House of DIFFA: Beyond denim
AIDS fundraiser holds masquerade ball Saturday
The jacket collection persists, but event changes with the times

It seems few people are interested in preserving Oak Lawn’s architectural history
Cover story by David Taffet
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—Scott Cantrell, The Dallas Morning News

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Jerry Jones: Dallas Cowboys would welcome a gay player

Jerry Jones, the owner of the Dallas Cowboys and arguably the most famous of the league’s 32 owners, told Wade Davis, a former defensive back who came out in 2012, that he and the Cowboys would welcome an openly gay player.

“When someone like him speaks out, the world changes,” Davis told USA TODAY Sports.

Davis spoke to NFL owners, coaches and general managers about sexual orientation in sports on Wednesday in Orlando, Fla. Davis came out nine years after his last stint on an NFL roster ended and has already received positive feedback from meetings in New York with NFL officials, including commissioner Roger Goodell, over the past several months.

But there was a moment after his second presentation, this one to team owners on Tuesday morning, that confirmed to Davis just how much impact he had made in the quest to eliminate homophobia in the NFL.

But it wasn’t just Jones. It was coaches like John Fox of the Denver Broncos, who called Davis’ presentation the best he had ever seen at these annual meetings, and Atlanta Falcons owner Arthur Blank, who said it is up to NFL owners to spearhead this culture change.

Respect in the workplace has been the overarching theme at the league’s annual meetings, from the fallout of the Miami Dolphins locker room bullying scandal to preparations for the league’s first openly gay player in former Missouri defensive end Michael Sam, who came out last month and is preparing for the draft.

“I think the most important thing is that it is a matter of respect,” Blank told USA TODAY Sports. “How we live is more important than what we say about it. The guidance that we’re getting from the league is outstanding, and the attention that it is getting is outstanding. But it is up to us to make sure it becomes a living part of our culture, with more sensitivity, more awareness of the impact of what we’re saying.”

Davis said he was approached by numerous coaches and other team executives to visit with teams. He hasn’t set up any presentations yet, but Davis and Troy Vincent, the former Pro Bowl defensive back who was named the NFL’s vice president of football operations, will work to set up a program for speaking directly to players.

“I might share more of my personal stories with players, but I’m going to let them know that hey, we don’t want to be treated any differently, we just want to be part of the NFL family, too,” said Davis, who played two years for NFL Europe and participated in three NFL training camps.

— Steve Ramos

SMU Senate votes to add LGBT seat after years of battle

The SMU Senate voted 34-3 to add an LGBT seat to the student governing body, according to SMU’s The Daily Campus. The issue must now go for a vote before the entire student body and requires a two-thirds vote.

This has been a contentious issue that has been debated and defeated every year since first introduced by student Tom Elliott in 2009. Several other Senate seats are reserved for groups of minority students. Others are designated for off-campus residents, specific dorms and frats and sororities.

One issue that previous Senates dealt with is identifying LGBT students — whether they needed to belong to one of the on-campus LGBT groups, if anyone who self-identified as LGBT could participate or if any student, including allies or even opponents trying to throw the race, could simply register to vote in that race.

During this period, SMU was voted a “most homophobic” school by Princeton Review each year, and the high-profile battle over this seat probably added to the perception of anti-gay discrimination on campus.

Elliott graduated in 2010 and now works in Chicago. He remembered how he felt after the defeat.

“It was disappointing since there was such a strong show of support by faculty, staff and students,” Elliott said.

“Even with people coming in to talk to the Senate, it failed by a large margin.”

He said after he graduated, freshman Harvey Luna picked up the fight.

Elliott warned that the work’s not over since the student body must vote.

“It’s very important for people working on this to mobilize support on campus,” Elliott said.

— David Taftet
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Who is saving Oak Lawn?

Oak Lawn’s charming single-family homes and duplexes are being razed to build high-rise condos priced up to $1.5 million

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

When John Moser moved out of Oak Lawn 20 years ago, he was certain he would miss the sense of community that defined the area. His downtown-based company covered his costs for using public transportation, and on weekends he could walk to clubs and restaurants.

“I loved living in Oak Lawn when I first moved to Dallas,” Moser said. “Buying a house in North Dallas was a difficult decision, but you know what? They couldn’t pay me to live in Oak Lawn today. And where would I live? The house I lived in was torn down.”

It wasn’t the only one. During the past several decades, developers have razed hundreds of the single-family homes built in the early 20th century to make room for structures that could house more people on the same amount of land.

“Single-family homes gave way to duplexes. Duplexes were torn down to make room for fourplexes, and then those were torn down, so developers could build multi-storied condos and apartment buildings,” Herschel Weisfeld said. Weisfeld owns the former Dallas County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Building on South Street. He converted it into the SOTA (State of the Art) building which houses executive office suites and a private art gallery.

The SOTA building is surrounded by examples of what Oak Lawn was and what it has become. Just a few feet down Hood Street, a well-kept bungalow snuggles next to an immaculate early 20th century home with a gingerbread-decorated porch. In the mid 20th century, Oak Lawn was dotted with hundreds of those homes, many of them built in the Craftsman and other styles.

“There isn’t much left of all that now,” Weisfeld said.

Where did it go? Dallas Landmark Commissioner Michael Amonett provides part of the answer. He said the mix of single-family and multifamily housing on the same blocks in Oak Lawn meant preservation-minded neighbors were unable to organize neighborhoods into historic or conservation districts. That mix began in the 1950s as Dallas began to expand into a large, modern city.

But now, those small apartment complexes are being replaced with taller, denser buildings, and Amonett believes unscrupulous developers are responsible for the transformation of Oak Lawn into a crowded, traffic-plagued neighborhood.

“They looked at the single-family homes and said, ‘I could stack two or three $500,000 condominiums on top of that one house,’” Amonett said.

