Wedding Bells:

Is marriage equality a foregone conclusion?

By David Taffet, Page 8
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Obituary

Kee Newman Holt, 58, died Jan. 19 after a long battle with cancer. Holt had worked at Resource Center since 2005, first as coordinator of programming for LGBT seniors and more recently as center services manager. Before coming on staff, he volunteered at the center for many years.

He was from LaMesa, Texas and attended Angelo State University. For about 10 years he worked as an administrator at the state school in Denton.

Holt was an avid traveler and enjoyed traveling with his close friend, Doug Wright. Puerta Vallarta was one of their favorite places to visit.

Artist Rob Conover said, “Kee always had a story to tell and always made me laugh. His humor was so much like mine; we both knew the latest gossip and laughed together at some very insane things we saw.”

Former Resource Center Board Chair Terry Loftis said, “I have no words upon hearing this news. [He was] and remain[s] an amazing spirit and man.”

Kee is survived by his cousin Kelli Strube of Grapevine, his aunt Kay Robinson Eaton of Heber Springs, Ark., and his uncle Frank Kee Robinson of Knoxville, Tenn., as well as his family at Resource Center including co-workers and many people who use the facility for a variety of purposes.

There will be a celebration of his life later in the spring. To be notified, send an email to DRWrightDFW@aol.com.

Memorials can be made in Kee’s name to Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St., Dallas 75219.

Bruce Jaster named interim executive director of Turtle Creek Chorale

Bruce Jaster has been named by the board of directors of the Turtle Creek Chorale as its interim executive director, replacing Kim Sosolik, who resigned this week to pursue other business interests.

Jaster was on the board of the Chorale for 10 years and sang with the group for 15 years. He also established an endorsement for the Chorale.

He leaves a position with Price Waterhouse to take this job with the Chorale.

In the LGBT community, Jaster was known in the 1990s as an owner of The Reservation Desk, a travel agency based in Oak Lawn that specialized in gay travel. He serves now on the board of The Dallas Way.

Jaster begins his new position on Jan. 27, just two weeks before the Chorale’s 35th anniversary concert that long-time Chorale artistic director Tim Seelig will conduct. Tickets for that concert are available at TurtleCreek.org.

— David Taffet

And the (Miss Gay Dallas State) winners are …

On Saturday night, I was honored to be one of the judges at the 2015 Miss Gay Dallas State and Miss Gay Dallas State At Large pageants, held at The Brick as a preliminary in the Miss Gay Texas State Pageant System.

The very talented Victoria Weston won the title of Miss Gay State, and Basha Nicole, another very talented performer, won the Miss Gay Dallas State At Large title. First runners-up were Natasha Alexander Parsons for Miss Gay Dallas State, and Kenya Rider for Miss Gay Dallas State At Large. Vanity Rains, second alternate to Miss Gay Dallas State, did an excellent job as well.

— Tammye Nash

Tickets to see Laverne Cox at UNT go on sale

Laverne Cox, the first transgender person to be nominated for an acting Emmy Award and a vocal advocate for LGBT issues, will present her talk, “Ain’t I a Woman: My Journey to Womanhood,” at the University of North Texas Super Pit coliseum in Denton on Feb. 24. A Time magazine cover model, Cox is a co-star on the Netflix hit series Orange is the New Black, and will discuss the racism, classism and gender bias she has dealt with. She’s being presented through the Mary Jo and V. Lane Rawlins Fine Arts Series of UNT.

Tickets are $10 for the general public, $5 for UNT staff, and free for UNT students and are available at untuniontickets.universitytickets.com.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

California hate group left town after CoH protest

A group that protested Sabbath services at Cathedral of Hope on Sunday, Jan. 17, left Dallas after their appearance at the church.

The head of the group traveled to Dallas from Los Angeles to protest a Muslim imam conference in Garland and Saturday’s MLK parade before heading over to Cathedral of Hope to spread the hate. Police confirmed Cathedral of Hope was the group’s last stop before heading out of town.

“On their way out of town, why not harass others,” Dallas police spokesperson Monica Cordova said.

According to its website, gays are just a small portion of what this hate group protests. Among its other targets are Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, atheists, rebellious women, adulterers, pot smokers, abortionists, witches, blasphemers and ... yes, hypocrites ... because they’re not that.

The Los Angeles-based group, Official Street Preachers, is headed by Ruben Israel Chavez aka Ruben Israel. The Southern Poverty Law Center lists it as a “general hate” group.

“These groups espouse a variety of rather unique hateful doctrines and beliefs that are not easily categorized,” the SPLC writes about “general hate” groups. In other words, they don’t specialize in their hate.

— David Taffet
FINAL WEEK!
VOTING ENDS JANUARY 31

at dallasvoice.com/RVA

by 01.31.15 for your local favorites!

YOU CAN WIN

$500 cash, dinner for two at Dish and
a pair of tickets to “Chicago” at Bass Hall!
Tickets to the Tyler Area Gays’ Sixth Annual Ball/Viva Las Vegas are available for purchase until doors open at 7 p.m. for the Saturday, Jan. 24 event. Discounted tickets are $35, $30 for students, and may be purchased either online at Tylerarea-gays.com/viva-las-vegas.html or through a Project TAG member by e-mail at Info@TylerAreaGays.com. Regularly priced tickets are $40 at the door.

Tarrant County Democratic Party hosts 2016 summit

Tarrant County Democratic Party is sponsoring a Strategy Summit to prepare for the 2016 elections. Texas Democratic Party Chairman Gilberto Hinojosa will be a guest speaker. The goal is to create a comprehensive Tarrant County 2016 Action Plan.

Topics include messaging, precinct chair recruitment and development, social media management, club integration, fundraising and voter registration and education.

The summit will be from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 24 at the University of North Texas Health Science Center Research and Education Building, 3500 Camp Bowie Blvd., Fort Worth. Call 817-335 VOTE (8683) for more information.

Information for tax season released

As the 2015 tax season begins, individuals and families will be asked to provide basic information regarding their health insurance on their tax returns. People who purchased coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplaces, or decided not to enroll in coverage, should be aware of the additional steps that will be a part of the tax filing process starting this year.

More information and resources are available at IRS.gov or Healthcare.gov/taxes.

For more information, visit IRS.gov/freefile or IRS.gov/VITA. More information and resources are available at IRS.gov or Healthcare.gov/taxes.

Meet Austin. Austin is a purebred Longhaired Dachshund. He is very handsome and will make an awesome new companion and best friend. Austin is a loving little boy and his loves going on walks. Take a little time to visit Austin and show him what a loving home is all about.

Austin 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–5 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.

DCHHS Kicks Off Chikungunya and West Nile Virus Campaigns

Dallas County Health and Human Services has begun its 2015 information and education campaigns to stop the transmission and spread of the Chikungunya and West Nile viruses.

The campaign involves public information and education initiatives as well as detection, prevention and control methods. DCHHS will continue with year-round surveillance, public health follow-up of reported human cases, public awareness and control through source reduction.

More information on the campaign is available online at Dallascounty.org/department/hhs.
Equality Texas seeking participants in Feb. 17 Faith Advocacy Day

Tammye Nash | Managing Editor
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The first of three advocacy days hosted by Equality Texas during the 84th Texas Legislature is less than a month away, and Daniel Williams, the LGBT lobby group’s legislative specialist, this week encouraged LGBT people of faith from across the state to register to participate.

Equality Texas’ Faith Advocacy Day is Tuesday, Feb. 17. It will include a short morning session on how to navigate the Capitol and most effectively communicate with lawmakers, followed by lunch. Participants will be divided into teams, with each team assigned to specific legislators. After lunch, the teams will spend the afternoon visiting their assigned lawmakers.

Family Advocacy Day will be March 23 and Freedom Advocacy Day will be April 13.

Williams explained that while the different dates have different themes, those coming to lobby elected officials all three days will address Equality Texas’ full legislative agenda — they will just do so “through a different lens for each day.”

“People [in general] think of LGBT people as kind of free radicals,” Williams said. “They don’t think of us as people with jobs, people with families, people of faith who attend church. We have to draw those connections for them, and do it very clearly.

“The LGBT community includes people of faith, and those people use their faith to inform their actions and their decisions in all parts of their lives,” Williams continued. “I am a person of faith, and my faith teaches me to treat others they way I want to be treated. So when I think about addressing discrimination or bullying in the schools, I think about making sure those children are treated the way I would want to be treated.”

Williams said Equality Texas is asking those who want to participate in Faith Advocacy Day register in advance at EqualityFederation.SalsaLabs.com so that the organization can put together packets of constituent-matched materials and assign each participant to a team.

Each team will have a leader who has participated in previous lobby days and is familiar with the process. Teams leaders can then help their team members lobby in the most effective and efficient manner, he said. Each team will be focused on a specific issue on the organization’s legislative agenda.

