Vince Martinez turned around a failing fundraiser and draws volunteers to Legacy Counseling

by David Taffet, Page 8
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- ON THE COVER
  Vince Martinez is an angel for Legacy.
  Design by Terry Thompson and Craig Tuggle.

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DTG seeking nominations for grand marshal

June is National Gay Pride Month and for many folks around the country that means its Pride parade time. But in Dallas, we have our Pride parade in September — in part to honor Judge Jerry Buchmeyer’s 1982 ruling striking down the Texas sodomy law and in part to escape the heat of June.

But that doesn’t mean we don’t get in on the Pride month activities. Because June is when we start nominating people to be grand marshal of the Pride parade coming up in September.

The Dallas Tavern Guild is asking that folks weigh in on who should be named grand marshals of the 2016 Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade by nominating some worthy individual. Nominations are being accepted online at DallasPride.org until July 1. At that point, a ballot with the top 5 nominees will be posted online and the public will vote. Don’t delay. Nominate your choice today.

— Tammye Nash

Government finally recognizes 1975 same-sex marriage

Troy Masters with The Pride LAx, Los Angeles’ LGBT newspaper, brings us the story of Richard Adams and Anthony Sullivan, and how last year’s marriage equality ruling changed — in a way — their past.

Adams and Sullivan were married in Boulder, Colo., in April 1975. Thanks to a loophole in the law and a fair-minded country clerk, they were able to get a marriage license, and they got married.

Then Adams applied for a green card for his husband, Sullivan, who was an Australian citizen. The application was, of course, denied by immigration authorities who declared that the men had “failed to establish that a bona fide marital relationship can exist between two faggots.”

But their marriage remained on the record and was never invalidated.

The two men fought for 10 years, becoming in the process the first same-sex couple to sue the U.S. government to have their marriage legally recognized. But they lost at every turn, finally being forced to leave the country in 1985. They came back to the U.S. the next year, but had to live under the radar, always in fear that Sullivan would be deported.

Finally in 2012, President Obama offered some relief in the form of a memo to protect low-risk family members of U.S. citizens from deportation, including same-sex partners of American citizens. Sadly, Adams died a year later. But this year, 41 years after they were married, the White House has instructed the director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to issue a written apology directly to Adams and Sullivan, and the same L.A. immigration office that denied their application for a green card with such insulting language in 1975 has recognized their marriage as legal and determined that Sullivan deserves the same treatment as all other surviving spouses under immigration law.

— Tammye Nash

Bishop Arts Theatre taking submissions for PlayPride

The Bishop Arts Theatre Center will hold its third annual PlayPride Festival in September, and as before, the theater is seeking submissions for original, local works to showcase. Six playwrights will be invited to compete for cash prizes (voted on by audience members).

The scripts should be producible during a 15–20 minute runtime, be unoptioned, published or produced, containing LGBT themes and with no scene changes, blackouts or more than four cast members. The author must also be a resident of Texas. You have until July 1 to submit the script electronically in PDF format at info@bishopartstheatre.org.

Selected playwrights will be informed in about a month, and the festival will take place Sept. 15–25. Get working!

— Arnold Wayne Jones
GILEAD SCANDAL:

Gay men, we don’t care about your kidneys and bones
ONLY THE MONEY!

In a cover story in the Los Angeles Times on May 29, 2016* it is documented that Gilead, the maker of HIV drugs that most positive patients as well as those on PrEP take, intentionally held a much less toxic version of their drug off the market in order to extend their patents and make tens of billions of dollars. Gilead stopped research on a less toxic version of its core drug tenofovir (marketed under different names in combination with other drugs) in 2004. Earlier this year AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) sued Gilead to invalidate their patents based on them withholding the updated version of the drug. Gilead’s response was they “have no duty to develop, test, seek approval of, or launch the new product on any particular timetable.”

Widespread reports of kidney damage and bone loss due to tenofovir have been known since 2003 and federal authorities several times warned Gilead about downplaying the risks. Nevertheless, Gilead with the assistance of the CDC is promoting the older more toxic version of tenofovir to young HIV negative men for PrEP. They never bothered to seek approval of the safer drug because they wanted to wait until the very last moment to get approval of the new less toxic version so that their patents would be extended for another twenty years.

Gilead has spent hundreds of millions of dollars seeking approval for PrEP, paying doctors to endorse it, funding governments and community groups to promote and advertise it. Yet Gilead says that they stopped the research on the less toxic drug because they needed to shift their research to other medications. However, they had $11 billion in 2011 to buy Pharmasset, which had the rights to a drug that cured Hepatitis C. They turned around and brought Sovaldi and Harvoni to market and are charging $84,000 and $94,000 respectively for them. These ridiculous prices are causing rationing which prevents most Hep C patients from receiving these drugs.

AHF has fought for lower drug prices for decades. When we started treating in Africa in 2002 we paid $5000 per patient per year for the HIV cocktail, today we pay $100. We lobbied. We sued. We protested. That’s what passionate advocates do. It is high time that the CDC and AIDS organizations cut the cord to big drug companies and return to the roots of AIDS activism which does not include feasting at the table of Pharma greed.

pet of the week / BLACK BEAN

Black Bean is a beautiful girl, a little over a year old, with medium-length hair. She was raised in a home with small children and a small dog, and got along with everyone. She loves to cuddle and is waiting on a happy forever home.

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

Have an event coming up? Email your information to Managing Editor Tammye Nash at nash@dallasvoice.com or Senior Staff Writer David Taffet at taffet@dallasvoice.com by Wednesday at 5 p.m. for that week’s issue.

- Weekly: Lambda Weekly every Sunday at 1 p.m. on 89.3 KNON-FM with this week’s guest is Buster Spiller; United Black Ellenment hosts discussion on HIV/AIDS in the black community (UBE Connected) at 7 p.m. every fourth Tuesday of the month at 3116 Commerce St., Suite C; Core Group Meeting every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.; Fuse game night every Monday evening except the last of the month at 7 p.m. at the Fuse space in the Treymore Building, 4038 Lemmon Ave, Suite 101; FuseConnect every Wednesday from 7 p.m. For more information call or e-mail Jalenzski at 214-760-9718 ext 3 or Jalenzski@myresourcecenter.org.

JUNE
- June 10-12: Firedancers Ruby Slipper Anniversary
  The Firedancers Dallas Tribe celebrates its 29th annual Ruby Slipper Anniversary, “All Fired Up,” at Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser Ave. Registration begins at 8 p.m. Friday followed by a meet-and-greet with Mr. Firedancer contestants. There is a pool party at a private residence on Saturday, and Saturday night at the bar, dinner, an auction, a show and the Mr. Firedancer contest. Breakfast/brunch is offered throughout the weekend, and there will be a social cocktail hour each day. For information visit Firedancersdallas.org.
- June 10-11: Turtle Creek Chorale presents Heartstrings
  Love and marriage comes to the stage at 7:30 p.m. at City Performance Hall, 2025 Flora St. $20-55. TurtleCreekChorale.com.
- June 10: Calcutta Auction
  Comedian Dana Goldberg is the auctioneer for auction items and caddy packages for Saturday’s Fairway to Equality golf tournament. 6:30 p.m. at Sue Ellen’s, 3014 Throckmorton St.
- June 11: Jackie K. Jones Memorial Ride
  AIDS Services of Dallas holds the second Jackie K. Jones Memorial Ride, which raises money to help build and maintain Jackie’s

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June 11: Longview Pride

June 11: Fairway to Equality

The 21st annual HRC Fairway to Equality golf weekend, 1:30 p.m. at Buffalo Creek Golf Course, 624 Country Club Drive, Rockwall.

June 11: LGBT Day at Bahama Beach

LGBT Day at the city’s water park off South Hampton Road. Bahama Beach, 1895 Campfire Circle. $9. Evening movie at the water park. $5.

June 11: The Girls of Nashville

Business Council for the Arts and Dallas Songwriters Association present “The Girls of Nashville,” a songwriters’ showcase celebrating musicians, songwriters and women in music, at the Kessler Theater, 1230 W. Davis St. Bar opens at 6 p.m., doors at 7 p.m. Features Alyssa Micaela, Ashley Ray and Heather Morgan, with headliner Liz Rose. Tickets are $15 for general admission, $25 for reserved gallery seating and $140 for VIP table seating for four, available at PreKindle.com/promo/id/24511045851595454.

June 11: Jazz Jam

The jam attracts some of the area’s finest jazz musicians. From 5-7 p.m. at Labyrinth Walk Coffee House, Unitarian Universalist Church of Oak Cliff, 3839 W. Kiest Blvd. Free.

