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No Tie Dinner raises vital funds for AIDS Services of Dallas

James Russell, Page 8
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Imperial Court de Fort Worth/Arlington’s Mother Michial awards ceremony

The Mother Michial Community Service Awards, presented by the Imperial Court de Fort Worth/Arlington, took place Wednesday, March 25 at Club Reflection in Fort Worth. Candidates were screened throughout March, culminating in a vote last Saturday at Celebration Community Church.

Emperor and Empress 35 JD Swisher and Scarlett Rayne, who are married in real life, served as the awards show’s emcees.

Numerous bar owners, their staff and volunteers were in attendance.

Among the categories were best male and female impersonators, best bar and charity organization of the year. AIDS Outreach Center won charity organization of the year.

— James Russell

Indiana governor signs discrimination bill into law

One of Indiana’s largest companies said it would reduce its investment in the state after Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed an LGBT discrimination bill into law Thursday, March 26.

“We are forced to dramatically reduce our investment in IN based on our employees’ and our customers’ outrage over the Religious Freedom Bill,” Salesforce Marketing Cloud Division CEO Scott McCorkle tweeted.

Salesforce is a $4 billion software company based in Indiana. McCorkle also tweeted that the company was canceling any programs that required customers or employees to travel to the state and said all expansion plans in the state are canceled.

Other companies are discussing moving their convention business.

The new law allows anyone to claim religious exemption from providing service to gays and lesbians.

— David Taffet

Dallas County expands FMLA

Dallas County Commissioners voted on Tuesday, March 24 to expand family medical leave to benefit LGBT and single employees.

The so-called “plus-one” system allows employees to name someone as the person the employee would care for, even if that person is not legally related.

Anti-marriage equality bill would cost Texas an extra $1 million-plus a year

As the Legislature debates its biennial appropriations bill, choosing what money goes where, the Texas Legislative Board released one fiscal impact analysis that may leave its author and 19 co-authors pulling out their hair.

HB 1745, titled the Preservation of Sovereignty and Marriage Act, by Rep. Cecil Bell, R-Magnolia, would strip county clerks from issuing marriage licenses and cede control to the Texas Secretary of State office. It also re-asserts the state’s ban on same-sex marriage.

According to the memo to State Affairs Chairman Rep. Byron Cook, it also comes with a two-year price tag of $2,456,782. In order to adequately issue marriage licenses, the state would have to add 18 full-time employees and enhance current technology to meet the increased demand.

To maintain these responsibilities the Budget Board estimates it will cost an additional $1,005,863 between 2017–2020. That’s $4,023,452.

Talk about fiscal conservatism.

— James Russell
HRC Federal Club Spring Luncheon features legal director, Ohio plaintiff

The Human Rights Campaign’s Federal Club Spring Lunch will discuss the movement after marriage equality with HRC Legal Director Sarah Warbelow and Jim Obergefell, the lead plaintiff in the case before the Supreme Court challenging state same-sex marriage bans.

Registration for the March 28 event has closed. But to learn more about the Federal Club and future events, visit DFWFederalClub.org.

Impulse Group Dallas hosts PrEP talk

Impulse Group Dallas will host TruTalk: a PrEP Discussion from 6:30–8:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 2 at the Inwood Theater, 5458 W. Lovers Lane. Featuring a panel of LGBTQ advocacy leaders and medical professionals with decidedly different points of view, TruTalk: a PrEP Discussion will explore the pros and cons of this hot-button issue with “The Jada Fox Show” host Jada Pinkett Fox and Dallas Voice’s 2015 “Rising Star” Angel Velasco.

Impulse Group’s mission is to promote healthier sexual lifestyles and better educate young gay men about HIV. With support from the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, this group of volunteers works to create campaigns, events and online content to reach a new generation of gay men who live in a modern and rapidly evolving world.

Tickets are free but RSVPs requested. RSVP at Bit.ly/1FLIpme.

Gender-Bending Pop-Up Shop to visit Bishop Arts

Oakland-based clothier Saint Harridan brings its Pop-Up Shop to Dallas as part of its Suit Up America Tour April 10–12.

Saint Harridan designs and retails masculine suits, dress shirts and accessories for women and transmen. Its signature line of men’s style two-piece suits and dress shirts sold by the size are strategically designed for their customer base. Accessories, including Saint Harridan’s Limited Edition Queer-It-Up-A-Notch Bow Ties, will also be available for purchase. The pop-up shop will be open at Zoomos, 504 N. Madison Ave., Dallas, 75208 from noon–8 p.m. on Friday, April 10 and Saturday, April 11 and 11 a.m.–4:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 12. For more information contact Mary Going by phone at 510-473-5414 or email at mr.marygoing@saintharridan.com.

pet of the week / BROWNIE

Brownie is a 2-year-old German shepherd mix. She is petite for a shepherd dog. She is very loving and wants to definitely be a companion dog. She is looking for an active family who could take her on long walks. She loves her chew toys, car rides, and actually enjoys going to the vet. She will be a good exercise mate for those New Year Resolutions to get healthy. Trips to the dog park and running the neighborhood will be great for both of you. She is happy sleeping in her kennel and is use to staying in it when you are not at home. Come meet our Beautiful Brownie today!

Brownie 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 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.

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MARCH

• Lambda Weekly every Sunday at 1 p.m. on 89.3 KNON-FM.

• March 27: University of North Texas XTE HIV/AIDS Dance Society Benefit Concert

The UNT’s Dance Honors Society presents a benefit concert for the Resource Center featuring Big Rig Dance Collective and UNT Dance students at 8 p.m. at the Dance and Theater Building on the UNT campus, 300 Bernard St., Denton. $10 admission. Online contributions can be made at Gofundme.com/UNTXTEBenefit.

• March 27: Dedication of “Targeting” by George Tobolowsky

New sculpture dedication at 6:30 p.m., ilume Park, 3109 Douglas Ave.

• March 27: Fort Worth Food+Wine Festival

Grand Tasting

The big-and-bold evening showcases more than 100 exceptional wines, craft beers and spirits from near and far, with spotlights on Fort Worth favorites. The sipping pairs perfectly with food from the best North Texas chefs, restaurateurs and artisan producers. 6–9 p.m. at The Worthington Renaissance Fort Worth Hotel, 200 Main Street, Fort Worth. For more information visit Fortworthfoodandwinefestival.com.

• March 28: George Tobolowsky exhibit opening

Art opening in conjunction with new sculpture dedication by the artist from 7-10 p.m. at ilume Art opening in conjunction with new sculpture exhibit opening

visit Fortworthfoodandwinefestival.com.

• March 28: HRC Federal Club Spring Luncheon: “Beyond Marriage”

The Human Rights Campaign’s Federal Club leadership lunch features guest speaker Sarah Warbelow, HRC’s Legal Director from 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at the Tower Club, Thanksgiving Tower, 1601 Elm Street, 48th Floor. RSVP required. Ticket prices vary. For more information and to RSVP visit Bit.ly/1BNjdYd.

• March 28: Celebration on the Lake Church Community Celebration

Outdoor event with beverages, food, live music and more open to the public. Entertainment includes MC Cain aka Mr. Shawn Wm. Cain, Sr. a design evangelist/Christ-centered lyricist, CHANEY an engaging and passionate rock worship band and CHAOTIC RESEMBLANCE. Noon–6 p.m. at Celebration on the Lake Church, 9120 TX-198, Mabank. For more information call 903-451-2302.

• March 29: Joel Harper Book Talk at NUVO

The personal trainer to the stars and regular contributor to The Dr. Oz Show, Harper will discuss his new book Mind Your Body, which explores the connection between meals, moves, and mindset at NUVO, 331 Oak Lawn Avenue #101, from 4–7 p.m. For more information and to RSVP e-mail RSVP to mindyourbodydallas@gmail.com.