Oak Lawn has only two neighborhood associations, Perry Heights and Maple Springs, compared to the more than 30 in Oak Cliff. Amonett said that before a developer builds in Oak Cliff, the neighborhood asks for a traffic study, but no one in Oak Lawn asks for them.

It shows. The Texas Department of Transportation reports that Lemmon Avenue, from Inwood Road to Haskell Avenue, is the most congested city street in the state that is not a highway. It causes 146,997 hours of delay per mile each year. It’s the same in other cities, according to Amonett. Neighborhoods are being cleared of their architecturally interesting homes to make way for condos and apartments, which brings in more people whose cars clog the streets not designed for those numbers.

“The machine wants more taxable square footage,” Amonett said. “Go to any city.
Oak Lawn landmarks

Most structures designated landmarks in Dallas are in Oak Cliff, around Fair Park and in East Dallas. However, 13 buildings in Oak Lawn have that protected status as well, but only five are houses. No multi-family or apartment houses are on the list.

Three of the buildings are familiar to anyone who visits the gayborhood — The Melrose Hotel, Oak Lawn United Methodist Church and the Cedar Springs Fire Station.

The Turtle Creek Pump Station on Harry Hines Boulevard at Oak Lawn Avenue was built in 1909 and was the major source of water in Dallas until 1930, when it became obsolete. After renovation, the building reopened in 1988 as the Sammons Center for the Arts and is home to groups such as the Turtle Creek Chorale, The Women’s Chorus of Dallas and the Shakespeare Festival of Dallas.

The Kalita Humphries Theater on Turtle Creek Boulevard is the only theater designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and is currently the home of Uptown Players.

Old Parkland Hospital on the corner of Maple and Oak Lawn Avenue has landmark status but received waivers during its recent renovation and expansion. Several other buildings under construction on the campus echo the style of the original.

Two schools in Oak Lawn have landmark status — North Dallas High School on Haskell at McKinney avenues and Stephen J. Hay Elementary School on Herschel Avenue.

Of the several houses with landmark status, only two remain residences. The Mayor Bradford House stands next to the Stoneleigh Hotel at 2905 Maple Ave. The Harris Kemp House is in Maple Springs at 2822 Maple Springs Blvd.

A house at 3508 Cedar Springs Road at Sale Street is listed on the register as Shingle Style House. The designation was given because this is the only significant example of shingle style residential architecture in Dallas.

The King Mansion on Gillespie Street is better known as The Mansion on Turtle Creek. Guests enter the hotel through the original home of oil and cotton magnate Sheppard King.

Of the other houses in Oak Lawn that have landmark status, the best known in the gayborhood is 3829 N. Hall St. at Reagan Street. The house currently houses a salon.

Several other buildings in Oak Lawn are on the National Register of Historic Places including the highrise apartment building at 3525 Turtle Creek Blvd. and Cedar Springs Place, a Dallas Housing Authority development on Lucas Drive at Maple Avenue. Old Parkland Hospital on the corner of Oak Lawn and Maple avenues was recently renovated and expanded into a new office campus is on the national list.

and they’re all talking about density.”
That drive is eliminating single-family and small apartment complexes. In their place, developers are building what Amonett calls “Eastern Bloc communist country housing.”

“There’s no advocate for historic preservation in Oak Lawn,” said Mark Doty, who works in the Dallas Historic Preservation office in City Hall. Buildings that don’t have a Dallas historic designation will be torn down because of simple economics: The land is worth more than the buildings that sit on the property.

“We’re losing the charm and allure of Oak Lawn to new construction,” Doty said.

In the 1960s, Oak Lawn became a magnet for the counterculture movement with its inexpensive rents and closeness to Lee Park. By 1980, it had become Dallas’ gayborhood. Doty isn’t opposed to the development of the area, but there are Oak Lawn properties he’d like to see preserved.

“I’d like to see Sam Houston School designated,” he said.

The school, established in 1909, is located behind the clubs on Throckmorton Street. Doty also would like to see some of the fourplexes between Lemmon Avenue and Highland Park given landmark status. Oak Lawn’s future, though, may not be as dire as Doty predicts.

None of Weisfeld’s properties has landmark status, but he’s worked to preserve and renovate his buildings.

“The challenge is taxes,” Weisfeld said. “Taxes don’t incentivize a person to preserve a property.”

When Weisfeld bought the building on Routh Street, it suffered from extensive water damage and some of the ceilings were caved in. Instead of razing the building, however, he repaired it and capitalized on the solid wood doors and concrete walls and ceilings.

“I’ve done adaptive reuses,” he said.

The Weisfeld Center in Downtown Dallas is another of his renovations, and he’s received a number of awards for his efforts. The Urban Forestry Council honored him for saving a hickory tree on his property that is the largest of its species in Oak Lawn. Former Dallas Mayor Ros-Kirk presented Weisfeld with a proclamation, and Preservation Dallas honored him with two awards to acknowledge his work on the SOTA building and the Weisfeld Center.

“Historic preservation is important,” Weisfeld said. “Coexisting with development adds character to a neighborhood and adds uniqueness.”

New and old buildings can live together, Weisfeld added, noting the Old Parkland campus as an example. The original building was renovated and preserved, while the design of additional high-rise office towers on the campus mimic the original style.

However, Weisfeld doesn’t believe Oak Lawn neighborhood’s narrow streets can live with the additional cars a new 10-story building a block away will add to the congestion. That residential tower sits next to another new and taller building, The Plaza on Turtle Creek II, situated on land that a few years ago had only single-family homes and duplexes on it. According to its website, The Plaza has two vacancies, one for $500,000 and the other for almost $1.5 million.

That leaves Moser shaking his head.

