As the last 'last call' looms at his iconic Oak Lawn bar, Howard Okon looks back at 35-plus years in the business

by Tammye Nash
Page 8
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The Second Annual Summit on LGBT Aging, an event held by the Coalition for Aging LGBT, will shine a bright light on the situation facing the aging LGBT communities in North Texas, featuring the presentation of a recently-fielded research report on the many issues we face. The Summit will also include lively, action-oriented break out sessions that will dig more deeply into areas of primary concern – housing, legal/financial issues, legislation, transgender-specific issues, caring and wellness, and social spaces and support.

The goal of the Summit is to further explore the needs of the aging LGBT population in North Texas and to continue to develop a plan of action to better address those needs. As the senior LGBT population continues to grow, we feel a great urgency to make sure that each aging person can live their life with dignity, respect and without fear of discrimination.

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Got a pet? Send your pic!

On July 15, we’re publishing our annual “Pamper Your Pets” edition, and we want to fill up our Scene pages with pictures of our readers with their own pampered pets. So send us a pic of you and your pet if you want to be considered for inclusion in Scene next week. You can send the photos to the Dallas Voice Facebook Page via message, or email them to calendar@dallasvoice.com. Photos must be at least 600 points wide at a resolution of 240 dpi to be eligible for publication in our print edition.

Maybe it’s time for your “15 Minutes”?
— Tammye Nash

One Cub Scout troop promotes heterosexuality in a whole new way

Remember when the Boy Scouts of America were discriminating against lesbian troop leaders even if they were moms with kids in their troops? And throwing out teens who came out? You know — They had to set a moral example, all in the name of family values and honesty.

Well, the Scouts changed their policy slowly. First they’d let scouts who came out as teens finish their Eagle Scout level and wait until the next week to give them the boot. Then they decided parents of gay scouts weren’t so bad, and then gay employees could stay.

And through all those changes, the sky didn’t fall and Boy Scouts of America still promoted truth, justice and the American way.

In the year since the Irving-based Boy Scouts of America finished changing their discriminatory policies against LGBT troops and employees, my hunka things changed.

According to a report by ABC News, one Cub Scout troop near Denver has a new sponsor — Hooters.

One Cub Scout mom was surprised when her 7-year-old came home wearing some Hooters attire. Others expressed outrage as pictures of Cub Scouts with waitresses in Hooters uniforms showed up on Facebook.

Apparently, a local Hooters restaurant volunteered to help the Cub Scout troop. In addition to making a financial donation, they sent volunteers.

Ken Paxton files injunction against federal guidances protecting trans students

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton announced on Wednesday, July 6 that Texas is leading a 13-state coalition asking for a preliminary injunction to block enforcement of “Obama’s bathroom rules.”

“Obama’s bathroom rules” refer to a list of guidances issued earlier this year by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice to help school districts avoid discriminating against transgender students. Paxton and other right-wingers — including Chief Protector of the Bathrooms Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick — insist that these guidelines, along with Fort Worth Independent School District’s comprehensive policy for interacting and protecting transgender students, put women and children in danger by allowing men to use the same public restrooms and locker rooms as long as the men/boys are willing to declare that they feel like a woman/girl that day.

Federal officials have noted that school districts that insist on discriminating against transgender people risk losing federal money because such discrimination violates Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex-based discrimination in schools. Federal officials and federal courts have already determined that “sex” in this case means gender and includes anti-trans discrimination.

Paxton said, in his press release, “The nation’s schools, and every place of employment, are now in the crosshairs of the Obama administration, which maintains it will punish those who do not comply with its orders. Schools are facing the potential loss of funding for simply exercising the authority to implement the policies that best protect their students. Every employer is now being threatened for not bowing to anyone that identifies as the opposite sex.”

The press release then goes on to explain that the Obama administration is “attempting to rewrite Congress’ use of the term ‘sex’ in multiple federal lawsuits to now include ‘gender identity.’ If successful this radical change simultaneously opens up all intimate areas within schools and workplaces to members of both sexes.”

— Tammye Nash

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instant TEA

DallasVoice.com/Category/Instant-Tea

However, things went a little awry when a “group of trained volunteers mistakenly wore the wrong attire” to a local Cub Scout camp.

How were these well-meaning volunteers to know that they weren’t supposed to work with 7-year-olds with their boobs hanging out?

Well, maybe BSA policies haven’t really changed. After all, the experience promoted heterosexuality and must have scared the crap out of the scouts who are gay, whether they’re out or not.

We didn’t bother asking BSA’s spokesman in living for comment, because he hasn’t returned a call to Dallas Voice since the whole Cub Scout mom incident when Jennifer Tyrrell, who was kicked out of Scouting for being a lesbian, came to town to protest.

— David Taffet

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ONE

COMMUNITY

Out of the Closet Thrift Store
3920 Cedar Springs Road
Dallas, TX 75219
(214) 599 - 2173
Monday - Saturday: 10:00 - 7:00pm
Sunday: 10:00 - 6:00pm
Amelia has already cemented her reputation with staff and her foster parents as “literally the perfect kitten.” She likes to sit in your lap, and loves to cuddle and play. Move quickly for your chance to be the lucky person who gets to give Amelia her 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 former Dallas City councilwoman Veletta Lill; United Black Ellument 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 2C; 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 8 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.

- JULY:
  - July 8: High Tech Happy Hour
    Open to everyone. From 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Maracas Cocina Mexicana, 2914 Main St.
  - July 9: Teen Pride Volunteer Orientation
    Volunteer orientation “Teen Pride: A Celebration For All” volunteers from 10-11 a.m. at Oak Lawn Branch Library, 4100 Cedar Springs Road.
  - July 9: Workout of the Day for Orlando
    Crossfit Heat hosts a community workout and fundraiser for the Orlando LGBT community. Proceeds benefit Equality Florida’s Pulse Victim Fund. 8-10 a.m. at 810 S. St. Paul St.
  - July 10: Holocaust survivor speaks
    If you have never heard survivors tell their stories, this is your chance at 12:30 p.m. at Dallas Holocaust Museum, 211 N. Record St #100.
  - July 14: Upstairs Inferno
    Q Cinema presents the Fort Worth premiere of Robert Camina’s film about the largest gay mass murder — until last month. 7 p.m. at Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 3200 Darnell St., Fort Worth. $8.
  - July 16: Quinceanera Gaybingo
    Monthly fundraiser for Resource Center
**JULY**

- **July 16: Youth Vigil for Pulse**
  LGBTQ youth and allies rally including reading of the victims names, open mic, youth speakers and performers from 4-7 p.m. at Legacy of Love Monument.

- **July 16: Night of Stars benefiting LifeWalk**
  Raven, JujuBee, Krystal Summers, Nova Starr, Vanity Storm, Sienna Silver and others guests perform to benefit Greg Drolgen Memorial AIDS Fund LifeWalk team 8:30–10 p.m. at The Brick, 2525 Wycliff Ave., #120. $20.

- **July 17: Drag Star Divas for Orlando**
  The North Texas GLBT Chamber of Commerce partners with The Rose Room and Drag Star Diva to present Drag Star Divas for Orlando, a benefit for the victims of the shooting in Orlando, a drag extravagenza featuring an all-star cast, 6-9:30 p.m. in The Rose Room at 54, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. There is a $5 suggested donation at the door, and the event is open to those 18 and over. Visit bit.ly/Divas4Orlando for more information.

- **July 19: Log Cabin Republicans meeting**
  Former Dallas County GOP Party Chair Wade Emmert speaks on the challenges for the Republican Party. Social at 6:30. Meeting at 7 p.m. at Coal Vines, 2404 Cedar Springs Road.

- **July 20: Holocaust survivor speaks**
  If you have never heard survivors tell their stories, this is your chance at 12:30 p.m. at Dallas Holocaust Museum, 211 N. Record St #100.

- **July 24: The Brick Closing Party**
  The Brick/Joe’s, 2525 Wycliff, will close after 25 years with a farewell party with owners Howard Okon and Greg Parrish who are retiring.

- **July 25: High Tech Happy Hour Christmas in July**
  Benefits The Senior Source. A $50 gift card to Target or Walmart will help a senior purchase personal items and a $100 check will purchase and install an air conditioning unit. From 5-7 p.m. at Two Corks and a Bottle, The quadrangle, 2800 Routh St. #140.

- **July 31: Holocaust survivor speaks**
  If you have never heard survivors tell their stories, this is your chance at 12:30 p.m. at Dallas Holocaust Museum, 211 N. Record St #100.

**AUGUST**

- **Aug. 10: Black Tie Sponsor Appreciation Party**
  Black Tie Dinner holds its sponsor appreciation party at Brendan Bass Showroom, 2001 Irving Blvd.

- **Aug. 10: Holocaust survivor speaks**
  If you have never heard survivors tell their stories, this is your chance at 12:30 p.m. at Dallas Holocaust Museum, 211 N. Record St #100.

- **Aug. 19: Cabaret & Cabernet**
  Sammons Center for the Performing Arts, 3630 Harry Innes Blvd., presents Cabaret & Cabernet, featuring emcee Tracy Fulton along with Denise Lee, Linda Petty, The Larry Petty Combo, Teddy and Lorena Davey, Jay Gardner, WT Greer, Shear Goodspeed Keeton, Keran Jackson, LaLa Johnson, Carolyn Lee Jones, Shelley Kenneavy, Pam Musgrove and Diana Savage. Wine tasting at 7:30 p.m., performances at 8 p.m. Admission is $400 for a table of eight; $300 for a table of six, $200 for a table of four. Call 214-540-4458 or email BScott@myresourcecenter.org.

- **Aug. 21: Holocaust survivor speaks**
  If you have never heard survivors tell their stories, this is your chance at 12:30 p.m. at Dallas Holocaust Museum, 211 N. Record St #100.

- **Aug. 25-26: Sister Helen Holy**
  Sister Helen Holy headlines her own benefit show for Legacy Counseling Center saving sinners at Sammons Center for the Arts, 3630 Harry Innes Blvd. $45-100 plus sponsorship opportunities. HelenHoly.com.

- **Aug. 27: Austin Festival and Parade Festival at Fiesta Gardens, 2101 Jesse E. Segovia St., Austin. Parade starts at the state capitol.

- **Aug. 31: Black Tie 30-Day Countdown**
  Black Tie Dinner counts down to its big event at MJ+BW Showroom, 4519 McKinney Ave.

**SEPTEMBER**

- **Sept. 4: Broadway Brunch**
  Leslie McDonel performs to benefits AIDS Services of Dallas VIP meet and greet at 11:30 a.m., brunch at 12:15 p.m. and performance at 1:30 p.m. at Texas Discovery Gardens in Fair Park.

- **Sept. 10: North Texas Pride**
  North Texas Pride Festival will be held from 1-8 p.m. at the Louisiana Street Grill, 350 E. Louisiana St., in downtown McKinney. There will be vendor booths, kids’ activities and dancing. For information visit NorthTexasPride.org.

- **Sept. 17: Pride and Fabulous Gaybingo**
  Monthly fundraiser for Resource Center takes place 6-9 p.m. the third Saturday of the month at Rose Room at 54, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. Doors open at 5 p.m. For more information, call 214-540-4458 or email BScott@myresourcecenter.org.

- **Sept. 17: Teen Pride**

- **Sept. 18: Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade**
  Steps off at 2 p.m. at Cedar Springs Road at Wycliff Avenue. The route continues down Cedar Springs to Turtle Creek Blvd., then west to Maple Ave.

- **Sept. 18: Festival in the Park**
  Following the parade, the festival takes place in Reverchon Park, 3500 Maple Ave.
Longtime Dallas bar owner Howard Okon looks back on 35-plus years in the business as he prepares to close the Brick, his final bar

TAMMIE NASH  I  Managing Editor
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When the Brick/Joe’s closes its doors at the end of the night on Sunday, July 24, it will be the end of an era — last call not only for a bar that’s been around for 25 years, but also for a bar owner who has been part of Dallas’ LGBT nightlife scene for more than 35 years.

The Brick/ Joe’s — which first opened on Maple Avenue 25 years ago, before moving to its current location at 2525 Wycliff Ave. — will go out with a bang, owner Howard Okon said this week. “We have something special going on every night right up through the very last day,” he said.

This Saturday, July 9, Dannee Phann Productions and Impulse Group Dallas present a special show benefitting One Orlando. The show will star Jaidynn Dior Fierce, Jiggly Caliente, Chevelle Brooks, emcee Kennedy Davenport and more. Doors open at nine and the show starts at midnight.

“The Night of Stars” on Saturday, July 16, a special show presented by the Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund and starring Raven, JujuBe, Krystal Summers, Nova Starr, Vanity Storm, Sierra Silver and more, benefits GDMAF’s Miss Lifework contestant, Vanity Storm. (See the Gay Agenda, pages 6 and 7 for details.)

Thursday, July 21, the Brick hosts the Mr., Ms. and Miss Rodeo Naked pageant, benefitting the Dallas and Fort Worth chapters of the Texas Gay Rodeo Association. The event starts promptly at 6:30 p.m. and includes a silent auction and Rodeo Naked merchandise sales.

The club’s final Saturday night, July 23, will be dedicated to “Red — Summer Night’s Dream,” presented by the Dallas Red Foundation and starring Drag Race star Cynthia Lee Fontaine, 2016 Miss Red Raquel Blake, Gloria Devine, Onyx Anderson, Nicole O’Hara Munro, Dallas Sheraton and G-Licious G. All proceeds benefit Legacy Counseling Center.

And on Sunday, July 24, the bar says so long with a day-long farewell party. As the website says, “Please join us all day Sunday, July 24, as we reminisce, greet old friends and have one last ‘blow-out’ party.” The bar opens at 3 p.m., and the party lasts til 2 a.m., with DJs, spotlight performers, dancers and more.

The charity events, Okon said, are one of the things he will miss most about being in the bar business.

“I couldn’t begin to tell you how much money we’ve helped raise and how much we’ve given over the years,” he said. “Anyone who needed a fundraiser, we tried to help. It was important to us, to me. It was a way for us to give back to the community that supported us all these years.”

But, Okon continued, the biggest gap the Brick’s closing will leave is as an entertainment venue for LGBT people of color.