• March 30: Transgender Day of Visibility at the Texas Capitol

Celebrate International Transgender Day of Visibility with Equality Texas, Legalize Human, Transgender Education Network of Texas, Texas Two Spirit Society, and Safe Schools Texas by educating legislators about discrimination based on bias against gender identity or expression and sexual orientation from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. at Equality Texas, 221 East 9th Street, Suite 302, Austin. For more information e-mail Cavan O’Raghallaigh at cavanor@equalitytexas.org.

APRIL

• Lambda Weekly every Sunday on 89.3 KNON-FM.

• April 2: Fort Worth PFLAG meeting

Meets every first Thursday from 7–9 p.m. at First Jefferson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1599 Sandy Lane, Fort Worth. For more information call 817-428-2329 or visit PflagFortWorth.org.

• April 2: Trans Network Affiliates Meeting: Dr. Steven Klemow, Parkland Hospital

Networking event and lecture for transgender organizations and service providers features Dr. Steven Klemow of the Amelia Court Clinic at Parkland Health and Hospital System. 7 p.m. at Brazos Room, Center for Community Cooperation, 2900 Live Oak Street. For more information e-mail nellgatherr@nellatpride.org.

• April 2: Annual Dallas County Democratic Party Johnson Jordan Dinner

Annual dinner honors countywide elected and judiciary officials. Pulitzer Prize winning Washington Post columnist Eugene Robinson speaks. VIP Sponsor reception at 5:30 p.m. and dinner and program at 6:30 p.m. at Hyatt Regency Dallas, Reunion Ballroom, 300 Reunion Boulevard. For more information e-mail eventsnsp@dallasdemocrats.org.

• April 3: Grace United Methodist Church Easter Weekend Services

Grace UMC hosts a Good Friday service 7–8 p.m. and three Easter services from 8–11:45 a.m. Easter SonRise Service 8–9 a.m. followed by an Easter Egg Hunt at 9:30–10:15 am for children ages 3–12, and a worship service 10:30–11:45 a.m. Grace United Methodist Church, 4105 Junius Street. For more information call 214-824-2533 or e-mail gunc@graceumcdallas.org.

• April 4: 8th Annual Stockyards Easter Run/Walk

1K, 5K and 10K run and walk starts at 8:30 a.m. in Fort Worth’s Historic Stockyards, East Exchange. Easter egg hunt and roll afterward. Benefits the All-Star Equestrian Foundation. $200 cash prize for largest team. Register at Bit.ly/1L0X5S. For more information call or e-mail Veronica Merrill at 817-257-4480 or at v.merrill@tcu.edu.

• April 4: Easter Egg-stravaganza at Northaven United Methodist Church

LGBT family friendly event includes Easter egg hunts, raffle, egg races with prizes, brunch and photo opportunities with Easter Bunny. 10 a.m.–noon Northaven United Methodist Church, 11211 Preston Road. For more information call 214-363-2479.

• April 6: Hidden consequences of changing Texas’ Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) Equality Texas, Texas Freedom Network and ACLU of Texas present a conversation on the impact of pending legislation on families, cities, local governance and businesses 7–8:30 p.m. at University Presbyterian SA, 300 Bushnell Ave., San Antonio. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. RSVP at Bit.ly/1FIHLO.

• April 7: DFW Transcendence Trans/SOFFA Meeting

Trans and ally support group meets monthly on first and third Tuesdays from 7–9 p.m. at Agape MCC, 4615 East California Parkway, Fort Worth. For more information call Finn Jones at 214-499-0378 or by e-mail at sfinn.jones@gmail.com.

• April 8: GEAR: Trans men Community Session

Monthly meeting discussion topics relating to masculine gender identity and transitioning. 6–8 p.m. at Resource Center, 2701 Reagan St. For more information call Finn Jones at 214-499-0378 or by e-mail at sfinn.jones@gmail.com.

• April 9: Fashion CITED: A Style Event

Style show benefits Legal Hospice of Texas. 6:30–9:30 p.m. at Frontiers of Flight Museum, 6911 Lemmon Ave. Tickets available at Bit.ly/1DGAPhZ.

• April 11: Hold Me Tight Couples Retreat

Randy Martin, LPC-S and Carolyn Solis, LPC facilitate a retreat focused on same-sex couples based on the work of Dr. Sue Johnson, author of Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love. Open to couples and individuals. 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. at Resource Center Dallas, 2701 Reagan Street. $200 per person or $400 per couple. Registration fee includes lunch and the book Hold Me Tight. Pre-registration is required. For more information call or e-mail Randy Martin at 214-392-8247 or at martinlpc@yahoo.com.

• April 12: Oak Cliff Earth Day Celebration at Lake Cliff Park
Grants are not enough

The state of HIV/AIDS funding and the need for local fundraisers

JAMES RUSSELL | Staff Writer
russell@dallasvoice.com

With more than 76,000 Texans living with HIV, every funding source counts. But limited state funds force most local HIV/AIDS service providers to look elsewhere.

As with any not-for-profit organization, one solution is to cultivate a reliable donor base, guaranteeing at least a portion of any agency’s budget will be met. But that means planning memorable events, like this weekend’s No Tie Dinner, which benefits AIDS Services of Dallas.

For an organization like ASD, with a lean budget and high demand for services, success means hosting a memorable event at a low price.

No Tie, now in its 10th year, mostly takes place in donors’ homes. Some hosts deck their homes out and invite a large group of friends, ASD’s Event Manager Kristi Holman said. Others just invite a couple of friends to hang out in the backyard.

The point is to allow people to donate in a comfortable environment.

“No Tie Dinner’s production costs are minimal so overhead is low. Funds can directly impact ASD that way,” said the group’s CEO, Don Maison.

“The beauty of NTD’s funds is that donations are unrestricted, covering what’s not covered by federal and state grants. Most grants can fund medical care but can’t fund quality of life care for residents,” he said.

But donors also like big events — like DIFFA’s Dallas Collection, Razzle Dazzle Dallas and Black Tie Dinner — that raise donations for multiple organizations.

Like all HIV and AIDS service providers, ASD relies on a variety of funding streams, the most substantial coming from the federal government. According to the Department of State Health Services’ 2013 report, $337,618,731 went to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment service organizations in Texas. Of that total, $271,789,179 came from Ryan White funds while the remaining $69,887,795 was dispersed at the state and local level.

The Ryan White Program provides funding for medical and support services to organizations serving those living with HIV. Since it was introduced in the 1990s, funds have moved from providing support services to paying mostly for medical services.

Maison identified three main funding streams for his organization: federal government funds, including Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS and Ryan White funds; state funds; and local fundraisers.

“No that around 75 percent goes toward out patient services, substance abuse, getting nonrestricted funds through private and foundation donors can go to social services,” said Melissa Grove, Legacy Counseling Center’s executive director, said restrictions on those funds still leave a gap in the general operating fund. That means fundraisers are key to filling budget gaps.

“Grants don’t cover everything. Ryan White funding is restricted. You always have to have fundraisers,” she said.

Holman and Maison agreed. No Tie Dinner’s gifts are non-restricted, meaning they can be used toward the organization’s general operating fund. Though donations are unrestricted and fill a funding gap, service providers still scrape for funds.

One possible source of funding in Texas is currently only on the priority list of public health providers: Medicaid expansion.

“We’re trying to expand Medicaid or have an alternative waiver, we would make more available in our limited pots of funding for HIV,” said Anne Dunkelberg, associate director and health and wellness program director at the Center for Public Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank in Austin.

