Texas high court weighs gay divorce

Lawyer, attorney general battle it out before justices

Cases could allow same-sex couples to dissolve out-of-state unions

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Dallas in the age of AIDS

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Doris Roberts stops by for benefit
TX high court hears gay divorce cases
Dallas engages its Russian sister city
Vatican surveys parishes on gay issues

The story behind Dallas Buyers Club
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ENDA passes U.S. Senate
The Employment Non-Discrimination Act passed the Senate 64–32 Thursday afternoon. Four senators were absent. Republicans Orrin Hatch and John McCain were among the Republicans who voted for the bill that would forbid discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Both Texas senators voted against the bill.

White House Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett encouraged the Senate to vote for the bill. “A majority of Americans assume there is a prohibition against discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workplace. There’s not, and that’s exactly why this is so important,” she wrote in a press release. “It’s not just civil rights advocates who support ENDA. Business leaders know that prohibiting employment discrimination is good for business.”

GetEqual spokeswoman Heather Cronk wrote, “Today’s passage of ENDA is, indeed, a historic moment for our community and our allies.” But she said the bill had flaws. “The broad religious exemptions in the bill cemented into law the very biases that the legislation was intended to overcome,” she wrote.

The bill now moves to the U.S. House of Representatives. President Barack Obama has said he will sign the bill into law.

Former TCC director Tim Seelig discriminated against by travel company when booking trip
Dr. Timothy Seelig, who for 20 years was the charismatic artistic director of the Turtle Creek Chorale, and who for the last three has been in San Francisco (where he’s led that city’s gay men’s chorus), is used to being out and proud. And loud. Which is why a company called Best Vacations Ever is probably kicking itself for pissing him off.

Seelig and his partner Dan England were booking a trip together to enjoy the offer of a time share, extended to them by the company. They had planned a trip to Las Vegas but were told same-sex couples were not allowed to book in the town known as Sin City. (They did offer Orlando and NOLA as alternative destinations.)

But what doesn’t happen in Vegas doesn’t stay there. Seelig called media, and BVE reneged on the denial, claiming it was not company policy, and offering to book them to Las Vegas, gratis. They declined.

Seelig didn’t have any of it. We mean it when we say don’t mess with Texas. That also goes for former residents.

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But what doesn’t happen in Vegas doesn’t stay there. Seelig called media, and BVE reneged on the denial, claiming it was not company policy, and offering to book them to Las Vegas, gratis. They declined.

BVE has since explained the policy and what they called a mistake, but Seelig wouldn’t have any of it. We mean it when we say don’t mess with Texas. That also goes for Texans — even former residents.

— Arnold Wayne Jones
Everybody loves Doris

The five-time Emmy winner was in Dallas recently raising money and awareness for Ranch Hand Rescue.

Davids Taftet | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Doris Roberts wanted to hit Betty White. The star of the TV series Everybody Loves Raymond made a guest appearance on White’s new series Hot in Cleveland during the second season, and the script called for White to hit Roberts and then Roberts to hit her back. The cameras rolled, and White hit Roberts, who, in her 80s, performs her own stunts.

And then the slugfest ended. After a break in filming, the producer decided Roberts wouldn’t get the chance to clean White’s clock. Her reward for taking one on the cheek was that the episode pitting the veteran TV favorites against each other became the highest rated for the sitcom.

While not engaged in throwdowns on the set, five-time Emmy winner Roberts donates a considerable amount of time to charitable causes. She has raised more than $80 million for AIDS and was the chair of the Children with AIDS Foundation for years. Her energy and compassion also extend to animals, visiting Dallas recently for a fundraiser for Ranch Hand Rescue, the farm animal sanctuary in Denton County that was founded by her long-time friend Bob Williams.

“The animals make you smile and feel good,” Roberts said, and the animals aren’t the only beneficiaries of her rescue efforts. While still living in California, Williams suffered a stroke. Roberts found him and rushed him to the hospital and then later helped him recover. Later, Williams moved to Texas with his partner Marty Polasko, and he founded the animal rescue facility. Roberts has been a supporter since.

The fundraiser was held in a Flower Mound restaurant and raised more than $50,000.

“Everything was donated, and the checks are still coming in,” Williams said.

Roberts brought in entertainers Paul Horner and Jack Betts for the sold-out event, and Williams said Roberts association with the children and veterans is one tied by the spirit of survival.

“I don’t give in. I don’t give up. I don’t settle. I don’t take no for an answer,” she said. “It’s my motto.”

And does she mind being interrupted by fans? Not a bit.

“Let me tell you a story,” she said. “I was sitting in a restaurant in Los Angeles, and a woman approached me. She said, ‘God put you here.’”

The woman explained she was from Iran and lost her son in war.

“You got me through,” she said. “I wanted to live because of you.”

The woman said she would come home at the end of the day and turn on the TV. Roberts made her laugh and helped get her through a terrible period in her life.

“If I have bad days, I think about that,” Roberts said.

But Roberts is too busy to have many bad days. This year, she’s appeared in the TNT show Major Crimes, two episodes of the ABC Family show Melissa & Joey, the upcoming video The Little Rascals Save the Day and the film Joe’s Daughter set to be released before the end of the year.

Although she has played roles different from the one she made famous as Marie Barone, the self-proclaimed domestic expert, and she’s not stuck on one she made famous as Marie Barone, the self-proclaimed domestic expert, and she’s not stuck on
Texas Supreme Court weighs gay divorce

Lawyer, attorney general battle it out before the justices in cases that could decide if same-sex couples can dissolve out-of-state unions

ANNA WAUGH | News Editor
waugh@dallasvoice.com

AUSTIN — The legal differences between states that recognize same-sex marriage and those that don’t collided in the Texas Supreme Court on Tuesday.