This year for the first time, Equality Texas is asking those registering for Faith Advocacy Day to pay a $5 donation to help offset the cost of the materials, the staff time and other expenses the organization incurs in sponsoring the lobby days. “But,” Williams stressed, “we don’t want that $5 donation to keep people who really want to participate from being able to do so. We do have scholarships available, and anyone who has a question or a need can contact us.”

Williams said that in years past, so many people have turned out to participate in Equality Texas lobby days that some people didn’t have the chance to fully participate. This year, by separating efforts into three different days with three different focuses, Equality Texas hopes to maximize its efforts, giving more LGBT community members the chance to interact with more lawmakers.

Participants can also choose the day that best fits their passion — faith, family or freedom.

Williams said Equality Texas has a wide-ranging legislative agenda this year that includes marriage equality and speaking out against anti-equality bills such as Rep. Cecil Bell’s House Bill 623, which would punish state employees who comply with any future court order requiring Texas to recognize the freedom to marry.

Other issues include ensuring that LGBT people are protected from discrimination in the workplace, in housing, in public accommodations, in public schools, in state contracts and across the spectrum of daily life and business in the state. Equality Texas is also supporting efforts to allow both parents’ names to be on supplemental birth certificates in adoptions, regardless of the parents’ genders; efforts to equalize the “Romeo and Juliet” laws that govern consensual sexual contact between minors and older teens, making the rules the same for same-sex couples as they are for opposite-sex couples; and efforts to make it easier for transgender individuals to have their gender markers changed as necessary on officials documents, among others.

For more information on Faith Advocacy Day, call Equality Texas at 512-474-5475 or email Daniel-Williams@EqualityTexas.org.
Marriage equality and the Supreme Court

The conclusion seems foregone, but SCOTUS’ timeline, other details remain uncertain

DAVID TAFFET | Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

When the U.S. Supreme Court accepted petitions from plaintiffs in marriage equality cases from four states, it laid out a timeline and limited discussion to two questions.

Unlike the 5th Circuit, which heard one hour of arguments on each of three cases from Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas, the Supreme Court has consolidated cases from Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee into one, then divided the hearing into two parts.

First, the court will hear 90 minutes of arguments on the question, “Does the 14th Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between people of the same sex?” Then the court will hear one hour of arguments on the question, “Does the 14th Amendment require a state to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state?”

Lambda Legal Supervising Senior Staff Attorney Ken Upton said the two cases from Ohio only involved recognition, so that state’s attorneys and plaintiffs will only be involved in the second portion of the hearing. His organization was involved in one of the Ohio cases.

Despite what seems to be a limitation by the court to constitutional questions, Upton said he expects the states to argue their full range of excuses for refusing to treat gay and lesbian couples equally.

“I don’t think arguments will be very different” than the ones already heard across the country in trial and appellate court proceedings, Upton said.

However, the court did limit discussion to the 14th Amendment, so Upton said that eliminates discussion of the “full faith and credit” clause of the U.S. Constitution.

The 14th Amendment does ensure due process and equal protection by the states.

The Windsor decision, which declared part of the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional, didn’t address 14th Amendment issues. Instead, it based its decision on the 5th Amendment’s right of due process by the federal government.

Matt Pepping, attorney for the plaintiffs in the Texas marriage equality case that was heard by the 5th Circuit earlier this month, agrees.

“The issue will come down to due process and equal protection,” he said.

Pepping said as states have lost over and over again, their arguments have been winnowed down. He expects attorneys for the states will use the “responsible procreation argument.” That is, he said, the “last man standing” in terms of usable arguments against marriage equality, but it is an argument that ultimately fails.

“In 30-odd cases, they haven’t come up with any good arguments against marriage equality,” Pepping said.

Upton said he expects attorneys for the states to argue the right of a state to determine who can get married. Attorneys for the states will argue they have a “legitimate” interest, while attorneys arguing for marriage equality will insist they’d need a “compelling” interest to limit marriage rights.

The time line

Briefs from the petitioners — those that originally sued their states for marriage recognition — are due at the Supreme Court by 2 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 27. The states must respond by 2 p.m. on Friday, March 27 and reply briefs are due by 2 p.m. on Friday, April 17.

That doesn’t leave much more time for the case to be heard this session.

The court hasn’t set the date for the hearing but only hears arguments on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesday through April 29 this session.

Decisions are written and issued through the end of June. Often the court leaves its most controversial decisions for the last day on its calendar — June 29 this year.

The most likely scenario for a hearing and outcome, according to Upton, is the case will be heard the last week in April with a decision rendered the last week of June. Should the same five justices (or more) that ruled for Windsor also come down on the side of marriage equality, the — at this time — 14 states that still don’t recognize marriage equality should be marriage equality states by July.

That’s the most likely scenario, but not the only one, Upton said. He said the court could decide to send the ruling back to the lower court — in this case, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeal, which ruled against marriage equality — and could do so without comment. If that happens, the 6th Circuit could change its mind or reaffirm its original ruling.

The court might want more time and decide not to hear the case until the fall session. It could wait to hear more circuit courts weigh in on the issue. The court hasn’t heard from several appellate courts, including the 1st Circuit that includes Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. All of these states became marriage equality states without appeals court rulings.

Puerto Rico, however, is also in the 1st Circuit, and a judge there ruled against marriage equality last fall.

The 5th Circuit heard appeals on cases from Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi in January but has not issued its ruling yet.

“We’ve been surprised before,” Upton said, referring to the court’s surprise decision in October to not take any of several marriage cases appealed from other federal appellate courts, effectively doubling the number of marriage equality states in a two-month time span.

Marriage equality in Texas

By Upton’s likely scenario, Texas should be a marriage equality state by July.

Mark Phariss, one of the plaintiffs in the Texas marriage case and himself an attorney, said he believes the 5th Circuit will issue a ruling and will do so within the next few weeks. He said the court will probably stay its ruling pending the Supreme Court hearing and decision. But his attorneys plan to ask the court to lift the stay, and, if necessary, appeal to the Supreme Court to lift the stay as it did in the cases in October and more recently in Florida.

Phariss said he’s immersed himself in the various court rulings and briefs filed around the country and he’s “absolutely confident” of a positive ruling by the Supreme Court.

He cited the Michigan case, which involves a couple that adopted special needs children. Based on Kennedy’s other rulings and how much he cares about what’s best for children, Phariss said he couldn’t imagine Kennedy ruling against that couple — especially after Kennedy wrote three previous, positive rulings on LGBT issues, including Lawrence v Texas (the Texas sodomy law challenge) and Windsor.

Other than the 6th Circuit and two lower court rulings, Phariss noted that every court has agreed.

“It’s impossible they’ve all gotten it wrong,” he said.

Co-plaintiffs in the Texas case with Phariss and his partner Victor Holmes are Cleo De Leon and Nicole Dimetman, an Austin couple expecting a baby in March. They petitioned the court to hold the hearing before they have their baby, Pepping said.

“We expect the 5th Circuit to rule promptly,” Pepping said.
Trans activist says nondiscrimination ordinance lacks teeth

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

Nell Gaither isn’t having it with Plano’s equal rights ordinance.

If anything, the Dallas transgender activist and Trans Pride Initiative president says she thinks the nondiscrimination ordinance, passed by the Plano City Council in December, is not just flawed but actually harmful.

On Wednesday, Jan. 21 TPI released a position statement denouncing the ordinance. And the organization did not hold back: “[We are] publishing this statement to express our conviction that the Plano Code of Ordinances Section 2-11, as modified by the so-called ‘Equal Rights Ordinance,’ is detrimental to the trans community and other marginalized persons who may experience discrimination due to sexual orientation or gender identity.”

Among the seven types of exemptions in the ordinance are nonprofit (except for city contractors), religious and educational organizations.

Gaither also believes the ordinance contradicts the announcement by outgoing U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder last year that Title VII could be disregarded, Gaither said.

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Exempting organizations from the ordinance means any complaint filed under Title VII could be disregarded, Gaither said.

“It’s a green light to discriminate with no recourse,” she added.

According to the 2010 National Transgender Discrimination Survey, released jointly by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National LGBTIQ Task Force, more than half of respondents reported being verbally harassed or disrespected in a place of public accommodation.

It’s history repeating to Amy Stone, an associate professor of sociology at Trinity University in San Antonio who studies transgender issues. She couldn’t comment on the specifics of the Plano ordinance, but her research shows Gaither is probably right.

“One of the ways transgender discrimination happens in public accommodations, including bathrooms, and faith-based nonprofit organizations like homeless shelters. Because of religious right opposition and misunderstandings about the different needs of trans people in the LGB community, transgender protections in many municipal nondiscrimination ordinances are often weakened by unclear language over who is covered and exceptions like religious organizations and bathrooms.”

