Queer Bomb
Taking Pride back to its roots
by Tammye Nash, Page 8
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QueerBomb 2016. Photo courtesy
Tom Rubek; design by Kevin
Thomas

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Narvaez sworn in amidst cheers

Dallas City Councilman Omar Narvaez received and ovation and cheers twice during this morning’s (June 19) swearing-in ceremony at the Meyerson Symphony Center. Narvaez is the first openly gay person elected to Dallas City Council in a decade.

The ceremony began with each council member and a guest coming on stage as Michael Sorrell, president of Paul Quinn College, announced that person’s name, district number, number of terms in office and the name and relation of the accompanying person.

Only when Narvaez entered the stage with his partner Jesse Vallejo to thunderous applause did the announcer add, “Talk about great expectations.”

Cathedral of Hope’s senior pastor Neil Cazares-Thomas delivered one of three invocations. He called for equality for all marginalized communities.

Also delivering invocations were Imam Omar Suleiman, co-chair of Faith Forward Dallas Thanksgiving Square and Father Rodolfo Garcia from the Cathedral of the Virgin Guadalupe, located across the street from the Meyerson. Closing the ceremony were the Rev. Canon Charles F. Camlin dean of the Church of the Holy Communion and Rabbi Andrew Paley from the liberal North Dallas synagogue Temple Shalom.

Who was invited said as much about Dallas as who was not. Not invited was the divisive Rev. