay in it until I close my eyes for the last time.

DL: Between getting inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and this, this kind of seats it because now, with this movie, my career will go on and on and on. This movie is doing for us what superstars’ records do for them. It has given us a voice. Now we have a voice.
Dog-loving fashionista John Conte lives his life out — and in style

Name and age: John Conte, 34
Occupation: V.P. of Education at Wade College
Spotted at: Holland Avenue and Reagan Street, walking his pugs, Albert and Victoria
Fashion sense: Born and raised in the Big Apple, this exquisitely handsome Italian American now makes the Big D his home. John migrated to Dallas when work for a bridal manufacturer brought him here five years ago. A fashionable child, John made fashion his major, and he has worked for Bloomingdale’s, Vanity Fair, Ralph Lauren and the Banana Republic catalog.
“I love retail,” he says. “The theater that stores create, the mannequins, the lighting, the way a store smells, the way they use props.”

An extraordinarily stable person, financially, emotionally and personally, John is a good role model for his gay students.

“Life is an opportunity to showcase the best of who you can be.”

Charity — for gays, kids and pets: Aside from his educational duties, John is busy managing a design and merchandising academy program with 30 faculty and staff members. For the past two years, he has co-chaired the Four-Legged Fashion Show benefiting local animal rescues. He is involved with DIFFA, the Fashion Lifestyle Awards and Accessible Luxury, which benefits the Texas Scottish Rite Children’s Hospital.

He shares his life with his partner of 12 years, Luke, a private equity consultant. They met at a gay bar in NYC called Barracuda when they were each on a date with another guy.

“NYC is not very gay couple friendly. Gay men are more stable here, there are more LTRs, couples do more entertaining. New York is so transitional, there’s no settling down, no congregating, it’s not a place a gay couple can throw their anchor down.”
Outsports — the go-to website for all things gay and sporting — has compiled a list of athletes’ anti-gay comments … and it is astonishing.

The remarks fill several pages. And especially because this is 2013, The Year of the LGBT Jock, they fill readers with a variety of emotions. There’s anger that people — many popular role models, which is what athletes are — feel the need to put other people down. There is disgust that some folks express bigoted beliefs so openly. But there is also amusement, because many such anti-gay sentiments seem so out of touch with the world today.

For years, sports was called “the last closet.” The idea was that although the rest of society was moving rapidly toward acceptance of gays and lesbians, the athletic world lagged far behind. This year, though, has seen a sea change in attitudes. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender athletes have burst out of the closet. Coaches, owners and top executives have embraced the cause. Teams are reaching out to the LGBT community, offering discounts on Pride Day and sponsoring Pride floats.

So now, when an athlete makes an anti-gay slur, he — and since Marge Schott died, it is almost always a male — is seen as an outsider. The outpouring of support that greeted the coming-out announcements of soccer athlete Robbie Rogers and basketball player Jason Collins makes homophobic comments seem outdated, juvenile, even comical.

It’s as if the athletes who say these things are cowering in their own closet. Where once athletes and coaches feared coming out, now the cleats are on the other foot. The fear today is expressed by athletes and coaches who realize the world is changing. And, probably subconsciously, they realize they don’t have the skills, insights or real-world experience to deal with it. They’re the ones who still think “faggot” is the worst insult you can hurl at someone. That’s what San Jose Earthquake Alan Gordon called Portland Timbers captain Will Johnson during a Major League Soccer game. (Actually, he called him a “fucking faggot,” though he did not specify “top” or “bottom.”)

MLS responded swiftly, slapping Gordon with a three-game suspension. His equally swift apology included this language: “That is not in my character, but there is still no excuse for saying what I said. I made a mistake and I accept full responsibility for my actions.”

Gordon showed a lot more character in those words than Bully Ray. The pro wrestler lived up to his nickname, calling a fan a “fag” and a “queer.” Bully said he meant no harm and was “careless” in his use of slurs.