Okon recalled a time back in the 1980s when he and fellow bar owner and friend Joe Elliott — longtime owner of Jugs and the person for whom the “Joe’s” end of the Brick is named — went to another LGBT nightclub in Dallas. As they were standing in line, he said, he noticed that African-Americans were being turned away at the door because they couldn’t provide three different forms of photo ID.

“But we — Joe and I — we weren’t asked for three different IDs. But of course, we weren’t black. Hell, I don’t think I have three different forms of ID today!” Okon said. “I remember being so mad about that, thinking how wrong that was. Being of Jewish heritage myself, I was never raised to treat people that way, and I just couldn’t understand how we as a [LGBT] community that had faced so much discrimination ourselves, could discriminate against a part of our own community.”

That’s what prompted him and Elliott to open Rapps, back in 1989. The bar — first located off Maple on the airport side of Inwood and later moved to a space in the same block where the Brick is now — catered specifically to the black LGBT and same-gender-loving community.

The Brick, since it first opened, has also welcomed people of color, Okon said, adding that his bars helped start the black Pride celebration, now known as Dallas Southern Pride. “It made me sad, all those years ago, [to see the African-American LGBT people] treated so badly. But I am very glad that we were able to give them a safe place to party, a place to be themselves, for all these years. I think that’s the biggest void we will be leaving, giving them a place to call their own.”

Okon also played a role in giving Dallas’ lesbians “a place to call their own,” even though many women don’t realize that. It started back in 1981, when he was moving his bar, Patrick’s, from its original location on Fitzhugh to a larger space on Oak Lawn. A woman named Sandy Myers came to him then with a proposition.

“Sandy had been my cleaning lady, and when we were getting ready to move, she came to me and said, ‘Howard, give me this place. Let me start a women’s bar here. I promise you I’ll make it work.’” Okon said. He agreed, and Myers did exactly what she said she would do.

That bar he helped Sandy Myers start was Buddies, which later moved first to Mahanna and then into a space on Maple Avenue — across the parking lot from the original Brick, in a location that had previously housed another Howard Okon bar, The Wave. When Buddies closed in 2009, it was the longest-running women-owned lesbian bar in the country.

In the 1990s, when his old friend Joe Elliott needed a place to move her bar, Jugs, Okon leased her space in

BRICK
Oak Lawn gift shop opened with one location in Austin back in 1986

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Nuvo owner Jeff Wright said he based the concept of his original Austin store on several shops in New York and on Arresta, a store owned by Ken Knight on the corner of Reagan Street and Cedar Springs Road in Dallas.

“I used to come to Dallas for fun,” Wright said. “I went to Arresta and it was like I entered an oasis.”

The original Nuvo opened on Guadalupe Street, just north of the University of Texas campus in Austin.

After looking around the city for the right location to open his new store, Wright said he found what he thought was the perfect location. At the time, that space was occupied by a women’s clothing store.

But as his partner, Jon Bonsignore, said, Wright was a great salesman. He found a different location where he thought the clothing store would do well and convinced the owner of the women’s store to move. Wright took over the lease on Guadalupe Street and opened Nuvo 30 years ago this past week.

Bonsignore said not only did Wright get the location he wanted, but the clothing store thrived in its new location. But Arresta closed on Cedar Springs Road a little more than a year later.

“Lots of people who came in [to Nuvo in Austin] after Arresta closed said there was no fun place to shop in Dallas,” Bonsignore said.

The Austin store was doing well and it made sense to open in a Dallas location, Wright said. And he and Bonsignore didn’t have to look further than the old Arresta space to find the perfect location. They opened Nuvo in Dallas in July 1988.

Nuvo has always been a great place to find gifts and original cards, but the merchandise mix has evolved over the years. When they arrived in Dallas, Bonsignore said, the customer was more sophisticated.

In Austin, they carried a line of earrings for $30, which they sold mostly to college students. In Dallas, customers asked for higher quality, so they upgraded their line to the $200-to-$1,000 range. They’ve been carrying product from some jewelry designers for 20 years.

Bonsignore said in the early 1990s, duvets became popular on beds. So, “We had several people in Dallas make bed skirts, shams and duvets for us,” he said. At one point, they had three beds in the store to display the linens.

But as big linen companies started doing duvets, sales dropped. “That business dried up for us as fast as it erupted,” Bonsignore said.

In Austin, Nuvo carried T-shirts. In Dallas, Union Jack, Off the Street and other stores were all selling T-shirts, so the Dallas store dropped that category in the Cedar Springs store pretty quickly.

“As our merchandise mix became more sophisticated, T-shirts didn’t belong in the store,” Bonsignore explained.

Dinnerware was another item that had a good run, until their primary supplier was purchased by a larger company, which put an end to the line’s innovative products. But as bookstores in Dallas have become rare, coffee table books have grown as a category for Nuvo.

Nuvo’s new interior. (Turk Studio courtesy Jeff Wright)
Marchando con orgullo

An estimated 400,000 people attended Mexico City’s June 25 Pride parade, including Dallasite Max Nuñez.

JESUS CHAIREZ | Contributing Writer
editor@dallasvoice.com

A massive crowd, estimated to be more than 400,000 strong, attended Mexico City’s 38th annual Gay Pride Parade, officially known as the Marcha del Orgullo LGBTITTI (Lésbico, Gay, Bise
cual, Transgénero, Travesti, Transsexual e Inter
cexual) on Saturday, June 25.

The wall-to-wall LGBT Mexicans enjoyed their Pride activities on streets that aren’t blocked off with steel barriers to keep people off the street. In Mexico City’s Pride parade, there is no sitting and watching as everything passes by. It’s a march down México City’s main street, Paseo de la Reforma.

The parade begins at the monument of the Angel of Independence (Monumento a la Independencia) situated in México City’s gayborhood, La Zona Rosa (The Pink Zone), and situated in front of the U.S. Embassy. From the Angel, the march moves along to end in front the Presidential Palace in El Zocalo, the city’s main square, with speeches and entertainment.

As with all parades, Mexico City’s Pride parade brings out a variety of people — young, old, osos (bears), people with wigs (lots of wigs) and, of course, those in makeup. Even gay nudists were participating this year, or at least people without clothes.

Though there were families in attendance, parade organizers have never placed restrictions on parade participants to make the event more “family-friendly.”

Dallas native Max Nuñez, who has been an announcer at Dallas’ Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade for the past eight years, attended México City’s Pride parade for the first time this year. Though he has had plenty of experience in Dallas’ Pride parades, he couldn’t help but get

emotional a couple of times as he walked in not only in a gay parade, but a parade that totally reflected his culture and heritage.

Nuñez said México City’s Pride parade far exceeded his expectations, giving him an “overwhelming sense of unity and love that was palpable and electric.”

Nuñez also said he was impressed with how large the parade was and how long it lasted. “It went on and on and on, a that party didn’t seem stop,” he said.

(Nuñez will once again be an announcer at the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade, set for Sunday, Sept. 18, at 2 p.m.).

To view more pictures of México City’s pride parade, visit Chairez’s Flickr page at Flickr.com/Photos/JesusChairez.