June 11: Turtle Creek monthly clean up

Join Turtle Creek Association’s monthly clean-up of the shores of Turtle Creek. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Beasley steps at Hall Street and the Katy Trail. clarke@turtlecreekassociation.org.

June 15: Spirit of Equality Award and Mayor’s proclamation

Mayor Mike Rawlings issues his Gay Pride Month proclamation. The Mayor’s LGBT Task Force presents its Spirit of Equality Award and CAPE serves cake and punch. Noon in the Flag Room, Dallas City Hall, 1500 Marilla St.

June 18: Beach Blanket Gaybingo

Monthly fundraiser for Resource Center takes place 6:30 p.m. on the third Saturday of the month at Rose Room at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Doors open at 5 p.m. For more information, call 214-540-4458 or email Bscott@mysticresourcecenter.org.

June 18: Turtle Creek monthly clean up

Join Turtle Creek Association’s monthly clean-up of the shores of Turtle Creek. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Revlon building, and the 40-mile ride begins at 9:30 a.m. For more information or to make a donation, visit JKMR.bike.

June 19: Father’s Day at the Arboretum

Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden, 825 garland Road, celebrates Father’s Day with remote control airplane demonstrations and exhibits, with remote control flights by North Dallas RC Club launching every hour on the hour above the Concert Lawn, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. There will also be walk-up sessions with the Perot Museum’s TECH Truck Staff in the Children’s Adventure Garden, and the Super Hero Dads Craft Corner for children. Admission is free for members; for non-members, $15 per adult, $12 for seniors, $10 for children 3-12, free for children under 3. There is an additional $3 fee for the Children’s Adventure Garden, plus a fee for parking. For information call 214-515-6615.

Wednesday, June 15, the Lakewood Branch Library hosts a screening of the movie Freeheld, starring Julianne Moore and based on the true story of Ocean County, N.J. police detective Laurel Hester who fought, as she was dying of cancer, to have her partner receive her survivor benefits.

Sunday, June 19, the Children’s Center at the Central Library celebrates Rainbow Family Day, with crafts and a movie.

Friday, June 24, at 2 p.m., the Oak Lawn Branch Library sponsors a screening, at the Oak Lawn Branch, of The Danish Girl.

Thursday, June 30, at 10 a.m., North Oak Cliff Branch hosts Trivia Night at Barbara’s Pavilion, 325 Centre St.

Other Pride Month events in the city include:

Saturday, June 11: LGBT Day at Bahama Beach, 1895 Campfire Circle. Guests who indicate they are attending LGBT Day at the water park receive discounted admission of $9.

Saturday, June 18: Juneteenth Unity Festival, presented by Dallas Southern Pride and Abounding Prosperity at the Bungalow Beach Club, 3221 Ross Ave., 3 p.m.-midnight. For information visit DallasSouthernPride.com.

Sunday, June 19: United Black Ellument, in collaboration with Ear Hustling Podcast, hosts Volleyball at Bachmann Lake, 3500 W. Northwest Hwy. For information visit UBEDallas.org/ubepark.

Saturday, June 25: Rainbow Family Day at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. For information visit UBEDallas.org/FFD16.

### WRCC Anniversary

White Rock Community Church, 9383 Garland Road, celebrates its 25th anniversary with a Reunion Weekend, starting Friday night, June 10, with a homcoming happy hour from 7-9 p.m., at Round-Up Saloon, where the idea of the church was born during dance lessons. On Saturday, June 11, there will be a gospel sing at 6 p.m. at the church, followed by a dinner and dance in the Activity Center. Founding pastor the Rev. Jerky Cook will share the pulpit on Sunday with Pastor Douglas Shaffer, with morning services followed by lunch. Since its founding in 1991, WRCC has stayed true to its mission to serve those marginalized by HIV/AIDS through the White Rock Friends General Store, which has served more than 7,000 clients during its 24 years. Activities are free and open to the public.

The Dallas LGBT Task Force, appointed by Dallas City Council, in its efforts to “ensure our city is inclusive and committed to equality for all,” will host the Spirit of Equality Awards at noon Wednesday, June 15, in the Flag Room at Dallas City Hall, 1500 Marilla St. Awards will be presented to advocates for and allies of the LGBT community. In addition, District 2 Councilman Adam Medrano will present a proclamation, signed by Mayor Mike Rawlings, declaring June to be Pride Month in Dallas.

A number of other events are slated throughout the month in recognition of Pride Month.

Dallas Public Library hosts events and activities including:

- **A Teen/Young Adult book display at the Dallas West Branch all month.**
- **A DVD display at the Hampton-Illinois branch all month.**
- **The Pride Wall, with “PRIDE” spelled out in 45-inch rainbow-colored letters, where visitors will be encouraged to write messages of pride and support at the Oak Lawn Branch all month.** There will also be an exhibit of works by LGBT artists centered on the Pride theme.
- **A display of books on transgender issues and a display on the various LGBT Pride symbols at the Renner Frankford Branch all month.**
- **A display on LGBT authors and books with a quiz about the history of the LGBT equality movement at the White Rock Hills Branch all month.**
- **Wednesday, June 15 in the Pollack Performance Space on the fourth floor of the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library, a screening of the documentary Take Back Oak Lawn, followed by a question-and-answer with filmmaker Steven Pomerantz.**

> Katy Trail, clarke@turtlecreekassociation.org.

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> **Saturday, June 25:** Rainbow Family Day at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road. For information visit UBEDallas.org/FFD16.

Katy Trail, clarke@turtlecreekassociation.org.

- **June 18: Juneteenth Unity Festival**
  Dallas Southern Pride and Abounding Prosperity present a Juneteenth celebration from 3 p.m.-midnight at Bungalow Beach Club, 3221 Ross Ave.

- **June 19: Summer Showcase Fashion Show**
  The Round-Up Saloon, 3912 Cedar Springs Road, presents the Summer Showcase Fashion Show, benefitting the Cedar Springs Merchants Association, and featuring fashion from ES Collection, Skivvies and Outlines. Steve Kemble hosts, and there will be live and silent auctions. 8 p.m. at The Round-Up Saloon.

- **June 19: Men Having Babies**
  The first Men Having Babies South Surrogacy Seminar and Gay Parenting Expo features community resources and 21 U.S. and Canadian service providers, as well as information about financial assistance for prospective gay parents. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Wyndham Dallas Suites–Park Central, 7800 Alpha Road.

- **June 19: Father’s Day at the Arboretum**
  Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden, 825 Garland Road, celebrates Father’s Day with remote control airplane demonstrations and exhibits, with remote control flights by North Dallas RC Club launching every hour on the hour above the Concert Lawn, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. There will also be walk-up sessions with the Perot Museum’s TECH Truck Staff in the Children’s Adventure Garden, and the Super Hero Dads Craft Corner for children. Admission is free for members; for non-members, $15 per adult, $12 for seniors, $10 for children 3-12, free for children under 3. There is an additional $3 fee for the Children’s Adventure Garden, plus a fee for parking. For information call 214-515-6615.

- **June 21: Volunteer orientation**
  Anyone 14 or older may become a library volunteer. At 6:30 p.m. p.m. at the Oak Lawn Branch Dallas Public Library, 4100 Cedar Springs Road.

- **June 23: Black Tie Sneak Peak Party**
  Speakers and entertainment at Park Place Motors, 613 Lemmon Ave.

- **June 24: Gay Pride Shabbat**
  Congregation Beth El Binah, a Reform Jewish congregation, celebrates the ancient biblical holiday Gay Pride Shabbat. 7:30 p.m. Northaven United Methodist Church, 11211 Northaven St.

- **June 24: Movie time for adults**
  The Danish Girl at 2 p.m. at the Oak Lawn Branch Dallas Public Library, 4100 Cedar Springs Road.

- **June 25: Buddies Groupies Night Out, Cowtown Style**
  The Buddies Groupies, fans and patrons of the longtime Dallas bar Buddies, meet for the Buddies Groupies Night Out, Cowtown Style. Check the Buddies Groupies Facebook page for details. 8 p.m.-2 a.m. at The Urban Cowboy Saloon, 2620 E. Lancaster Ave., Fort Worth.

- **June 25: Houston Pride Festival and Parade**
Singer Vince Martinez has turned Be An Angel into a blessing for Legacy Counseling

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Not much good usually comes out of a story that starts, “Seventeen years ago, I got a ticket for DWI.” But in this case, the person who got the ticket was singer Vince Martinez. And the agency he did his community service work for Legacy Counseling Center.