Far less “careless” was San Francisco 49er Chris Culliver. In the run-up to the Super Bowl — with media attention heaped on the pro-gay activism of players like Chris Kluwe and Brandon Ayanbadejo — Culliver proclaimed, “I don’t do the gay guys, man. I don’t do that. No, we don’t got no gay people on the team, they gotta get up out of here if they do. Can’t be with that sweet stuff. Nah … can’t be … in the locker room man. Nah.”

Besides the absurdity of a player in San Francisco (of all places) saying such not-so-sweet stuff, Culliver’s remarks revealed how far the gays-in-sports issue has evolved. The football player stood virtually alone fearing that, if he had a gay teammate, locker room issues would inevitably follow. Culliver’s threat that any gay player would have to leave sounded antediluvian. And while there are no openly gay current NFL players — yet — his assertion that there are none on his team makes one wonder what else he doesn’t know about life in the real world.

In The Year of the Gay Athlete, sports stars’ homophobic epithets outdated.
Sisters are doing it

Bareilles gives gays a load of love; Clayton steps 20 feet closer to stardom

Maybe you didn’t ask for it, but Sara Bareilles wrote you a love song anyway. Actually, she wrote you many love songs. With her third disc, the pop pianist is giving the gays their wedding theme: “I Choose You,” an undeniably irresistible ditty — cello included for added romanticism — that’s a sweet ode to love, the good and the bad. And her boy-chasing gets the best of her on pretty ballad “1,000 Times.”

But besides the safe first single, the LGBT-inspired anthem “Brave,” Bareilles shakes up her tried-and-true formula heard on past hits “Love Song” and “King of Anything” for more uncharted territory. “Eden” stands out most as an exhilarating turn and a definite highlight in the mix; the track borrows from Prince and then reaches a chorus that flicks with glistening near-dance synths while her heart breaks all over it: “No way to make the pain play fair” she sings.

It doesn’t disappear just because you say it isn’t there.

She gets in musical mode for “Little Black Dress,” a celebration of singlehood.

While Bareilles stories the ups and downs of relationships, presumably her own, she also dedicates a song — the moving “Satellite Call” — to “the lonely child.” If you ever wondered what Sarah McLachlan sounded like singing over a Sigur Rós track, wonder no more.

Give it up for Twenty Feet from Stardom, the wonderful documentary that’s finally spotlighting voices too big to just be backup (you can read more about it on Page 34). Because of it, Merry Clayton is, at last, basking in the limelight.

Sony Legacy’s The Best of Merry Clayton puts the diva front and center for her pivotal moment on The Rolling Stone’s riveting wake-up call “Gimme Shelter” — but now the track is all hers, and the woman who can sing circles around most owns more than just the famed rape, murder — it’s just a shot away bit. Songs from her only solo effort, the one that was supposed to make her a star (and should have), get a second life on this triumphant collection: She tears into Neil Young’s “Southern Man,” goes soft and sweet on the Carole King contribution “After All This Time” and croons “Country Road” with a raw realness that defines the essence of this soul queen. She takes “The Mighty Quinn” to church, turning the Dylan ditty into a gospel rouser. Her belty “Bridge Over Troubled Water” is felt deep, deep down. And then, somehow, it gets even better: “Suspicious Minds” is a stirring version of the Elvis classic that comes to an emotional break that gets you in the heart. Those 20 feet? You won’t find them on any song here.

— Chris Azzopardi

SARA SMILES | Sara Bareilles seems to take a lot of inspiration from gays in her third album.

and the woman who can sing circles around most owns more than just the famed rape, murder — it’s just a shot away bit. Songs from her only solo effort, the one that was supposed to make her a star (and should have), get a second life on this triumphant collection: She tears into Neil Young’s “Southern Man,” goes soft and sweet on the Carole King contribution “After All This Time” and croons “Country Road” with a raw realness that defines the essence of this soul queen. She takes “The Mighty Quinn” to church, turning the Dylan ditty into a gospel rouser.