Jesus Chairez is a former Dallasite now living in Mexico City. He was a producer and host of U.S.’s first bilingual LGBT Latino radio show, Sin Fronteras on KNKN 89.3 FM; from July 4, 1993 to July 3, 2005. Chairez is also a published author, “Queer Brown Voices,” a collective of Personal Narratives of Latino Activism. Chairez is a now freelance writer and can be reached at facebook.com/JesusChairez.
Wright said the company expanded once more to a Houston location. But after tiring of having to travel constantly between the three stores, he and Bonsignore decided to close the Houston location, which was under-performing, and they sold the Austin store. Then three years ago, Nuvo in Dallas moved from its original address on Cedar Springs Road to its current Oak Lawn Avenue location, two blocks away.

Bonsignore said they hadn’t really wanted to move. But they had been in the Cedar Springs Road location for 25 years and their lease was coming due. It was time to give the store a fresh, new look, starting with the need to replace the black vinyl tiles that had been in the store since it was Arresta.

Bonsignore and Wright had always had a good relationship with their landlord, and they expected her to renew the lease and split the cost of the remodel, something common in retail leases. They planned on work being done nights so that the store wouldn’t have to be closed more than a couple of days.

Instead, Bonsignore said, the landlord told them that if they tore out the tiles, the space would have to go through complete asbestos abatement. Everything in the store would have to moved out and the space closed for several weeks. They had no place to move some of their large fixtures or store merchandise during the remodel and they didn’t want to be closed that long.

Still, “The idea of moving was overwhelming,” Bonsignore said.

They found a location they loved, in the building with Parigi, and when the landlord heard they were looking for a new space, he said, “Oh, God, we would love to have you.”

So rather than close, they moved two blocks away.

They hired movers who specialize in moving fine pieces. One table was so big, the only way they were able to move it was by lifting it on furniture dollies and rolling it down the street.

Wright said the new location is so quiet compared to their old space: “It’s nice not hearing fire engines.” He also likes the glass in the front and back of the space, and he loves having parking in the back that they share only with Parigi.

Wright said he and Bonsignore have talked about retiring. But that discussion always ends with the question, “What would we do?” Most of their staff has been with them for years, and they want those employees to know they can have a career at Nuvo.

“I guess we’ll be here til we drop,” Wright said.
Trump and his magical thinking

You can’t fight hate with hate, and hate’s all he has to offer

S
o much anti-LGBT dumbf**kery has emerged after the shooting of 102 people, of which 49 were killed, by a man with a military-style assault weapon at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando.

There has also been much love and support for LGBT people and rainbow flags a-flyin’ — literally and figuratively. And that’s nice. But, man, the anti-gay stuff is just especially exhausting to read through and think about right now.

But I do it for you, dear reader. And while there were a lot of potential Creeps, many of them were pretty small fish, all things considered. So I chose a big fish, albeit one with very tiny hands.

As has been established, one of the first things Donald Trump did after the shootings was to hop on Twitter and basically congratulate himself “for being right on radical Islamic terrorism.” Granted he followed that with “I don’t want congrats,” but I doubt he really meant that. As one of the most narcissistic people ever to run for president, I’ll bet he gets a boner every time he’s praised.

On June 12, the Tweet that came before read, “Horrid incident in FL. Praying for all the victims & their families.” Which is an appropriate thing to say.

But it doesn’t really mean shit because from that moment on Trump has been using the Orlando shooting for political gain, namely by crafting the narrative that President Obama and soon-to-be-President Hillary Clinton are somehow softies for terrorists, and that since terrorist groups like ISIS hate LGBT people, Obama and Clinton basically hate LGBT people, too.

“Hillary Clinton can never claim to be a friend of the gay community as long as she supports immigration policies that bring Islamic extremists to our country and who suppress women, gays, and anyone else who doesn’t share their views or values,” Trump said in a June 13 speech.

In other words, since Trump, who doesn’t even support marriage equality, hates Muslims he’s a far better presidential choice for gays.

“You ask yourself who is really the friend of women and the LGBT community. Donald Trump with actions, or Hillary Clinton with her words?” Trump continued. I don’t know what actions Trump is talking about since he has no “actions” to show for his supposed support of LGBT people. He has not done a single thing but run his mouth about how much he hates brown people.

It looks like Trump is engaging in some magical thinking here. Apparently he believes that everything he says comes true. I, for one, am very relieved that is not the case.

Not sure what he’s thanking LGBT people for, but support certainly isn’t it. LGBT voters support Clinton by a mile.

Some individual LGBT people have expressed their support for Trump following the Orlando shooting. Fear makes people to do stupid things. And Trump is happy to capitalize on fear. In fact, his campaign wouldn’t exist without it.

On June 17 he promised via Twitter, “More attacks will follow Orlando.”

Perhaps Trump has dreams where he stops the next attack, flying through the air and stopping bullets with his bare tiny hands. But as far as actual policies go, all Trump has is anti-Muslim rhetoric that inflames hate and inspires bigotry.

“You can’t fight hate with hate, and yet that’s all Trump has to offer. And LGBT people have had more than enough hatred, thank you.”

D’Anne Witkowski is a freelance writer and poet and a writing teacher at the University of Michigan. She writes the weekly “Creep of the Week” column for Q Syndicate.
the Brick’s building on Maple. Later, as Elliott’s health was fading, her long-time partner broke up with her, stealing the bar away in the process.

“She owned Jugs,” Okon said of the girlfriend. “But I was the landlord. I told her, ‘I’m gonna open a small bar in the space at the other end of the building, and I’m gonna call it Joe’s, and it will run you out of business.’ That’s exactly what happened. I gave Joe that space to open up Joe’s, and all the women were loyal to Joe, so Jugs was gone in no time.”

Even when it wasn’t doing much business, even after the Brick moved to Wycliff, Okon kept Joe’s open, tagging the name onto the small bar at the end of the new space on Wycliff, all to honor the memory of his friend, who died of cancer and heart disease on Dec. 27, 1999.

Okon’s legacy in the Dallas LGBT nightlife scene dates back to the early 1980s when he opened his first bar, Patrick’s, on Fitzhugh. In addition to Rapps, the Brick and Joe’s, he has also owned The Wave, Moby Dick’s and the Box Office. He was one of the founding members of the Dallas Tavern Guild, the association of Dallas LGBT bar owners that stages the Dallas Pride parade each September, and he has fond memories of other bar owners and employees through the years.

“I made so many friends through the years in this business,” Okon said. “Joe and Sandy of course. Gary Monier [of the Cruise Inn], Denis Weir and Frank Caven [of Caven Enterprises], Bill Hargis [of The Eighth Day and The Cove], Ray Martin [of High Country].

“We were more than just business associates back then. We were friends. We were competitors, yes. But we were friendly competitors, and we worked together for the good of the whole community when we could,” Okon said.

“We’ve been through a lot over the years, good times and bad,” he continued. “We came through the AIDS epidemic when we watched so many of our friends die. But we made it through all of it, and it’s been good overall.”

Just as he remembers fondly the other bar owners he has known, Okon said he will always remember and love the people who have worked for him, in all his bars.