And Gaither isn’t the only trans activist decrying the ordinance. In December, Voice contributor Leslie McMurray blasted the ordinance in a column:

“The transgender community is once again left behind and twisting in the wind as the ‘we get yours’ attitude prevails once more. Not one organization that claims to represent LGBT interests stood up and cried foul. The LGB train left the station, again leaving the little ‘T’ far behind. ‘We’ll come back and get you later,’ they say.”

In an open letter also published in the Voice in December, the Transgender Education Network of Texas was blunt: The exemptions allow nonprofits to continue practicing bigotry.

“The city of Plano has created a situation wherein those who most need services such as shelter and other public accommodations can be turned away, refused service and ignored or treated badly simply because of who they are.”

Gaither says Plano and its elected officials don’t bear all the blame.

“Plano shut out the gender community because they didn’t understand the issues or the tactics of the conservative religious groups,” Gaither said. “GALA [Gay and Lesbian Alliance of North Texas] has no interest in the trans community so didn’t do the right thing in their communications by insisting that the ordinance actually be an equal rights ordinance. [So] we have a lose/lose situation that is incredibly problematic for the broad community.”

Gaither also chided Equality Texas for accepting an ordinance that doesn’t adequately protect anyone in the LGBT community, especially trans people.

Opposition from the right

Gaither was clear that she has hardly found allies in the Religious Right. “Even if I do really dislike the Plano ordinance, I just hate seeing the bigotry these folks express. I don’t get where it comes from,” she said.

Jeanne Rubin, vice president of Gay and Lesbian Alliance of North Texas and a Frisco resident, has felt the heat. She said GALA was not as involved as has been suggested. She agrees the policy doesn’t go far enough, and stresses that her organization “didn’t write or approve anything.”

She also said the policy is an ongoing project, like so much of the political process.

“If you get 70 percent [of what you want], that’s fantastic,” Rubin said, quoting a friend and elected official. “We have to look outside of ourselves. It’s politics.”

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JANUARY
- Jan. 10-Feb. 15: Bruce Wood: A Retrospective
  A new exhibition celebrating the life and creative contributions of the renowned Fort Worth dancer, choreographer and creative genius at the Arlington Museum of Art, 201 W. Main St, Arlington. Tuesday–Saturday 10:00–5:00 p.m. Sunday 1–5:00 p.m. Admission is $8 for adults, $5 for students and seniors. Children 12 and under are free. Call 817-275-4600 or email ama@arlingtonmuseum.org for more information.

- Jan. 24: Tyler Area Gays Winter Ball
  Join the Tyler Area Gays for their “Viva Las Vegas” Winter Ball from 7 p.m.—midnight at the Holiday Inn South Broadway, 5701 South Broadway Ave., Tyler. DJ, dance floor, casino games, heavy hors d’oeuvres, a cash bar and a contest for best Las Vegas entertainer look-alikes with prizes. All tickets will include a stack of casino chips. Early bird discounted tickets are $35 adult, $30 student or $40 at door. Tickets available at Tylerareagays.com/viva-las-vegas.html.

- Jan. 30-Feb. 7:
  Couple’s Communication Workshop
  Candy Marcum, LPC and Jimmy Owen, LPC conduct a two-weekend workshop for couples. 5-7 p.m. on Jan. 30 and Feb. 6 and 10 a.m.–noon on Jan 31 and Feb. 7 at 3500 Oak Lawn Ave., Suite 260. $440 per couple. 214-521-1278. Candy@CandyMarcum.com.

- Jan. 31: Blue in the Heart of Texas 2
  BITHOT is a biennial, one-day summit for Democratic Party activists toward the goal of discussing and maximizing the party’s effectiveness in 2016. The summit includes an afternoon “KnowledgeFest” of breakout sessions on specific topics. Tickets are $5 and cover meals. 8 a.m.–5 p.m. at New Mount Zion Baptist Church, 9550 Shepherd Road. Register online at Bit.ly/BITHOTDCDP.

FEBRUARY
- Feb. 7: Turtle Creek Chorale
  35th Anniversary Concert
  Tim Seelig conducts this performance. City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. Tickets at Tickets.TurtleCreekChorale.com or at 214-526-3214.

- Feb. 7: Night Circus Masquerade Ball
  The Women’s Chorus of Dallas annual fundraiser. 7 p.m. at Sammons Center for the Arts, 3630 Harry Hines Blvd.

- Feb. 14: LGBTQ SAVES Youth dance
  Valentine’s dance for youth 7–10 p.m. at Agape MCC, 4615 E California Way, Forest Hill. For more information visit LGBTQSaves.weebly.com or e-mail LGBTQSaves@gmail.com.

- Feb. 14: Dash for the Beads
  Oak Cliff Mardi Gras-themed walk, run and festival benefits local area schools to help promote healthy eating and physical activity. 9:30 a.m. at Kidd Springs Park. Register online at Bit.ly/1tZOtxv.

- Feb. 15: Mardi Gras Oak Cliff Parade
  Bishop Arts District at 4 p.m.

- Feb. 17: Equality Texas Faith Advocacy Day
  Lobby legislators in Austin about issues facing LGBT people. First of three EQTX’s lobbying days at the Capitol. Co-sponsored by the Texas Freedom Network. 11 a.m.—4 p.m. at First United Methodist Church of Austin Family Life Center, 1300 Lavaca St. Advanced registration required. Register at EqualityTexas.org.

- Feb. 19: Urban Engagement Book Club:
  Tomlinson Hill by Chris Tomlinson

- Feb. 22: He Said/She Said
  The Human Rights Campaign Dallas Fort Worth presents the inaugural He Said/She Said fundraiser, a new twist on the Her HRC event. Events include trivia with cash prizes, HRC Bachelorette and/or Bachelor live auction and a drag show to cap off the day. Cassie Nova and Jenna Skyy host. 2 p.m. at Sue Ellen’s.

- Feb. 28: 17th Annual Toast to Life: Voodoo on the Trinity
  What do you get when you mix a bunny with magic? You get “Voodoo on the Trinity,” the theme of Resource Center’s annual Toast To Life fundraiser. DJ Lady Bunny will provide entertainment. The fundraiser begins 7 p.m. at The Empire Room, 1225 N Riverfront Blvd. For more information visit Bit.ly/1BUU2p2w.

MARCH
- March 7: 25th Anniversary of House DIFFA Celebration
  DIFFA/Dallas celebrates the 25th anniversary of its House of DIFFA black tie fundraiser benefiting several North Texas AIDS service organizations. Silent/live auction, seated dinner and fashion runway show begins at 6 p.m. at the Omni Hotel Downtown Dallas, 555 S. Lamar St. Ticket prices vary and are available at Bit.ly/1ID2U2Y. For more information visit Diffadallas.org.

- March 7: 25th Anniversary Concert
  Tim Seelig conducts this performance. City Square’s 35th Anniversary Concert

- March 9: Diffa Dallas Pink Tie Gala
  Omni Hotel Downtown Dallas, 555 S. Lamar St.

- March 10: EQTX Lobby Day
  Lobby legislators in Austin about issues facing LGBT people. Final EQTX lobbying day. 11 a.m.–4 p.m. at First United Methodist Church of Austin Family Life Center, 1300 Lavaca St. Advanced registration required. Register at EqualityTexas.org.

APRIL
- April 13: Equality Texas Freedom Advocacy Day
  Lobby legislators in Austin about discrimination against LGBT people. Final EQTX lobbying day. 11 a.m.–4 p.m. at First United Methodist Church of Austin Family Life Center, 1300 Lavaca St. Advanced registration required. Register at EqualityTexas.org.

- April 15: Evening of Hope Reveal Party
  Benefits AIDS Outreach Center. Blue Sushi, 3131 W. 7th St., Fort Worth.
Kathy Bowser retiring as COTL pastor

DAVID WEBB | Contributing Writer
nash@dallasvoice.com

CEDAR CREEK LAKE — Celebration on the Lake Church Pastor Kathy Bowser announced Jan. 18 she would retire in May after leading the congregation for 10 years.

“There is a time to say hello, and there is a time to say goodbye,” Bowser said in a telephone interview this week. “It is now a time for the church to begin again with a new pastor.”

Bowser said she and Fluffy Jones, her wife who is active in helping lead the congregation, began talking about retirement last year.

The couple married in California last year on Feb. 13. They delayed their retirement plans until this year because of a new capital campaign the church undertook to raise enough money to pay off the church’s mortgage. An anonymous donor offered a contribution of $25,000 if the church could match the funds.

“We felt it would be really disruptive for us to retire during the capital campaign,” Bowser said. “And we were as excited as everybody else about it.”

The church realized the goal of paying off the loan early and burned the mortgage in a ceremony Jan. 12. The congregation paid off the mortgage Jan. 12. The congregation’s board of directors about her plans so a announcement, Bowser said she

“Water,” Bowser said.

The church’s board of directors approved the capital campaign and the sale of property given to the church by a member allowed the quick pay-off.

“We really blew it out of the water,” Bowser said.