“Even if I wanted to move back to Oak Lawn, I couldn’t afford it,” he said. “Even if they paid me a million dollars.”
Hood was transferred from another local shelter to find a home. He’s a handsome and friendly 1-year-old beige Terrier mix. Hood would be a great companion for an individual who would take him on walks throughout the neighborhood. He enjoys lots of attention and loves taking naps in the afternoon. Come visit with Hood today.

Hood and other pets are available for adoption from Operation Kindness, 3201 Earhart Drive, Carrollton. The no-kill shelter is open six days: Monday, 3-8 p.m.; closed Tuesday; Wednesday, 3-8 p.m.; Thursday, noon-8 p.m.; Friday, noon-5 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, noon-5 p.m. The cost is $110 for cats, $135 for kittens, $150 for dogs over 1 year, and $175 for puppies. The cost includes the spay/neuter surgery, microchipping, vaccinations, heartworm test for dogs, leukemia and FIV test for cats, and more. Those who adopt two pets at the same time receive a $20 discount.


Fashion Cited takes flight

Style event Fashion Cited takes place at the Frontiers of Flight Museum on April 3, benefitting Legal Hospice of Texas. Among the designers whose fashions will be shown are Solody, Cathy Garcia, Francisco Flores, Morgan Powell and Aparicio. Marek + Richard Underwear is always among the most popular brands showcased.

“This is shaping up to be our biggest and best event yet,” said LHT Development Assistant Harvey Mireles. “It’s been a pleasure to work with well-known Dallas fashionista Rhonda Sargent Chambers.”

Chambers is this year’s honorary chair. The annual fashion show has become LHT’s largest fundraiser. Funds raised help to provide legal services to more than 800 low-income people who are terminally ill or HIV-positive people at no charge each year in 16 North Texas counties.

Frontiers of Flight Museum, 6911 Lemmon Ave., April 3 at 6:30 p.m. $50 online. $60 at the door. Tables can be reserved by calling 214-321-6622. LegalHospice.org.
Kristopher Sharp’s harassment at UHD last year pushed Sen. Murray to introduce the bill this week, push for a vote this time around.

ANNA WAUGH | News Editor
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WASHINGTON — When Kristopher Sharp was called into his dean’s office last year and shown a flier targeting his sexual orientation and HIV status in his campaign for student body vice president, he never thought the experience would lead to a bill to prevent future attacks.

Sharp, now a senior at the University of Houston-Downtown, is an intern in the Washington, D.C., office of Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., as part of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund’s congressional internship program. His personal story of anti-gay and HIV harassment inspired Murray and out Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wisc., to introduce the Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2014 on Thursday.

The bill was originally sponsored by the late Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., and is named for the Rutgers University student who committed suicide in 2010 after his roommate streamed a video of Clementi and another man having sex. The LGBT-inclusive bill would require colleges and universities to prohibit harassment and establish a Department of Education grant program to support campus anti-harassment programs.

Last March, Sharp was called in to speak to administrators about a flier circulated around campus with a picture of him with an X over it below the caption, “WANT AIDS?” It urged students not to support him and his running mate’s “homosexual agenda.” On the back of the flier was a copy of a medical document confirming his HIV-positive status. Dallas Voice first reported the homophobic attacks.

Sharp said this week that Murray’s office was considering taking up the bill. He mentioned his story during a policy meeting a few weeks ago and later shared it with the senator, who then decided to introduce it.

“It’s kind of crazy to even be placed in Sen. Murray’s office knowing this is a bill she was looking into,” Sharp said.

destined to lead | University of Houston-Downtown senior Kristopher Sharp sits with Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., in her Washington, D.C., office this week. Sharp is an intern in her office and is using his anti-gay bullying experience at UHD to gain support for a collegiate anti-harassment bill introduced by Murray. (Courtesy of Kathryn Robertson/Sen. Patty Murray’s office)
Retired United Methodist Pastor Bill McElvaney will soon have to answer for his decision in early March to officiate the wedding of longtime gay couple Jack Evans and George Harris.

A complaint filed by the Rev. Camille Gaston of Richardson requires him to sit down with Gaston and Michael McKee, bishop of the North Texas Conference. Gaston, is also the district superintendent of the North Texas Conference.

But the outcome of the process called a joint resolution, where the parties and bishop will discuss how to resolve the issue, could be anything from suspending McElvaney to defrocking him if the bishop decides to file charges and the case goes to trial.

McElvaney, emeritus pastor at Northaven United Methodist Church, married Evans and Harris on March 1 at Midway Hills Christian Church. The celebration took place at Midway to prevent Northaven and its current pastor from coming under attack for allowing the ceremony to take place there.

Evans and Harris, who’ve been together for 53 years, asked McElvaney to perform the ceremony after he announced in January that he disagreed with the United Methodist Church Book of Discipline about homosexuality being against God’s teachings and he would perform same-sex unions.

A week later on March 7, he received a letter stating a complaint was filed against him for presiding over the ceremony.

“The UM Discipline calls for a supervisory response from the bishop,” McElvaney wrote on Northaven’s website last week when he announced the news about the complaint. “This response is intended to be pastoral and administrative, directed toward a just resolution between the parties.”

McElvaney also said that the letter explained he’d been suspended from all clergy responsibilities for a period not to exceed 90 days. But in a statement from McKee this week, he said the complaint initiated a “supervisory process” and suspension “is not being pursued.”

McKee said McElvaney’s “officiating a same-sex union has intensified our denomination’s ongoing conversation about human sexuality and same-sex unions.”

“Administrative and pastoral in nature, this process seeks a just resolution in which God’s work of justice, reconciliation, and healing may be realized in the body of Christ,” McKee said. “As a bishop of The United Methodist Church, I realize that our denomination often finds itself in conversations about a number of social issues, including the evolving discussions regarding the church and human sexuality. Like any other body with a diverse membership, there will always be a wide range of deeply held ideas and ideologies.”