“The challenge facing Medicaid expansion at this point is Democrats have written all of the bills relating to its expansion. But those bills aren’t likely to go far in the state’s overwhelmingly Republican statehouse,” Dunkelberg said.

While federal funds like Medicaid are largely for the uninsured, they only cover some services — the types of services not covered under federal grants.

That’s why cultivating a donor pool is important. But there’s another reason to prove your organization’s financial strength. Being a successful steward of public funds can also reap rewards in the private sector. In ASD’s case, the Purple Foundation will serve as NTD’s presenting sponsor for the event, a first for the organization. A new platinum level sponsor, the Deason Foundation, hosted another first for the organization: a sponsor appreciation dinner.

Along with the others’ help, including Seattle-based Microsoft, NTD has already doubled sponsorship across sponsor levels. “It was amazing,” Maison said, crediting hosts Doug and Holly Deason for an impressive evening.

But Holman with ASD said they’d take checks any time. “We’ll take checks up until the event and of course after,” she said.

AIDS Services Dallas staffers Sergio Delgado, HR director, left, and Alex Sanchez, development associate and volunteer services manager, right, cut off ASD President and CEO Don Maison’s tie for the No Tie Dinner. (Tammye Nash/Dallas Voice)
Black Tie announces 2015 theme, beneficiaries at Fort Worth event

Organizers name 16 local beneficiaries, get ready to 'Ignite' support

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Black Tie Dinner officials on Thursday announced the theme for the 2015 dinner, set for Nov. 14, and the 16 organizations chosen to share in proceeds from this year's event. Dinner co-chairs Debra Davis and John Lawrimore made the announcements during a kickoff event held at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden.

Davis said the Black Tie Dinner committee chose “Ignite” as this year’s dinner because “We feel this theme represents the atmosphere in the community.

“We’ve seen a huge progression in LGBT rights over the last year, which seems to have ignited a new level of engagement towards our mission,” she explained.

The 2015 local beneficiaries are AIDS Interfaith Network, AIDS Outreach Center, AIDS Services of Dallas, Cathedral of Hope, Celebration Community Church, Congregation Beth El B'Nai, Equality Texas Foundation, Health Services of North Texas, Lambda Legal, Legacy Counseling Center, Legal Hospice of Texas, Northaven United Methodist Church, Resource Center, Turtle Creek Chorale, The Women’s Chorus of Dallas and Uptown Players.

The dinner’s national beneficiary is the Human Rights Campaign.

Each year, the Black Tie committee allocates about half of its proceeds to HRC and the remaining half is distributed to the local beneficiaries. Since the first dinner in 1982, which raised $6,000 for HRC, Black Tie Dinner — the largest LGBT fundraising dinner in the country — has distributed more than $19 million to HRC and local beneficiaries.

In addition to being the largest event of its kind, Dallas’ Black Tie Dinner is also the only event of its kind to donate to local organizations as well as HRC.

“Selecting beneficiaries is one of the most important decisions our board makes every year,” Lawrimore said. “Each of these organizations bring their own unique impact to our community. They are the reason Black Tie Dinner exists and we are proud to be able to help fund their efforts.”

Raffle tickets and sponsorship tables are currently being sold online at BlackTie.org. General table sales begin in June.

For more information call 972-865-2239, ext. 29.

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On the Brinker of equality

Founder of Susan G. Komen turns her attention to the fight for LGBT civil rights

TAMMYE NASH  | Managing Editor
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There was a time, Nancy Brinker acknowledged, “that I probably wasn’t kind to gay people.” But any unkindness grew not out of animus toward gays, but rather from a lack of knowledge.

“Back then, people didn’t talk about it. I probably knew gay people that I never knew were gay. I never realized that some people are born gay,” Brinker said in a recent interview. “I can look back at people I knew and see now that yes, they were probably gay. But back then, you just didn’t talk about it. I never thought about it.”

But Brinker isn’t in the dark any more. The woman who founded Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation (now Susan G. Komen) may not be marching in LGBT protests or parades, but she is a very vocal, very staunch advocate for LGBT rights, thanks to her openly gay son, Eric Brinker.

“I am very proud of my son. This is very personal to me,” said the long-time Dallasite, who now lives in Florida where she supports passage of the Florida Competitive Workforce Act, bipartisan legislation that would ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression in employment, housing and public accommodation.

Brinker — U.S. ambassador to Hungary from 2001 to 2003 and chief of protocol of the U.S. from 2001 to 2003 and chief of protocol of the U.S. from 1990 to 2001 — was also one of 300 Republican lawmakers, operatives and consultants who recently signed an amicus brief in conjunction with marriage equality cases going to the U.S. Supreme Court in April.

“We just want the court to know that we stand for traditional conservative values, and that means stable families and civil marriage rights,” Brinker said of her reason for signing the amicus brief. “This is a free country, and we have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I am a Republican, and I am conservative. But I don’t ever want to be part of anything that disadvantages my son.”

This is not the first time that Nancy Brinker has “opened my mouth” and stood up for a marginalized group of people.

Nancy Brinker’s sister, Susan Komen, died of breast cancer in 1980, at the age of 36. Brinker promised her dying sister that she would do everything she could to end breast cancer, and in 1982 she established the Komen Foundation, with that end in mind.

Today, the fight against breast cancer is a popular cause. But that wasn’t the case in 1982.

“Back then, the stigma surrounding breast cancer was enormous,” Brinker said. “That stigma was one of the biggest hurdles we had to get over. Now, we have raised more than $2.6 billion and we have changed the culture.”

Along the way, Brinker said, she also became aware that two of the populations being disproportionately affected by breast cancer were lesbians and transgender women, and often these women “were not being treated with respect and acceptance.”

While being lesbian or transgender in and of themselves were not risk factors, lesbians and trans women often faced certain hurdles that did put them at a higher risk for breast cancer. Brinker said these women, overall, tend to not have health insurance, to not get regular mammograms and to not access health care services in general. And often, she said, it’s because lesbians and trans women are not treated with dignity and respect by health care professionals.

“Frankly, they face stigma from health care providers,” Brinker said. “And that is just not acceptable.”

According to the Komen website, in 2012 alone, Komen affiliates funded more than 1,900 grants, totaling more than $92 million, to provide services, including mammograms, diagnostics, educational programs, support services and treatment assistance through local organizations. Back in the 1990s, the Komen Foundation worked with the Young-Elder Women’s Health Program at Nelson-Tebedo Community Clinic to provide mammograms and other services to Dallas’ lesbian community.

While Brinker’s sense of fairness prompted her to support such programs for marginalized women, the concept of LGBT equality didn’t become real to her until her son came out to her.

“I’ve always been really relaxed about my son’s life, but at the same time, he didn’t come out to me until he was over 30,” Brinker said. “It wasn’t that I didn’t know, I just wondered when he was going to talk to me about it. When he finally did tell me, I cried — not because he was gay, but because I felt badly that he had felt badly, and that he felt he couldn’t share that with me.”

Brinker said she believes that one reason Eric didn’t come out to her sooner has to do with the fact that his peers were less open with their parents and families. “It just makes me sad to know that he would ever have a moment where he would think he would be penalized for who he is,” Brinker said of her son. “I just hope that some day my son finds that person he loves, who loves him, and they are able to be married if they want, and spend their lives together.”

Brinker said that “people my age, when we were younger, thought of homosexuality as a disease, ‘that it was contagious and you could catch it from someone, that somehow a person could be ‘convinced’ to be gay, even though they weren’t.”

“Back then, there were a lot of old wives’ tales that people used to believe,” she continued. “They thought being gay was something dangerous, something bad. And sometimes, if you insist on characterizing somebody as being dangerous and bad, then they will become dangerous and bad, because that’s what everyone tells them.”