Two same-sex couples who married in Massachusetts but now live in Texas want to divorce, but Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott is fighting it, arguing same-sex couples in Texas can’t divorce because the state doesn’t recognize their marriages.

Jody Scheske, the attorney for the two couples, H.B. and J.B. of Dallas and Angelique Naylor and Sabrina Daly of Austin, focused his arguments on the validity of their marriages in another state. He further highlighted that only the parties petitioning for a divorce, and not the state, have a right to contest it.

The Austin couple was granted a divorce in a lower court. Abbott intervened and filed in the Third Court of Appeals, but the lower court’s decision was upheld. Abbott then appealed that decision to the Supreme Court. According to documents obtained by Dallas Voice, Abbott has spent $189,912.08 fighting the cases from January 2009 to July 2013.

A 2011 law allows the state attorney general to intervene in cases that challenge the constitutionality of a statute. Deputy Attorney General James Blacklock, representing the state, argued the constitutionality of the state’s ban on same-sex marriage was brought into the cases by the previous judges’ rulings. He said the state was, therefore, justified to intervene and defend state law, which doesn’t recognize the same-sex couples’ marriages for any purpose.

Justice Don Willett asked if a state has to first recognize a marriage before granting a divorce, later mentioning that Georgia has a marriage amendment but allows same-sex divorce. But Scheske said the couples’ marriages are valid in Massachusetts, and Texas laws relate to marriage, not divorce, and don’t apply. He added that the “treatment of Texas to those marriages doesn’t change their validity.”

In the matter of jurisdiction, Scheske said the state family code doesn’t specify jurisdiction.

Blacklock said both parties have challenged the constitutionality of Texas’ law in their cases. Therefore, the attorney general has standing to defend the law. “There is no way to grant a divorce without recognizing a marriage,” Blacklock said.

Justices brought up property and other rights, questioning how assets could be divided when a union ends without a legal process.

Blacklock said the assets would be divided in a way to appease the parties. When asked about children, he said the Austin couple has a child, but the case doesn’t deal with a child-parent relationship.

The issue of taxes also was raised. Married same-sex couples in Texas can file joint taxes because the federal government recognizes the marriage in light of the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act.

Blacklock said the marriages were void in the state for every purpose.

Paul Castillo, staff attorney at Lambda Legal’s Dallas office, said the justices asked questions about the “practical realities” of same-sex couples married in other states but live in Texas.

“I was encouraged by some of the questions that made it appear they are cognizant of divorce is in fact different than marriage,” he said.

Castillo said the court was likely pressured to hear the cases because of the different decisions by lower appeals courts.

He said the focus on dividing property and how the outcome would affect children involved were important to the impending decision, but he said it’s hard to know how the all-Republican court will rule.

“I’m cautious about any sort of predictions when it comes to oral arguments because that’s inevitably not an accurate predictor of how the court will rule,” Castillo said.

Dallas attorney Peter Schulte, who represented J.B. in district court, said he was optimistic about the arguments.

“Whatever they do, I think it’s going to have to affect the broader base,” he said. “I think the court was very concerned about more cases coming before them. ... They really just want to resolve this issue.”

Scheske later said the Dallas couple has been living apart since 2008. He added that if the Supreme Court sides with the state in the Austin case, the decision would remarriage the couple, who have considered themselves divorced for four years.

“There’s no question that my clients were married,” he said. “And the only place they can resolve that marriage is their state of residence.”

Jonathan Saenz, president of conservative group Texas Values, said he thought the court would rule in favor of the state’s marriage statute and not allow the couples to divorce.

“It’s clear that this couple and other couples are trying to use divorce as a mechanism to undo our marriage laws, and I don’t think the Texas Supreme Court is going to let that happen,” Saenz said.

The court doesn’t have a deadline to issue a decision, but Scheske said he expects a decision by the spring or as late as the summer when the court recesses.

“You really can’t tell what the court’s going to do,” he said. “We intend to prevail. I believe that’s what will happen.”

For more details about the oral arguments, go to DallasVoice.com.
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This little guy doesn’t have a name yet, but he’d make someone a great pet and should be called Gentleman Joe. He’s a 2-year-old Chihuahua, is very laid back and friendly. He’s had a little hair loss but has been treated for it and will be back to his dapper looking self very soon. Please visit #A811320 at Dallas Animal Services Adoption Center, 1818 Westmoreland Road.

The Adoption Center is open 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 12 noon until 5 p.m. on Sunday. All adopted pets are spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. Standard adoption fees are $85 for dogs and $55 for cats. They also offer discounts on adoption fees for pets over 6 years of age, to any senior citizen that adopts a pet, and to anyone adopting more than one pet at a time. For more information, visit www.DallasAnimalServices.org, or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DallasAnimalServices. Photo contributed by Judi Burnett.

Members of LEAGUE at AT&T presented a check to Resource Center for its Youth First program to offer training classes next summer to LGBTQ youth with the aim of helping them pass the GED exam. Pictured, from right; Youth First program manager J. Michael Cruz, Resource Center CEO Cece Cox, LEAGUE at AT&T CFO Theresa Bates, LEAGUE at AT&T Dallas/Fort Worth President Jerry Laberteaux and LEAGUE at AT&T Dallas/Fort Worth Membership Officer Rick Wilson. (Photo courtesy of Resource Center)

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Rather than ending a sister city’s relationship, Dallas is engaging Saratov on Russia’s anti-gay policy

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Physicians visiting Dallas from sister city Saratov, Russia, are proud their city is more open and accepting to gays and lesbians than other parts of their country.