Martinez describes himself as a hairstylist, cook and a singer who’s been on stage since he was 16. “I was the Julio Iglesias of the Ozarks,” he said — the gay Julio Iglesias of the Ozarks who wasn’t out at the time.

When he got his DWI, Martinez was working at an Uptown salon and had heard of Legacy and the work it did through his co-workers. So he decided that would be the place to do his community service.

Executive Director Melissa Grove had him do some office work — monotonous tasks like filing and shredding old files. He wasn’t very good at that.

“We quickly learned Vince wouldn’t be very useful doing those sort of things,” Grove said, choosing her words carefully. “His talents lie elsewhere.”

He told her he could sing, not normally a skill needed around a counseling office. “But we’re a grassroots organization so we found a place for

Angelic
him,” Grove said.

She put him in charge of the agency’s annual Be An Angel fundraiser. The event hadn’t really made money in the past, but Grove was giving it one more try.

Martinez ran with it.

For the first time in its history, Be An Angel made money that year; and Martinez has been running it ever since. He also became a Legacy board member and warns other people doing community service that assisting Grove was infectious.

Cast members from The Real Housewives of Dallas found out Martinez was right when they showed up to volunteer with Legacy’s Grace Project weekend. They’re still putting in time at the agency — so much time that Grove has practically become the seventh real housewife. She’s appeared in three episodes and been talked about in others.

Martinez said the Real Housewives will be at this year’s Be An Angel as well.

Martinez has, over the years, developed a habit of attracting an interesting array of people to help out with Be An Angel.

He met Buddy Holly’s widow 30 years ago and has a selection of memorabilia she gave him, including rare posters and Holly’s “That’ll Be the Day” gold record. In his early Be An Angel days, she donated items for the auction and came on stage helping to push bids up much higher than Martinez could have done.

Another of his friends is Gennifer Flowers, who had a 12-year relationship with President Bill Clinton. Martinez’s brother is president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union.

“My mother has pictures of him with the Clintons,” he said. “And I sang with Gennifer Flowers.”

Martinez has also attracted talent to the Legacy board. In fact, “He’s brought in half the board,” Grove noted.

This year’s Living Legacy Award is going to former board chair Steve Weir, one of the volunteers Martinez brought to the agency.

For this year’s Be An Angel, set for June 18 at Wendy Krispin’s 7 for Parties in the Design District, not only will Martinez be entertaining, he will also be responsible for much of the silent auction.

Among the items is a set of three Le Creuset pans — each filled with a specialty from one of three local chefs: Janice Provost of Parigi, Monica Greene and Joanne Bondy. A fajita dinner for 50 has become a Be An Angel auction favorite. Trips include time in a Florida condo for 10 with a panoramic view of the white sand Miramar Beach.

Martinez even threw himself into the auction. For a starting bid of $500, enjoy cocktails and hors d’oeuvres while touring his private art collection and enjoying a Vince Martinez mini-concert for 12 at his Turtle Creek high rise.

Thinking about Martinez’s contribution to Legacy Counseling Center, which includes Founders Cottage and Grace Project, the largest HIV-positive women’s conference in the U.S., Grove said, “His community service became an important part of our survival.”

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Be An Angel dinner with silent and live auction June 18, 7-11 p.m. on June 18 at 7 for Parties, 150 Turtle Creek Blvd. Suite 107. Tickets at $125 and tables at $1,500 at LegacyCares.org or 214-520-6308 ext. 302.

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Tug Whitehead is using the International Leather Sir title to spread the word about being free to be yourself.

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

“It’s OK to be kinky. Do your 9 to 5, then at 6 o’clock, crack out that bullwhip if that’s what you want. You are not alone.”

That’s the message that David “Tug” Whitehead of Dallas wants to share with men and women across the country, around the world even, as he makes his way through his year as International Leather Sir.

Whitehead claimed the title in the Dallas-based contest — which includes the International Leather Sir/boy competition and the International Community Bootblack competition — last September. He will pass the sash to the 2016-17 winner at the climax of this year’s contest, set for Sept. 1-4 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Dallas – Campbell Centre. But in the meantime, he plans to keep on preaching the gospel of self-expression.

“There’s a common misperception out there that there’s something wrong with what we do, that leather is this big, scary thing,” Whitehead said. “But really, leather people are just everyday people who have a certain way of expressing themselves. People need to know, how you express yourself is just fine. It’s a celebration of who you are.”

Whitehead was born “just south of Memphis” in a little town called Southaven, Miss., and grew up not too far away in another small town called Byhalia. He went to college at Ole Miss — aka The University of Mississippi — then about 1989, moved to Memphis. Whitehead spent 13 years in the U.S. Army, doing two tours of duty in Desert Storm, before moving to the Army Reserves and the National Guard.

He lived in Santa Fe for awhile, then moved to Fort Lauderdale in Florida then up to Chicago before landing in Dallas. He worked for American Airlines as a flight service manager until the merger with U.S. Air, then spent time in marketing with a pharmacy before taking his current job as director of marketing for a legal services firm.

Whitehead acknowledges that it took him awhile to come to realization himself that it’s OK to be yourself, even when that means being different. It was, he said, as much a coming out process as acknowledging that he was gay.

“I had to come out twice. I came out as gay, but I kept my kink hidden for years,” he said. “For years, I enjoyed doing all these things. But if was very difficult when I wasn’t out about it to find people who enjoyed doing the same things.”

Whitehead said his first foray into the world of leather came years ago when he was still underage and snuck into a bar in Memphis, Tenn., called The Pipeline. “I snuck in behind someone who was significantly older. I walked in dressed like your typical college boy. But there was a shop inside the bar [that sold leather clothing and accessories]. I bought my first leather harness there, and it just went from there.”

The kink, he continued, “came afterwards, when I started finding such great pleasure in the physical expression” of BDSM sexuality, in using that mixture of pleasure and pain to help a submissive partner “cross that line to catharsis,” resulting in “great satisfaction for both of us.”

As a leather Sir, Whitehead cuts a commanding figure in his personal life. In fact, he has two boys that serve him, both of whom have won regional contests and so advance to the international event — one competing for International Leather boy, the other for International Community Bootblack — here in Dallas in September.

But Whitehead is still very much an introvert. Because of that, “This year as International Leather Sir has been an extreme test for me,” he said. “I have really had to step outside my box.”
Each ILS/b-ICBB winner is given a set amount of money for travel to fulfill the duties that come with the title. That’s helpful, Whitehead said, because “people want me to teach, to lecture, judge contests. It just keeps adding up. And if I go over the allotted amount for travel, then the rest comes out of my pocket.”

There are other leather-related contests out there. International Mr. Leather, for example, is held over the Memorial Day Weekend each year in Chicago.

But, Whitehead said, “what drew me to the International Leather Sir contest is that the winners are required to carry on with charitable work. I can’t even tell you how many fundraisers I’ve done since last September.

“That’s the thing about charity, though. Do you give money, or do you do something? To me, it’s less about just writing a check and more about rolling up your sleeves and getting in there and doing something to help raise the money,” Whitehead said.

While Whitehead may have found the public side of being International Leather Sir to be a test for his introverted personality, it is a test he is passing with flying colors, according to ILS/b-ICBB board member Chris Edwards.

“In the history of International Leather Sir, we’ve had five very different titleholders. They have all represented the title differently, and they have all represented it very well,” Edwards said. “Winning the title gives you a kind of celebrity. What you choose to do with it is up to you.”

Edwards noted that the titleholders themselves decide which charities they will work for, and Whitehead looked outside the leather/kink community and outside the LGBT community for at least some of his charity work. In February, he noted, Whitehead staged a campaign to sell T-shirts to raise money for a military veterans’ group.

“This is an organization that has nothing to do with his sexuality. But he’s a veteran, and he wanted to give something back to his brothers and sisters who were in the military, too,” Edwards said.

“It wasn’t a huge amount,” he continued. “But it made a difference. We [in the leather/kink and LGBT communities] sometimes get a bad rap for being very insular in terms of our charitable work. But this shows that we give back to our communities — all of them — in many different ways. And Sir Tug has another benefit coming up at the end of this month in Fort Worth — Boots and Bikes for Vets on June 26 at Underground Cigar Shop.”

Whitehead said that “service to my community has always been a big deal personally. People don’t always realize how much the leather community gives back — whether it’s getting out there and picking up trash or helping get food for someone who’s hungry or helping educate people on the proper pronouns to use with transgender people.”

While it’s nearly impossible to find one charitable outlet that affects the whole broad spectrum of the community, “what’s important is to touch one person at a time. That’s what helps build community.”