Brinker said that as she looks back on people she has known, she realizes that some of them were probably lesbian or gay people who found themselves crushed under the weight of discrimination and detestation. “I had a lot of friends who ended their lives, who got on drugs, and I know now that it happened because they were gay and because they were afraid and had nowhere to turn,” she said.

Brinker said a friend named Steve Covey once told her that LGBT people often face a lot of discrimination and fear. “He told me, ‘You will change the entire way you look at the world when you meet the first gay person that you really know.’ And he was right.”

Brinker also acknowledged that the weight of discrimination LGBT people face didn’t really hit home to her until she traveled overseas, to countries where the dangers are much more immediate.

“I never thought about some of these things until I traveled to countries where people can be put in jail just for being gay, and even killed,” she said.

Even with that experience, Brinker said she finds it “hard to fathom in 26 percent of this country, civil marriage is still not available to all people. I understand that some people are not entirely comfortable with [homosexuality]. No one is saying you have to be. Nobody is telling you that you have to be best friends with a gay person. Just don’t discriminate against gay people. Simple as that.”

Brinker said that she “really resent[s]” the fact that civil rights for LGBT people still have to be a topic of discussion. But since it does, she intends to make her voice heard in that discussion.

“When you are known primarily for one thing — for me, Susan G. Komen — people start to think you are a one-trick pony. Well, I am not,” Brinker declared. “This is something I care a lot about, because I care about my son. I’ve got a big mouth, and I think it’s time I opened it. Again.”

When her son Eric Brinker came out to her, LGBT rights became very personal to Nancy Brinker.
Anything could happen when Jack E. Jett entered a studio, which is probably why Sandra Bernhardt agreed to be his co-host.

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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Jack E. Jett had a reputation for being wild, crazy, unpredictable — and always entertaining.

On his last appearance on Lambda Weekly, Jett said, “My goal is to read the Internet from front to back before I die. So right now, I’m at the H’s. I keep reading Huffington Post and they keep putting stuff in there, so I’m stuck.”

On March 21, Jack Pinson, better known as Jack E. Jett, 58, died of a heart attack, just days after celebrating his 21st anniversary with his partner John Gennusa.

Gennusa said Jett was born in Grand Prairie, the son of a Baptist minister. He got out, Gennusa said, as soon as he could.

Jett moved to California and became a fashion model. He was featured in Playgirl, but had his greatest success working on a gig in Japan. He became so successful, he stayed and became one of that country’s most successful print models at the time.

Once he moved back to L.A., Jett became Belinda Carlisle’s personal production assistant. “He did all the stuff people hate doing,” Gennusa said. “They palled around together for 10, maybe 15 years.”

Soon after Jett moved back to Dallas in 1994, he and Gennusa met at JR’s Bar & Grill. Gennusa said it was odd they met, because neither normally hung out at the bars. At the time they met, Jett was working for Prime TV, looking for programming for the Australian television company.

During that time, Jett was also developing the Jack E. Jett character, who dressed in a long black coat and wore one yellow rubber glove. He soon began doing a public access TV.

In the early 2000s, the “reality” show Cheaters began filming in Dallas. Host Joey Greco would accompany someone who would catch a two-timing spouse out with someone else. When it was a lesbian couple, they’d inevitably end up fighting in the parking lot behind Sue Ellen’s.

In one episode, Greco was “shot” by the enraged spouse who was caught in the act, and Jett filled in while the host “recovered.”

In 2004, the Q Television Network began production in a studio in Haltom City. The cable network’s main show was a two-and-a-half hour, five-day-a-
Blasting off on Planet Privilege

I read that “Planet Confusion” post from Leslie McMurray in the March 20 issue of Dallas Voice, and let me just say for starters, it was a hot mess. You know it ain’t good and you have screwed up in TransWorld when our TERF (trans-exclusive radical feminist) enemies and the TS separatist useful fools are gleefully linking to it, disrespectfully misgendering you at the same time, and you are getting called out by your trans family for the problematic commentary in it.

And once again, we have another instance of a late-transitioning trans person saying some problematic crap.

The first problem with the post was using that Jackie Robinson analogy. It didn’t fit this situation, and you would have been better off leaving it out.

Also problematic is the conclusion jump made based on a cis-woman’s assertions that Carlotta Sklodowska, the trans woman in question, is a crossdresser. She’s not, and has stated that she is trans. So why would you use Yvette Cormier’s and the conservafools’ dirty work for them by not only continuing to erase her declared identity, but then going on an anti-crossdresser rant on top of it?

Sklodowska could have looked like Heidi Klum when she walked into that locker room to hang up her coat and purse and she still would have been unjustly misgendered.

I started my transition in 1994. I was wearing feminine attire in public long before that. It is a cardinal rule in TransWorld that when out and using public restrooms that correspond with gender presentation, we always sit to pee. For you to insinuate we don’t reinforced the transphobic “men in dresses” trope. It may be news to you, Leslie, but those of us who have been out and proud since before 2012 are a lot more politically and PR savvy than you give us credit for. Did it also not occur to you to ponder the point that Yvette Cormier may have had an agenda and may have been lying?

No police report, no arrest, no predator. Anyone who has been in TransWorld long enough to pay attention knows that far too many conservative white peeps have been crying wolf and white women’s tears over nonexistent trans predators. Now they and the anti-trans industry and their lexicographer useful fools are gleefully linking to it, disrespectfully misgendering you at the same time, and you are getting called out by your trans family. Because if they are enacted, they will disproportionately affect trans people of color.

In addition to the problematic anti-crossdresser rant, the column had the vanilla-centric privileged stench of trans identity politics that makes me sick. Not everyone in TransWorld can plunk down $20K and jet to Thailand to get sex reassignment surgery for various personal, fiscal and medical reasons, and you need to keep that fundamental point in mind in the future.

You also need to keep in mind there are many ways to present as female, and cis and trans women come in all shapes, sizes and genital configurations.

But the bottom line in this whole sorry mess is this: Yvette Cormier lost her membership for bullshit. She has the audacity to want Planet Fitness to pay for her precious delicate nerves being disturbed by a trans woman merely existing.

Monica Roberts is an African-American transgender activist and blogger at TransGriot.blogspot.com who lives in Houston.
week talk show. His co-hosts both loved his creativity and off-the-wall sense of humor while sometimes feeling frustrated by him.

“Tell you what. Working with Jack was challenging, because he didn’t always play well with others,” said co-host Chrisanne Eastwood, a comedian from L.A. “But, when he was on a roll, he could surprise the shit out of you. He was funny and fearless and fiercely ambitious. And gone much too soon.”

“Jack and I used to fight like cats and dogs,” said Scott Withers, another co-host. “Our boss pitted us against each other to ensure we gave our best on camera.”

While the rest of the cast could finish an episode and go home, the show consumed Jett.

“I’ll never forget the time he called me while I was shopping in IKEA,” Withers said. “He yelled at me for nearly an hour. Over the years, we had come to respect each other and became friends. We enjoyed laughing about our fights. He was more talented than I could ever become. I never told him that and I will regret it forever.”

Mimi Snow worked on the QTV crew. She met Jett while she was editing Cheaters and did some side work editing his public access show.

“I immediately fell in love with his quirky, fun, glove-wearing persona,” Snow said. “He came to me one day and asked if I’d be interested in editing for an all gay network. He said the current editors were straight and they needed someone give it the gay touch. I took him up on the offer and that eventually led to my dream of being a successful editor in Los Angeles.”