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2013’s example of homo-ignorant behavior came about two months ago. Describing the way he played physical defense against LeBron James, Indiana Pacers center Roy Hibbert quickly added, “no homo.”

Perhaps he thought he was back on the elementary school playground. Maybe he worried that reporters (who, in the same press conference, he referred to as “motherfuckers”) would actually think that, by guarding another player closely in a nationally televised playoff game, Hibbert was really trying to cop a feel. Or maybe … no, the mind boggles. There is no rational explanation for why a well-paid professional athlete would trot out such a tired term.

Unless he is so removed from the world in 2013, he just doesn’t understand how society is changing. But that doesn’t explain it either. Because so many NBA, NFL, MLS and other pro athletes do get it.

Like Kobe Bryant. Two years ago, he called a referee a “fucking faggot.” Reaction was swift. So when Jason Collin came out, the Los Angeles Lakers superstar was one of the first to react. He tweeted: “Proud of @jasoncollins34. Don’t suffocate who u r because of the ignorance of others.”

That should be a mantra for every professional athlete.

— Dan Woog
The scoop

Billie Jean, zombies and HBO’s Prop 8 movie

Prop 8: The Movie. First it was a horrible ballot initiative designed to strip marriage rights away from California’s LGBT community. Then it was a parody YouTube musical with an all-star cast. Then it was a play from Dustin Lance Black based on court transcripts. Then it was a dead piece of historic legal discrimination thanks to the Supreme Court of the United States (boom!) and now, thanks to HBO Documentary Films and directors Ben Cotner and Ryan White, the Proposition 8 media train makes another stop at the feature-length doc station.

For the past five years, Cotner and White have had access to the work of both the legal team and the plaintiffs, whose stories gave the case such a powerful punch when it came to demonstrating Prop 8’s harm to gay relationships with no concurrent benefit for society. The as-yet-untitled film is currently in production and is scheduled to air on HBO at an unspecified date in 2014. If justice prevails, there’ll be more states adopting marriage equality laws in the interim. Victory lap!

Billie Jean King: American Master. For the first time ever, PBS’s American Masters is going to profile a sports figure and that inaugural honor goes to tennis legend Billie Jean King. The 90-minute documentary on the 69-year-old King will focus on her career, one that challenged sexism in American sports and changed the way women’s athletic achievements are perceived all over the world. In addition to new interviews with King, the film will feature Serena and Venus Williams, Maria Sharapova, members of the Virginia Slims Circuit “Original 9” like Rosie Casals, Gloria Steinem, Chris Evert, Margaret Court, Bobby Riggs’ son Larry, King’s friend Elton John and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Fittingly, American Masters: Billie Jean King will premiere Sept. 10 on PBS affiliates to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the infamous “Battle of The Sexes” match between King and Bobby Riggs — and just in time for Dallas Pride. This calls for a watching party: white Laosite shirts and soft-butch haircuts mandatory.

HR gives Alicia Silverstone the job. We’ve missed Alicia Silverstone. Like, a lot. Our worn out VHS tape of Clueless bit the dust and then we wore out the DVD, too (yes, it can be done), as the talented comic actor focused on her own post-Clueless life — vegan cookbooks, unorthodox child-rearing practices, simultaneous Internet notoriety for those unorthodox child-rearing practices and a lot of less-than-awesome TV and film projects that we pretty much ignored (with the exception of that one-off episode of the hilarious and weird Children’s Hospital). But now Darren Star (Sex and the City) has her and we have hope again. A pilot for Lifetime called HR will star Silverstone and focus on the changes her character, a Type-A director of Human Resources for a large corporation, goes through after suffering a head injury. Drama? Comedy? Probably a little of both (although most likely not slavishly attached to being the female version of the old sitcom Herman’s Head), which suits us fine. Head injuries are like that. More news as this develops.