Before she made the announcement, Bowser said she individually advised the church’s board of directors about her plans so a committee could be formed to search for a new pastor. She also met one-on-one with church founders and longtime members, so one-third of the congregation expected the announcement.

Bowser led up to the news with a discussion of Ecclesiastes 3. “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens . . .,” which is also the theme for a song by Peter, Paul and Mary.

“It feels very, very right,” said Bowser, who is 70. “No matter how much I will miss everybody and how many tears I have shed, this is a good thing. Everybody will be okay. It is an excellent time to make the change.”

In her sermon last Sunday Bowser fondly recalled her early days as pastor of the church when Pastor Carol West of Fort Worth’s Celebration Community Church, who is also a weekender and helped found the church, asked her to take over as the lake church’s pastor. Bowser said she stumbled through some sermons, and she once talked the congregation into bringing flashlights inside when sunrise services got rained out.

“That was the dumbest idea,” she said. “How kind and patient everyone was.”

Bowser said the Bible recounts the Baptism of Jesus as “changing his life radically” because he immediately began preaching and became consumed with spreading the word of God. Becoming pastor of the church changed her life similarly. “It was a huge change,” she said.

In addition to the mortgage-free building, Bowser leaves the church with 82 members and a three-year plan to almost double the size of the congregation and to establish strong relations with other churches and philanthropic organizations in the Cedar Creek Lake area.

Church member Brenda Allen said she believes the congregation at large shares her reaction to Bowser’s announcement. The church’s founders agree the church is in a good place for continued growth, and that Bowser’s leadership put the congregation in that advantageous position. Three new visitors attended church services last Sunday.

“We are sad to see her leave us but excited about she and Fluffy getting to enjoy some quality retirement together,” Allen said. “They put their hearts, souls, energy and more into making our church what it is now. Kathy had a vision from the begin-

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

A TIME TO SAY GOODBYE | Kathy Bowser has announced her retirement as pastor of Celebration on the Lake Church, saying it is time for the church to ‘begin again with a new pastor.’ (Photo courtesy Brenda Allen)

ning, and she worked constantly to make us move forward without her leadership.”

Bowser and Jones, who have owned a weekend home on the lake for 21 years and also own a home in Arlington, plan not to attend church services for a while to allow a new pastor to take over the leadership role and become comfortable. “I don’t want to be a distraction,” Bowser said.

Bowser noted she and Jones consider most of the congregation good friends, and they will be making a big adjustment in their lives. The couple usually spent time in their lake house only on weekends because of church duties, but now they will be free to visit the lake mid-week as well.

Daryl Wicks, a newer church member, said Bowser’s departure will make him sad.

“I may sound corny, but it’s from my heart and how many tears I have shed, this is a good thing. Everybody will be okay. It is an excellent time to make the change.”

In her sermon last Sunday Bowser fondly recalled her early days as pastor of the church when Pastor Carol West of Fort Worth’s Celebration Community Church, who is also a weekender and helped found the church, asked her to take over as the lake church’s pastor. Bowser said she stumbled through some sermons, and she once talked the congregation into bringing flashlights inside when sunrise services got rained out.
Marchers in NYC’s ’77 gay Pride parade wanted protection from discrimination and sodomy laws; same-sex marriage wasn’t even a dream

The U.S. Supreme Court’s Jan. 16 announcement that it would decide if the Constitution guarantees the rights of same-sex couples to marry wherever they reside, and whether states can refuse to recognize same-sex marriages sanctioned by other states left me marveling at the advancements of the gay rights movement in my adult life.

In 1977 I lived and worked for a time in New York City where I marched in my first gay rights parade at the age of 27. Up until that point I had not participated in any sort of activism, even though I had made no secret of my sexual orientation in Dallas prior to joining a couple of friends in Manhattan in search of excitement. During those days I aspired only to go out every night and to enjoy every bit of entertainment I could squeeze out of the big city that never slept.

The three of us shared a three-room boxcar-style apartment, and I worked for a temporary agency that sent me on office assignments across the city when I wanted to work. I felt like I had struck gold when the agency sent me to a public relations agency that represented all of the Broadway theaters, and they gave me free tickets to shows. God I loved that dead end job — answering the phone, typing and assisting the employees of the theaters and the celebrities the agency represented. I kept that assignment as long as possible.

I lacked purpose in my life in those days, and my friends shared my lack of enthusiasm for pursuing a career. We all worked just enough to pay the rent and utilities and to eat and drink in the endless array of restaurants and bars in the city. Weekends we spent at the beach when the weather turned warm enough. Sometimes people we met in the bars invited us to their weekend homes on the New Jersey Shore and Fire Island.

I couldn’t imagine life beyond 30 and I wanted to extend my search for adventure indefinitely.

When June rolled around that year we started noticing flyers posted in the bars about the upcoming gay rights parade, and we decided to join in. I have watched a small parade in downtown Dallas in 1972 with one of my New Jersey roommates and I made signs to carry in the parade. Mine said, ‘Gay freedom is my right.’ I doubt that I even knew what I meant when I wrote those words.

On the Sunday morning of the parade, my roommates and I made signs to carry in the parade. Mine said, ‘Gay freedom is my right.’ I doubt that I even knew what I meant when I wrote those words.

The parade finally got underway it eventually stretched the entire length of Fifth Avenue, and I remember seeing people all along the route hanging out of windows and cheering. As we passed the Arthur Murray Dance Studio, gay instructors with their straight female clients yelled and waved.

For the first time in my life I felt like I belonged, and it motivated me to take a stand.

Before the summer ended, I decided to return to Texas so I could finally finish college. Almost 40 years later, those days in New York seem like a dream. My two roommates — who remained in New York and never knew LGBT activists would focus on marriage equality — no longer are living.

When I first moved to Dallas, I probably would be dead today, too.

Instead, I returned to Dallas and I enrolled in the School of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin as soon as I could. One of my first stories for the Daily Texan explored a deadly new disease striking gay men in San Francisco and New York City. From then on I came across stories about the LGBT community that needed to be told at every newspaper for which I worked.

Sometimes I told the stories over the objections of others in the newsroom who failed to grasp the significance of the gay rights movement. At the same time I frequently attended the funerals of my friends, and I wrote their obituaries.

Over the years, I came to realize that every person who came out to a straight relative, friend or coworker contributed to the gay rights movement, whether they ever marched in a parade or otherwise demonstrated for the cause. As activist and former Dallasite William Waybourn pointed out to me in a discussion in the early 1990s when he led a national organization in Washington D.C. “If every gay and lesbian person in the country came out today, the discrimination would end tomorrow.”

Eventually, I made my way to the Dallas Voice where I covered LGBT issues solely. But despite my specialization in LGBT issues and my association with local, state and national LGBT leaders, the marriage equality story caught me off guard. I never dreamed same-sex marriage would receive so much support in state governments, the courts and the American public in general. It took so long to get the sodomy law overturned that I thought marriage equality would be many decades off, if it even happened in my lifetime.

I’m glad that, at the age of 65, I’ve lived to see the gay rights movement succeeding in ways that seemed impossible a little more than a decade ago. But it is a bittersweet moment. So many people who helped lay the foundation for the success of the gay rights movement will never get to enjoy it.

Still, I’d like to think that they somehow know what they helped achieve. And if so, they are no doubt as amazed as I am.

David Webb is a veteran journalist with more than three decades of experience, including a stint as a staff reporter for Dallas Voice. He now lives on Cedar Creek Lake and write for publications nationwide.
Trending toward discrimination

Marriage equality moves ever closer to being the law of the land, but the bigots keep looking for loopholes

As more and more state laws against same-sex marriage fall in the courts, I see an alarming trend elsewhere: People are claiming it is their “religious right” to discriminate against LGBT people.

While this is absolutely their right as individuals, it is not their right as owners of public enterprises, as law enforcement officials, as civil servants and as other folks involved with serving the public either for profit or civic duty.

Yet this is the argument being made. Apparently, the idea that gays and lesbians could get some kind of equal treatment so raises the hackles of some Americans that they have to find loopholes in the law to continue not just their personal hatred, but to institutionalize discrimination. As an activist it makes me both sad and mad.

Let’s start with the “sad” part.

I have to believe that the people who are so vehement in wanting to deny us equal rights are not doing so based on logic. Logically, there is no reason for it. Therefore, I must assume it comes from something broken in them that leads them to search for scapegoats. They believe that their own misery must be caused by someone else, especially if finding that “cause” can divert them from examining their own condition and their own problems.

For example, “My marriage is in trouble because my spouse and I don’t spend enough time working on the relationship, therefore it must be somehow hindered by those gay guys down the street. After all if I didn’t spend all my time worrying about what they do in the privacy of their bedroom, and imagining how their sex must be more strange and lascivious and sinful, then I’d have more time to spend with my spouse.”