When QTV moved to California in 2005, Snow moved with the network. But Jett, who began doing his own show, commuted from Dallas to tape in L.A.

Jett’s show was called Queer Edge with Jack E. Jett. One of his first guests was Sandra Bernhardt. Gennusa said Carlisle, a friend of Bernhardt’s, arranged the appearance.

Bernhardt and Jett hit it off and he asked her to be his co-host. He was shocked when she agreed.

“She enjoyed his sense of humor,” Gennusa said. “He was good at setting things up for her and letting her do her thing.”

Gennusa said Jett and Bernhardt remained friends and kept in touch until the end. Jett retained ownership of that show, which he sold into syndication.

After QTV folded later that year — it was funded through a fraudulent penny stock scheme and with few advertisers quickly ran out of money — Jett mostly did radio broadcasting.

He and Gennusa co-hosted a program on Rational Radio in Dallas and later hosted ilume radio. Gennusa said he came to the studio during the first show just to help out, but once he sat down at a mike across from his partner, he stayed through the rest of the run of the show.


“We will all miss him,” Crossland said.

People who worked with Jett often credit him with helping them get their careers on track.

“Jack Pinson was sweet, giving, funny and incredibly entertaining,” Snow said. “There will always be a yellow glove in my heart with his name on it.”

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Mary Chapin Carpenter has always been known for her eclectic oeuvre, when she released last year Songs From The Movie — a 10-cut album of some of her previously-released singles revisited with orchestral arrangements — the singer-songwriter delved into unique territory even for her, incorporating genres from folk to Beach Boys-esque pop to country, with which she’s probably most closely associated.

But listen to the original version of “I Am a Town,” one of Carpenter’s most popular hits, from her 1992 country-tinged breakout album Come On Come On, and then listen to this latest version: It’s easy to hear how the song’s original slow cello lines and subtly swelling ebb-and-flow lend themselves to a more grandiose treatment. The newly-added strings, woodwinds and French horn evoke a cinematic grandioseness — a sensibility that comes with maturity.

It was an idea, she says, that she kept “in her back pocket,” always present even as she navigated her career, a divorce, the death of her father and her own serious illness (Carpenter suffered a pulmonary embolism in 2007), which forced her to take a break from writing and performing.

“I was in the wilderness,” she says of the period, “not only because it was a tough time personally, but for me my identity and my sense of purpose was very tied up in the identity I had as a songwriter and the enormous amount of sustenance I got from an audience, playing live music and writing songs.”

From that dark place came Ashes and Roses, a gorgeous album veined with grief that evolves into redemption. That dark place bore other fruit as well, as she came out the other side.

“When I was able to resume traveling and touring and recording it certainly gave me an arc of gratitude and realization that it really is a short life, and you have to make the most of it,” she says.

Part of making the most of it meant pulling that old project out of her back pocket and making it real. “It took a number of years to get the specifics going,” she says of the challenges she faced in gathering a 63-member orchestra, a 15-voice choir, collaborator Vince Mendoza and all the other logistics that turn an idea into a reality. And then there was the real effort: more than 30 years into her career, learning how to sing not with a guitar in hand and a backing band but with such a huge, dominating ensemble.

“I love singing with an orchestra,” Carpenter says. “It was really terrifying at first, because you have to learn how to do it and get your bearings and that terror was very pronounced. But finally over a period of time I realized it was diminishing, and that what was taking its place was this joy, this euphoria, that has been nothing short of transformative.” The subsequent tour, she says, “was one of the greatest experiences of my life.”

These transformations, these re-imaginings, seem to be a theme for Carpenter. Her illness, she says, played a great role in her constant evolution. “I just feel like this is the only life I have, this is the only career I have and I want to learn new things,” she says.

But the re-imagining continues. For her appearance at Bass Hall this weekend, the gay-popular performer will be stripping the music all the way back down to just her, Jon Carroll on piano and John Doyle on guitars and bouzouki. It makes sense in a way: From a folk-inspired project that started 17 years ago, to a full-fledge departure from her usual, back to a feel that’s as intimate as her first albums, yet different. Carpenter’s foray into both the wilderness and the studio seem to have transformed her indeed.

“Just this one part project has enriched my life to such a degree,” she says, “that it has made me feel like I never want to do the same thing over and over again.”
ARNOlD WAYNE JONES  | Executive Editor
jones@dallasvoice.com

The next time a hater dismisses the musical format as silly fluff, share this with him: Over the course of just 16 years in the 1940s and ’50s, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II produced 11 original works (nine stage shows, a movie and a TV special, both since adapted to the stage). Among those musicals, three contained major Asian characters, and many of them were pointedly critical of right-wing extremism (Nazis, racism, imperialism). They wrote tuneful musicals, yes, but they were about something.

You have to attribute a lot of that to Hammerstein (the author and lyricist). Even without Rodgers, he wrote Show Boat (with its interracial marriage) and Carmen Jones (all-black cast in a modernization of Carmen). Social justice meant something to him … and long before the Civil Rights Movement got officially underway.

With that backdrop in mind, it’s difficult to watch The King & I, which Dallas Summer Musicals has on stage in an all-new tour, and not think about how a musical written in 1951 and set in 1865, seems more progressive than current Texas politics. As I sat there on press night, listening to the “barbarian” King of Siam (Alan Ariano) matter-of-factly state that the earth spins on an axis and has been around much longer than the Bible says, I wondered whether attendance should be required of the committee that writes Texas’ school textbook policy.

All of this is by way of saying, you can still feel a thrill watching an excellent production of a 64-year-old piece of stagecraft just because it’s so ballsy. Sedate sometimes, even stately? Oh, yes — Rodgers’ scores were magnificently orchestral. But there’s passion and beauty that takes your breath away.

That’s apparent from the opening scene, in which the British schoolmistress Anna Leonowens (Rachel York), accepts a job as tutor in far-off Siam (now Thailand), sings the opening number, “Whistle a Happy Tune.” Is that… could it be… Julie Andrews??!! You’d swear it was: Close your eyes, and York’s crystalline soprano and perfect diction will convince you you’ve entered an alternative universe where Mary Poppins finally got to play Anna. She’s amazing.

But the fact is, everyone is in this lushly-appointed production. York sings fully half the songs, including the most famous (“Whistle,” “Shall We Dance,” “Getting to Know You,” “Hello, Young Lovers”), but allow yourself to be swept away in the gorgeous forbidden romance between Tup-tim (Yoonjeong Seong) and Lun Tha (devastatingly sexy Devin Iwai), whose duets are scorching with sexual energy. And while every King since Yul Brynner lives in the shadow of his legendary performance, Ariano (short, giving him a bulldogish center of gravity) makes the role his own. (The choreography is also breathtaking.)

It’s salient that the show’s sympathiest number, “Shall We Dance,” is interrupted by the show’s most gruesome and emotional twist. It turns on a dime, wrenching you from glee to gasp. That’s the power of a great musical. Haters gonna hate, but King & I is great.
Time can really slip away from you. It seems just the other day that Dallas foodies were voting on the selection of the fourth chef to take over Kitchen LTO (Limited Time Only), restaurateur Casie Caldwell’s Trinity Groves dining experiment that recruits a new chef every four months with online polls of candidates. The winner then creates a menu to reflect his or her style, but which will only be around as long as the chef’s tenure.

Last summer, the winner turned out to be Blythe Beck, already a known quantity in the Dallas restaurant scene. Beck’s stint should have ended in January, but instead, Caldwell savvily mounted a Facebook campaign to keep Beck around for a second four-month engagement.

So when I got the notice last week that announced the search was underway for the next chef, it occurred to me it was now-or-never time to write a review of Blythe Beck’s Kitchen LTO before it’s forever lost to the ages.