Northaven Pastor Eric Folkerth said any Methodist can file a complaint about a situation or action deemed inappropriate or that defies Methodist rules, but the bishop is the only one who can elevate the complaint to charges. He can also dismiss the complaint and not pursue the issue.

If the three agree on a solution during the just resolution phase, the issue is resolved and no more complaints can be filed. However, Folkerth said in the case of McElvaney, who’s said he will perform weddings, more complaints could be filed if he officiates at additional ceremonies.

Folkerth said he doesn’t know how the process will go until it happens.

“I think that’s a hard thing for a lot of people because they don’t understand our system,” he said.

“Pray and take no other action.”

McElvaney said the process has a lot of possible outcomes, and he also encourages prayer during the discussions.

“There are a number of possibilities that may arise from these developments,” McElvaney said.

“This first step involves no legal counsel or judicial procedure.”

Dr. Robert Hunt, professor of Christian Mission and Interreligious Relations at Southern Methodist University’s Perkins School of Theology, doesn’t expect a trial to take place. Instead, he said any number of things could be agreed upon during just resolution.

For instance, a pastor who performed a same-sex wedding was once told to write a letter about accountability and to continue the dialogue about the topic with other clergy.

McElvaney’s age and health may be a factor in how the complaint is resolved. The 85-year-old has liver cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy.

And some bishops have come out publically that they won’t address complaints regarding clergy’s actions for same-sex weddings. Others have said they will take the complaints to trial.

And if the case goes to trial and McElvaney is defrocked, Hunt said there are many more clergy members ready to follow in his footsteps.

“This first step involves no legal counsel or judicial procedure.”
“It just seems way too destined. This is the perfect example of why we need legislation like this.”

Murray agreed.

“When Kris came to intern for me and came in and told me what had happened to him personally, it just crystallized for me how important this is,” Murray said. “And Kris’ courage in not just letting something bad happen to him, but really want to make a difference so this won’t happen to anybody else is so compelling.”

The incident greatly affected Sharp, who once thought about withdrawing from the race and contemplated suicide.

But he said support from the university and the greater LGBT community outweighed the negative pushback at the university.

“I did get depressed. I got really sad, and there were even a couple of moments where I was like I can’t do life anymore,” he said. “If it wasn’t for the support of the community … these people who were being kind to me, I don’t think I’d be here today.”

He later used his role to open an LGBT resource center in the fall and add sexual orientation and gender identity to the nondiscrimination policy in the student handbook.

Now he hopes to use his painful story and his role as an intern to support the bill to passage.

“If this bill were to pass and somehow I were able to help that, help the senator push it or testify on its behalf, if it were to pass, it would almost be worth it,” Sharp said. “It was a very difficult time, of course, in my life, but to know that there are protections in place for all students because of something like that is very meaningful. This specific example exemplifies why we need policies like this to be put in place.”
What comes first, the sex or the relationship?

No matter how many “how-to” dating guides you devour or how many “cardinal rules” your best friends divulge, the first date with a potential mate is always a total crapshoot. You may think you have it down — the right questions to ask, the right answers to give and the perfect way to leave him wanting more. He could be perfect on paper: wonderful job, seemingly intelligent and fills out his T-shirts in all the right ways, but all of that won’t matter if there is no spark. When something does catch fire, though, the hardest question you’ll ask yourself will inevitably arise.

How long should you wait before you sleep together?

Of course, for many gay men, the answer is simple. “Why wait at all?” This is certainly a logical response if you aren’t looking for anything serious. As long as both parties are aware that the sex is transactional and doesn’t equal an emotional connection, no harm done. But if you’re searching for something more along the lines of a husband or less of a hook-up, jumping right into the sack can lead you right out of the boyfriend zone.

Just think about it. We’ve all been there before. You think you might really have something with a certain new man in your life. His text messages make you lightheaded, you swoon over all of his pictures, and his sense of humor is spot on. The chemistry is bubbling over, and you just can’t keep your hands out of his pants for one more second. Cut to 30 hot and heavy minutes later. You achieved the release you desired, and it’s time to wash up. Sure, he’s still as cute and sweet as he was before, and you assume nothing has changed. You kiss goodbye and tentatively plan to meet up again. As you drive back to your place, the craving to reply to the text he just sent you is considerably less intense than it was before. Now, his multiple messages throughout the night aren’t as cute — they’re a little annoying. By the next day, you realize that the visions of relationship bliss had washed down the drain with whatever else you washed off in his shower the day before.

Sex — 1; Relationship — 0.

Or worse, you’re the one with all the post coital warm and fuzzy feelings. After he leaves, you immediately start to worry that you gave it up too soon. As you drive home from date night, you can’t help but notice that the gap between communication can sprout, blossom and die before your emotions even have a chance to take root. Although it’s difficult, withholding the sexual element of a new relationship is sometimes the only way to allow the intellectual connection to happen. And maybe it never does, but at least you’ll know that it’s not because you, quite literally, blew your wad too soon.

Dating is always a gamble, and you sometimes end up with a losing hand no matter how you choose to play your cards. However, having sex too soon is kind of like putting all your chips on the table when you just got into the game. Sure, there’s a chance you could win big, but it’s probably a small one. Most likely, you’ll end up broke before you even get started.

Heaven knows that if it’s already sex you’re looking for, being truthful about what you want will probably prove to be more beneficial in your endeavors. Lead too many husband hunters on, however, and you’ll wind up being pigeonholed as the boy who cried relationship one too many times.

When it comes to dating, always remember that you’re never the exception and always the rule. No matter how many stories you’ve heard about true love spawning out of a one-time-thing, you can’t bet on the same happening to you.

So take some of that self-control that you have when it comes to resisting ice cream before pool season, and put it to use when it comes to your need to get off. Just like with the ice cream, the long-term results are most definitely worth it.