Ian McKellen to star in a zombie movie. Excited? When you’re Gandalf and Magneto at the same time, you can do whatever you like. So you can forgive Sir Ian McKellen for deciding that another Shakespeare adaptation would be, of course, a wonderful idea … perhaps later. Right now he’d much rather run off to star in a zombie comedy sporting the unlikely title of The Curse of The Buxom Strumpet. You really can’t blame him. Set in the 18th century, the story concerns a small English village beset by a zombifying ill-

ness, causing the uninfected to flee, even if it means going to — oh, dear — France. So think Shaun of The Dead with less electricity and more mud. Directed by Matthew Butler, the film also stars Gillian Anderson and Academy Award nominee Imelda Staunton and is due sometime in 2014. No word on who plays the Buxom Strumpet. Hope it’s McKellen.

— Romeo San Vicente
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- Tuesday, July 30th: Polk Rec Center, 7p - 9p
- Thursday, August 1st: Polk Rec Center, 7p - 9p
- Saturday, August 3rd: Nash-Davis Rec Center, 12p - 2p
- Monday, August 5th: Polk Rec Center, 7p - 9p
- Wednesday, August 7th: Polk Rec Center, 7p - 9p
- Friday, August 9th: TAV/ASC, 7p - 9p

For directions to the new member clinic locations or any information about DIVA, please visit www.DIVADallas.org

No cost or commitment to attend.

Visit: www.DIVADallas.org for maps
email: vpmembership@divadallas.org
**Sunday 07.28**

LifeWalk’s Elizabeth Trail’rs team hosts rescheduled fundraising pool party

The weather wasn’t very friendly two weeks ago when Dallas — in the clearest evidence ever of global climate change — got a week of July downpours. That canceled the summer fundraising pool party for LifeWalk. But what are the chances of another rainstorm? We’re hoping not, because the rescheduled Sunday Funday event takes place this weekend at the Belmont Hotel’s awesome pool in West Dallas. There’ll be cocktails, food, a 50/50 raffle, concert tickets, giveaways and hot gay guys in Speedos. And it counts as charity.

**DEETS:** Belmont Hotel, 901 Fort Worth Ave. 1–5 p.m. $20 suggested donation.

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**Friday 07.26**

Brandon Moses spins at Dick’s Night Out

The best way to get your weekend started early is to track down some Dick...’s Night Out, the gay mixer from the Ghostbar overlooking Dallas from the W Victory Park Hotel. This time, Dallas’ favorite DJ, Brandon Moses, spins, while Bar10’s sexy staff offers bottle service ... or enjoy $5 beer and well drinks!

**DEETS:** W Victory Dallas, 2440 Victory Lane. 6–10 p.m. No cover, but RSVP required at DNO26.eventbrite.com.

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**Sunday 07.28**

Lone Star Ride hosts Mex-adoran social

LifeWalk isn’t the only charity popular in the gay community hosting a fundraiser this weekend. The Lone Star Ride is barely two months away, and organizers are still accepting applications for riders as well as support team. You can socialize while enjoying the great Mex-adoran food at Mario’s on Sunday with a happy hour featuring margaritas, appetizers and a chance to enter a raffle for a 7-day cruise.

**DEETS:** Mario’s Restaurant, 5404 Lemmon Ave. 2–4 p.m. AIDSDallas.org.
**Review: ‘Avenue Q,’ a year in**

A “long-running” play in Dallas might be the State Fair musical each fall, or an especially long run of a show at the Dallas Theater Center, like Fly has been (52 performances in all for that one). But Avenue Q has them all beat. It opened, for a “normal” one-month run, 13 months ago. It was a hit, so it got extended. Then extended again. And again. It closed last November, only to re-up this spring with an “open-ended” run which, sadly, ends this weekend with more than 100 performances — and essentially the same cast the entire time.