“They’re proud of not being part of the terrible things happening in Russia,” said their host, former state Rep. Harryette Ehrhardt.

Over the summer, a number of American cities considered dropping their sister city partners in Russia because of an anti-gay law passed by that country. The law bans “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations to minors.”

But the law is just part of an anti-gay campaign that has accelerated under the leadership of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Pride parades have been banned in Russia, and a number of violent attacks on gays have been reported.

The law is vague, so it is unclear how it will be used during the upcoming Sochi Olympics. LGBT athletes, coaches and spectators fear they will be harassed, arrested or deported.

While other cities threatened to drop their sister cities, Dallas City Councilman Philip Kingston suggested engaging Saratov.

Former Dallas Mayor Pro Tem John Loza visited Saratov twice, and he also called the city open and welcoming.

Loza described Saratov as a city of about a million people on the Volga River about 500 miles southeast of Moscow near the Kazakh border.

“I took my partner David on my second visit,” Loza said. “It didn’t seem to be an issue.”

Five physicians and their translator from Saratov are in Dallas for the week. Ehrhardt said they are spending most of their time at Baylor Hospital observing and participating in surgeries.

Ehrhardt is planning their evenings and weekend. On Nov. 9, the group will attend a performance of the Turtle Creek Chorale. She made it clear to her guests who the chorale’s members are, and she said the Russians were delighted to be attending.

When Ehrhardt served in the Texas House of Representatives from 1995 to 2002, she sponsored the hate crimes bill and anti-bullying legislation and was considered among the most liberal members of the Legislature and a staunch LGBT ally. She said the parties disagreed on policies but then worked together to get things done. That lesson is one Ehrhardt hopes the Russian government can use to resolve its issues with its gay community.

Turtle Creek Chorale spokeswoman Caroline French said Artistic Director Trey Jacobs and members of the chorale would meet with the Saratov delegation at a reception after the Saturday performance.

“The concert is part of the city’s commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President John Kennedy.”

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The Vatican sends out a worldwide survey to its members, asking for parish-level input on controversial issues such as same-sex marriage.

STEVE RAMOS | Senior Editor
ramos@dallasvoice.com

When the Vatican recently announced it was going to survey Catholics worldwide to get their thoughts on issues long considered anathema, including same-sex marriage, Mark Gonzales of Lewisville said, “No, thanks.”

“It’s too late,” he said. “After years of telling me I was going to hell for being gay, years of telling me I was not acceptable in God’s eyes, the Catholic Church now wants to know what I think about how it should treat gays. Well, it’s a little too late. The damage has been done. Believe me, the Vatican does not want me to answer that survey.”

The 39-question survey, sent out Oct. 18 to bishops around the world, is unprecedented, some church officials say. It’s a sign of the Catholic Church opening up to change and increasing pastoral care regardless of a believer’s background.

Still, Gonzales won’t budge.

“Think about someone who is in an abusive relationship for years,” he said. “The abuser tells the victim over and over that he’s worthless, that he has no value and that there is something wrong with who he is. The victim tries to change, but he can’t because you just can’t change how you were born.

“It’s like telling someone with blue eyes he has to have green eyes. So after years of horrible abuse, the victim escapes. Then later, the abuser wants to talk about how the victim feels. Are you kidding me?”

Pope Francis, who some see as more progressive than his predecessors, ordered the survey. The Vatican, ordered to meet by the pope, is a gathering of the church’s bishops. They will meet Oct. 5-19, 2014, and is focused on the theme “Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization.”

Information gleaned from the survey will be discussed at the synod.

“The social and spiritual crisis, so evident in today’s world, is becoming a pastoral challenge in the Church’s evangelizing mission concerning the family,” the Vatican survey said.

The survey, along with questions concerning same-sex marriage, also solicits opinions on contraception and out-of-wedlock relationships.

Referring to gay couples, one question asks, “What pastoral attention can be given to people who have chosen to live in these types of unions?”

Also, “In the case of unions of persons of the same sex who have adopted children, what can be done pastorally in light of transmitting faith?”

Jennifer Anzalone, who moved to Dallas from Massachusetts eight years ago, said she was interested in participating in the survey.

“I never totally left the church, even though I’m deeply troubled by its position on gays and women,” she said. “There’s a lot about the church I love, so I’ve had this love-hate relationship with it. I get angry with its homophobic messages because I’m gay, so I learned tounker down and walk through that storm because I’m not prepared to leave the church.”

Anzalone is hopeful the Vatican will change its position and evolve in its teachings and its role in the world. She sees the survey as the beginning of a transformation in the church’s position on controversial topics.

“If the church is alive, then it should change to meet current needs,” she said. “It’s been stagnant for too long, and it’s a good thing they’re putting this survey out because the last thing the church needs is another Reformation.”

Anzalone is referring to the split in the Catholic Church, sparked by Martin Luther in 1517, which created the Protestant denominations.

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Back to you, Challulah

If I had taken a different career path, I’d have more money and hair.

Somewhere along the career path I took a wrong turn because it’s obvious the broadcast journalists are the ones having all the fun. They’re all movie star gorgeous, and they get to engage in witty banter with one another about the humidity, hair gel and what will crazy Linda-Say Lohan do next.