In some ways, it’s more of an exercise than a requirement. I’ve known Beck since she was sous chef (and later exec) at the now-defunct Hector’s on Henderson, and followed her to her “naughty” stay at Central 214 (also now gone in favor of John Tesar’s Knife steakhouse). She’s always had a culinary point of view, like it or not — what she calls her “naughty recipes:” Buttery, gluten-y, hedonistic dishes that embrace what dieticians like to shame us for. Might they cut a few years off your life? Yeah, so? What else is life for? I exaggerate … slightly. Beck isn’t out to kill anyone, and it’s not like she throws a spoonful of lard in a frisée salad just for the helluvit. I suspect even she doesn’t indulge in the extravagances she creates on a daily basis. But she’s creating a mindset as much as a menu: Forget food-shaming and calling good meals “guilty pleasures.” Enjoy life! Tip a glass! Don’t skip dessert! There’s a reason the first three letters of diet are “D-I-E.” She’s gourmand as much as gourmet, a living embodiment of Wildean epigrams (“moderation is a fatal thing — nothing succeeds like excess;” “the only way to get rid of temptation is the yield to it”).

All of which could make a review of her Kitchen LTO experience — I’m already on record as a fan — superfluous. Only it’s not. That’s because, even if you liked Blythe at Central 214, you should love her here. There are familiar dishes on the menu: the deviled egg and southern-fried oyster ($16) appetizers, the “iceberg babies” salad ($10), the chicken-fried quail and waffles entrée ($19 small, $27 large). She’s not new to this, but I’ve never had better versions of any of these from Beck before. Maybe
there’s some nostalgia at work, but I think the opposite: It’s not that the older versions have grown better in my memory, but that the new ones exceed them. She has polished the recipes, made them just as sinful yet deftly elegant.

A good way to prove this is by focusing on the new-to-me items, starting with the champagne brie bisque ($8). Bisque is a cream soup; brie is a potent cheese; champagne is, well, champagne—all the earmarks of a Blythe Beck creation. You expect to be bowled over by its heaviness, its richness. One spoonful, though, and I knew I was in foreign territory. Creamy, yes, but it danced on the tongue (I suspect the bubbly infuses it with lightness). It preps the palate, not overwhelms it.

The breads and spreads ($12; we ordered an additional side of grilled sourdough for $3) were equally as disarming. Beck was an early champion of the bona fides of pimento cheese, so I wasn’t surprised to see a ramekin of it among the trio, but two others created a savory trinity: the so-called pink duck sauce (a dip made with duck fat in Beck’s signature Pepto-colored palette) and a salty trout “salad” that had me and my dining companion trawling the bottom of the dish like junkies for every last morsel. (That’s always been Beck’s goal, to have people throw decorum away and just live a little. If that’s the criterion, it’s a success.)

The familiar entrées were just as addictive. The ribeye ($21/$27) combines a well-marbled cut of beef chicken-fried with coffee-and-bacon-infused gravy. “Naughty” creamed corn and braised mustard greens, a combination that would be considered a hate crime in the Land of Low-Fat Food Nazis. Fortunately, we live in Texas. Frying can sometime mask flaws in a dish, but here it simply brings out Beck’s ethos, which unexpectedly balances bold and nuanced flavors. That’s especially evident in the bacon-cheddar meatloaf ($14–$19), where a slab of exquisitely glazed meatloaf, banded but a retaining wall of bacon, draws as much symphonic power from a salad of Brussels sprout petals as from the sharpness of her pimento mac-n-cheese. (She does a disservice to even call it mac-n-cheese, as the pasta was more like a gemelli awash in a bath of cheddar rather than something a fourth-grader chokes down with cut-up wieners.)

The menu really comes together holistically, from the accessible drink list to desserts like the oatmeal cream pie ($10) sandwiching rum raisin ice cream to create a sort of idealized comfort-food vibe. It’s home cooking elevated by a chef who, unlike your mom, wants you to be naughty and doesn’t care if you eat your vegetables. Now that’s guilt-free dining.

Denise Lee appears for Chef and Song’s free concert series at Kitchen LTO on March 30. Full menu available. Reservations from 7 p.m.; concert at 8 p.m.
What started out as a wild hair of an idea has grown into a vivid and fashionable business for James Mealey and Nikhail Asnani. And it all started at a Hong Kong gay bar.

A few years ago, Mealey moved to the Asian city, where he met Asnani. While at a gay club, he wondered where the men got their sleeveless shirts. Suddenly, the word “gaytanks” popped into his head.

Now, it’s not just a name — Gaytanks is an emerging uni-sex lifestyle brand that exclusively features the gay man’s favorite summery accessory: the tank top. What’s even better is that it targets (as you might guess) gay men and their girlfriends.

Though neither Mealey nor Asnani have formal training in fashion, Asnani’s family was involved in manufacturing. Together, they began designing and came up with the distinctive, burgeoning brand that’s roots can be traced back to Hong Kong’s unique sense of style.

“Hong Kong is a very flashy place. It’s known for an almost gaudy style but also fun and colorful,” Mealey says. “Being out there and seeing all
Despite uni-sex designs, queer-owned Gaytanks speaks to a gay sensibility of the street styles had a lot of influence on the looks we put together.”

Their debut collection of a dozen tanks took inspiration from the fashion megalopolis, both in design and the funny-yet-unapologetic attitude that speaks to gay culture. One mint green tank bears the words “Eat My Butt” bookended cutely with a fork and knife on either side; a small disclaimer at the bottom corner reads “*gluten free.” Another switches the wholesome hush puppies with the pun “hush poppers.”

“Humor is a really important aspect of it, having fun with it but also in terms of vibrant colors, really eye-catching but flattering colors that you can wear out to the beach, the clubs, in the summer walking around the city. It’s a whole different kind of combination,” Mealey says.

The pair returned to the states last April; by June, they were selling tanks in droves at Pride festivals in Boston and New York. “Every group of guys who walk in with friends would turn to one of their group and say, ‘You need to get that tank top — we’re buying it for you.’ It was really funny to watch,” Mealey smiles.

They get socially responsible as well. One item features a white background covered in the “gay love” emoji: two men holding hands. Others include a couple of wonderfully weird camouflage color combinations in addition to a literal tank schematic for a dash of military flair. And there’s the classic rainbow print — rainbow arches ended on each side with picturesque clouds that comes with green and gray backgrounds (forest and fog).

The fit runs a little small, which isn’t a bad thing; Mealey recommends ordering a size up and the price point for all current products runs $30. Mealey identifies the pixilated tank top as one of his favorites and is an expression of Pride in the digital age.

“It’s really funny to see people’s realizations because it takes them a second to understand what it is,” says Mealey. We worked with an extremely talented graphic designer [Asnani’s sister] to go through a few different versions of this in terms of placement of the pixels and wording. It was very humorous to go through the different amounts of pixilation because sometimes it would look too much like a dick and sometimes it didn’t look like a dick at all.”

The designers plan to expand the product line further following up with additional collections of tank tops and even looking to bring the same bold, striking style to belts; think colorful safari scenes. Mealey and Asnani plan to continue to be present at Pride festivals (including Dallas if things go well), while also maintaining digital sales through their Web site and eventually rolling into boutiques in gayborhoods around the country.

“That’s really been one of the most exciting parts of it. I have friends who will send me pictures of random guys out at the bars that they see wearing our tops. It’s incredible to have this crazy idea and next thing you know you see people out and about wearing your stuff,” says Mealey.

Mealey’s family and friends have been extremely supportive through the entire creative process, even helping them unload and set-up booths at Pride festivals. His mother is a self-employed online retailer for silver and was able to provide insight on the e-commerce side of things, while Mealey’s dad thinks he has the next brilliant design — but it is all appreciated and out of love.