How should we mark Fred Phelps’ death?

Tyler Curry is a Dallas-based writer and is the creator of The Needle Prick Project.
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Dallas Voice: In recent years, on albums such as 1969, Get Happy and now Dream A Little Dream, Pink Martini expanded its scope through collaboration. Can you say something about how you see that fitting in with Pink Martini's recipe?

Thomas Lauderdale: The band has always been about collaboration from the beginning. For me, I never thought that I would be in a band, let alone lead one. The reason I chose not to go off to music school or conservatory was because I felt like the people who were going to conservatory were really narrow thinking and completely isolated in a practice room and not be able to relate to other people. I wanted to go to a liberal arts college and get a broad education. What I learned in college was how to throw a party more than anything else. I was kind of like the cruise director of the Harvard campus for four years. When I started the band, what I really liked about the aspect of it was bringing more people on the stage, which made the whole experience more festive and fun. There were people there to ally with. A shared experience as opposed to being a lonely concert pianist with nobody to spend time with.

The stage then became more theatrical and fun by adding more people. In terms of traveling that made it more interesting. In recent years, what’s been amazing is this idea of collaboration, keeping the band on its toes as well as me on my toes, as well as bringing new energy constantly into the mix so that things never become stale. After 20 years, it’s still riveting. Whether it’s writing a song in Italian with Alba Clemente such as “Una Notte a Napoli” to recording “Kitty Come Home,” one of my favorite songs of all time, with Rufus Wainwright backed by the von Trapps on Get Happy. What makes it interesting is that it is sort of a partnership where these disparate things come together and you get this new thing that I wouldn’t necessarily get on my own or even with just the band members.

As you said, the von Trapps could be heard on Get Happy and, to a greater extent, on Dream A Little Dream. How did that come about?

Two years ago, I was scoring music for the annual Christmas tree lighting in Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland. I’m on the board for the Oregon Symphony, and they called up and said, “We’ve got the von Trapps, the great-grandchildren of Maria and Georg, and they are going to be playing with the Symphony tomorrow night. Do you mind if they come on stage during the Christmas tree lighting and perform a song or two?” I, who love The Sound of Music so much, was in heaven. When I met them, they were totally incredible — beautiful young people who had been homeschooled in Montana, and they’ve been traveling and touring and performing for 10 years and had this incredible rapport and this incredible unified sound. Plus there’s the extraordinary history, which is indicated by the name von Trapp. I totally fell in love.

Looking at the repertoire they were performing, I thought, “It’s pretty Sound of Music-heavy. I could think of at least five songs that they should consider. They were actually at that point trying to figure out in what direction to go. They were straddling that line between being The Sound of Music kids to adults. I felt like I was a good person to actually make recommendations and to be helpful. We started working on this album and my goal for the album was to help them make the transition out of being just The Sound of Music to actually something else. I think what the album does is that; bridges the gap and allows them to go in any direction they want to go in the future.
The album opens and closes with two of August von Trapp’s compositions, “Storm” and “Thunder” respectively. Why did you choose to do that? All of the songs we chose for this album are the songs I think would be the next step forward for life beyond the Sound of Music. I think there will always be that aspect of them, and that may be the way in for many people, but in the end I think what it’s actually about is something even more amazing than the original von Trapp family singers from 50 years ago. They are young and earnest, and they have this new sound which is … I don’t know much about modern pop music, but some people say they sound a lot like Fleet Foxes. That’s interesting because August adores Fleet Foxes. The goal was to create an album that would set them free so they can explore any direction and any kind of music they would want to do in the future.

Did you happen to see the NBC production of The Sound of Music with Carrie Underwood as Maria? No. I’m sure it was hideous. It’s such a terrible idea. It’s like trying to remake Casablanca.

Your Dallas show will feature the von Trapps as musical guests. What can people expect from that? It’s going to be a hodgepodge of activity. We’re going to do all the material that comes from the collaboration with the von Trapps. Traveling with the von Trapp’s, they always make things better. I can only imagine that it’s going to be the most fun tour ever.

Charmian Carr, who played Liesl in the 1965 movie of The Sound of Music, is another guest artist on Dream A Little Dream and can be heard singing “Edelweiss.” How did you swing that? I met Charmian 10 years ago when she was traveling with the Sing-along Sound of Music. It turns out I have a friend here in Portland, and Charmian is his godmother. He grew up in Los Angeles. When I started to work on this project, I thought that I had to get Liesl in on it. She’s an interior decorator — she was Michael Jackson’s interior decorator! So we flew her up.

Color me curious: In the spirit of future collaborations and color coordination, do you think there might come a time when Pink Martini might collaborate with, say, the Indigo Girls or Pink? Absolutely! I think it’s possible to work with anybody. I like collaborating with people who are entirely different. The message of Pink Martini is one of empathy and compassion and finding ways of bringing people who are very different together and unite them through music, which is also the message of the von Trapps. Growing up in Indiana, my parents would entertain, and I would go to sleep upstairs listening to the sound of laughter drifting upstairs. It was very calming and comforting. I think that’s what I’m trying to duplicate in every aspect of my life.

DO RE ME | Thomas Lauderdale, center, will bring his band Pink Martini to the Winspear with special guests the von Trapps.
You know her as the ultimate ass-kicker from TV’s The Biggest Loser, the trainer whose intensity manifests in some of the most intimidating facial expressions known to man … not to mention a yelling spell or two. The thing is, Jillian Michaels’ passion — her single-minded focus — may be intimidating, but it’s also effective. As fans of TBL and her other show, Losing It With Jillian, can attest, Michaels has changed lives.

We picked the brain of the openly gay Michaels in advance of the Dallas stop of her Maximize Your Life Tour, a motivational live show which she says is intended to “awaken you to reignite your passion, define your goals and live in your authentic truth.”