They do all of this while I’m struggling with an editorial that, once published, will establish world peace.

It’s too late for me to change careers and go to the dark side because as a friend so nicely put it, I don’t have the hairline for it. Broadcast journalists never go bald, and they end their careers with more hair than they had when they were 15. I’ve heard that along with yearly salaried increases, they get more hair. Except for Matt Lauer. Bless his heart.

We all know that most of the broadcast journalists began their careers as models on The Price is Right. You’ll notice during the news how nicely the TV reporters point to the buildings behind them or pass their hands along the crime scene tape as if it were a can of spaghetti on a game show. We can’t do that in print journalism. Silly us. We have to rely on the reporter’s writing skills to break down a complicated bond issue so fifth-graders can understand it.

Just the other day I was sitting at my desk when a newscaster interrupted my soap opera … I mean my editorial writing … with a special report.

“This is Challulah Bankhead with a special report from Dallas,” she said seriously. From her tone, it would seem she was going to announce that plague had consumed half of the city.

“You’ve just heard a you-saw-it-here-first live report from Dallas where police have confirmed that two gangs turned the city’s streets into a war zone. We’ll have an update for you at five.

Of course, all of us print journalists were gathered around the TV in the newsroom, fascinated by the report.

But the seasoned reporters we are, accustomed to wars, political scandals and Hollywood divorces, we went back to our soap operas … I mean our editorial writing. • Steve Ramos is senior editor at Dallas Voice. He can be reached at editor@dallasvoice.com

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The poster for the *Dallas Buyers Club* — the movie (opening this week in the Angelika Film Center) about an underground AIDS treatment movement in the 1980s and '90s — prominently features the Dallas skyline. Aside from that image, the title itself and the protagonist at its heart, Ron Woodroof, the film will disappoint viewers expecting to see familiar places (or even hear familiar names) from bygone days of the gayborhood. (It was shot mostly in Louisiana.)

Getting basics like geography wrong might lead some to question the truth of the bigger story. But don’t mistake historical inaccuracies for outright criticisms — especially not in the way the film tells an important history of AIDS that has long been overlooked.

According to the movie, Ron Woodroof (played by Matthew McConaughey) was a hard-drinking, fast-lovin’, heavy-druggin’ homophobe whose reckless behavior resulted, quite by accident, in a diagnosis of AIDS by a caring physician (Jennifer Garner). At the time, doctors gave him about a month to live. But Ron was a fighter with a hardscrabble Texas spirit. He refused to cede to death. When he couldn’t find drugs in the U.S. market to stem the spread of his HIV, he sought them out in Mexico and Japan. When the Food and Drug Administration balked at his efforts to sell grey-market drugs (with the help of a drag queen named Rayon, played by Jared Leto), he established the Dallas Buyers Club: a members-only co-op where those who paid a fee could access the drugs he just “happened” to have.

A lot of that never happened. There was no Rayon, no FDA raiding his business regularly, no corrupt doctors on the take to Big Pharma. He was not a homophobe either, according to those who knew him, but rather openly bisexual. And the doctor who was Woodroof’s primary care physician throughout much of his treatment wasn’t a woman, but Dr. Steven Pounders, who’s still in practice today.

You might expect that Pounders, who met with the screenwriter more than three years ago to have his brain picked for details about Woodroof’s life, might object to being changed to a woman — even a beautiful one. But that’s not the case. Not at all.

“It’s a movie, but it got a lot of very true facts [right],” he says. “Ron was doing all that stuff. He was diagnosed with AIDS — not even HIV, but AIDS — and had no T-cells. He was taking Peptide T [which is shown in the movie] and Compound Q [which was not]. He had this incredible ability to fit in, which is why it was accurate to present him as [pretending to be a priest] to carry drugs over the border. It does make a good story.”

It’s “a good story” partly because it is based on true facts largely unknown outside the HIV community during the frantic early days of the plague. The Dallas Buyers Club wasn’t the country’s first such group — an under-the-table collective of HIV-positive folks who united to smuggle unapproved (but not illegal) treatments from overseas while the FDA’s bureaucracy kept them out of the hands of the dying — but it was considered one of the most brazen.

And Woodroof was a compelling personality (“I don’t think anyone who ever met him didn’t like him,” Pounders says) whose drive to keep himself, and others, alive at all costs was a rare glimmer of hope at a time when an HIV diagnosis was a death sentence.

Certainly Pounders saw that first-hand. He had just finished his residency in Houston when Parkland Hospital hired him to work in its newly-formed AIDS clinic (a clinic which came about only because of a lawsuit promulgated by activists in Dallas’ gay community). It was probably there that Woodroof first became aware of Pounders, so when the doctor went into private practice in September of 1989, Woodroof was among his first patients.

“When I met Ron, he had already started Dallas Buyers Club,” he says. As in the movie, it worked in real-life essentially as it is shown: HIV-positive people would pay a membership, show up at Woodroof’s apartment with a prescription and Woodroof would take it to Mexico to fill it. (Pounders explains that even under federal law, nonapproved drugs for personal use can be brought into the country legally, up to a three-month supply.) What is not shown in the film is that doctors like Pounders were frequently employed to administer the drugs intravenously.

“In 1989, the only drugs we had were AZT, which was not strong enough but extremely toxic, and Bactrim, which we aerosolized and used to prevent pneumonia,” Pounders explains. Preventing pneumonia was the best way to keep people healthy while their immune systems
were depressed. But not everyone could take Bactrim. That’s where Woodroof’s foreign drugs came in. Pounders treated dozens of DBC members, saving or extending many lives. “That was incredibly real about the movie,” he says.