“My dad is really funny about it. He thinks he can come up with really funny tank top ideas and he comes up with terribly hilarious ideas all the time,” he says. “A lot of my friends also give me ideas, some better than others, but I think it’s a good sign that people believe it’s fun and want to be part of it.”

You can shop at Gaytanks.com.
Good Olly!

Pop star Olly Murs talks handsy fans, gay-baiting and sharing a sweater with Sam Smith

A veteran of nakedness, Olly Murs was fueling our straight-boy fantasies long before Nick Jonas. Stripping at London’s prestigious G-A-Y club, frequent underwear-only selfies, a leather jacket-clad cover photo in December’s Attitude magazine — we’re as addicted to Murs’ sex appeal as we are to his pop confessions.

Following the release of the British “X Factor” alum’s fourth studio album, *Never Been Better*, Murs spoke candidly about how he and other artists use sex to market their music, his biggest regret in life and how he considers fans grabbing his junk a “compliment.”

— Chris Azzopardi

Dallas Voice: You were one of the original Nick Jonases — you got naked for the gay community years before he did. Olly Murs: Yeah! I’ve done a few naked shots for the gay magazines. My body is in demand by the gay folks — I can’t complain! I don’t think I’ve got the best body in the world, but no, it’s very flattering. It’s always great to do those magazines and also to show people that — even though I’m a straight guy — I’m very comfortable with my sexuality, so I think that’s a great thing to do in those magazines, and it’s great fun.

I did a gig once at G-A-Y in the U.K. — a very renowned club, and a lot of artists go there to perform — and obviously when you do a performance there are girls screaming and going crazy for you, and obviously at a gay club it was a lot of men and it was quite strange, a different sort of noise, you know? It’s very, RAWR!

Are we gay men more touchy-feely than the girls? I think you are actually. You’re a bit more forward. You have a lot more confidence. And that’s a good thing!

What’s the grabbiest a fan has gotten at a show? When we did the 2012 tour and I walked into the audience, one of my fans went to grab my bits, which was quite interesting and quite funny.

How do you react to grabby fans? Oh, it’s fine. It’s cheeky and playful. And a compliment!

When Nick Jonas started showing more skin, people claimed he was gay-baiting. As someone who’s straight but open to getting naked for the gay community, I’m curious: What are your thoughts on “gay-baiting”?

I don’t know why people would say that. You’re just giving people what they want, and sure, there are a lot of gay men out there that love Nick Jonas and wanna see him, but women wanna see him naked as well. At the end of the day, it’s up to the artists. I don’t have to take my top off, but when I was asked by a magazine like Attitude to do it, I was like, “Why not?” I’m not against it, and you hope you get a good reaction out of people. But as artists we’re always trying to promote and win new fans over. It’s playful, and also, what’s wrong with an artist taking his top off?

What’s the trick to shooting a nude photo? Make sure you have a good diet before you do it. Make sure you feel good with your body and you’re comfortable with it. Obviously I wasn’t massively comfortable the last time I did it because it was the first time I got naked in about two years, so my body changed a little bit. I wasn’t quite as fit as I was before, but it was good though. Tuck that stomach in at all times!

You’ve been hitting the gym.

Where have you seen the most progress? Well… day one started yesterday. I’m on day two today. [Laughs] And it’s going well! I’m getting there, you know?

In an age where the stigma of male body hair is in flux, you seem to embrace yours. Always. I think we always talk about hair on bodies, and sometimes when you take it off you just look a bit too young. I’m quite proud of a bit of masculine hair.

When you measure the success you’ve had globally, where does America fall? How do you feel about your success here versus worldwide? Everywhere is different — for example, in Europe I’ve got a much bigger fan base, and obviously Australia, too — but I don’t try to compare places. I just know certain markets are a little bit harder, and America is one of them. Every time I’ve come back, though, it’s been amazing. Just gotta keep working hard. And I think the fans in America are amazing — a really great bunch of people.

Will you be touring America? Yeah, we hope so. At the moment we haven’t announced it, but we’re hoping to come back to the U.S. at some point later on in the year.

Around Christmas of last year you were in a sweater foursome with not only Demi Lovato and One Direction’s Niall Horan, but also Sam Smith — all of you shared an oversized ugly sweater, and it was amazing. Yeah, I got to share a sweater with him, and it was a beautiful thing! I don’t think people realize how tall Sam is. He’s a very tall man! But he’s also very charming and really honest. Sam’s great.

How tall are you? I’m about 5-foot-9 on a good day. He’s about 6 foot, maybe.

How did you and Sam initially meet? I met Sam at a gig. I can’t remember [exactly where], but then during *X Factor* [in December] we had a good chat again and he’s a lovely guy. Really great singer, and obviously had an amazing week at the Grammys. He deserves it.

During the song “Stick with Me,” you refer to regrets and how we all have a few. What’s your greatest regret?

I don’t live life by regrets, but I went to college in the U.K. and didn’t go to university, and I’d love to have done that and experienced that. I really didn’t work hard enough in school to do it, and I regret a bit that I didn’t. But, obviously, I’m really happy where my life got me to now, so I can’t complain. I’m in a really great place as a person now, and I’ve never really had many tough times in my career where it’s been terrible; it’s always been quite positive with me. This album really is a true reflection of me realizing what I’ve got.

Would you say this is your most serious and personal album? Yeah, definitely the most serious, and it definitely has a lot of balls behind it. It’s exciting to do an album and put your life and soul into it, and it’s bigger and better than the last three albums. It’s the best one I’ve done. I’m excited to hear what all the American fans think of it.

Describe the album as if it were a candy. It’s a Gobstopper — long-lasting. You’re chewing it and enjoying every piece of it until the end.
Friday 03.27 — Saturday 03.28

Diavolo shows architecture in motion with Fluid Infinities

In broad strokes, Diavolo is a dance troupe, but when you see the group perform — with the use of technology and sets that turn movement into something architectural — it seems like something more, something otherworldly. The popular company, which TITAS brings back this weekend, completes its “l’espace du temps” trilogy of for two shows on Friday and Saturday.

DEETS: City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. March 27–28. 8 p.m. ATTPAC.org.

Saturday 03.28

An evening with B’way legend and local girl Betty Buckley

Fort Worth native Betty Buckley has done it all, from Broadway to TV to film and records. Her latest album, Ghostlight, is a tribute to her favorite showtunes. More than that, though, she’ll also perform songs by the likes of Mary Chapin Carpenter (who will also be performing in Fort Worth this weekend, see Page 14) in the terrifically intimate cabaret space of Bass Hall’s McDavid Studio for two shows on Saturday.

DEETS: McDavid Studio, 301 E. Fifth St., Fort Worth. 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. $60.50. BassHall.com.

Tuesday 03.31

Drink up at DFW Rescue Me’s 4th Kibble & Cocktails pet fundraiser

No one loves their pets like the gay community. And we like to eat and drink, too. So to combine all of those elements in a single event is a great opportunity. Barking Hound Village hosts its 4th Kibble & Cocktails, benefiting DFW Rescue Me’s Voices of Justice Program, which educates young people about the safe and humane treatment of animals and to combat abuse. Food is provided not just by Trinity Groves’ resident restaurants (including Kitchen LTO and Luck), but also Rodeo Goat, Souk, Gemma and more, plus drinks from Stoli and others. Leave your dogs at home, though!

DEETS: Trinity Groves, 3015 Gulden Lane. 7–10 p.m. $100. DFWRescueMe.org.
DANCE

Diavolo. The third installment of the architectural dance troupe's acclaimed series. Presented by TITAS. City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. March 27–28 at 8 p.m. ATTPAC.org.