“It was the people who made it special,” he said. “It’s always been the people. There are people who worked for me 30-something years ago, people who paid their way through school work-
The write stuff

Cesar Baquerizo’s mission to expose the horrors of gay conversion therapy

Cesar Luis Baquerizo has a soft spot for underdogs. It’s an attitude borne from experience. Born in Quito, Ecuador, Baquerizo has lived most of his life with a 90 percent hearing loss. And he grew up gay in a culture that still takes a macho attitude about sexuality — so much so, that within the last decade, his native country has undergone several scandals about gay “conversion therapy” centers that go to extremes to “cure” people of their homosexuality.

Baquerizo was so moved by the tales of abuse in these clinics that in 2011 — at age 25 — he began writing A Safe Place with You. A sweeping novel that spans the founding of a (fictional) conversion clinic in the 1970s and goes up to the present day, A Safe Place with You tells a compelling story about a young man who provides light to his fellow “patients” while detailing the hypocrisy and damaging attitudes that have demonized homosexuality.

Against the odds, he spent years trying to find a publisher for the English-language version of the book. “Rejections were always there — it was a tough time and very bad emotionally,” he says. “On my last attempt, I found myself with an acceptance letter. I remember jumping around with so much happiness.”

Earlier this year, Baquerizo finalized the English-language translation, and started his own North American book tour, which brings him to the Barnes & Noble in Plano this Saturday. “What brought me here is my dream to spread my message about the horrific practice of conversion therapy,” Baquerizo says. “The reality is, only in Vermont, California, New Jersey, Illinois, Oregon and the District of Columbia is conversion therapy on minors banned. That means 45 states don’t protect youth LGBTQ that are rejected by their own family and sent to these horror experiences. Reparative/conversion therapy is a dangerous practice that destroys and distorts psychologically and spiritually LGBTQ youth. A Safe Place with You is about the journey to love yourself and encourage self-acceptance.” — Arnold Wayne Jones

Dallas Voice: You’ve had a journeyman career, but you’ve said writing this book was a dream come true. Did you always want to write this book, or did you just feel you needed to tell a story, and this is the one that came to you? Cesar Baquerizo: Well, writing a book is a dream I wanted since I was 14. I started writing back as a kid in my primary school, but more like a hobby. It was an activity I used to entertain myself so I could explore my creativity.

Writing this book came to me unexpectedly. When I first found out about the illegal clinics that were operating to “cure” homosexuality, it really impacted me. I felt that need to do something — to act up so I could create more awareness about the dangerous and awful practice that is conversion therapy. I got inspired to create a fictional world with fictional characters that are in fact not that different from our current reality. I do need to tell this story so I can make a good difference to reach people’s heart to allow them to be placed in the LGBT [person’s] shoes, so they can understand how does it feel to be right there with my characters.

Speaking of the clinics: How much research did you do? How much of the details are based in fact? When I first started writing the Spanish version in August 2011, it was difficult for me to research directly with the patients, because most of the victims did not give their whereabouts or their names for [personal security reasons]. The victims’ testimonies and the information from the health ministry of Ecuador [accounts] about the illegal clinics published in newspapers helped me and inspired me to write A
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Safe Place with You. It was after I published [in Spanish] that I got the chance to have conversations with survivors of these very real clinics and their stories ended up similar [to what I wrote]. They later let me know how they identified with my characters.

So there’s nothing autobiographical about it? I’m not necessarily telling my story, but there are some parts based on my own experiences in coming out, what I felt about the Bible, about the society. Also, each of my characters have something and different sides of me. I can say that I wrote and created all my characters like alter egos.

So, do you personally know anyone who went through conversion efforts? I have a dear friend, who is so brave and inspiring, who told me that in late 2014, his father wanted to put him in a center to “cure” his homosexuality. His father never told him directly, but it was like a conspiracy [in his] family. Luckily, his sister warned him, “Be careful.” He was paranoid everywhere he would go because he knew how hundred of these clinics were discovered by the health of minister [in 2011]. So he decided to leave the country. He now resides in Canada and lives proudly, married with his long-time boyfriend, who is from Ecuador, too. Their story inspired me even more to come forward to talk about these issues.

I [also] met a guy who confessed me that he was forcibly taken by his family to a center where he suffered both physically and emotionally. It was a nightmare for him. Luckily, his parents took him out months later. [But] many families will say nothing to see their sons “healed” from their “bad behavior.”

What is the state of gay rights or gay acceptance like in Ecuador — or Latin America in general — now? Is it getting better? Well, the problem is that these centers are hidden. I can’t tell how many of these clinics may still exist in Ecuador or around the world. They may even exist in your own proverbial backyard. We have protection laws against LGBT discrimination [in Ecuador], but still we have a lot to do in our society to stop violating our rights. It’s important to speak out [and be] more visible about these issues that destroy LGBT youths’ lives. The reality is that most LGBT people here are influenced by the views of the society and are obligated to still live in the closet. They even have to create a double life to make their families proud, to receive the inheritance and to “protect” their family’s name. The rest of us who aren’t closeted do our best to show our diversity and to inspire the closeted ones that there is nothing wrong in them and there will be always someone who will accept and understand their true identity.

I don’t try to generalize about my country or to judge someone, but what I’m sharing are facts that need to be known in order to stop spreading the misconception about what is sexuality — which is diverse. We are all here with our different sexual orientations and we shouldn’t be ignored. The reality is that most LGBT people are influenced by their views of society and religion, which don’t let them experience the journey of humanity where they get to find, discover and know who they are.

You’ve been 90 percent deaf most of your life. Has that informed your novel? Or your identity as a gay man? Do you have an “outsider” quality based on both of these? I identify myself with all my particularities. Being gay is not the only thing that makes me. I’m more than that. Each part of me shows the rest how the same we are, because we are all different. I’m deaf, too. I did experience being an outsider in my teenagers years for being gay and deaf. At that time, I felt [like I wasn’t] part of the deaf community for not knowing ASL signs and [I wasn’t] part of the gay community for not seeing anyone being openly proud. I struggled a lot to fit in this society because I couldn’t relate or identify myself with anyone. But I managed to find myself proudly as part of both communities when I realized there were more people like me. I believe that we can make a big change all together by [making] our diversity more visible so everyone can see us, especially the kids, who are the ones that are going through the hard times alone. I’m learning ASL signs little by little and I enjoy new experiences.

There’s a strong romantic component to your book. Is that just your Latin roots coming through? Oh, I always have been romantic, a dreamer and an adventurer. I like to have new experiences. I like to work hard because it makes me feel alive. I’m romantic because I like to think that loving someone with a lot of affection and to want to make that person your everything — it’s a beautiful feeling in life.
Women aren’t funny (and other lies)

Funny lady Poppy Champlin brings Queer Queens of Qomedy Tour to Texas

Being a standup comedian is difficult business. Being a gay standup is even harder. But being a gay female standup? You’re talking Herculean effort there.

I mention this to Poppy Champlin, who has been making her living as a comic for a quarter century. As recently as just a few years ago, I note, there was a controversy when a Chicago club owner was quoted as remarking that women “just aren’t funny.”

“You’re saying it nicely,” Champlin sighs. “That’s been going on for a long time. Yet Ellen DeGeneres just got the Mark Twain Award — the highest award for comedy! Ellen has a brilliant mind. It’s not your sex, it’s your mind — what your mind does with subjects and information and twists them — that makes a good comedian. Women have great minds, just like men do.”