Still, McConaughey, Leto and director Jean-Marc Vallee know that they haven’t made a documentary. Instead, they were aiming for something more sweeping. Using Woodroof’s passion to reveal a truth about the treatment of AIDS during its precarious “plague” years. (Not everything is fictionalized. McConaughey says he based a lot of his character’s mindset on a “Pandora’s box” of information: Woodroof’s personal diary.)

“The hard truth that I could see, and the way I approached it, was him getting HIV is what gave him his purpose in life,” McConaughey says. “That’s the first time that he had something that he grabbed hold of for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day, until he was here no longer. That’s where he found a real identity.

That’s where he found a purpose. “He doesn’t start off as this crusader for the cause. He’s not waving the flag. If anything, he’s a selfish son of a bitch who’s doing what he can to survive.”

Still, some early reviews were critical of the film, in part because it portrays Woodroof as heterosexual and homophobic, which others deny. “[The screenwriters] were really concerned how the community would react if they portrayed him as a straight guy,” Pounders admits. “He seemed to me very comfortable in the gay environment, like any other gay man.” But he adds that, in the context of the film, it makes for a “better” story. Woodroof’s transition from bigot to champion of the underdog takes on more power when framed as personal growth. In the context of the film, however, making Ron a bigot — and having him befriend Rayon, who is comfortable being gay — makes for more dramatic character development, mirroring how mainstream society itself came to soften its condemnation of gays.

“When [Matthews] portrays a guy who’s racist and homophobic, and then his arc changes slowly but surely without even realizing it,” Vallee says, “he’s going to become the spokesperson of the gay community he’s been bashing for years and years — that’s what [McConaughey] brought naturally.”

For Pounders, McConaughey’s performance was simply “uncanny — down to the look and the hair and the beard,” he says.

Mary Franklin, who worked with the real Woodroof back in the early days of the Dallas Buyers Club, says McConaughey also got the character exactly correct.

“He was a rebel, he was passionate, he was a visionary and he was a great businessman trying to survive,” Franklin says. “[Back then], if you wanted to live, or try something new, you were out of the luck. [Ron] was not going to accept that. We were in a war with a disease, and any ammunition that was available was good ammunition. Ron said, ‘If I’m gonna die, I’m gonna do it my way.’”

And that’s what he did. The Dallas Buyers Club was not the first med sales exchange of its kind to pop up during the AIDS crisis, but it did have a reputation for being the most daring. And Woodroof’s take-no-prisoners attitude fueled it. “He was the crazy cowboy. He was a rallyer, but totally underground. He wasn’t gonna lay down and let it happen, and he didn’t want other people to let it happen to them,” she says.

The movie also got that right. Woodroof did make frequent trips to Mexico (eventually using a speedboat, Franklin says, under cover of night) to purchase the meds that weren’t available in the U.S.

“He loved the adrenaline rush. He loved the whole excitement of going to get the drugs and the whole nationwide network,” she says.

It wasn’t always simple, though. Woodroof never bilked members of the club for the price of the meds — they paid the same price he paid. He made money off the membership fees … and found other sources of income.

“He was always looking for how to pay for the thing,” Franklin says with a smile. “He was full of energy — an unreasonable, crazy guy. I never saw him when he didn’t have energy, though I’m sure there were times when he didn’t. He was always proud of what he did.”

And more than 20 years later, those who were a part of the Dallas Buyers Club are proud to have been a part of it.

Chris Azzopardi contributed to this story.
John Krokidas may seem like moviedom’s overnight sensation, but it sure doesn’t feel that way to Krokidas himself.

It was just last month, the night before his 40th birthday, that Krokidas screened Kill Your Darlings, his debut feature as a director, in New York City — where the film is set and where he lives. That means, technically, he was still in his 30s when he made his NYC debut. And he’ll take it.

No one just happens upon a movie career, and Krokidas has been hard at work on realizing his dream project — his only major project, really — for nearly a decade. That’s when his film school birthday, that Krokidas screened the post-war period might not merit much attention by the mainstream press, except that Krokidas snagged for his leading man Daniel Radcliffe in one of his few non-Harry Potter screen performances. And Radcliffe goes all the way, dropping trou, sucking face and even engaging in same-sex sex on screen. And all without Hermione or Hagrid anywhere in sight.

This was an unlikely journey for first-timer Krokidas, who began the filmmaking process in earnest about six years ago. That’s when, almost on a dare, he sent the script to queer-indie producer Christine Vachon. “Christine then flew out to meet me to convince me she should produce the movie,” Krokidas says, still a bit surprised she was wooing him.

The first step after that was casting the major roles. From the start, Krokidas had a dream-cast for his leading man Daniel Radcliffe (played by Dane DeHaan). The first time director John Krokidas a decade to make his portrait of the Beats. Is he finally ready for his close-up?

Then Radcliffe did the unthinkable for a star who didn’t seem to regret any of it. (“It’s hard to find a financier willing to invest in a first-time director,” Krokidas sighs.) It took first-time director John Krokidas a decade to make his portrait of the Beats. Is he finally ready for his close-up?
It took first-time director John Krokidas a decade to make his portrait of the Beats. Is he finally ready for his close-up?

of his magnitude: He offered to audition. “We went on an ‘actor date,’ which is like a romantic date in a lot of ways,” Krokidas says, “and he killed it — a dutiful son who shows one side to the world,” while nursing secret gay longings, he says. Offers were made, castmates were chosen, dates were set.