EXHIBIT

The International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes. The Baker Street Irregulars are the focus of this elementary tribute to Sir A. Conan Doyle’s enduring creation, the master consulting detective and cocaine addict. Includes interactive mystery-solving adventures. Perot Museum

MOVES ON AND OFF THE FIELD | Former Dallas Cowboys recruit Michael Sam has been an early standout on ‘Dancing with the Stars,’ which airs Mondays on ABC.

DANCE

**FRIDAY 03.27**

**COMMUNITY**

Panoptikon. The (now) weekly retro disco dance party, presented by Lord Byron. Red Light, 2911 Main St. Door 9 p.m.

**DINING**

Marcus Samuelsson Live. The celebchef will talk about his new cookbook, followed by an exclusive VIP dinner inspired by Samuelsson’s recipes. Presented by the DMA’s Arts & Letters Live series. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Talk at 7:30 p.m., dinner following. Talk only: $35; with dinner, $165. DMA.org.

**SATURDAY 03.28**

**SPORTS**

FrontRunners. Gay jogging group meets at 8:30 a.m. at the statue in Lee Park for a run along the Katy Trail.

**CABARET**

Betty Buckley: In My Own Backyard, from Broadway to Ghostlight. The Fort Worth Tony Award-winner performs excerpts from her new album and more.

**SUNDAY 03.29**

**COMMUNITY**

Drag Brunch. The monthly meal-and-entertainment, hosted by Jenni P. Dish, 4123 Cedar Springs Road, Ste. 110. Seatings at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m. $30.

**CONCERTS**

Pentatonix. The gay-led Grammy-winning a capella band performs. Verizon Theatre, 1001 Performance Place, Grand Prairie. 8 p.m.

**MONDAY 03.30**

**BROADCAST**

Dancing with the Stars. Out football player Michael Sam is among the contestants on this season of the long-running show. Airs on ABC at 7 p.m.

RuPaul’s Drag Race. The seventh season of the reality competition series continues, with Dallas’ Kennedy Davenport in contention. Airs on Logo at 8 p.m.

**TUESDAY 03.31**

**FILM**

A Clockwork Orange. Probably Stanley Kubrick’s greatest film, the futuristic view of society in decay. Based on Anthony Burgess’ novel. Screens as part of the Tuesday New Classic series at Landmark’s Magnolia in the West Village, 3689 McKinney Ave. Sponsored by Dallas Voice. Screens at 7:30 p.m. and 10:15 p.m.

**FUNDRAISER**

Kibble & Cocktails. A food-and-drink event benefiting humane treatment of animals. Trinity Groves, 3015 Gulden Lane. 7–10 p.m. $100. DFWRescueMe.org

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**Thursday 04.02**

**THEATER**

Andy Cohen announced on Watch What Happens Live that he was auctioning off his favorite suit (size 40R) and donating the proceeds to the Family Equality Council, which supports LGBT Families. “Even though I love this suit, it wouldn’t be fun for me to wear it again. But it will be so much fun for me to have you wear it, knowing we were able to support an amazing cause while also screwing Dolce & Gabbana out of at least one sale.” Bravo.

For every step forward, there’s always someone out there trying to take a step back. California lawyer Matthew G. McLaughlin has proposed what he calls the Sodomite Suppression Act, which would criminalize homosexuality — or, as he refers to it, “buggery” — and impose the death penalty on people who break that law. McLaughlin has to collect 365,000 signatures to have the measure put on the ballot. If successful, the law will be Section 29, Title 3 of the Penal Code. Or is that the Penile Code?

Exactly what prompted 33-year-old Republican Aaron Schock, pictured, to leave the House of Representatives is still a mystery, but one I expect will be solved soon. Meghan McCain says that Schock’s downfall was “ultimately flaming out” — truer words were never spoken. Resigning must have been a last-minute decision. Just a week earlier, he was accused of spending $5K on a replica of President Obama’s podium, which is known as “The Falcon.” This adds to the previous scandals about the lobbyist who break that law. McLaughlin has to collect 365,000 signatures to have the measure put on the ballot. If successful, the law will be Section 29, Title 3 of the Penal Code. Or is that the Penile Code?

In some sad news, Liza Minnelli is back in rehab. Her representative said, “Liza has valiantly battled substance abuse over the years and whenever she has needed to seek treatment, she has done so. She is currently making excellent progress at an undisclosed facility.” On the positive side, she’s been in rehab so many times, her next stay is free! She’s back! Joan Collins returns to TV in E1’s The Royals. And if you’ve seen any of the clips from upcoming episodes, you know that she’s a queen mum who’s a real mother! Even if Collins is looking forward (E1 has already greenlit a second season of the show), she’s also happy to glance backwards occasionally. Dame Joan will be appearing at the official Star Trek convention to be held at the Rio Suites Hotel in Las Vegas Aug. 6–9. Since she starred in what is arguably the most popular episode of the classic series, this is quite a coup for the organizers, who promise she will not only appear, but do photo ops and sign autographs.

This leads perfectly into our “Ask Billy” question. Patrick in Rhode Island writes: “Have they figured out who that nude guy climbing down from a window at Buckingham Palace was? He has a great ass. Maybe it was Prince Harry. Or maybe it was some guy visiting Prince Harry?”

You can hope all you want, but alas, the nude guy wasn’t intruding on Harry — or any other member of the royal family. It turns out to have been just a hoax, cleverly produced by the folks behind E1’s aforementioned series. A faux tabloid program shows the entire footage, where actress Alexandra Park (playing the role of Princess Eleanor) is seen throwing her beau out the window. Happily for us, he got started before his clothes did.

When Aaron Schock is in any way connected with Falcon, it’s time to end yet another column, filled with all sorts of royals — dukes and queens — to say nothing of bare bottoms. And that just scratches the surface of what you’ll find on BillyMasters.com. If you’ve got something you want me to look into, dash off a note and I promise to get back to you before Chaz Bono books a flight to South Africa!

Until next time, remember: One man’s filth is another man’s bible.

Have a question for Billy? Send an email to him at Billy@BillyMasters.com.
Making the SCENE the week of March 27–April 2:

Alexandre's: Mi Diva Loca at 10 p.m. on Friday. Bad Habits at 10 p.m. on Saturday. So Strung Out with Spencer West at 9 p.m. on Thursday.

Best Friends Club: Travel Fund show and auction 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Brick/Joe's: Support the Brick Titans softball team at 5–7 p.m. on Friday.

Club Reflection: Cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Dallas Eagle: Leather Perspectives at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday. Nasty Pig Gear night 10 p.m. on Saturday. Home for the Holiday show at 7 p.m. on Sunday. Mark Frazier retirement celebration at 8 p.m. on Tuesday.

Round-Up Saloon: Miss Gay Dallas America 2015 at 9 p.m. on Wednesday with Charity Case, Sally Sparkles, Kara Dion, Chanel LaMasters, Gizzle Bevon Ashton and Dessie Love-Blake. Big D Talent Show at 7 p.m. on Thursday.

Woody's Sports and Video Bar: Dallas Woody's Demons Extra Innings at 4–7 p.m. on Sunday.

To view more Scene photos, go to DallasVoice.com/category/photos. Scene Photographer: Kat Haygood.

Nell and the gang at Liquid Zoo.

Jinx Monsoon, Sharon Needles, Alex and Ivy Winters at Cedar Springs Tap House.

Harley at Grapevine Bar.
Dancing at Sue Ellen's.

Group at S4.

Happy hour at The Brick.

Bartenders at The Tin Room.

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