Not that men and women think the same way. She admits that “men have a different mentality. I suppose that’s dictated by their cocktail of testosterone. There is a different sensibility to our humor. When I’m performing on men’s cruises, I play a bit more risqué and dirtier. I always say to them, ‘I’m gonna push the envelope to the edge’ … and then they move the edge! So I push it even further. Women are a bit more timid about sexual stuff. They want to keep it in the brown zone.”

Carving out the audience that appreciates her humor — and during our conversation, she’s very funny — has been as much a part of shaping her career as honing her timing. “It’s been a hard road as a female comedian and a lesbian comedian. I eventually said, ‘Fuck you’ [to straight audiences] — I decided I’m just gonna play to my tribe. And by tribe, I am really saying lesbians.” (Not that she doesn’t want and enjoy gay men to laugh it up with the ladies — every-
Bi actress Evan Rachel Wood, who teams with a queer crew for a powerful new movie, talks Orlando massacre, sci-fi and tea with Elizabeth Warren

Openly bisexual actress Evan Rachel Wood is fired up lately about the Orlando massacre, misconceptions about bisexuality, and her role in the post-apocalyptic indie, Into The Forest.

Headed up by queer female dream team Ellen Page, Wood, and director Patricia Rozema (When Night Is Falling, I’ve Heard The Mermaids Singing), the film is based on Jean Hegland’s 1996 post-apocalyptic novel. Living in the remote, woodsy Northwest with their father, siblings Nell (Page) and Eva (Wood) find all power and technology has suddenly gone down due to a mysterious event, but that’s the least of their problems when a tragic accident, shifty strangers, and a horrific crime strike their once idyllic corner of the woods. (The film is currently available via VOD and will run in select theaters later this summer.)

Raised in Raleigh, N.C. (her father, David Ira Wood, is a local theater icon), Wood, 28, is probably best known for playing Mickey Rourke’s estranged lesbian daughter in 2008’s The Wrestler, a lusty Sapphic vampire queen in HBO’s True Blood, and a debauched adolescent in her 2003 breakout Thirteen. She came out as bisexual in a 2011 Esquire interview, dated Kate Moennig of The L-Word (whom, she says, remains a best friend), and on June 10 this year made a YouTube video to clear up misconceptions about bisexuality and share her personal tale of revelation.

“There is so much shame that comes with that ‘bisexual’ label, so I was like, I’m not going to be ashamed or silent,” she remarks. The mother of a nearly three-year-old son (dad is actor Jamie Bell, whom she amicably parted with in 2014), Wood chatted by phone about post-apocalypse existence, the Orlando tragedy, her turn as an android in HBO’s upcoming sci-fi series Westworld, and which political figures she’d go on a date with.

Dallas Voice: As a North Carolinian, are you rolling your eyes about the HB2 bathroom bill, transphobia and other horrible GOP legislation going on down there lately? Wood: Oh my God, I can’t even. It’s embarrassing. When I grew up there we pride ourselves on being a progressive southern state. It’s really disturbing to see this happening.

Ellen Page brought both you and Rozema on Into The Forest. Was the fact she was also openly queer an element that helped convince you to sign on? Well, the script really drew me, and it was just a really pleasant coincidence that me and Ellen and Patricia are all out. We had a few giggles about it, like that’s pretty cool, but no. It worked out that way.

So what issue does the movie address that most compelled you? How disconnected we are from our primal nature and how we relate to our environment. No one really knows or is taught how to live off the land, to forage for food, to survive without all the luxuries and conveniences of a soft bed...
crushes? You know what? I met Jamie Lee Cur-
tis yesterday and I’ve got to say she is a b-ble! I
was so speechless and starstruck, and I’ve been
so in love with her for so long and she was even
more beautiful in person.

How about Nick Jonas, who has been happy to
court the gay boys as well as the girls? Oh, I
don’t know enough about him and what he’s
doing!

Elizabeth Warren? Would you say yes to a wine
and cheese date with her? I love her. Oh, hell,
yeah! She’s great.

And Bernie Sanders? Sure! Can he bring the bird?
[Laughs] I’d date them all except Trump.

Are you Team Hillary? Ummm…. As opposed to
Trump? [Laughs] Politically, getting involved in the
press is very dangerous right now. I’m not voting
for Trump!

Whose life story would you most like to play?
Janis Joplin. It’s a dream forever and ever, and
[the response is always] like, oh you’re too pretty.
Dude, movie magic! She’s just incredible to me.

What can you tell me about your character in
Westworld, and are there LGBT characters?
Absolutely. It’s based in the future, and it’s going
to be much more fluid [sexually], so of course
that’s there. My character is a ‘host.’ I think what’s
going to be really cool about the ‘hosts,’ because
we don’t like to use the word robot, is they would
be more fluid and genderless. It’s going to blow
people’s minds. The writing impresses me the
most, it’s so intricate, deep, an existential night-
mare and very much based in reality. It’s set in
the future but based on real technology we’re devel-
opin now, looking at the state of humanity and
where we’re at, what we consider entertainment,
and why we’re so attracted to darkness. It’s taking
a good, hard look at that.

As a mom of what you call the raddest son, what
is your wish for your child’s future? More tol-
erance, empathy, kindness and communication.
That’s a reason I had children. Sometimes people
think, “I’m not going to have a kid because every-
thing’s so messed up,” but I felt here’s my chance
to put something good into the world, raise a good
man and for him to be the change. That’s a lot to
put on him, but that’s how it works.

one is welcome at her shows.)

Which is why Champlin is delighted that her
Queer Queens of Qomedy Tour — which kicks
off Sunday at Hyena’s in Dallas before heading
to Austin, San Antonio and Houston — isn’t just
showing audiences the talent that’s out there,
but doing it in mainstream venues.

“They are straight clubs [we are playing at]
that usually cater to a straight male audience,
which is the way comedy has been for a real
long time,” Champlin says. “But they see I can
bring in the audience.”

Partly that’s because standup — which started
its heyday in the late 1970s — is always looking
for the next big funny thing. And that’s becom-
ing gay humor, from the likes of Ellen and Tig
Notaro, among others.

“I think they are finally hearing from gay co-
edians cuz other kinds of humor are all tapped
out,” she says. “You gotta come up with new
stuff all the time.”

Gay comedians find common ground with ac-
cepting straight audiences by showing the uni-
versality of experiences — something that was
hard to sell just a decade ago.

“Ellen [is amazing] but has always been re-
ally clean — she doesn’t really talk about gay
stuff. I was not going to be wildly out and gay
in my show, but I talk too much about sex and
my relationships. If I can’t say ‘my girlfriend,’ I
don’t have an act. It’s about the girlfriend be-
cause that’s where people connect. They want
to hear about that stuff. I tell them, ‘My mother
was horrendous and continues to be. I’m 50-
plus and still get the when-will-you-be-getting-
a-boyfriend speech.’ Everyone can relate to
that.

The “qomedy” tour will feature Champlin
and three other female standups, specifically
tapped to appeal to Texas audiences. She will be
joined in Dallas by Sandra Valls and Mimi Gon-
zalez, both Latinas. She intentionally wanted a
contrast to her last Texas show, which included
comedian Vicki Shaw.