But moviemaking isn’t ever that easy. The one condition Radcliffe imposed was that he first had to complete filming on a little movie he was scheduled to shoot: The two-part finale to Harry Potter, The Deathly Hallows. That would put everything off by two years. At that point, financing fell through.

But Krokidas is an inherently optimistic person. He drove through, finding a new cast (which at one point included Jesse Eisenberg, until The Social Network hit and, he backed away from playing another college kid). They then found new financing, … until that fell through, too. (“It’s hard to find a financier willing to invest in a first-time director,” Krokidas sighs.) It was taking forever to get the film made — in fact, about two years.

That’s when Krokidas remembered he still had Radcliffe’s email address. So he did what all the conventional wisdom says you never do. He reached out to the talent directly. His request was simple: Are you still interested in playing Allen Ginsberg?

“He sent back a one-word answer,” Krokidas says. “‘Absofuckinglutely.’” All the delays may have worked to Krokidas’ advantage in the long run. Over time, he and Bunn continued to massage the script, collecting scores of research about the people and the period to create a film as authentic as they could swing on a tiny budget.

“A lot of what we did was to constantly adapt to a smaller and smaller budget,” he says. “We tailored the parts to each actor,” including Radcliffe, who is a huge fan of literature and especially poetry — and a huge defender of gay rights. “He’s our best LGBT ally and always has been,” Krokidas says authoritatively.

Ironically, finding straight actors willing to play gay wasn’t a problem — it was finding some who hadn’t just played gay. The cast ultimately included such heavyweights as Michael C. Hall, Jack Huston, Elizabeth Olsen, Ben Foster, Jennifer Jason Leigh, David Cross and Kyra Sedgwick. The 24-day shoot in the spring of 2012 forced the creative team to be inventive; much of the film was shot inside a convent, which hadn’t changed much in the three-quarters of a century since the events took place. And while it took 10 years from concept to red carpet to reviews (most of which have been positive), Krokidas doesn’t seem to regret any of it.

But hopefully he’ll be able to make the next one quicker.

One-and-a-half stars. Now playing in wide release.

QUEER CLIP: ‘Thor: The Dark World’

Continuity has never been the strong suit of the Marvel franchises. The Avengers didn’t even try to explain how Thor (Chris Hemsworth) made it to Earth after the gateway from Asgard had been destroyed, and Thor’s girlfriend Jane (Natalie Portman) barely figured into the story at all. So it’s a small surprise that Thor: The Dark World has plot holes big enough for Thor to walk through. But who cares about story when you have a mega-ripped blonde Nordic hippie flexing his biceps every 15 seconds? Still, it’s too bad the director, Alan Taylor, gives us only a few seconds of the shirtless God of Thunder, but it was enough to make the women and some of the gay men at the screening sigh. You’ll probably sigh at the pointless dialogue, muddled story and murky look that puts this Thor somewhere between Lord of the Rings and the Green Lantern. This is far from the best from Marvel.

— A.W.J.
Sometimes, you don’t know what to think. You hear both sides of a story, both conflicting. Rumors are whispered, denials issued, and you’re left to make up your own mind. Right or wrong, there are some things you’ll never know for sure. And that goes for what’s inside The Book of Matt.

In early 2000, Stephen Jimenez went to Laramie, Wyo., to start work on a story for which he thought he had an “abundance of detail.” He had, in fact, planned on writing a screenplay about the murder of Matthew Shepard. Laramie residents were friendly, he says, and it didn’t take long to find the prosecutor who won conviction of the two men who murdered Shepard. He hinted to Jimenez that there was more to the story than the news media had reported.

Intrigued, Jimenez dug for information and consequently, he says, discovered corruption and odd loose ends in the Shepard murder (and other cases). He spoke with witnesses and with people who knew Shepard and his killers. And, he claims, with some who were overlooked or inadequately interviewed by officials during the investigation. He believes that he was physically endangered many times because someone wanted him to stop asking questions.

The reason for that, perhaps, was that what he says he found was shocking and not what people have come to believe. It involved drugs, sex-for-hire and at least one man who, Jimenez indicates, can’t tell the truth. And because of what he learned, Jimenez asserts, “I will offer here what I believe to be a more accurate account of the violent events set in motion…” on that night in October 1998.

At first blush, The Book of Matt seems like any other true crime book, albeit one that’s tedious, occasionally off-topic and sometimes melodramatic. Jimenez obviously did abundant research for this book, and his extremely lengthy list of interviewees and often-anonymous “witnesses” proves that.

And yet, if each page of this book was imbedded with nitroglycerine, it couldn’t be any more explosive. Jimenez, who is himself gay, makes a lot of allegations that seem to be based on rumor and leaps of conclusion, and he’s not often very complimentary. He leaves the reader with an impression that there was a lot of putting-two-and-two-together here that, face-value, did add up but that left uncomfortable questions niggling in the back of my mind.

Furthermore, Jimenez asserts that Matthew Shepard wasn’t killed because of a hate crime, but that he was murdered because he was involved in a drug “family” to whom he owed money. Indeed, several of Jimenez’s “witnesses” claim that Shepard was “friends” with his killers long before his death, which could alter Shepard’s legacy, even if it does not negate the fact and horror of the crime.

Here’s the thing: only three people knew for sure what happened that night — one is dead, one gives “contradictory statements” and one’s not talking. That leaves open a good bit of finality to this story, but you can read The Book of Matt if you want, and make up your own mind.