It should come as no surprise that studies show the most vocal homophobic voices belong to people who are trying to suppress their own homosexual desires. This has been proven out in the public eye by politicians, clergy and public figures whose voices are the loudest against LGBT rights, and who are exposed through an indiscretion or scandal as deeply closeted gay or lesbians.

Though I experience more than my share of “schadenfreude” at their public exposures, in my heart I ache for their pain, knowing if they had only been able to accept their own orientation honestly, things would be better for everyone. The train wrecks of “ex-gays” betraying their wives, or vehement anti-gay politicians being caught in restroom sex stings make for entertaining television. But they have long-term consequences for the people involved that are less entertaining.

That brings me to the “mad” part of my reaction.

I am angry that bigots with their badly spelled signs camp out at our parades and churches to spew their bile.

I am angry that we live in a country that finds it acceptable to put our rights to a vote! I am angry that my tax dollars support a system that categorically denies me the same rights as other citizens. I am angry that I have to write this damned column about a subject that should have been settled years ago.

So what the hell can I do about it?

Well, for one thing, I can try forgiving those broken folks who cause me such pain. And though that is small comfort, it is better than lashing out with the same vitriol I receive.

The second thing I can do is take action — not a protest or march, but direct action. I can get involved in the system that institutionalizes the homophobia and change it. That can be as simple as a vote, or as involved as running for office, something that I am more and more inclined to do.

The third possibility is one I am not really happy with, and that is pick up my toys and leave. I have friends who have encouraged me to move to Canada, and others who are lobbying for South Africa. Both those countries have better protections for LGBT people and offer full citizenship regardless of sexual orientation. South Africa even has those protections written into its constitution, and that is certainly appealing.

The reason I am not going to leave is a stubborn streak ingrained in me by and inherited from my family. My maternal grandfather was an illiterate blacksmith, but he understood right and wrong and instilled in me that since of justice. He was a Roosevelt Democrat and he once told me if his hand ever pulled the lever for a Republican it would burn his fingers.

He refused to be bullied, and so do I.

So, if folks on the far right can claim it is their religious liberty to refuse to serve me, to protect me or allow me entrance to their place of business, I will claim my religious right to refuse to give them my money.

I will not just vote in elections, but vote with my feet and wallet. I consider that a sacrament, and to share my time or money with people who hate me is sacrilege.

I love the sinners, but not their sin.

Hardy Haberman is a longtime local LGBT activist and board member for the Woodhill Freedom Alliance. His blog is at DungeonDiary.blogspot.com.
Taking it to the street

Jonathan Palant re-emerges with a new choir and a mission — to bring attention to homelessness

Arnold Wayne Jones
Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

For those who think of Jonathan Palant as merely the former artistic director of the Turtle Creek Chorale, there are many more verses yet unsung.

For instance, since arriving in Dallas eight years ago, Palant has volunteered as choral director for The Stewpot, the downtown soup kitchen serving Dallas’ homeless and disadvantaged community. He’s also been music minister at Kessler Park United Methodist Church, and teaches music at Richland College. Then three years ago, he founded his own group.

Called Credo, it was formed as a “mixed choir, in that it is interfaith and brings people of all walks of life with all different experiences and abilities together for a common purpose — of song, but also of service to our community.” We intentionally kept it open-ended,” Palant says. The Stewpot Choir was rebranded as the Dallas Street Choir.

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One reason was that even Palant wasn’t sure how long it would last. It was initially launched as what Palant joshingly calls “a choir in a box.” A group of 28 singers gathered for monthly rehearsals, culminating 11 months later with a trip to Cuba to perform. It was so successful, Palant extended it a second year, doubling rehearsals, growing the choir; another company has donated gowns for the women — all for free. Local musicians, including those who perform with the Dallas Opera, have volunteered their time, and all three composers are flying in from Australia on their own dimes.

There was just one hurdle that concerned Palant: Where were the choir members going to sleep that night?

“The concert is at 7 p.m. To secure a bed in a shelter, you need to check in by 4 p.m. But then LaQuinta gave us a good rate on rooms so we can put the entire group up for the night,” he says. Which means, for possibly the first night in a long time, singing members will have access to their own room, their own shower, their own bed. Palant hopes that’s the kind of incentive that will encourage many of the homeless singers to show up.

“I don’t know what kind of choir will show up for this concert,” he says, noting that the full complement of Credo as well as the Richland College Chamber Singers will be on hand along with von Stade: “I’ve never faced this kind of unknown before.”

Despite that uncertainty, Palant is exhilarated by the response (ticket sales have been strong so far), and it has him looking ahead. “I’m trying to figure out what’s up next for the Street Choir,” he says. 
Wall of Sound

Out dancer-choreographer Travis Wall brings Shaping Sound troupe to NT

Travis Wall was just 18 years old when he shot to the national spotlight as one of the most popular contestants ever on So You Think You Can Dance, becoming the runner-up on the second season of the show. That was nine years ago, though, and a lot has happened in the interim. In addition to returning to SYTYCD as a guest choreographer (and receiving an Emmy nomination for his work), he starred in a reality series called All the Right Moves, which tracked his efforts to found a new dance company called Shaping Sound.

It’s that company that is now occupying most of Wall’s, and it’s what brings him to North Texas this week for the second leg of Shaping Sound’s national tour.

We spoke with Wall by phone this week, and asked him how his style has changed since his reality TV days, whether his boyfriend is part of the act and what audiences have been like on the tour so far.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Dallas Voice: Your reality series, All the Right Moves, was about the founding of Shaping Sound … Wall: That was the beginning of it, where the company first started. We really did all get a house together and were all gonna put shows together. That’s how the reality show came about. We did it for one season, so that was just a little glimpse of the idea we had. How it has evolved has been really mind-blowing. We are on our second national tour now.

What’s the tour like? Do you travel with your partner? No, he’s a coach for UCLA so he can’t travel with me. The tour has been great — this is our second national tour. We did a lot of Texas on the first leg of this tour — Austin and Houston and El Paso — then a lot of east coast, including my hometown, Virginia Beach. Now we’re hitting the Midwest, Canada … it’s pretty darn cold!

It’s been warm in Dallas lately. Awesome!

You were a teenager when you appeared on SYTYCD. Has your style changed since then? Yeah, the summer will be the 10-year anniversary of SYTYCD. It’s crazy to think who I was on that show and how I was dancing then — I was just “turn, turn, turn” instead of finding real purpose in my movement. I kind of wish I had waited a bit [to appear on the show] because I didn’t really come into my own as a dancer until [after that]. Every year I evolve — you have to keep learning and keeping it fresh.

You’re the artistic director of Shaping Sound, but do you also perform? Oh, yeah — I’m all over the show! [Laughs] You gotta give the fans what they want.

How do you describe it? It’s definitely a dance experience. When you’re coming to see a dance company, you probably think you’re going to see a few pieces. But there’s really a full storyline taking place over two acts — [the audience] is going along this journey with one dancer. People will be blown away with the music selection, which includes lots of different kinds of music. There’s rock that gives us this edgy feel; there’s what we grew up with, like Broadway and jazz, and even classical which forces us to do more classical ballet. It’s really visual with beautiful bodies and beautiful lighting.

What have audiences been like? We have these fans who follow us on social media and Instagram and really [turn up for our tour]. And the people who come to our show get loud. We love it when people are cheering and screaming.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

SHAPING SOUND
When southern charm, a storied history and wild abandon collide, there’s absolutely no mistaking what city you’re in. The only dilemma a North Texan faces is exactly when to visit New Orleans to maximize the sensory overload. Fortunately, there are dozens of annual events that are either primarily LGBT or extremely welcoming of our community, all just a 90-minute plane ride away. (Or an eight-hour drive if you’re feeling road-trippy.)

With more than a dozen recent visits to the city between us, we’ve created a monthly guide for indulgent ways to spend a long weekend letting those bon temps roll.

February: Some big event with beads & parades. Even though Mardi Gras is celebrated all over the Dallas area in various ways, there’s nothing like the real deal in NOLA. Leading up to the fattest of Tuesdays are a variety of LGBT events, including the dog-themed Krewe of Barkus Parade (Feb. 8), which was conceived at gay bar Good Friends. Three LGBT masquerade spectacles — Friday Night Before Mardi Gras Ball (13), Armeinius (15) and Lords of Leather A month-by-month guide to the gay playground that is The Big Easy
(15) are great places to show off your feathery masks before celebrating the big day at the Gay Mardi Gras Bead Toss (17) on Bourbon Street.

March: Four-leaf clovers. Get your fill of green beer and shamrock-festooned strippers as the gay bars join the rest of the city in celebrating St. Patrick’s Day (17). Two days before in nearby Metairie, the largest St. Patrick’s Day Parade (15) features floats handing out cabbages, potatoes, carrots, onions, packaged seasonings and other ingredients for Irish stew. It’s worth seeing, but best to skip on hauling veggies back to your hotel.