“Vicki’s from Texas but really white — like,
Casper the Ghost white,” Champlin says. “So
am I — I’m practically a pilgrim.”

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Asian Film Festival of Dallas back for 15th season

Asian Film Festival is one of Dallas' longest-running celebrations of the visual image, and focuses on both films and filmmakers from China, Thailand, Japan and the rest of the Pacific Rim. This year's fest — its 15th — kicks off with a party in the Foundation Room at the House of Blues, but all the films will play for a week at the Angelika Film Center Mockingbird Station.

DEETS: Angelika Film Center Mockingbird Station, 5321 E. Mockingbird Lane. AsianFilmDallas.com.

McNally makes second appearance with Uptown Players’ ‘Only a Play’

Uptown Players’ most recent production was the drama Mothers & Sons, written by playwright Terrence McNally. Well, McNally is back at the Kalita ... in a far less serious tone. It's Only a Play is his riotous recount of behind-the-scenes as a Broadway company awaits their opening night review from The New York Times. B.J. Cleveland and Chamblee Ferguson lead the cast.

DEETS: Kalita Humphreys Theater, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. UptownPlayers.org.

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**Festival of Independent Theatres.** The 18th annual showcase of smaller local companies returns with six troupes producing unique shows. Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Drive. July 8–30. For a complete lineup, visit FestivalOfIndependentTheatres.com.

**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 families. Wyly Theatre, 2400 Flora St. Through July 29. DallasTheaterCenter.org.


**A Kid Like Jake.** Second Thought Theatre closes its season with this area premiere about a little boy who prefers Cinderella to G.I. Joe. Bryant Hall on the Kalita Humphrey Campus, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd. Through July 23. 2TT.co.


**Pinkalicious.** A musical about the joys of overdoing it with color. Rosewood Center for Family Arts, 5938 Skillman St. Through July 17. DCT.org.

**Psycho Beach Party.** Coy Covington stars in this campy Charles Busch play. Final weekend. Theatre 3, 2900 South St. in the Quadrangle. Theatre3Dallas.com.


**FINE ART**


**Vermeer Suite: Music in 17th Century Dutch Painting.** A lovely original Vermeer is among the seven paintings in this intimate exhibit exploring themes in Dutch art. Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 Harwood St. Through Aug. 21. DMA.org.


**FRIDAY 07.08**

**COMMUNITY**

**Mr. and Ms. Great Plains Olympus Leather Contest.** Title contest for those in the leather/BDSM/fetish community. Meet and greet Friday at 7 p.m., public contest, cocktail party and results Saturday at 6 p.m. Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. Friday and Saturday. GreatPlainsOlympusLeather.com.

**SATURDAY 07.09**

**COMMUNITY**

**Wiener Fest 2016.** Get a hot dog and support the nonprofit Team Friendly DFW. Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave. 3 p.m.

**BOOK SIGNING**

**A Safe Place with You.** Ecuadoran author Cesar Luis Baquerizo signs copies of his new novel, which is about the hazards of conversion therapy.

**SUNDAY 07.10**

**COMEDY**

**Queer Queens of Comedy.** Poppy Champlin, Sandra Valls, Mimi Gonzalez and local guest Chris Guzman perform standup. Read the interview with... Patrons at New Orleans' Up Stairs Lounge gay bar, before the arson that killed more than 30 people 40-plus years ago, ‘Upstairs Inferno,’ a film about those events, makes its Fort Worth premiere Thursday.

Read the interview on Page 14. Barnes & Noble, 2201 Preston Road, Plano. 2 p.m.

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TUESDAY 07.12

FILM

The Band Wagon. As much as film lovers swoon over Singin’ in the Rain, this musical — starring Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse in her best film role — is in every way its equal. A gem you have to see. Screens as part of the Tuesday Big Movie New Classic Series at Landmark’s Magnolia Theatre in the West Village, 3699 McKinney Ave. Screens at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

FRIDAY 07.15

THEATER


THURSDAY 07.14

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

Asian Film Festival of Dallas. The 15th annual film fest focusing on Asian films and filmmakers. Kick-off party at the Foundation Room at the House of Blues, 2200 N. Lamar St. 9 p.m. Screenings at the Angelika Film Center Mockingbird Station, 5321 E. Mockingbird Lane. July 14–21. AsianFilmDallas.com.

Upstairs Inferno. The Fort Worth premiere of the award-winning documentary by Dallas filmmaker Robert L. Camina, about what was, before the Orlando shooting, the largest mass-murder of gays in American history. Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 3200 Darnell St., Fort Worth. 7 p.m.

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Hey, y'all. When I sit down to write my little ol' column, I usually write about whatever has been on my mind, or do I go in the general direction of giving advice to others. After all, this did start out as an “Ask Cassie the drag queen anything” kind-of-deal. Well, since no one has asked for advice in a few weeks — apparently I have solved all of your problems and you are all living a life free from a need for advice — I will talk about the only thing that has been on my mind as of late.

On June 12, some asshole went into Pulse nightclub and killed 49 beautiful souls and wounded many more. I'm not going to talk about the absolute need for gun control and a policy change that will make it hard for bad guys, hell-bent on death and destruction to get their hands on weapons whose only purpose is carnage. Hell, if the politicians won't listen to the families of people killed by automatic weapons, what chance does a drag queen have? The whole situation is so frustrating and embarrassing for us as a country.

The evening of June 12, I contemplated not going to work and doing my job as an entertainer. There had been such a horrible dark cloud over all of us that day. Part of me just wanted to curl into the fetal position and stay in bed all day, but us “girls” take the old adage, “The show must go on!” very seriously. Suck it up buttercup and do what you do. I found that being out that night helped me immensely.

I was in awe of the turnout that night. I had friends that don’t come out that often show up and tell me they felt it was important to be out that night. I’m glad they were there. On the way to the club, I remember thinking, “This is scary, and I hope I am not scared tonight to be onstage.” Once there, the fear was nowhere to be found. It was our job that night to help take our minds off the horrors of that morning, and although it may have briefly left our minds, it still weighed heavily on our hearts. I wish I were more eloquent in those situations, I hope the crowd knows how much it meant to us that they were there. I love my community and was very proud that night to be a part of it.

The next morning, I woke up, turned on the television and cried learning more details. Facebook was awash with stories and posts that just felt like a gut-punch. A showgirl friend who worked at Pulse posted that she was OK but lost many friends. My husband was at work, so I was home alone that day. I felt completely overwhelmed by grief. I know the shooting happened in Florida but it felt closer.

I have never struggled with depression. I've been in a bad mood, felt ennui and been heartbroken over many things, but I have never felt an all-encompassing depression like I felt that day. My heart hurt, my brain wouldn’t stop going to dark places and I felt physically sick. If that is what people that struggle with depression feel like daily, I will never think of depressed people the same way.

Thank god for my Freakshow at JR’s that night. Once again being around my people helped. The bar was full of our Monday night regulars and even more people that I have never seen out on a Monday. The show was light hearted and fun but what it did for my own personal morale, helped shovel away my dark cloud. Not completely — June 12 created a dark cloud and a change in all of us that will be there forever, but it made my dark cloud manageable.