And Whitehead is always looking for different ways to reach out and educate. Surprisingly enough, he was recently asked to travel to Bozeman, Mont., to speak — as International Leather Sir — to a group of high school drama students. He said he insisted on being seated on stage, with the students seated in a circle around him, while their parents looked on from the audience.

“I told them, ‘You ask me whatever you want, and I’ll answer as honestly as I can.’ And they did, and I did,” he said.

The students’ questions covered a wide range of topics on BDSM — fisting, flogging, caning, sounding. “And the parents were sitting there wondering, ‘How the hell does my kid even know to ask about these things?’ We ended up bringing the parents onto the stage to be part of the discussion, and they ended up asking even more questions than the kids.”

While that may not be his usual audience, Whitehead said it is a shining example of how he is able to reach out to dispel some of the myths about the leather/kink and LGBT communities.

And dispelling myths can help stop discrimination and prejudice. He also hopes to be a guidepost for others on their own personal BDSM journeys, something that his leather helps him do.

“When I put [the leather] on, I am three or four inches taller,” Whitehead said. “It helps me to be true to who I am, to be true to community. That helps me be there as a mentor or a guide to others on their journeys, to honor those who came before. I want to be there to represent all the ones who were or are afraid to express themselves, and to help them get over that fear.”
Texas Values email claiming ordinance affects public bathrooms prompts packed house at council meeting

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“I’m sorry to disappoint everyone, but this isn’t the bathroom war,” Mesquite’s Deputy Mayor Pro Tem and Place 2 Councilman Jeff Casper declared, as the city council began discussion Monday night of a new policy banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the city’s hiring policies.

The council eventually approved the policy change on a 5-2 vote, but not before some 22 city residents stood up during the citizens’ forum part of the council meeting to voice their opinions before what Mayor Stan Pickett described as “an overflow crowd.” The vote on the policy change had originally been included as a consent agenda item, but the council rearranged the agenda after an email earlier in the day from the Austin-based right-wing organization Texas Values prompted the unexpected turnout.

The email from Texas Values President Jonathan Saenz warned of a “dangerous new ordinance that threatens the privacy and safety of its citizens by opening up women’s bathrooms, showers and locker rooms to men on city property, such as City Hall, libraries, city swimming pools and recreation centers.”

Saenz, apparently, confused the city’s equal employment opportunity policy with debate — from the local perspective all the way up to the federal level — over whether transgender people should be allowed to use the proper public restroom facilities, based on their gender identity and not the gender assigned them at birth.

But Casper obviously took issue with Saenz’s claim. “Hundreds of cities have passed an equal employment policy such as this. A few cities have, in addition, have passed a secondary policy that is much more broad that includes private employers in their cities and kind of legislates what they have to do as well. That is not this policy,” Casper said.

“This agenda item,” he continued, “isn’t about bathrooms. It’s not about pools. It’s not about locker rooms. It’s not about public facilities, no matter what a political hack from Austin tells you in a fundraising email. That is not true.”

Casper stressed that the policy affects the some 1,100 current employees of the city and any future employees. “All of our employees, regardless of their skin color, who they love, or how they identify should know that this city council respects them and is here to protect their rights,” he said.

“This is not about public restrooms. It’s about public service, including our first responders, some of whom are LGBT and they deserve to know when they put themselves on the line that we have their backs just as much. Casper added that the residents of Mesquite “deserve the best service possible from the most qualified applicants possible.”

Casper’s declaration came after Pickett noted that 11 people had spoken against the policy change during the citizens’ forum, and 11 had spoken in favor. He, too, stressed that the policy had nothing to do with who can or cannot use gender-specific public bathrooms in Mesquite.

“We are going to be looking at and talking about a city employment policy. We are not nor have we ever discussed any bathroom policies,” Pickett said. “We are not discussing bathroom policies tonight.”

At the request of Place 6 Councilman Dennis Tarpiey, Rick French, the city’s director of human
resources and civil service, and Paula Anderson with the city attorney’s office, both clarified that federal law does not yet require state or local governments to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. But, they added, recent guidelines from federal agencies and federal court rulings are “trending” toward the interpretation that Title VII prohibitions of discrimination based on sex include prohibitions of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Tarpley then acknowledged “right up front that I don’t know what transgender is. I don’t know that I would know a transgender person if I saw them.” But because he “took an oath of office to uphold the laws of the United States,” he would be voting in favor of the policy change.

Place 5 Councilman Greg Noschese warned that neither the city government nor its employees are perfect, and so a “vague policy … leads to litigation [and to] years of paying lawyers. And as a lawyer who makes a lot of money off of people making bad decisions, I can tell you it gets very expensive for the taxpayers.”

Just the simple fact of not having a specific policy when other cities do “puts us in the crosshairs of the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission],” Noschese continued, noting that having inclusive nondiscrimination policies also makes the city more attractive to corporations looking to relocate.

“I’m going to support this policy [because] it’s the right thing to do [and because] it sends the right message” to current and future employees, Noschese said.

Even though he said he had some concerns and might “lose some sleep over it,” Place 1 Councilman Bill Porter also said he was voting for the policy because it was the right thing to do. Pickett cast the fifth vote in favor.

The two votes against the policy change came from Mayor Pro Tem and Place 3 Councilman Bruce Archer and Place 4 Councilman Dan Aleman. Both men called for the vote to be delayed — Archer, because, he said, while he had been prepared to vote for the policy he now wanted to have more time to hear the concerns of residents, and Aleman, because, he said, he is new to the council and wanted more time to study the policy.

Rafael McDonnell, communications and advocacy manager for Resource Center, said he first learned that the Mesquite City Council was considering updating its EEOC policy about a year ago, thanks to one line in an article in the Dallas Morning News. McDonnell said at the time he sent an email offering the center’s assistance in crafting the policy to the assistant city manager, who forwarded it to the city’s HR department. HR, McDonnell said, “gave me a polite brush-off.”

When Dallas Voice wrote an article about the situation, McDonnell said, Casper reached out to him.

McDonnell said he then met, right before Christmas, with Casper and City Manager Cliff Keheley at City Hall, taking with him examples of other such ordinances and making suggestions about what language to use.

Still, McDonnell said, “I didn’t even realize this was coming up for a vote now, not until I saw Jonathan Saenz’s email yesterday.” He said that the final language, while not exactly the verbiage he and other community leaders had suggested, “still enumerates sexual orientation and gender identity, which was our concern.”

McDonnell said that the passage of this policy in Mesquite, coupled with high-profile battles in Rockwall and in the Fort Worth Independent School District over bathroom policies, will no doubt prompt right-wing politicians in the Texas Legislature to target the LGBT community when lawmakers convene in Austin next January.

State Rep. Matt Shaheen, R-Plano, is already crafting legislation preventing local governmental entities from offering protections above what the state offers, which would mean nondiscrimination ordinances in cities like Dallas and Fort Worth would be invalidated — much as North Carolina’s controversial HB2 invalidated a Charlotte city ordinance banning discrimination.

“But the problem [for conservatives] is that, yeah, it would mean no protections for LGBT people, but those ordinances also protect lots of other people, like veterans and pregnant women,” McDonnell noted.

Jeff Casper
EqTx names new chief development director

Officials with Equality Texas this week announced that Collin Acock has been named the organization’s new chief development officer, effective June 1.

Equality Texas CEO Chuck Smith praised Acock’s “outstanding skills and … proven track record in nonprofit management and fundraising,” adding, “He is an excellent communicator who will provide leadership at every level of the organization. We are pleased to welcome him to our growing team.”

Acock said he is “thrilled to join the Equality Texas family” and looks forward to “working hard for our Texas LGBT community to ensure our rights.”

Acock, who has more than a decade of experience in nonprofit fundraising, came to Equality Texas from the Texas State Historical Association. As director of development for TSHA, he worked to build strong inter-departmental relationships to better utilize scholarly resources and increase contributions.

Acock previously worked as development director for the Long Center for the Performing Arts in Austin.

Acock received his B.A. in English from the University of Texas at Austin and his M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from Carnegie Mellon University. As a playwright and screenwriter, he finds ways to weave storytelling into the fabric of what he does. His professional and community activities include, among many others, serving on both membership and outreach committees for the Association of Fundraising Professionals — Austin.

Acock lives in Austin with his husband, Shane, and their dog, Jackson.
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Standing strong against the haters

Transgender couple put a human face on the debate over inclusive EEOC policies in Mesquite

On Monday night, June 6, my wife, Ashley Boucher, and I braved Metroplex evening traffic to make it from Grand Prairie to Mesquite for the Mesquite City Council meeting. The council was set to vote on adding sexual orientation and gender identity to their employment nondiscrimination policy, a vote that had been in the works for a year.