It says a lot that one of North Texas’ biggest hits ever is about gay puppets who have sex and curse like Dick Cheney on the floor of the Senate while singing like refugees from Sesame Street. I revisited the show last week, to get a final glimpse of this Tony Award-winning musical and just to see how well it held up.

“Held up?” It’s never been better.

The cast could be bored by their roles by now, but the opposite is true: They have every joke down pat, all the interactions feel lived in and the singing is flawless. This time around, I was able to appreciate even more Olivia de Guzman Emile’s hilarious character work as Christmas Eve, and the synergy James Chandler and Michael Robinson demonstrate as they team up for Nicky and Trekkie Monster (Robinson’s energy on the song “The Internet (Is for Porn)” is particularly enjoyable). And Megan Kelly Bates, Matt Purvis and Denise Lee have excellent voices that sell the silliest of lyrics.

“It’s never been better.”

— Arnold Wayne Jones

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**ELIZABETH TRAIL’RS**

**calendar highlights**

**THEATER**

**Avenue Q.** Theatre 3’s hit from last summer and fall winds up its current run in its Theatre Too space. Theatre 3, 2900 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Final weekend; reviewed this week. $10–$40. Theatre3Dallas.com.

**Assassins.** Onstage in Bedford stages this musical by Stephen Sondheim, which tracks American assassins throughout history. 2819 Forest Ridge Drive, Bedford. Through Aug. 11. $15. OnstageInBedford.com. 817-354-6444.


**Children of a Lesser God.** Tony Award-winning play about a hearing man and a deaf woman. Greenville Center for the Arts, 5601 Sears St. Final weekend. ContemporaryTheatreofDallas.com.

**FINE ART**


**Dan Rees.** Work from the man just designated the first artist in residence at the Goss-Michael Foundation, 1405 Turtle Creek Blvd. Final weekend. GossMichaelFoundation.org.


**Biennial: Origins in Geometry.** A juried competition of emerging visual artists. Museum of Geometric and

FILM
DallasSITES. As part of the DMA DallasSITES exhibition about JFK, screenings of rarely seen videos from the 1980s–2000s originally part of the Dallas VideoFest will be screened. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood Road. Through Aug. 18.

COMMUNITY
Mimosas and Music: Sunday Soul Food Brunch. Every week at Havana Lounge, 4006 Cedar Springs Road. 10:30 a.m.–3 p.m.
Bagels & Booze. Drag performances and fun. JR.’s Bar & Grill, 3923 Cedar Springs Road. 1–3 p.m.
Ministry. Weekly Sunday tea-dance-and-more gay mixer with a new DJ each week. LeVu, 2505 Pacific Ave. 6 p.m. Cover 21+: $5 before 7 p.m. (free with flyer), $10 after 7 p.m.; cover 18–20: $15.

TUESDAY 07.30
SPORTS
DIVA new member clinics. Dallas Independent Volleyball Association holds intro lessons for new members. Polk Recreation Center, 6801 Roper St. July 30 and Aug. 1, 7–9 p.m. DIVADallas.org.

THURSDAY 08.01
TELEVISION
Project Runway. The very gay reality series is back for a new season. Airs at 8 p.m. on Lifetime.

SUNDAY 07.28
WORSHIP
Cathedral of Hope. Traditional service at the United Church of Christ congregation. 5910 Cedar Springs Road. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. CathedralOfHope.com.
The ONE Church, 5427 Philip Ave. Services 6 p.m. Dallas1Church.org.