— Jonanna Wisner

**Dallas Voice:** At your live show, you focus on three key health aspects, what you call “self, science and sweat.” What are those, and how do they relate to each other?

*Michaels: “Science” covers, quite literally, the simple science of proper eating to lose weight, keep it off and attain optimal health. The “sweat” section is about how to exercise in the most effective way so you don’t spend hours in the gym, and you get results quickly to help you stay motivated. And the “self” section is really the bulk of the show. This is where we look at where and why we are stuck in our lives and unfulfilled: Learn how to transform pain, suffering and old wounds into wisdom, power and empathy; move through fear; dramatically enhance our self-worth and self-esteem; harness our potential and achieve our life goals once and for all.

What do you think is the biggest roadblock people face when they are trying to shift something in their lives?

*It always comes down to self-worth issues. People either don’t feel the goal is worthy, or that they are worthy of it, and even worse, they doubt their ability to achieve it.

What’s the hardest exercise you do? Like, the one you just absolutely dread?

*I have a friend I work out with who is an absolute monster named Dan Solomone, and I truly hate it.

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— Jonanna Wisner
If you could only recommend one exercise a person could do besides cardio, what would it be and why? I don’t believe in that. It’s like asking a heart surgeon the same question — he couldn’t perform the surgery. The key to fitness is to progress, differentiate and be holistic with your training, which means as many fitness modalities as possible and training as many muscle groups as possible.

What would you say to people who just don’t like physical activity to get them motivated? When you are training properly 30 minutes a day, four to five times a week, will be enough to get great results in conjunction with a healthy diet. And [it helps you] gain perspective. While you might not like fitness, surely you like what it affords you: skinny jeans, bikinis, meeting your grandchildren, walking your daughter down the aisle.

In some ways, the health and fitness situation in the U.S. has been atrocious. In others, it seems like awareness and activity has risen — Michelle Obama’s influence on awareness, shows like The Biggest Loser and Losing It. What is your assessment of the state of the fitness union? I think, with everything, you win some battles and you lose some, but statistically speaking our obesity rates are gradually trending down, and that’s something to really celebrate.

You are known as someone who cuts straight through the bull. Where did that part of your personality come from? Ha! It’s been a long life filled with many different characters who have helped shape me and my persona along the way. Without writing a biography, I would simply say that I personally appreciate the truth even when it’s hard to hear. Authenticity is critical when you are giving advice to people, and in order to truly help someone change an aspect of their lives you must deliver honest solutions that produce real results.

You’ve been open about having had difficulty in your childhood — night terrors, bullying, you were overweight. How did that shape your relationship to physical fitness? I was fortunate enough to get into martial arts when I was around 12 years old, and while my transformation didn’t happen overnight, I learned very early on that feeling strong physically transcended into every facet of my life. I had more confidence in every aspect of my life. Fitness to me is not just about building a better body; it’s one tool I use of many to help people build a better life.

Do you think the LGBT community has a different relationship to being healthy? Honestly, I don’t differentiate. I see people struggling from all walks of life with their health regardless of who they choose to sleep with.

This season of The Biggest Loser was not without controversy. What was the first thought that went through your head when you saw Rachel Frederickson come on stage after losing all that weight? What is the proper balance between healthy and unhealthy weight loss? Obviously, I was shocked and concerned. Rachel is a good kid, and I believe that only her trainer, Dolvett, can comment on her journey as he was the one working with her.

Looking back, is there anything that you would have done in your career differently, say on Biggest Loser or Losing It? Why? I have to say... being in the public eye you get credit for things you don’t deserve and criticism for things you don’t deserve. Ultimately, I don’t believe in regret because I think all setbacks in life are nothing other than entry points for learning.

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**REVIEW: ‘The Mousetrap’**

A houseful of travelers, all virtual strangers to each other, arrive at a newly-opened bed and breakfast on the Moors of England just as a snowstorm traps them all inside. At the same time, news reports of a vicious killer on a rampage, recently seen in the area, fill them with dread. Could it be one of them? Maybe the flamboyant gay student with the suspicious name Christopher Wren? (Jeff Wittekend, pictured center)? Or the blustery retired major (Francis Henry, left)? And what do we really know about the estate’s proprietor (Bryan Brooks, right)?

The Mousetrap is the classic whodunnit, the Agatha Christie chestnut that has been playing in London’s West End since before Queen Elizabeth’s coronation (25,000-plus performances with no end in sight). It’s not, and never had been, great dramatic literature, but it is (and continues to be) essential viewing for theater buffs, with a surprise ending (always a Christie specialty) and all the trappings of a melodramatic hoot: A creepy old house, a gruesome murder of one of the guests, a detective (Michael Speck) who solves the case by summarizing the facts.

Theatre Britain, which continues its revival of the show through this weekend, understands the traditions of the English drawing-room mystery and has assembled a cast with several standout performances, especially Wittekend as the scatter-brained, flirtatious young man, Speck as an intense and charismatic Sgt. Trotter, Henry as the epitome of stuffy retired military and Jackie L. Kemp as the puckish Italian scamp Paravoni. Director Sue Birch coordinates the entrances and exits with the precision of grand farce, although she never creates the sense of foreboding claustrophobia that makes the walls feel as if they are confining you with a maniac... at least until the lights go out and a victim gasps for breath in the darkness.

If you’ve never seen The Mousetrap during its 60-year run, you’ll wonder who’s the killer, but even if you have, it’s still tons of fun — a bit of theater history performed with relish.

— Arnold Wayne Jones


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**DALLAS INDEPENDANT VOLLEYBALL ASSOCIATION**
Kevin Gunter’s introduction to Dallas musical theater was a trial by fire. Literally. In 2006, Gunter happened to meet Jeff Rane, one of the co-founders of Uptown Players, at Amy Stevenson’s Mama’s Party cabaret. After seeing Uptown’s production of Pageant, he was asked to help out on UP’s upcoming musical Thrill Me. But the day he arrived at the theater for a rehearsal, something was off. “There was smoke coming out of the theater,” he recalls. “I knew something was wrong.”