I work for the city of Dallas and am a teacher in the Dallas ISD. So my wife and I keep a close watch on the policies of cities around us. What if we wanted to move to Fort Worth or Mesquite? What if we were offered jobs there? Getting involved helps us, as a transgender married couple with kids, expand our possibilities for employment and safety. To our joy, the Mesquite City Council approved adding those protections to their policies.

Still, it is easy to feel unsafe at these events, even with police presence. On either side of you, there are opposed citizens cheering speakers who deny your identity, who call transgender women “men in disguise,” and use “American values, faith and family” and “this changing world” as code for discounting your humanity.

We looked at each other in culture shock as the mayor invited a pastor to open the meeting with Christian prayer to Father God and Lord Jesus. The entire room stood with bowed heads, praying along with the pastor over our “changing world.” Everyone responded, “Amen,” as if it were a matter of course to marry evangelical Christian faith with city politics.

You have to understand, for many LGBTQ persons, experiences of churches are less than compassionate. Area evangelicals frequently back so-called “values” organizations that work to keep us strangers to civil rights, to marriage and even to charitable help like homeless shelters.

So linking government to religion immediately puts us on guard, in this part of the country.

My wife and I are still reeling from our experience at the Fort Worth ISD board meeting in May, when they opened discussion on their policy guidelines for transgender students. Based on my experience there, and now in Mesquite, I have to question if those opposing protections for transgender people even know what transgender people are. Indeed, one of the Mesquite councilmen openly admitted he isn’t sure what the word transgender means.

So we have to stand there, in the flesh, as everyone talks about us. We have to allow debate to rage on as to whether we are dangerous or mentally ill; listen to them question whether we could be appropriate employees; listen to them theorize that we might like transgender-only accommodations (Perhaps “those people” would like some converted individual staff rooms?) rather than access to the appropriate bathroom.

Mayor Stan Pickett repeated again and again that the policy nothing to do with bathroom access. But if I am a city employee, would it not protect my access to all staff facilities?

My skin crawled and I bristled as I listened to one after another uninformed person talk about “the transgender” and “Do they actually know any transgender people?” I was so proud of Ashley for speaking to the council after hearing so much vicious language levied against women like her. She is an executive corporate chef and caterer, and she spoke of dreams of opening restaurants in the city. She brought them back to thoughts of capable and talented employees whose work had been spoiled by discrimination.

But most of all, she gave them the face of a real transgender person. She presented herself as evidence of what the crowd was going on about. She showed them that we are right here, not some vague theory.

We are model citizens. We are parents. We are taxpayers. We are transgender. Stop talking about us like we are a problem, an issue, a debate. Protect women and children? How better than by protecting vulnerable transgender women and children?

The height of social harassment comes when men like conservative attorney Jonathan Saenz of Texas Values come up from Austin to incite prejudice against transgender people. He stood at the podium in Mesquite, insulting my community and calling for a return to “values.” That character walked over to us after all that bloviating and gripped my hand to shake it. I shouted at him over the whole council — quite out of order — to look me in the eyes after what he had said, to look at me and my beautiful wife and tell us we don’t deserve to have a job or use a restroom.

“I’m looking at you,” he answered quickly, his eyes empty and glassy. “I’m looking at you.”

I just stood back.

For the record let me say these few more things, on my own behalf and on behalf of my community:

My community stands for family values. My two children and our loving home attest to it. Our huge chosen family of adoptive grandparents, adoptive aunts and uncles — chosen out of love and care for the vulnerable — is as real a family as any you could name.

We stand for America. On my shelf is my treasured Teacher of the Year award, given by the Chamber of Commerce, recognizing my work in public schools. I pledge allegiance to our flags every day, and I teach the meaning of our home to children, for the first time.

We stand for freedom. We have fought to be ourselves in the Bible Belt, with grace and dignity, showing hospitality to our neighbors and kindness to strangers other charities wouldn’t help.

We stand for faith in humanity, still, ever after the carnage people like Jonathan Saenz leave among our loved ones. I dare anyone speaking against the transgender community to sit through our annual Day of Remembrance services, to listen to the hundreds of names of transgender people murdered each year, in cold blood, for daring to live as we are. Yet we still go on in faith that it will be better.

I am a Texan. I am transgender. Texas does not belong to the liars and fearmongers who want to define hate as “values.” While others move to a safer home, we insist this is our soil, and if it isn’t safe, we have to make it so.

Yes, we transgender people are Texas, too, and we are proud that the Mesquite City Council approved its policy and made Texas a little safer for our community. Blessed be the ties that bind us together, in hope for an even brighter future in the Lone Star State.

Jeannot Jonte Boucher is a public school educator, graduate student at the Southern Methodist University and the Montessori Institute of North Texas, and native Texan. Jeannot and spouse Ashley, transgender parents, support advocacy for the gender diverse communities in the South.
Be prepared. Your lung cancer can spread to your brain.

Rose, age 59, Texas

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Nick Jonas, all fired up
Boys do Nick Jonas sometimes, but it’s mostly girls. They dress up as the pop star, emulating his rousing onstage persona and donning denim that looks practically painted on. Yes, if we needed further proof about why the 23-year-old former Jonas Brother is a celebrated beacon in the LGBT community, for his abs and for his advocacy — for standing up against the North Carolina “bathroom bill” by canceling two upcoming gigs there — look to the drag kings. Those kings are sure to find even more fodder for their glitzy acts on Last Year Was Complicated, Jonas’ second solo album.

In our new interview, Jonas talked candidly about 2015, his year of “growth.” And although he was congested — yes, even the perfection that is Nick Jonas deals with allergies that are “terrible” this time of year — he was more than happy to dish on LGBT rights, the night he and brother Joe ended up at a West Hollywood gay bar, and touching his… face.

— Chris Azzopardi

Dallas Voice: I’ve never asked a guy this question — I’m always asking female artists who are being impersonated by men — but there are Nick Jonas drag kings, so we must talk about this. Nick Jonas: I know, right?

What’s it like to know that lesbians are dressing up in Nick Jonas drag? Also, what tips do you have for a Nick drag king who wants to perfect their Nick Jonas drag act? Well, it’s an honor, you know, first of all. I feel very honored! I think the tips would be, make sure the jeans are fairly tight — not too tight, but tight enough. And I do a lot of face touching. I’ve noticed, so maybe incorporate that into the act and it’ll all work.

When do you touch your face the most? When I’m singing, when I’m talking. It’s kind of a strange thing I do.

I spoke to your brother Joe recently and he mentioned getting down at the gay clubs with you. What’s a night with you and Joe like at the gay club? It was very fun! We were out at The Abbey in L.A.

Good place, good drinks. Good drinks! And it was just a good environment overall. People were very welcoming and we had a good time and we hung out and had a couple of drinks. And they played our music too, which is always nice when you’re at a club. The DJ was being friendly.

Was this a promo obligation? No, it’s just where we ended up. It wasn’t promo at all.

Who gets hit on more: you or Joe? We were kind of isolated, in our own sections off to the side, so we weren’t able to interact that much, but I’m not sure. He was also with his girlfriend at the time, so maybe he was getting less attention.

What would you say to straight guys who might not feel as comfortable going to a gay club as you are? In the same way I feel like there’s no difference with my fans, gay or straight, the same thing applies to the club. And you can have a good time anywhere you go if you just choose to have a good time. I think it’s a unique environment to be in — and it’s a fun place and they play great music, [laughs] and as long as you’re willing to go in and have fun, I think it’s all good.

Some straight guys worry they might be the object of some man’s affection. Insecurity drives a lot of really poor decision-making. I think as long as you can be confident and comfortable in your own skin and who you are then you don’t really have to be worried about that.

When did you become comfortable in your own skin? It’s a continual thing, continual growth. Just like everybody else, there are some days when I don’t feel great in my skin. I do my best to grow. But I think when I came into my body, you know, and started building muscle and realizing that in a lot of ways physically I had become a man, that’s when I became comfortable and confident. Getting into fitness was helpful.

When did being accepting and loving to the LGBT community really become important to you? Was there a person or a moment that really drove you to become the advocate that you are? It was my early Broadway days and being kind of immersed in the community at an early age and really seeing that there was no difference. The key was accepting and loving people from all different walks of life. It was just a priority at an early age and also because my parents were really open and loving and laid it out for us that there was no difference. I think that was a healthy environment to be in at an early age.