— Terri Schlichenmeyer
Friday 11.08

Dallas Summer Musicals stages ‘Lord of the Rings in Concert’

It’s a symphonic concert. No, it’s theater. No, it’s a movie. Actually, it’s a bit of all three. Dallas Summer Musicals invested in a massive stage production of The Lord of the Rings (it still hasn’t come to the U.S.), but you can get a taste of what they had in mind with this multimedia presentation, which features Howard Shore’s Oscar-winning score (played by the Dallas Pops) while excerpts from the film play above. It has the scope of opera, only with a movie and no annoying trailers.


Friday 11.08

Kinsey Sicks perform ‘dragapella’ at Majestic

They are America’s favorite beauty shop quartet who perform in drag, and even though there’s not a lot of competition for that title, the Kinsey Sicks are still harmonious fun with their four-part song stylings and campy sense of humor. And the concert Friday even benefits Dallas’ own Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

DEETS: Majestic Theater, 1925 Elm St. 8 p.m.

Friday 11.08

Oscar-nominated director Lee Daniels feted by Dallas Film Society

Lee Daniels scored his first Oscar nominations directing and producing Precious, and he’s on the short-list again for his latest film, Lee Daniels’ The Butler. But the gay filmmaker (and bestie with Oprah) has also worked on some of the edgiest indie films of the new millennium: The Woodsman (about a child molester), Monster’s Ball (Oscar for Halle Berry), The Paperboy (Southern Gothic gay sex) and more. The Dallas Film Society holds a dinner honoring Daniels on Friday, including a Q&A with film critic Elvis Mitchell, then on Saturday there will be a screening of one (or more) of his films (details have not been announced).

DEETS: Hall of State at Fair Park. Red carpet begins at 6 p.m., program at 7:30 p.m. DallasFilm.org.

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OPERA
Center, 2800 Stemmons Freeway. Through Nov. 17.
brothers. KD Studio Theater at the Trinity
True West
1331 Record Crossing Road. $16–$25.
Presented in English.
Dallas ever since, comes a play focusing on the tragedy.
death of Santos Rodriguez, which affected civil rights in
Santos: A Wandering Soul.
Final weekend.
Theatre Arlington, 305 W. Main St., Arlington.
Quattro and Elias T aylorson as the doomed friends.
Of Mice and Men
Nov. 8–10. $15–$85. DallasSummerMusicals.org.
Orchestra. Music Hall at Fair Park, 901 First Ave.
The Lord of the Rings In Concert
The Oscar-winning score by Howard Shore is performed by the Dallas Pops
Theatre, 15650 Addison Road.
THEATER
AVenue Q. The foul-mouthed, gayish musical returns to Theatre Too, with most of the original Dallas cast intact.
Theatre 3, 2900 South St. in the Quadrangle.
Dante: Inferno. Mark-Brian Sonna’s fall Halloween show, a revival of his take on Inferno.
Stone Cottage Theatre, 15650 Addison Road. Final weekend.
$23–$25. MBSProductions.net.
Nine. Lyric Stage moves out of Irving for its Downtown
Dallas debut with this staging of the great musical Nine,
directed by Len Pfluger. City Performance Hall,
2520 Flora St., Nov. 8 and 9. LyricStage.org.
The Lord of the Rings in Concert. The Oscar-winning score by Howard Shore is performed by the Dallas Pops Orchestra. Music Hall at Fair Park, 901 First Ave. Nov. 8–10. $15–$85. DallasSummerMusicals.org.
Of Mice and Men. Steinbeck’s classic tale, with Van Quattro and Elias Taylorson as the doomed friends.
Theatre Arlington, 305 W. Main St., Arlington.
Santos: A Wandering Soul. Twenty years after the death of Santos Rodriguez, which affected civil rights in
True West. Sam Shepard’s comedy-drama about rival brothers. KD Studio Theater at the Trinity River Arts Center, 2900 Stemmons Freeway. Through Nov. 17.
OPERA
Carmen. Bizet’s masterpiece kicks off the Dallas Opera’s new season, dubbed By Love Transformed.
Wineyard Opera House, 2403 Flora St., Nov. 10 at 2 p.m. Nov. 11 at 7:30 p.m. DallasOpera.org.
FINE ART
Al Weiwei: Circle of Animals. The controversial Chinese artist re-imagines zodiac figures of the Chang dynasty.
Dallas International Art, Antique and Jewelry Show. The five-day event returns, with luxury items from top designers. Dallas Market Hall, 2200 Stemmons Freeway. Friday–Monday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m. $20. DallasFallShow.com.
FRIDAY 11.08
COMEDY
The Kinsey Sicks. The dragapella group performs their comic beauty shop quartet. Majestic Theater, 1925 Elm St. 8 p.m. $25–$45.
FILM
Lone Star Film Festival. The seventh annual event continues though the weekend with a lineup that includes several gay-interest screenings, including the upcoming holiday releases August: Osage County and Philomena.
AMC Palace Theater at Sundance Square, Fort Worth. For a complete schedule and passes, visit LoneStarFilmFestival.com.
COMMUNITY
High Tech Happy Hour. The monthly mixer comes to Kormill, 4152 Cole Ave. 5:30–7:30 p.m.
SATURDAY 11.09
COMMUNITY
Third Annual Holiday Toy Drive presented by The Original Cupcakery and The Hearts with Hearts. Dallas Holocaust Museum, 211 N. Record St. 6–8 p.m. Please bring a new unwrapped toy. TheHeadWithHearts.org/toydrive.
CONCERTS
Remembering JFK. The Turtle Creek Chorale sings with Austin’s SoCo Women’s Chorus for this chamber piece. Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, 14115 Hillcrest Road, Nov. 9. Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 3815 Oak Lawn Ave., Nov. 10. 8 p.m. $25. 214-526-3214.
HUMOR
An Evening with David Sedaris. The gay essayist performs excerpts from his most recent collection, Let’s Explore Diabetes with Owls, as well as other works. Bass Performance Hall, 353 Commerce St., Fort Worth. 7:30 p.m. BassHall.com.