On that Tuesday morning, I woke up and did the same thing I did on Monday, but instead of getting depressed, I got angry. I was angry at the lack of chatter on Facebook from my straight friends and family. I have quite a lot of straight folks that I am friends with on Facebook. Some of them I am related to, some that I went to school with, some are friends that I have known all my life and some are random Cassie fans that I feel a connection with. Many of these people post on Facebook and social media, prayers for everything. When the horrible terrorist attack happened in Paris, there were prayers for Paris. Many of them even changed their profile pic to the Paris flag. When the little boy fell into the gorilla enclosure and the poor animal was killed, there were prayers for the families and zookeepers even for the other gorillas that might miss their friend. But when the one of the worst terrorist attacks in American history happens… SILENCE!

I was confused and heartbroken and pissed off. Are we not worthy of your prayers because we are gay? Do they not care because it happened at a gay club? Are they so torn or worried what others might say if they show support for the gays? Can they not see past the fact that many of the people killed were gay and just see them as human? I wanted an outpouring of anger, heartbeat and support from my straight allies but all I felt was abandonment with the exception of a few.

Yes, I know it’s just stupid Facebook and I know I am on it way too much, but it is a valid way of getting a feel for what is being felt in our world. You know how scientists use frogs as a way of determining the health of an ecosystem. Facebook, to me, is like that frog and our frog is sick or dying.

Over the next few days, I heard from some of the more important members of my family and felt a little better. Then I got a message, through Facebook, from a woman that I have always considered my other mother. In fifth grade I became best friends with her and son and from then on they always made me feel like family. I received this message exactly when I needed it.

James, I have been thinking about you a lot since the horrific event in Orlando. I want you to know that I know you, I know your heart. I know that you are struggling with this level of hate and prejudice. There is no sense to be made if it. It has always been out there, but not to this extent. I can’t imagine how you must feel having a job where you are supposed to make people laugh and let go of the hurt and pain of a prejudiced society. My heart goes out to you. I am so sorry that this prejudice exists. I am sorry that you, while hurting have to carry the weight of finding a way to make people laugh and entertain them while suffering. You are so kind, sensitive, caring and giving. You gave Lee and I so much joy for so many years. I don’t have the words to heal your pain, fear or physical hurt right now. But, I do want you to know that you are loved. Your family is loved and I wish for you the strength to be strong and courageous right now. My heart is heavy for you and the Community that has been there for you and loved you for so many years. You are an amazing young man. We love you and will forever. When you are ready, we would love to have you and your husband over for a group hug.

Mamma Perry.

Sometimes we just need to feel that others are thinking of us, praying for us, love us. I took strength from her words and hope you will too.

This week I got a little deep into my feelings and haven’t felt very funny. I promise next time to try not to be such a Debbie Downer. I love you all. Remember to always love more, bitch less and be fabulous! XOXO, Cassie Nova.

If you have a question of comment, email it to AskCassieNova@gmail.com.
Making the SCENE the week of July 8–14:

• Alexandre's: Kristen Majors on Friday, K-Marie on Saturday and Tuesday, Chris Chism on Wednesday, Ilumin on Thursday.

• Brick/Joe's: Benefit for Orlando with Kennedy Davenport, Jaelynn Dore Fierro, Jiggly Callente Brooks, and LaTrone McNae on Saturday.

• Club Reflection: The Green Team presents Linze Sereii and others with MC Nancy Peoples on Sunday benefiting LifeWalk.

• Dallas Eagle: Mr. and Ms Great Plains Olympus Leather contest on Friday and Saturday. Discipline Corps club night at 10 p.m. on Friday. National Leather Association club night at 7 p.m. on Saturday. United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Studs & Stilettos Gone Wild benefiting the Greg Dollgener Memorial AIDS Fund at 8 p.m. on Sunday.

• JT’s Bar & Grill: Cassie’s Freak Show with Athena, Ana Budjit, Daphne and Bleach on Monday.

• Rainbow Lounge: The Illusions of Rainbow presents Tommie Ross as Diana Ross at 9 p.m. on Saturday.

• Sue Ellen's: Bad Habits on Friday, Straw Hat Society on Saturday. Customer Appreciation Night with Bella at 4 p.m. and Jessica Lynn at 7 p.m. on Sunday.

• The Rose Room: Rising Star with Kalexis and Your Highness on Thursday.

• Two Corks and a Bottle: Show Tune Night with David Carpenter on the piano from 7–10 p.m. on Wednesday.

Scene Photographers: Kat Haygood
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Date night on The Strip.

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- Gay owned & managed. Avail. NOW!

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**Coming July 15, 2016!**

Extra! Extra! Exciting news! Starting in July, Dallas Voice Classifieds will become MarketPlace, your calling card for LGBT Texas business. MarketPlace will be your one-stop shop for all your professional service needs. The new upgraded colorful look will feature business card sized ads in print, online, mobile and social media. For more information on advertising with us, visit www.dallasvoice.com/marketplace.
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For more information contact Sonny Blake @ 214-522-8600 Ext. 236

Gay Anthems
Solution on page 24

Across
1 1997 song of Ultra Nate
5 For this, for Caesar
10 Water-to-wine town
14 Spencer-Devlin’s sport
15 Word after “pinky”
16 Some have it to grind
17 Word with gratification or abuse
18 Care for
19 Polished surface, for drag queens
20 1978 song of Gloria Gaynor
23 Claim of some porn stars
26 Moon position
27 Narcissist
28 Lorca’s “Later!”
30 What you could get caught in
31 Brought into alignment
32 Film noir classic
35 1992 song of kd lang
39 Take too much of
40 Alaskan language
41 Culture Club’s “___ Miracle”
42 Be a ham in Hamlet?
43 It may be leather or strait
45 She hoped Gibson was gay in What Women Want
47 Family member, to a homophobe

48 1976 song of ABBA
51 Off-Broadway prize
52 Spud, in slang
53 Lesbian character in No Exit
57 Ice in the sea
58 1979 Broadway debut
59 Beauty that’s only skin deep?
60 Provide, as for oneself
61 Place for a pickup
62 1978 song of Village People

Down
1 3-pointers to Kopay
2 Lesbian opponent of Wade
3 Wing for Philip Johnson
4 Scarecrow and more
5 Lend a hand
7 Command to one’s bitch
8 Stallion’s supper
9 Bet midder?
10 Kahlo painting, perhaps
11 Erotic diarist Nin
12 Easily screwed
13 Trucker’s rod
14 Bentley of American Beauty
15 Mary’s MTM girlfriend
16 Literary lesbian Sylvia
17 Home near polar bears, perhaps
18 Auctioneer’s word
22 Mary’s MTM girlfriend
23 Literary lesbian Sylvia
24 Home near polar bears, perhaps
25 Auctioneer’s word
26 Literary lesbian Sylvia
27 Home near polar bears, perhaps
28 Auctioneer’s word
29 The vas, for one
31 Threaded fastener
32 ”Iron Mike” of football
33 First appearance
34 Material for nice stones
35 1978 song of Ultra Nate
36 Elizabeth Taylor’s The Last ___ Saw Paris
37 Rubbed with oil
38 Neighborhood
40 Alaskan language
41 Culture Club’s “___ Miracle”
42 Be a ham in Hamlet?
43 It may be leather or strait
45 She hoped Gibson was gay in What Women Want
47 Family member, to a homophobe
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