April: Bunny business … and all that jazz. We love spending Easter afternoon in Lee Park, but it’s always fun to mix things up and it doesn’t get much more mixed up than the Gay Easter Parade (5) featuring men and women in their Easter finest reveling in celebration on a Easter Parade (5) featuring men and women in their Easter finest reveling in celebration on a festive stroll through the French Quarter. This year’s New Orleans Jazz Festival (April 24–May 3) is a who’s who of LGBT favorites, including Elton John. No Doubt and Lady Gaga with Tony Bennett.

May: Wine and mascara. When the weather begins to heat up, so does the social calendar. Favorite festivals are Bayou Boogaloo (15–17), New Orleans Wine & Food Experience (20–23), and the New Orleans Oyster Festival (30–31). But it’s the over-the-top hilarious MASCARa Run (15) that finds contestants bar-hopping and transforming from men into full-on drag queens, adding a different layer of femininity at each stop.

June: Over the rainbow. If you can’t wait for our own Pride parade in September, celebrate when much of the world does. New Orleans does it up big with a three-day gay Pride event filled with parties, a parade and a huge festival. Plus, the heat means guys and gals wearing much less clothing and that’s always a perk.

July: Steer queer. Pamplona’s got nothing on the Crescent City’s Running of the Bulls (San Fermín en Nueva Orleans) (9–12). These heifers have been replaced by a herd of female roller derby players who gore the slowest runners with foam baseball bats. Participation is fee. Simply wear a white shirt with red neckerchief and let the games begin. Celebrate your success (or failure) at the course finale with sangria, tapas and other Spanish treats.

August: Drinking and dressing. The Red Dress Run (9) goes from long and elegant to short and slutty … and so do the men and women wearing them during this bawdy, anything-goes charity run. Ranging from three to four miles (no one really measures the distance), the focus is mostly on drinking, singing songs with X-rated lyrics and showing off your gams without having to wear a pair of matching underpants. For the New Orleans Oyster Festival (30–31), one of the nation’s most spectacular lights festivals held in gorgeous City Park.

September: To (gay) infinity and beyond. As Liberace once said, “Too much of a good thing is wonderful.” He could have easily been describing Southern Decadence (2–7). This epic, end-of-season gay send-off held Labor Day Weekend blends together the revelry of Mardi Gras with naughtiness of Folsom Street Fair for three days of nonstop music, dancing, drinking and hot boy watching.

October: Magical mystery tour. New Orleans throws one hell of a Halloween party, but what really sets this city apart is the Voodoo Music Arts Festival (Oct. 30–Nov. 1). Past performers at this three-day celebration have included Foo Fighters, Skrillex and Outkast. In addition to the tunes and the art, there are other festival must haves like amusement rides and a beer garden. In a city known for its ghosts, vampires and voodoo priestesses, Gay Halloween is superb, especially the massive HNO Costume Party (31) that goes until 4 a.m.

November: Lights! Get into the holiday spirit early with Celebration in the Oaks (Nov. 27–Jan. 3), one of the nation’s most spectacular lights festivals held in gorgeous City Park.

December: Creole Christmas. Add a fresh twist to tired traditions with Christmas New Orleans Style. This month-long celebration offers up holiday staples with Big Easy flair. This month-long celebration offers up holiday staples with Big Easy flair. This month-long celebration offers up holiday staples with Big Easy flair.

Where to stay

Windsor Court Hotel. Modeled after England’s elegant Windsor Castle, this property recently experienced a $22 million renovation. The only four-star four-diamond hotel in the city, it’s classic sophistication at its finest with exquisite perks like a scenic club level on the 22nd floor overlooking the river and offering everything from nibbles and bubbly to heavy hors d’oeuvres and craft cocktails. The nearby French Quarter may beckon, but with these perks so does a full day at the hotel.

Audubon Cottages at Dauphine Orleans Hotel. Tucked away in the French Quarter away from the hustle and bustle is the perfect location for a private getaway. These seven luxury cottages feature individual courtyards, a butler and complimentary breakfast. The centerpiece of this tranquil oasis is a saltwater pool shared by only the cottage guests and rumored to be one of the oldest in-ground pools in New Orleans. But really, any hotel in the New Orleans Hotel Collection is a good bet.

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Hotel Monteleone. Perhaps the most famous French Quarter hotel, this massive property boasts old-world details from the impressive lobby to every guest room and suite. Known for a few ghosts and its iconic rotating Carousel Bar, it’s a must-visit whether you’re staying there or just popping in for cocktails.

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I'm just gonna say it: Jennifer Aniston was robbed. Sure, when news broke last month that she had been nominated for a SAG Award and a Golden Globe (for best actress in a drama, no less!), a hue and cry went out on the blogosphere: Rachel is a serious actress?! Since when? She started getting Oscar buzz for a film no one had heard of, called Cake, and until the nominations came out last week, she seemed a real contender. Yeah, right.

Yeah! Right! She really is as good as people don’t seem to want to believe in this film, itself about as far removed from frivolous romantic comedies like We're the Millers as you can possibly get.

Aniston plays Claire, a woman about whom we know surprisingly little for a long time. All we are sure of is: She suffers from chronic pain, occasioned by a disfiguring accident; she pops Oxycodone like Altoids; and she’s an angry, angry bitch. You might be too if you suffered as much loss as she has, though the scope of it only plays out in fits and starts. Is she really in pain, or just a malingerer? A victim or a drug addict? Is there hope for her?

The role requires Aniston to spend 100 minutes suppressing a grimace while still reaching out to the audience emotionally. It’s a tough tightrope to walk. As she drives away those who seem to care about her — the other members of her support group (led by Felicity Huffman, who I could see playing the Claire role herself 10 years ago), her estranged husband (Chris Messina) and especially her housekeeper Silvana (Adriana Barraza), who both enables and looks after Claire. All of them — plus Sam Worthington, Anna Kendrick and more — add fine support, but this truly is The Aniston Show.

It’s not just because Aniston has been America’s sweetheart for two decades, first on Friends, then as the hapless romantic casualty of the tabloids … though, in fact, going against type doesn’t hurt. It’s her focus, her determination to portray a character as superficially unlikable yet sadly sympathetic, to eschew the trappings of studio glamour and dig deep into a character for art’s sake. You’re transfixed by her even as she makes you wanna pull your hair out.

Good as she is, Aniston didn’t make the cut in the Oscar race. Too bad, but ultimately irrelevant. The work stands on its own, and her performance will have to suffice as the icing on this Cake.

Even if Jen had scored a nomination, she wasn’t likely to win the Oscar, not when this is clearly Julianne Moore’s year. With her pale skin, soft red hair and china doll features, Moore has always been both a dreamy film presence and an earthy one. She seems at once ethereal and relatable, a delicate flower with hidden thorns. Those traits are perfectly attuned to the title role in Still Alice.

Moore plays Alice Howland, a Columbia University linguistics professor who just turned 50. Words, language, family — they mean everything to her. So when she starts forgetting some of them, she seeks medical attention only to be told the worst: She has early on-set Alzheimer’s. There’s no cure. She will, eventually, lose her memories … and she’ll know it.

The premise alone is the equivalent to the educated upper-classes of a medical horror show. Our identity, after all, is the only thing we actually have, so when that goes, what’s left?

Like Cake, Still Alice could have felt like a disease-of-the-week movie, something better suited for Lifetime than an art house cinema. But the
writer-directors, Wash Westmoreland and Richard Glatzer (The Fluffer), don’t resort to cliché or mawkishness. It’s not giving too much away to say we never see Alice completely ravaged by this illness. That’s not the point. It’s a story of survival in the face of insurmountable odds, of character and will power and love.

(Glatzer himself was, with the past few years, diagnosed with ALS, a fact that gives resonance to the storytelling.)

Moore is a savvy actress, one who engenders our affection with a fretful smile even more so than with outward warmth. She skillfully underplays the role so well, Kristen Stewart’s ham-fisted pouting is almost not even a distraction. It’s the kind of role awards were designed to honor; all the better that Moore indisputably deserves it.

RACHEL GETTING MARRIED | Jennifer Aniston brilliantly plays a woman coping (poorly) with exquisite loss in the indie film ‘Cake.’

Guinea pigmentation

It’s 1879, Victoria is in her 42nd year on the throne (and still has more than 20 years to go), the British Empire is at its height, the Industrial Age has led to new technologies and the upper-classes are delighted to claim the world for their own. It is inconceivable they will not dominate culture for centuries.

Well, as it turned out, barely a few more decades. The empire collapsed (they almost lost neighbor Scotland last year) and other cultures had a way of resisting domination — even the savages, it turns out, are not as vulnerable as overly confident explorers.

It’s from this framework that The Explorers Club unravels its farcical plot. A woman (Dana Schultes) has dared threaten the gender barrier of this clique, having returned to London with Luigi (Michael Ulmer, who makes feral fabulously funny), a native of a lost tribe somewhere in the jungle. But when Luigi slaps the queen (a perfectly acceptable greeting in his homeland), it triggers an international incident that begins to show the chinks in the British Empire.