SUNDAY 11.10
WORSHIP
Cathedral of Hope. Gay-affirming church of the United Church of Christ congregation has two services. 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.

COMMUNITY
Fiesta Latinoamericana! Dallas International Festival presents this celebration of Hispanic culture. Automotive Building at Fair Park. 10 a.m.–7 p.m.

CONCERT
Zoe Lewis. The lesbian musician and comic performs. Shooting Star Ranch and Retreat, 1007 Batchler Road, Red Oak. 2 p.m. $20 donation requested.

MONDAY 11.11
RELEASE PARTY
Holidazzle Encore! The new CD of Christmas tunes by DFW Actors Give Back, for which proceeds benefit local charities, is launched with a release party. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. 7–9 p.m. DFWActorsGiveBack.org.

WEDNESDAY 11.13
TELEVISION
American Horror Story: Coven. Glee creator Ryan Murphy’s third run at the series, featuring, as always, gay content (as well as a lesbian star in Sarah Paulson). FX at 9 p.m.

CONCERTS

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21 Org. offering AIDS coverage
22 Fashion photographer Herb
23 PC display
25 Modern Family family member
26 Portrayer of Ben
31 Warming in relations
33 Lorde of verse
34 Give some lip to
37 Female flyer
38 Like the “fruit loop” section of a city
39 Mouth, slangily
40 With 44-Across, portrayer of Jorge
44 See 40-Across
47 Pittsburgh pro
51 Waffle choice
52 2013 movie about two married gay men forced to live apart
57 Jodie Foster’s ___ Driver
58 Cowboy’s rope
59 Cinder suffix
61 Where to find hot buns
62 Everglades wader
63 Auctioneer’s word
64 Computer company’s erection?
65 Catch in a trap
66 Defied radar

Down
1 Warsaw agreement
2 Queens tennis stadium
3 Versatile vehicles
4 Shags on the carpet?
5 Wrestler’s victory
6 Gossip columnist Barrett
7 Got a little behind
8 Lower, to Lorca
9 Bambi’s aunt
10 Nose rubbers
11 Bottomless
12 Gobs
13 Layers in the barnyard
18 Apiece
19 Spot on a cliff
24 Hereditary chain
25 Antonio’s Evita role
26 Novelist Rona
27 One of a wheel’s nuts
28 Lupino of Women’s Prison
29 Take a crack at
30 Entree
31 “Jabberwocky” starter
32 “Hold your horses!”
35 Performed like Rufus Wainwright
36 Sites for three women in a tub
41 Stationary acceleration
42 Peace Nobelist Wiesel
43 Streetcar and more?
44 Change places
45 Russian saint
46 Nala, for one
48 Give up an office
49 Put in shackles
52 Composition of some beds
53 Alternatives to asses
54 Poet Teasdale
55 Unappetizing food
56 Pronoun for Proust
57 Stranded driver’s need
60 Dipstick word

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Spin Fall Edition features DJ Michael Tank from Fort Lauderdale at TMC: The Mining Company on Nov. 9. LaRue presents Miss Texas FFA Pageant at Large on Nov. 10 in The Rose Room. The show stars Donet McKim and newly crowned Miss Texas FFA 2013 Tony R. Andrews. Sofia McIntosh hosts. The evening is dedicated to 2006 winner Whitney Paige. Win copies of Night Time, My Time, the debut album from Sky Forks featuring the single You're Not the One on Nov. 8 at Station 4. JR's Bar & Grill has two album release parties this week. On Nov. 11, celebrate the release of Celine Dion's new CD Loved Me Back to Life and on Nov. 12 mark the debut EP from songstress Banks. Win free copies while supplies last. National Leather Association holds its monthly bar night at Dallas Eagle on Nov. 9. That night, Leather Knights holds Military Man-euvers, a fundraiser with raffle, auction, military haircuts and uniform contest. On Nov. 10, Dallas Bears stage a turnabout show. DJ La spins all thefavorites at Eden Lounge on Nov. 9 on the rooftop bar. The football games are on all afternoon on Nov. 10. Trinity River Bears meet at Club Reflection on Nov. 10 followed by a cookout. Cowtown Lathersmen meet at Changes on Nov. 11. Texas Gay Rodeo Association meets on Nov. 12. The Imperial Court de Fort Worth/Arlington celebrates the birthday of the Empress with a Birthday Turkey Roast Show at Best Friends Club on Nov. 14. Antion Shaw and the Bang Ups are at Sue Ellen's on Nov. 8. Caio Bella appears on Nov. 9 and Calico Jak stops by on Nov. 10. Bella and Dani are the hump day entertainment on Nov. 13. Kristin Majors performs at Alexandre's on Nov. 8 and Sheila F and infinity entertain on Nov. 9.

Photos by Patrick Hoffman.
To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/category/photos.
Jay and Grant on The Strip.

Herman and Dominic on The Strip.

Serge, Rene and Paul at TMC: The Mining Company.

Gretchen on The Strip on Halloween. Bo at Zippers.

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