The fire at the KD Studio Theater postponed the show, but only accelerated the need for Gunter’s services: Within a week, he was sight-reading music at an improvised benefit concert to get the company’s season on track again. And since then, Gunter has been one of Uptown’s go-to guys — not just to play the piano, but as musical director of their shows, including co-directing their annual Broadway Our Way fundraiser.

“His musicianship and piano skills allow the cast to easily learn their music, and the orchestra to sound terrific under his leadership,” says Rane. Still, it’s likely you wouldn’t recognize his face. Don’t feel badly; though. Musical directors are, ironically, unsung in the theater, frequently masked behind a scrim, hidden away with the rest of the orchestra. And unlike operatic or symphony conductors, they rarely garner applause just by stepping up the podium.

Gunter hardly minds, though. Musical directing is not his full-time job — he’s on staff in the musical department of SMU, where he teaches piano — but it is one he’s passionate about.

Since his debut with Thrill Me, he has worked for other troupes like WaterTower Theatre and Lyric Stage. Uptown is a kind of home. In fact he returns there this week, leading the band in their latest production, a revival of their hit musical comedy Pageant — a spoof of beauty pageants featuring an all-drag cast.

“I saw [the original production] so many times, I probably saw every contestant win at least once,” he says. It may also be what got him the bug to work in theater. As a music nerd, Gunter grew up begging his parents for piano lessons. He got his undergraduate degree in piano performance before moving to Dallas to pursue his graduate degree in performance and pedagogy. He was such a standout, he was offered a teaching position on staff before he actually graduated.

From his training, Gunter is well-versed in the mechanics of composition and arranging — issues like meter and tempo. But as a teacher, he’s also a people-person, someone who loves working the grueling hours it takes to get a show off the ground.

GENUINE GRRLS | Kevin Gunter, center, is used to being behind the scenes, but the veteran music director is having a blast conducting one of his favorite shows, the campy ‘Pageant.’ (Photo by Mike Morgan)
‘Pageant’s’ Kevin Gunter went from SMU music professor to gay go-to guy for musical directors

“I’m one of the people who’s there beginning to end — when they pick the show, then at auditions, where I might be playing the piano — though if I’m lucky, someone else is playing and I can take it all in, then even working with the cast,” he says. That’s a commitment of anywhere from six months to a year before a show opens.

As musical director, he has to come up with a sensible way to approach the sound of a show, from the band to the singers. For *Pageant*, that’s a needle that needs precise threading.

“In terms of how to sing and the sound we wanted, hopefully you have a vision for what the show is,” he explains. “Chris Robinson, the director, told me from day one that we are spoofing the pageant system from within, so while they are onstage we want them to be cheesey and unheared, but also sound good. They he just let me run with it.”

Only one role in the show, the pageant’s M.C., Frankie Cavalier (played by B.J. Cleveland), is actually played as a man, so his range is lower than everyone else. The rest are written in male harmonies, but often a little higher than normal. That’s a challenge Gunter is used to, having worked on Broadway Our Way, where men sing the songs written for women and vice versa, but which he also did on last year’s *Songs for a New World*.

“We flipped the genders of some of the songs, and you’re already dealing with a very complicated score,” he says. The best way to help the
Take off the mask

DIFFA’s latest incarnation takes the form of a masquerade ball. And it’s not even Mardi Gras anymore.

There was a time when the DIFFA gala was all about denim. Jeans jackets were the fashion accessory, gussied up by acclaimed designers and even A-list celebs, bid on during a runway show. But times change, and DIFFA has changed with them. The big AIDS fundraiser has, for one, moved to a new locale (from the Anatole to the Omni Hotel), and while there are still jackets (more of the smoking variety) to glam up the place, the theme this year focuses on a masquerade ball. Elaborate Venetian masks will be a selling point, but as always, it’s as much about raising money as it is looking good.

Here’s a selection of some of the masks up for auction this year, but expect Dallas’ fashionistas to arrive with their own as well.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

HOUSE OF DIFFA
Omni Dallas Hotel
555 S. Lamar St. March 29 at 6 p.m.
$375. DIFFADallas.org.
Friday 03.28

Dallas Opera cuts up with ‘Barber of Seville’

It’s perhaps the most beloved opera buffa in the classical canon, a farce that’s so iconic even if you’ve never seen a production, you’ve certainly seen Bugs Bunny’s takeoff of it. Yes, Rossini’s The Barber of Seville is a delicious sex comedy, about a conniving barber who helps a patron woo a beautiful young woman. It’s full of disguises, mistaken identities and one of the most recognizable scores in opera history. And while nearly 200 years old, this barber still cuts it. It will be performed in rep with DO’s Die Tote Stadt.


Thursday 04.03

Bullying or bravery? That’s what ‘Gidion’s Knot’ wants to know

A parent and a teacher are having a heated conversation about a fifth grader named Gidion. Is he a bully? A protector? A victim? Kitchen Dog Theater continues its season of hot-button social topics in Gidion’s Knot, which tackles the politically active topic of bullying. A two-hander for actresses Leah Spillman and Jenni Kirk, Tina Parker directs this regional premiere, which was bumped for more than a week due to a casting change, giving it an unusual mid-week opening night.


Friday 03.28

Cheslea Handler dishes at Verizon

Anyone who’s ever seen Cheslea Handler’s talkshow, read her books or seen her standup before knows her secret: She’s a gay man in a straight woman’s body, as sassy and filthy as a drag queen on a roll. Which is probably why we love her so much. Her queerness probably even accounts for the provocative name of her new tour, Uganda Be Kidding Me Live.