The Explorers Club is a farce that does not rely (much, at least) on broad physical comedy, slamming doors, mistaken identity or sexual desire to keep audiences laughing, although each time it does delve into those arenas it succeeds. (A stunt with cocktail glasses warrants spontaneous applause — several times).

From Thomas Ward’s blowhard ignoramus to Mark Shum’s milquetoast guinea pig lover to John Kyle Igneczi’s half-crazed assassin (two, actually), the cast expertly navigates Neil Benjamin’s smart script that touches on religion vs. science, sexism and cultural imperialism. Director Jim Covault — who mounted the same production last year at Stage West — delivers a confectionary delight.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

On Newsstands NOW!!!
Friday 01.23

‘Annie Get Your Gun’ gets concert performance

Lyric Stage’s latest production is one of the most popular musicals of the golden age of Broadway, Irving Berlin’s rarely-seen Annie Get Your Gun. The high-kicking Western-themed comedy features classic songs (“There’s No Business Like Show Business,” “Anything You Can Do”), presented as they were originally intended: A full 34-piece orchestra. This concert version plays only one weekend instead of the usual two, so now’s the time!


Sunday 01.25

Dish’s Drag Brunch inaugurates 2015

This weekend marks the final Sunday of the month, and that means this is the first Drag Brunch of 2015. Drag diva Jenni P is the headliner for this essential new Dallas tradition, which includes three seatings (at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.) with a three-course menu from the Oak Lawn restaurant Dish. It’s like going to a drag club without the late nights.

DEETS: Dish at the ilume, 4123 Cedar Springs Road. 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. Dish-Dallas.com

Saturday 01.24

Cavalia Odysseo gallops into North Texas

If you’ve seen a Cirque du Soleil show, you know how fabulous something under a big top can be. Well, imagine the same, with horses. That’s Cavalia, which combines the raw power and beauty of equestrian mastery with spectacle and showmanship that includes acrobatics, humor and hot men in singlets. It’s been a decade since the show last made it to North Texas, and this new show, called Odysseo, promises new delights. It will play daily with matinee and evening performances; special packages, including premium seating and a full dinner service, are also available.

DEETS: Under the big top at Dr Pepper Ballpark, 7300 Rough Riders Trail, Frisco. Tickets from $29.50. Cavalia.net.
ARtsWeeK:
NOW PlAyiNG
THEATER


Another Murder, Another Show! The latest from Pegasus Theatre, this In Living Black & White show — where makeup, sets and lighting make the play appear to be an old black and white film — brings back Harry Hunsacker in this spoof of 1940s-era film noir. Final weekend. Eisemann Center for Performing Arts, 5231 Performance Drive, Richardson. EisemannCenter.com.


Why Things Burn. Southwest premiere of a play by Ric Kearse, an ode to ’50s-era film noir and pulp fiction at the height of the Red Scare. Final weekend. Margo Jones Theatre at Fair Park, 1121 First Ave. $15. WhyThingsBurn.bpt.me.

DAVID JACOBS


EXPO


DINING

Cook Hall: Beer vs. Whiskey Dinner: Wine pairings are so 2014 — what about a dinner that pairs food with beer? Or whiskey? How about both? Cook Hall at the W Hotel is giving you the chance to compare the two side by side, with a special chef's dinner tasting this night that includes three courses, each featuring a selection of food, brew and liquor. W Dallas Victory, 2440 Victory Park Lane. 7 p.m. $68/per person. 214-397-4111 for reservations.

FRIDAY 01.23

Submit an item for inclusion in the Community Calendar, visit Tinyurl.com/dvsubmit. For a more complete Community Calendar online, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.
SATURDAY 01.24
SPORTS
FrontRunners. Gay jogging group meets at 8:30 a.m. at the statue in Lee Park for a run along the Katy Trail.

CIRCUS

SUNDAY 01.25
BROADCAST
Downton Abbey. The fifth season of the addictive drama about life among the aristocracy continues. Airing on KERA at 8 p.m.

Girls. The fourth season of the quirky comedy-drama about modern living, co-starring Andrew Rannells and Zachary Quinto. Airing on HBO at 8 p.m.

Looking. The second season of the drama about gay life in San Francisco, starring Jonathan Groff. Airing on HBO at 8:30 p.m.

MONDAY 01.26
EXERCISE
Adult Broadway Butt Busters. DTC artistic associate Joel Ferrell leads an hour-long cardio-centric fitness class based on B’way choreography for an eight-week session each Monday evening. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through March 2. 5:30–6:30 p.m. $150. ATTPAC.org.

TUESDAY 01.27
FILM
The Producers. Mel Brooks’ Oscar-winning comedy about two Broadway producers who try to engineer a huge flop and thereby bilk their investors. The 1968 film included several flamboyant gay characters; in 2000, it was adapted to the musical stage. Screens as part of the Tuesday New Classic series at Landmark’s Magnolia in the West Village, 3699 McKinney Ave. Sponsored by Dallas Voice. Screens at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 01.28
BROADCAST
Top Chef. This season, in Boston, with Padma, Tom, Gail and Richard Blais, returns. Airing on Bravo at 8 p.m.

THURSDAY 01.29
BROADCAST
Project Runway All Stars. Returning contestants compete. Airing on Lifetime at 8 p.m.

THEATER

FRIDAY 01.30
THEATER


OPERA
La Wally and Everest. The Dallas Opera continues its season with two one-acts: The fourth act from Alfredo Catalani’s La Wally (set in the Alps) and the world premiere of Gene Scheer and Joby Talbot’s Everest, about the doomed 1996 expedition. They will be performed with an intermission. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. Jan. 30–Feb. 7. DallasOpera.org.

AT THE MOVIES: ‘2 Days,’ ‘Humbling’

Jennifer Aniston is still getting sympathy for being passed over for an Oscar nom for Cake (see my review on Page 18), but if you want to do a side-by-side comparison to the woman regarded as taking her slot, check out Marion Cotillard, pictured, in Two Days, One Night. She plays a woman destined to lose her job, unless she can convince her co-workers not to take a bonus. (Now playing at the Angelika Mockingbird Station.)

For the week’s gayest-themed new release, check out The Humbling. Based on Philip Roth’s novel, it stars Al Pacino as a man who has an affair with a lesbian (Greta Gerwig). The relationship triggers a series of incidences with those from their romantic pasts resurface to cause chaos. (Now playing at the Texas Theatre.)

— Arnold Wayne Jones

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01.23.15 • dallasvoice 23
Love me, love my animals

I have been bitching a lot recently. I have complained about the youth of today, the lack of great quality music and my feet hurting — just your general “things that annoy me” stuff. Well not this week. This week I am only going to talk about awesome things, “things that annoy me” stuff. Well not this week. This week I am only going to talk about awesome things, “things that annoy me” stuff. Well not this week.

I am a golden Pomeranian who changed my life forever. Soon after came the first and only girl I ever fell in love with, Evee. She was a loud mouth little bitch of a Pom whose nickname was Evil. The two of them truly taught me the value of companionship and helped me realize that I was worthy of being loved. They kept me from becoming a bitter single person and helped me recognize love when I found it. If you have a pet, you know what I mean. If not, think about adopting a dog or cat. But only if you can give them the love, time and care that they deserve. Now let's help some of you mo-fo’s.

Dearest Cassie, Let’s talk Stephen Fry. As many know, Fry (57) recently [married] Elliott Spencer (27). For the mathematically challenged, that’s a 30-year age gap. Now I know many say that age is just a number, but there’s more to it, right? Stage of life, changes in the body (my knees stopped working at 40, and that can be kind of important to a gay man), stigma, the inevitable Cher vs. Gaga super diva argument. Now while we, the fabulous people, have navigated the stigma waters before, can it really work? I have a proclivity for the younger variety and find myself asking out guys in their mid-to late-20s, but is that creepy? Is there such a thing as an “appropriate” age gap or should I not give a damn? Can I trust that any millennial is interested in anything more than daddy money? If I read “be under 30” one more time on Grindr, my head might explode. Is it time I hang up my twerking shorts and trade it in for a leather vest? Or is this just another form of discrimination in a community that’s supposed to be about acceptance? — Dirty Old Creeper.

DOC: First off, you seem like your Grindr profile probably says “be under 30” as well. Am I right? Maybe your game would be different if you had lots of coin. There is nothing wrong with being a chicken hawk, but it definitely has its hazards. Relationships are hard enough, especially when you have little in common. Hell, when I was 10, I dated a 35-year-old. The sex was fun but everything else was blah. He liked Perry Mason and bland chicken for dinner; I wanted to go out all the time to dance. We didn’t have enough in common to make a relationship. Second, you can’t fault a guy for saying “be under 30.” You have your preferences, they have theirs. Grindr might not be the best place to find anything other than Mr. Right. Now anyway. Third, regarding Stephen Fry and Elliott Spencer, I’m glad those two ugly men found each other. That should give you hope that a big age gap can work. Just lower your standards. I wish them and you a lot of luck, y’all are gonna need it. Just keep an open mind and an open heart and hopefully you will find the right twink with daddy issues. Now as for the Cher vs. Gaga case, they are both awesome Cassie.