How do you feel about speculation about your own sexuality? I think people are gonna make their assumptions regardless, you know? And I’m a heterosexual male who’s playing two gay characters on TV shows and really doing my best to be the most accepting and loving person I can be because I think that’s the way we all should be. So, if people have opinions or thoughts on my sexuality, that’s on them. I know who I am and I’m comfortable with who I am.

You stepped in for Iggy Azalea last year and headlined Pittsburgh Pride when she canceled her headlining performance after LGBT groups pulled out in protest of her past homophobic tweets. What was it like playing your first Pride event? It was a lot of fun! I think there was a real warmth because of the fact that I kind of jumped in last minute and covered, so I think
Carole King’s music mirrored the full pageant of the rock ‘n roll era. From soul anthems like “Natural Woman” to novelty dance ditties like “Locomotion” and soft-rock classics like “You’ve Got a Friend,” you can hardly imagine any occasion where one of her songs would not work as the background music to life’s great moments. That richness is much of what gives Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, its amazing texture. Unlike, say, Jersey Boys, which celebrates one group’s sound, or even Mamma Mia!, which shoehorns one group’s catalogue into a conventional book-musical narrative, Beautiful is a songwriter’s tribute with all the ups-and-downs of a creative — not interpretive — artist. You feel King in every note, every lyric.

The show is as ebullient and joyful as any contemporary musical since The Drowsy Chaperone. It opens in Brooklyn during the poodle-skirt days of teenybopper music. Carole (Abby Mueller, sister of Jessie Mueller, who created the role on Broadway) is a 16-year-old college student with aspirations to write a hit song. She pairs up with sexy budding lyricist Gerry Goffin (Liam Tobin), goes to work for Don Kirschner, and a legend is born.

But legends have high and low points. Gerry cheats on her and has emotional problems, but through it all, Carole martials along, turning out songs that reflect (and sometimes deflect) her personal turmoil, which will eventually culminate in Tapestry, one of the most acclaimed, honored and best-selling albums of all time.

But this isn’t a lemons-to-lemonade story. The great depth of its appeal is how strong yet vulnerable Carole is — secure in her talents, but doubtful as to her sex appeal. It’s one of the most complexly written leading roles in a musical comedy, and Mueller’s upbeat, somewhat defiant performance hits it home. The whole cast rocks it, with great comedic support from Becky Gulsvig and Ben Fankhauser as Cynthia Weil and Barry Mann (a rival songwriting couple), brisk staging by Marc Bruni and, of course, a score that is par excellence. Just try walking out not humming a tune and feeling hopeful.

Hope plays a central role in the lives of the characters in Outside Mullingar — even hope that seems drowned by life’s occasional tragedies… and tragedies abound here because, well, it’s Ireland. The Irish are a peculiar lot, and plays and films set there are plump with an atmosphere of beautiful, hilarious dread. The plays of Martin McDonagh reveal a sense of horror masquerading as day-to-day normalcy. (Psychopathic cat owners. Matricidal spinsters. Felonious gravediggers.) Even a sprightly musical like Brigadoon is premised on a lovely Irish village that disappears into the mist for a century at a time — hardly the makings of a conventional happy ending.

And so it is with the Muldoons and the Reillys, neighboring farmers in damp central Ire-
land. The Muldoon patriarch has just died, which leaves an opportunity for the senior Reilly (John S. Davies) to finally re-acquire a small strip of land — an easement, which he sold years ago but which has been a sore spot ever since. But the younger Reilly, Anthony (Jeremy Schwartz), might not even inherit the land, which creates a rift between father and son, exacerbated by Anthony’s prickly relationship with Rosemary Muldoon (Jessica Cavanaugh), the girl next door who has been crushing on him for 30 years … though he hasn’t seemed to notice.

It’s all very kitchen-sink, with lilt ing brogues and clever wordplay, courtesy of author John Patrick Shanley. But when you let director Rene Moreno loose on this kind of material … well, something as magical as Finian’s rainbow appears. There’s no better director of actors anywhere that I have seen. He turns a cast into a collection of fully-fleshed-out humans as deftly as a close-up card sharp. There’s such effortless naturalism here, you almost forget that you’re even watching a play; it feels more as if you’re spying on the lives of real people.

And his actors do live those lives, so wonderful fully. The tentative romance between Cavanaugh and Schwartz — middle-aged folks playing middle-aged folks — is expertly rendered by the leads, while Davies and Gail Cronauer as the irascible oldsters have breathtaking moments. Outside Mullingar isn’t a flashy play with hot-button moments. It must settle for just being an exceptionally engaging and true one about waiting until the moment’s right.

Family dynamics and the time to confront long-buried feelings take a different turn in the contemporary drama Mothers & Sons … though the story begins decades earlier.

In 1990, Terrence McNally won an Emmy for writing a TV movie called Andre’s Mother. It was the height of the AIDS crisis, and the film was set during the memorial of Andre, an actor who succumbed to the disease. Andre’s lover, Cal, was there, as was his disapproving mother Katherine, a humorless transplant to Texas who seems so cold she could not forgive her son for the sin of being different.

This new play builds on those characters, but it’s a loose sequel. Cal (Gregory Lush) is now a financially secure money manager with a new husband, Will (Kevin Moore) and a son Bud (Alex Projean). Katherine (Marjorie Hayes), now a widow, shows up on their doorstep unannounced a few days before Christmas. She and Cal haven’t kept in close contact over the years, so Katherine is astonished to find he has moved on with his life when she clearly has not. She projects her disappointment with every icy gesture and sniping aside: How dare Cal continue to live, when her son’s life was cut down too soon?

It’s a play with each foot in a different generation of gay culture, seeking to bridge two eras: The scary-activist days of an epidemic that decimated gay society, and the more settled world where same-sex marriage is legal and acceptance the rule, not the exception. Will and Bud belong to the latter; Katherine and Cal to the former … only she never felt a part of it and he has evolved beyond it.

In the broadest sense, Mothers & Sons is a political play, a play of ideas — it parses the rift between those who still live in a self-imposed labyrinth of bigotry and a culture that has moved on from them. At its worst, it sounds a bit old-fashioned and intentionally provocative, as if these arguments haven’t been hashed out for 35 years.

But at its best — and its best is exceptional — it subtly navigates the ways in which we communicate, how diplomacy in the face of ignorance if a blessing, and how ignorance morphed into hatred needs a sturdy slap to the face. Cal “handles” Katherine, diffusing her insults with light-hearted banter, using manners to soften her hard edges … until she crosses too many lines. The play has a lot to say about blame, self-pity and how age differences should not affect our innate humanity.
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ARNOLD WAYNE JONES
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Here’s the dirty little secret about Americans: we want our fast food. We like our fast food. But behind the scenes, we want to feel good about liking our fast food. And that’s where a place like Start comes in.

It has the trappings of fast food. It’s open early for breakfast, and stays open for late snacking. There’s a drive through — the essence of convenience eating.

But there are the non sequiturs: Beer and ciders are sold here (organic). So is granola (same).

Selling itself as “handmade, wholesome food,” Start — with two locations, one on Lemmon in the gayborhood, one near SMU on Greenville Avenue — boasts a hipster vibe where the menu filled with ingredients so free of preservatives that eating them won’t pickle you before you’re dead: Organic, hormone-free meats. Grass-fed beef. Salads made of protein-rich quinoa — indeed, there are an assortment of vegetarian selections (see “hipster” reference above — hipsters are either vegans or subsist solely on edibles and housemade game sausages. That’s just a fact). Start even strives to diminish its eco-footprint by not offering water bottles and minimizing waste. “Real food fast” their logo announces. That’s very different than “real fast food.”

You pay a bit extra for that sense of social responsibility, but you are rewarded for it. The hamburgers are a specialty, touting the option of gluten-free buns as well as build-your-own-burger possibilities. It’ll cost you anywhere from 7 to 10 bucks, depending on your mood. But the flavors are fresh and satisfying, and considering how many actual fast food joints serve mystery meat faster than Mrs. Lovett’s pie shop, there is a smug bit of self-congratulation that comes with knowing the provenance of your meal.

The other entrees deliver as well. The turkey and swiss wrap was dry in bites, washing it down with a bottle of cider was more than satisfying. There’s a drive through — the essence of convenience eating.

No value meals here; the value is in living a cleaner lifestyle. That means you shell out separately for garnishes and sides, like tater tots (which, if I’m being honest with myself, probably were not hand-cut by an Irish farm girl). But honestly, who really wants that anyway? Isn’t it enough that they are, apparently, baked? (Start restaurants don’t own a deep-fryer, according to the menu.) Just ladle on the organic ketchup and indulge in a bit of childhood comfort dining — only the kind your nutritionist would approve of.