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Across
1. Israeli author Oz
5. Mushroom source
10. Greet Pat Robertson
14. That’s bull, to Frida
15. She came between Bess and Jackie
16. Hit the ground
17. Armchair athlete’s channel
18. Writer Dykewomon
19. “Now ___ me down to sleep…”
20. Step Up star
23. Flew high
24. Murdoch with a flower?
26. Lodging place
27. Things to consider
31. Snaky shape
32. Bowling lane button
34. Home state of J. Nabors
35. Select from the menu
37. Captain Kirk portrayer
40. Judy Garland concert persona
43. Civil War side
44. Pink Triangle Press publication
48. Game with “Reverse” cards
49. Feeler
51. One of Lee’s men

Down
1. Went down on
2. George once of San Francisco
3. Broadway Annie, and others
4. Source of waves at sea
5. Changes a bill
6. “___ Hai” of South Pacific
7. Muscat site
8. Dynasty long before the Carringtons
9. Song about loving yourself?
10. Caribbean republic
11. Manhandled
12. Like the tutees in Anna and the King
13. Filthy digs
21. Like a bottom
22. Flaming queen’s activity?
23. Title for Elton
25. Old letters from Russia?
26. A stripper takes it off
29. De Wolfe of design
30. Food fowl
33. The Name of the Rose writer
36. Title for Oedipus
38. Emulate George Frenn
39. Do pioneer work
40. Dupont Circle of D.C., e.g.
41. “Put ___ Happy Face”
42. Animal painter Rosa
45. Torch song threesome
46. Living in Fla., perhaps
47. Tummy muscles
49. Southern of old TV
50. Jackie O.’s second husband
52. Fruit with a peel
53. Sponsorship
55. Puff up
56. Max of Steel star
58. Time out?
59. Deity on Xena
60. Shakespeare’s Puck, e.g.
61. Ewe said it!
62. Socrates’ market
63. Seep slowly
66. Spot for gay honeymoons
67. Celestial ice ball
68. Opposed to, to Jethrene Bodine
69. Scores for Patty Sheehan
70. Remove a slip?
71. “Equal justice under law,” to homophobes
The United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Stop the Madness, an anti-bullying show benefiting Youth First Texas hosted by Danielle Star at the Dallas Eagle on July 27. That’s followed by the monthly DFW Pups meet and greet hosted by Lee Novy. On July 28, the Dallas Diablos present Scrumdown at Sundown, a bachelor auction benefiting the team’s travel fund. … Carlos Saenz performs at Alexandre’s on July 26. Bad Habits appears July 27. Midweek entertainment includes Anton Shaw on July 31, then starts the new month with So Strung Out with Spencer West on Aug. 1. … Texas Gay Rodeo Association supports Scott Thompson and his bid to become Mr. Yellow Rose of Texas with the show The Road to Yellow Rose Part II at Best Friends Club on July 27. Special performances by Nancy Peoples, Thelma De Zel and Jason Bernard, candidates for Miss and Mr. TGRA 2014. … Celebrate with John McCartney on his 30th birthday at BJ’s NXS! on July 27. … Jurni Rayne appears at Sue Ellen’s on July 26 and Kickback performs on July 27. … S4 holds an Iggy Azalea release party for the single Work from the upcoming debut album The New Classic on July 26. Win copies while supplies last. … And at JF’s Bar & Grill, there’s an album release party on July 29 for Sara Bareilles’ new CD The Blessed Unrest, featuring the single Brave. … Eden Lounge has a rooftop party on July 26. Spoken Word on July 27 is an evening of open mic poetry. Kathy and Bella perform late afternoon on July 28. … Linze Stellite presents Act One benefiting Toys for Tots at Garlow’s on July 27. … The Round-Up Saloon presents Texas Hold’em poker tournament series with five qualifying rounds every Monday through Aug. 19. The final competition is Aug. 26. All play is free. … A Night of Mischief and Magic takes place at Randy’s Club Cherries with MC LaTrece Franklin on July 26. …

To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/Category/Photos.
Friends at Sue Ellen’s.

Jim and Cliff on the patio at Zini’s.

Greg and Jose at Grapevine Bar.

Martin and Kent at the Round-Up Saloon.

Sisters and Pam at 1851 Club.

Michael and John at JR.’s Bar & Grill.

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