DEETS: Verizon Theatre, 1001 Performance Place, Grand Prairie. 8 p.m. AXS.com.

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THEATER


We Are Proud to Present a Presentation ..., a regional premiere. 3200 Main St. Through April 19. $15–$30. Undermain.org.


OPERA


COMEDY
Chelsea Handler: Uganda Be Kidding Me Live Tour. The racy comic performs her no-holds-barred standup. Verizon Theatre, 1001 Performance Place, Grand Prairie. 8 p.m. $30–$70. AXS.com.

FIDAY 03.28

COMMUNITY
Dick’s Happy Hour: White Party Edition. Monthly gay mixer, with guest DJ Prince P. Levu, 2505 Pacific Ave. 6–10 p.m. RSVO required at DicksHappyHour.com.

SATURDAY 03.29

FASHION
House of DIFFA: Masquerade. Omni Dallas Hotel, 555 S. Lamar St. 6–10 p.m. DIFFA Dallas.org.

DIVASLICIOUS | Denise Lee performs songs from her album “Divas of American Music” at the South Dallas Cultural Center on Sunday.

SUNDAY 03.30

CONCERTS
Denise Lee: Divas of American Music. The popular singer revives her one-woman show of tunes from the Great American Songbook at the place where she had her first professional gig in 1986. South Dallas Cultural Center, 3400 S. Fitzhugh Ave. 6 p.m. $35–$50. DeniseLeeOnstage.com.
MONDAY 03.31
BROADCAST
*RuPaul’s Drag Race*. The sixth season continues, with the two “premiere” groups of six queens each merging into one group. Logo at 8 p.m.

*Dallas*. The Texas-set nighttime soap continues its third season. TNT at 8 p.m.

THEATER
*Remember*. The Dallas Theater Center Guild presents a staged reading of Preston Jones’ forgotten play, written while working at the DTC in the 1970s. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. 7 p.m. $10–$15. DTCGuild.org.

WEDNESDAY 04.02
THEATER
*Nocturne*. The second show of Second Thought Theatre’s 10th anniversary season, written by Adam Rapp (who was a staff writer on *The L Word*). Bryant Hall on the Kalita Humphreys campus, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. April 2–26 (in previews through April 3). STT.co.

THURSDAY 04.03
THEATER


FASHION

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**Submit to the Community Calendar**

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

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Solution on page 23

Across
1 Provincetown mementos
5 Boxers are visible here
9 Place for hay
13 Some guys do it nocturnally
14 C’te d’___
15 Memo starter
16 Tales of the City character
17 Blast furnace fuel
18 Rip Torn’s voice role in Hercules
19 With 37-Across, Christian Campbell musical comedy
22 Mar. basketball tourney
23 “See ya”
24 Destination of the Bounty
26 Tarzan portrayer Ron
27 Stats from A League of Their Own
31 Harry Potter’s field
32 Bone to pick
33 Lucy’s gal pal
34 Small rum cake
37 See 19-Across
39 Verb of Verlaine
40 On the ball
42 Skirt, as an issue

44 “Iron Mike” of football
45 Broadway light
46 Granola lesbian’s bit
49 Official messenger
51 The Family of Max Desir author Robert
53 Latina writer Castillo
54 Campbell movie about a DC lobbyist
58 Birch of Indiana
60 End of Caesar’s boast
61 Series ender
62 One at a checkout
63 Ryan of porn
64 Ending for Copland
65 Dancer Shawn and others
66 Animal abodes
67 Three of Frida’s family

Down
1 Part of the head
2 Lacking family values
3 Low A
4 Tennessee, but not Williams
5 Like many Mae West quotes
6 Shirt brand
7 Zap in the microwave
8 Alexander, with “the”
9 Nickname that Taylor disliked
10 Campbell movie of 2007
11 More gay?
12 Ball
20 Shoe holder
21 Title for Edna or Judi
25 Couldn’t stomach
28 Gas station abbr.
29 For the birds
30 Start something with Mauresmo
32 Hooded jacket
34 Compulsive masturbation, e.g.
35 Cause hostility in
36 With The, Campbell mystery movie of 2008
38 Gielgud’s john
41 It might go right to the bottom
43 The lowdown
46 One with a gifted tongue
47 Game room
48 Stein steady
50 Michelangelo masterpiece
52 Tape deck button
55 West ___ Story
56 Windows’ picture
57 Zips
59 ___ Pinafore
Making the SCENE the week of March 28–April 3

Alexandre’s: Carlos Saenz on Friday at 10 p.m. Mi Diva Loca on Saturday at 10 p.m. Lula J on Wednesday at 9 p.m. So Strung Out with Spencer West on Thursday at 9 p.m.

Dallas Eagle: Southpaw Puppy & Trainer meet and greet on Friday at 8 p.m. Puppy and Trainer contest on Saturday at 7 p.m. United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Angels vs. Demons on Sunday at 7 p.m. Benefits Greg Dollinger Memorial AIDS Fund.

Eden Lounge: Dinah Shore Vegas Party with Robin Gans and DJ BJ Laray. Chance to win a Dinah Vegas weekend package for two and other giveaways. Saturday, 9 p.m.–2 a.m.

Rose Room: Guys and Dolls presents Miss LifeWalk hosted by Heather Thomas with Wayne Smith, Victoria Weston, Edna Jean Robinson and Chanel Champagne. Sunday at 6:30 p.m. $10 at the door. $20 reserved seating.

Sue Ellen’s: GIRL opening for Dilana from Rockstar Supernova on Friday. Susan Arbuckle Band from Austin on Saturday. Bad Habits on Sunday.

Woody’s Sports & Video Bar: Dallas Woody’s Wrecking Crew Extra Innings. Sunday, 4–7 p.m.

To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/category/photos.
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