It’s a serious play, but not one without levity. The balance is achieved with the nimble ensemble. Moore has never been so natural onstage, and Lush delivers another well-crafted character who has to hide and reveal deep emotions within a hair’s breadth. Katherine’s hardness makes Hayes a tougher nut, but her genuineness comes through. Director Bruce R. Coleman and set designer Kevin Brown make excellent use of the stage, filling it with real lives, which is what makes Mothers & Sons resonate so profoundly … no matter how old you are.
A real-life political tragedy unfolds before the camera in the funny-sad documentary ‘Weiner’.

What is it about the heroes of progressive Democrats that they can’t keep their junk in their boxer-briefs? Bill Clinton’s horndogery is legendary; Gary Hart’s literally signaled a sea-change in how the political press covers politicians’ private lives.

And then there was Anthony Weiner. Clinton and Hart were “victims” of investigative journalists and chatty conquests, surprised that their secrets were revealed. Weiner’s downfall resulted from his own thumb, when he tweeted his erect... ummm... wiener to a woman he was flirting with online. There’s no evidence the then-congressman from New York ever physically cheated on his wife Huma Abedin (remarkably, one of Hillary Clinton’s closest advisors) but he botched the handling of the scandal — claiming he was hacked, then quibbling about what really happened, and how much, and with whom. It cost him his congressional seat. But he thought he could ride it out, and two years later looked to be the frontrunner in the race for mayor of New York City. He even allowed two documentarians to make a film of his comeback campaign.

And then he fucked up again.

Weiner — the tightly-focused, virtually all-access chronicle of Weiner’s fall-rise-fall in American politics — feels slightly obscene due to its insiders’ look at a man coming apart. We see Anthony Weiner as the firebrand representative, excoriating Republicans in vituperative screeds on the floor of the House, fearlessly taking on opponents in pundit-filled talk shows, glad-handing his constituents during cheer-filled gay Pride marches. He is a Noo Yawkuh, through and through, the kind who brings a gun to a knife fight, who isn’t afraid of a little dirt. You wanna root for the guy. And you wanna throttle him.

Weiner could be screened for those practicing crisis management, although I’m not sure if it’s best seen as a case study or an abject lesson. It’s never fully clear to viewers when Weiner lapsed and sent more incriminating tweets (apparently after the congressional scandal, but how long before the mayoral campaign?).

That’s when his supporters turned on him. A second chance is one thing... but a third? (I think most of us lost our respect for Weiner when we learned his online screenname was “Carlos Danger.”) Yet what, exactly, had changed in the intervening years? The gay community — long ardent fans — would probably be the most forgiving; after all, we are probably, well... more “familiar” with the concept of sending dick pix to strangers and not thinking much of it. (Don’t judge.) But how has such provincialism survived from the Mayflower, when universal marriage is now the norm.

There’s a lot of armchair psychologizing (“Do you have a sex addiction?” an aide queries, although considering he never even meets his online paramours, it makes you Clintonize “It depends on what the definition of ‘sex’ is”) and we get to read it all on the faces of Anthony and Huma, who takes a backseat for most of the campaign as well as the movie, but emerges, in a strange way, as its protagonist. But a large part of you wants to rewrite history: Yes, Anthony Weiner ended up being a flawed narcissistic jackass ... are we shocked? He’s a politician ... the same politician, by the way, who believes in raising the minimum wage, in securing abortion rights, in expanding Medicare and advocating on behalf of LGBT issues. Weiner suggests that despite his shortcomings, his public shaming — even if earned — shouldn’t be a bar to good works. Twenty-five years after Clarence Thomas coined the phrase, we may finally have proof of what a high-tech lynching looks like. And it’s not pretty.
people were really pumped about that. The show itself was great. It was a lot of LGBT community people and it was good. They were a great crowd. And I’ll tell you what, I think it was one of my favorite shows of last year. There’s something to be said about surprising people!

Last year seemed to be pretty darn good for you, but your new album, Last Year Was Complicated, begs to differ. What was the biggest hurdle you had to overcome last year? It was a real year of growth, going from being in a group with my brothers for years to traveling alone, being alone all the time — it was intense at first. Then, on top of that, the breakup I had last year was, well, complicated [laughs], it was tricky. It required me to really dig in deep and lay out all my thoughts and feelings in my music, which, for me, is the best outlet possible.

Beyoncé is obviously experiencing this with her new surprise album Lemonade, but I wonder, for you, how do you feel when you release a body of work and the public dissects it and relates it back to your personal life? I can’t comment for Beyoncé or speak for her, but as an artist I think it’s so important to lay your heart and feelings out in your music, and if you want to be an open book in that way, it’s a great outlet to be able to do it. For me, I’ve just thrilled to have the outlet to pour my heart into because it’s a good way to process my feelings and emotions.

Do you keep the gay community in mind when you make music? I think you have to create and have it be authentically you and kind of worry about what people are going to think afterwards, or who might be listening. That’s what I’ve tried to do: tell the stories the best way I can first, [so they] are the most honest. If I have to go back and edit afterwards, I will, but for the most part what I write in that room that day is what ends up on the record.

Outside of Scream Queen and Kingdom, do you see more gay roles in your future? I think it’s about the material. If something comes up and has a great script and a great creative team, I would definitely do it. It’s all about the script though. That, for me, is the focus.

When I talked to Joe he said he was working on music with you. He also alluded to the possibility of a Jonas Brothers reunion down the line, saying, “It could easily happen.” What’s the status on the new music? And how do you feel about a Jonas reunion? Well, he and I live together now. We just moved in together actually. So yeah, we have a music room in the house and we’re always writing, whether it’s for us, for [his band] DNCE, for my stuff, or just writing for other people. I’m definitely trying to always create. But I’m not sure about a Jonas Brothers reunion. I think that we’re all very happy doing our own thing. And our oldest brother, Kevin, is expecting another baby with his wife, so it’s exciting times for everybody.

When might we hear some of the music you’ve been making with Joe? It’s gotta be right first, so if we get something done and it ends up on a project, that’d be great. But I’m not sure about anything coming out very soon — it’s gonna be a little while.

Following in the footsteps of some defiant tour cancellations in North Carolina to protest the state’s “bathroom bill,” you and your tour-mate Demi Lovato also took a stand, nixing both of your dates in the state. Why did you decide to cancel your shows there instead of, say, going the route that Cyndi Lauper did, which was to keep the show but donate the proceeds to LGBT causes? It’s an incredibly tough situation overall and one that we thought really hard about. Speaking with Demi and the whole team, the thought was, we needed to do our best to take a strong stand, and although it’s difficult and it’s gonna be a disappointment to our fans who were looking forward to the shows, we feel that it’s the right thing to do. Sometimes you gotta go with your gut feeling and do your best to help a situation. Hopefully our fans understand and stand with us. We’re trying to do our humble part. A change would be good.
**Saturday 06.11**

Jane Lynch performs a gleeful concert at HOB

As hard-edged coach Sue Sylvester on *Glee*, Jane Lynch disparaged those who chose musical theater over sports. But as a real-life singer, Lynch loves to hum a tune or two, which she does at See Jane Sing, her concert tour that arrives this weekend at the House of Blues.

DEETS: House of Blues, 2200 N. Lamar St. 7 p.m. LiveNation.com

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**Tuesday 06.14 — Sunday 06.26**

**Hits of both kinds in the gangster musical 'Bullets Over Broadway'**

Woody Allen’s 1994 film *Bullets Over Broadway* is a quintessential backstage comedy — a smartypants playwright who gets involved with a high-maintenance star and a theater-obsessed mobster in the 1930s. Two decades later, Allen turned it into a jukebox musical, featuring classic songs from the era. It arrives this week at Fair Park Music Hall for a two-week run, courtesy of Dallas Summer Musicals.


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**Friday 06.17 — Saturday 06.18**

**Bruce Wood Dance returns with Six**

It’s difficult to believe that choreographer Bruce Wood died two years ago... and equally amazing that his company, Bruce Wood Dance Project, has not just survived but flourished in that time. More evidence of its abiding success is *Six*, the company’s sixth season opener, which returns for two performances only. It features a Dallas premiere of one of Wood’s own masterworks, two other pieces also make their world premieres. Don’t miss it.

DEETS: City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. BruceWoodDance.org.

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THEATER

Blackberry Winter. A daughter finds ways of coping with her mother’s slide into dementia in this funny, poetic play about Alzheimer’s and myth. Runs in repertory with The Thrush and the Woodpecker, both by Steven Yockey and part of the New Works Festival from Kitchen Dog, which moves (temporarily) into the space at Undermain Theatre, 3200 Main St. Through June 26. KitchenDogTheater.org.