Dear Cassie, So I recently started dating a guy (I’ll call him Luke) that I met two years ago. He is a good friend of your co-worker. I won’t name names — Beyoncé is a private person. Anyway, I ran into Luke in the Rose Room and we exchanged numbers. Big mistake! We began texting the next day. I was off work that day so I was free to text all day. However, when I went back to work and couldn’t text back he started getting very clingy. He tried to make me feel guilty and kept asking if I really liked him. What happened to the days when you actually made a phone call or went out to dinner? I finally had to end it because of how clingy he was being. He called me a piece of shit and said, “This is why you’re single.” Do you think I did the right thing Cassie? Should I have been more understanding? Signed, Frowny face.

Dear FF, I think you both could be better at communication, but yes, you did the right thing. If there is name-calling and paranoia before y’all have even officially gone on a date, then think of the nightmare that y’all would be as a couple. The problem with constantly texting is, you don’t hear sarcasm or how things are said to know they should be taken. Don’t be afraid to say we “talk” later. Also if things get weird, don’t be afraid to peace out. Make a point to start the next relationship with actual one talking if that is what is important to you. In this world of instant information and short attention spans, it’s easy to move too fast. Slow your roll, and make sure the guy you are interested in knows that is what you want, Cassie.

Dear Cassie, I have always wanted to ask a drag queen if you have ever had someone recognize you and geek out in public. What was your reaction? Is it weird when this happens? Thanks, Joseph.

Yo Jo, that has happened to me many times, but it is my voice that usually gives me away. Recently while getting groceries, the girl in line behind me was staring a hole through me. I can get quite defensive because of the whole “look at that fag” mindset because of my beautifully arched eyebrows. I turned to her and said, “What the fuck are you looking at?” She just smiled and said, “Oh my God, you’re Cassie Nova! I thought that was you but wasn’t sure ‘til you yelled at me. I love you.” And on and on. I apologized for cussing at her and thanked her while blushing. I felt like a big shot in the checkout line at the Waxahachie Walmart. Cassie Nova: Superstar!

Now I must go rid my yard of doggie poop. That is the glamorous life of an animal lovin’ drag queen. Love more. Bitch less and be fabulous. XOXO, Cassie Nova.

If you have a question for Cassie Nova email it to AskCassieNova@gmail.com.
Making the SCENE the week of Jan. 23–29:

Alexandre's: Jason Huff at 10 p.m. on Friday. Bad Habits at 10 p.m. on Saturday. Mi Diva Loca at 9 p.m. on Wednesday. Lala Johnson at 9 p.m. on Thursday.

Best Friends Club: Caress Rista and Celeste Martinez host Sweet Dreams Are Made of the 80s with Sable Alexander, Diamond, Gemini Alexander Brooks, Adian Cox, Linze Sarrel, JC Alexander, Brittany Brooks, Bristol Gunnz, Korina Duvalle, Desiree LaBouche, Roxanna Divine, Veronica Reyes, Jazznine St. James and Natasha Parson at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday benefiting AIDS Outreach Center.

BJ's NXS!: DJ Clint spins on Friday 4 Play each week in January.

Brick/Joe's: Dannee Phann Productions presents Androgyny: The Fashion Show, with Roxxy Andrews from RuPaul's Drag Race, Will Jardell from America's Next Top Model, designers Thrill, Whitall & Shon and Jeremy Michael Calhoun, plus many special appearances. Benefits the Sugarstix LifeWalk Team. Saturday at 9 p.m. Ticket prices and details online at OneNightinBangkok.org. LGBT Kings & Queens presents High Rollers Houston Turnup Queens hosted by Ida Mae Watergate. Doors open at 9:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Changes: Imperial Court de Fort Worth/Arlington show at 8 p.m. on Friday.

Club Cherries: Birthday bash for Liza Cortez with DJ Chola playing Tejano, old school, country and more on Saturday.

Club Reflection: Trinity River Bears meeting at 2:30 p.m. and cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Dallas Eagle: National Leather Association-Dallas presents Leather Perspectives from 1:30–5 p.m. on Saturday. United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Donna Dumas's Birthday Show from 7–10 p.m. on Saturday.

Pekers: Mr. and Mrs. Charity America 2015 Linza Sarrel and Ricky Pournarr present Double Trouble at 8 p.m. on Sunday benefiting Miniature Schnauzers of North Texas and Home for the Holidays.

Round-Up Saloon: Like, Totally Awesome 80's Night! begins at 9 p.m. on Monday with Karaoke Out Loud hosted by Frank M. with a night of fun and festivities.

Sue Ellen's: Chris Pruitt Annual Musical Birthday Bash on Friday. Miss Marcy and the Sugar Daddies on Saturday. Kathy and Bella at 3–5 p.m. and Mi Diva Loca at 6–9 p.m. on Sunday. Marisela on Wednesday.

To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/category/photos. Scene Photographer: Kat Hegood
Guys’ night out on The Strip.

Out of drag at the Round-Up Saloon.

Bartender at the Dallas Eagle.

Alaska, Shalde and Jesse at TMC.

Texas All-American Goddesses: Vita Summers (At-Large 2015), Kristina Starr (2013) and Raquel Blake (2015) at the Rose Room. (Photo courtesy Jesse Osuna)
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Join us for Catholic Mass for the LGBT community First Sunday of each month Dignity Dallas Mass held at CATHEDRAL OF HOPE Interfaith Peace Chapel, Lower Level dignitydallas@hotmail.com 972-729-9572 www.dignitydallas.net

Do you wanna ride? JOIN SPECTRUM MOTORCYCLE RIDING CLUB, the largest GLBT motorcycle group in the region. Please visit spectrum-mrc.com to learn more.*

Pegasus Squares, an LGBT Square Dance Club, meets every Sunday from 2:30pm-4:30pm at the Resource Center. Beginner lessons start in October. Contact Rob Miller at 682-238-3442 for more information or visit pegasus-squares.com.

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Touring with Alan Turing

Solution on page 22

Across
1 They may be exchanged for tits
5 Boat that’s often blown up
9 Stonewall
14 For most students
15 Scat queen
16 Bone below the waist
17 Sal Mineo played one in Rebel Without a Cause
18 Antiaircraft fire
19 Some tennis scores
20 Feed a line to a portrayer of Alan Turing?
23 Steely Dan’s “___ Lied”
24 Gallup specialty
25 “With ___ toward none” (Abe phrase)
28 Bottom support
29 Straight line
32 John of Gay Sex Quotes
33 Platform at an HRC gala
34 Not a short story
35 Date a portrayer of Joan Clarke regularly?
38 Queen’s “subjects”
39 Competes
40 Up and about
41 Saint, in Rio
42 Lacking locks
43 Force from office
44 Bear hunter Boone, briefly
45 Shrewd
46 The puns of this puzzle, if you think they’re annoying?
52 Cut of meat
53 On-line ‘zine
54 Have itchy feet
56 Gertrude’s partner
57 Home of some bubbly
58 Amount of AZT, e.g.
59 Lord of La Mancha
60 The majority
61 One way to cook fruit

Down
1 Number of gay men under a centurian?
2 Obi-Wan player
3 Via, briefly
4 Robin and Jimmy Olsen
5 Prove wrong
6 ___ Child
7 Jazzercise target
8 Be the recipient in S&M?
9 Where to find a stallion
10 Like some pools
11 Somewhat
12 The Mod Squad character
13 S&M unit
21 Secret store
22 Portia de ___
25 Flat tops
26 Spartacus venue
27 “Of course I ___ people ...” (Quentin Crisp)
28 Sounded off at a frat hazing
29 Dustin in Midnight Cowboy
30 Gawks at
31 Batman’s alter ego Bruce
33 Group of dentists that penetrates your mouth?
34 Where to see cracks in boat bottoms
36 An ex of the Donald
37 Allman ex of Cher
42 Athlete who swings his stick
43 “Doggone!”
44 Music of the Village People
45 Libraces’s minks, e.g.
46 Some nest eggs, for short
47 Hedwig, to Michael C. Hall
48 End of a dry spell
49 Britney Spears’ “___ Curious”
50 Kind of point
51 Make more bearable
53 Small pussy noise

Co-Dependants Anonymous (CoDA) is a Twelve Step Fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is recovery from codependence and the development and maintenance of healthy relationships. CoDA meetings in the area meet:
• St. Thomas Episcopal Church 6525 Inwood Road (Inwood at Mockingbird) Dallas, Texas 75209
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