Dreamgirls. The hit rock musical, a thinly-disguised version of the making of the Supremes and Motown, becomes the Dallas Theater Center’s summer family show ... for funky, open-minded families. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. June 10–July 29 (in previews through June 16). DallasTheaterCenter.org.

Livin’ Fat. A college-educated man is forced to take a job as a janitor in a bank, and happens upon $20k in cash dropped by bank robbers and unnoticed by the cops in this comedy. Jubilee Theatre, 506 Main St., Fort Worth. Through June 26. JubileeTheatre.org.


Mothers and Sons. The first of two Terrence McNally plays being staged this summer by Uptown Players, this one revolves around the mother of a dead gay son who visits his surviving lover. Reviewed this week. Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through June 19. UptownPlayers.org.

The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia? Edward Albee won his second Tony Award for this perverse tragicomedy about a suburban husband (Van Quattro) who falls in love with a goat. Final weekend. Rudy Seppey Studio, 2333 W. Rochelle Road, Irving. LipServiceProductions.info.

Kiss the Boys. The return of Mark-Brian Sonna’s “murderous comedy” about two gay men planning a murder that doesn’t go as planned. Stone Cottage Theatre, 15650 Addison Road. Through June 19 (extended). MBSProductions.net.


CONCERTS

Turtle Creek Chorale: Heartstrings. The season finale concert series, featuring love songs ... and a few actual onstage weddings. City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. Saturday and Sunday. TurtleCreekChorale.com.
FINE ART


FRIDAY 06.10
COMMUNITY
High Tech Happy Hour. Monthly mixer, sponsored by TI Pride Network. Two Corks and a Bottle, 2900 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. 5:30–7:30 p.m.

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

SATURDAY 06.11
CONCERTS
Jane Lynch: See Jane Sing. Emmy Award-winner Jane Lynch, who as coach Sue Sylvester on Glee usually squelched efforts at singing, shows she has her own pipes in this concert tour. House of Blues, 2200 N. Lamar St. 7 p.m. LiveNation.com.

FILM
Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin. CineWilde presents this acclaimed documentary about an important civil right activist (for gay and African-American rights) who is nonetheless largely overlooked today. Presented as part of gay Pride month. Texas Theatre, 231 W. Jefferson Blvd. 4 p.m., pre-show discussion; 4:30 p.m. film; 6 p.m. post-show interview with filmmaker (and Rustin’s partner) Bennett D. Singer. $10.50.

SUNDAY 06.12
BROADCAST
Tony Awards. The 70th annual awards show honoring the best of Broadway, this year expected to be a lovefest for Hamilton. James Corden hosts. Airs on CBS at 7 p.m.

MONDAY 06.13
CABARET
Mama’s Party. Local singer Amy Stevenson hosts her ongoing cabaret series, always with special guests and a good time. Uptown Theatre, 120 E. Main St. Grand Prairie. $10.

BROADCAST
Real Housewives of Dallas. The new reality show, which features Dallas women. Season finale. Bravo at 8 p.m.

TUESDAY 06.14
FILM
How to Marry a Millionaire. One of the seminal Marilyn Monroe films, which established her reputation as a high-fashion coquette. Screens as part of the Tuesday Big Movie New Classic Series at Landmark’s Magnolia Theatre in the West Village, 3669 McKinney Ave. Screens at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

THEATER

THURSDAY 06.16
CABARET
Judy Chamberlain Jazz. The jazz vocalist’s weekly cabaret performance in the back room of Zippers Hideaway, 3333 N. Fitzhugh St. 9 p.m.

FILM

FRIDAY 06.17
THEATER

DANCE
Bruce Wood Dance Project: Six. Two world premieres, plus a Dallas premiere, make up this season opener. City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. June 17–18. 8 p.m. BruceWoodDance.org.
Cassie Nova

Being single isn’t a disability — it’s a choice for the choosy

Hello, my lovelies. I hope you all are having an incredible day. You know, families are funny things. If you are lucky, they are who you run to when things get overwhelming or chaotic. But for many in the gay community, we tend to run away from our blood family and run to our chosen family. I have an awesome, caring husband and many friends I can always count on.

One of the things I love most about my job is when I interact with the audience at a show and find out that there is a mom or dad out with their gay son or daughter. It makes me so happy and in between lewd jokes I always tell their kid how fortunate they are to have a parent that loves and supports them enough to go to a gay club and be hassled and hassled by a big scary man in a dress.

Every time I tell the crowd to “make some noise” for the fact they are there supporting their gay son or daughter, it is usually the loudest the crowd cheers the entire night. I never mean to, but many times when I have done this, the mom tears up. It fills me with all kinds of different feelings: Hope, that this is the new normal; jealousy, because I never had that; but mostly, it’s a sense of happiness that it is happening more and more.

I’m honored that so many young people think enough of our show to bring their parents out to see it. I hope that the parents have a blast but I also hope that they see and feel the sense of community we all share. Hopefully it relieves some of the anxiety they may feel about their kid going out to a gay club. Yes, we can act vulgar and crass. Sure, we over-sexualize just about everything, but at our core, a drag show is about acceptance. We want you to accept us as the hot messes we are and in return we promise to keep pushing boundaries, possibly make you feel uncomfortable but hopefully always entertain you.

The Rose Room: fun for the whole family… mostly! Now let’s get to work!

Hey Cassie! Longtime reader, first-time advice asker (that’s a word, right?). I’ve been out and proud for almost seven years. Yay, me! During all that time, I’ve tried every sort of possible route of dating — sadly, with no success in dating a guy longer than a couple months. Now that I’ve turned 30, I fear it’s a mark against me. This isn’t a “woe is me, why am I forever single?” I’m content with myself and know when the time comes (hopefully), someone will come into my life and I’ll figure out why it didn’t work out with anyone else. I need advice with another situation that almost always occurs when I tell someone “I’ve never had a serious boyfriend/always been single.” Their usual response is something along the line of, “What? How can such a [insert complimentary remark] guy like you never have been in a relationship?!” Which I translate into, “What is wrong with you and why does no one want you?” I know that’s most likely not their intention, but that’s how the reaction breaks down to me. I usually respond back with something humorous like, “A team of psychotherapists are doing a study to find out,” or, “I murder anyone that loves me.” You know, families are funny things. If you have a question or comment, email it to AskCassieNova@gmail.com.
Making the SCENE the week of June 10–16:

- **Alexandre's**: Stephanie Sallie on Friday. Mi Diva Loca on Saturday.
- **Club Changes**: Imperial Court show at 8 p.m. on Friday. Cowtown Leathermen meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday.
- **Club Reflection**: Cowtown Leathermen cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday. Wall of Food show at 8 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Dallas Eagle**: United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Wild, Wild West Show from 8-10 p.m. on Friday. Discipline Corps club night on Friday. Talon Nation fundraiser for Pegasus Slowpitch Softball Association from 1-6 p.m. on Saturday. NLA Bike Wash from 1:30-5 p.m. on Saturday. Purple Party presents SCORE! From 10 p.m.-2 a.m. on Saturday. Beyond Vanilla presents Lip Sync Battle from 7-10 p.m. on Saturday. UCLSE presents Drag Bag Show from 8-10 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Hidden Door** hosts the Firedancers Dallas Tribe's 29th Annual Ruby Slipper Anniversary, including the Mr. Firedancer Contest all weekend.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill**: Cassie's Freak Show with Janet Andrews, Bleach, Daphne and Yo Highness on Monday.
- **Round-Up Saloon**: White Rock Church, which got its start at the Round-Up 25 years ago, meets for happy hour from 7-9 p.m. on Friday. Cedar Springs Merchants Association Summer Showcase hosted by Steve Kemble at 8 p.m. on Sunday. VIP tables for $150.
- **Sue Ellen's**: Human Rights Campaign Calcutta and auction with Dana Goldberg from 7-10 p.m. on Friday. Vanilla Sugar on Saturday. Kathy & Bella from 5-9 p.m. and Bad Habits from 6-9 p.m. on Sunday. Caven Enterprises Benevolent Association All American King Pageant on Tuesday. Voice of Pride on Thursday.
- **The Rose Room**: Cassie, Asia, Valerie, Janet Andrews, Jenna, Krysta and Layla on Friday.
- **Two Corks and a Bottle**: Gary Carpenter on the piano with Show Tunes from 7-10 p.m. on Wednesday.

Scene Photographers: Kat Haygood and Chad Mantooth.
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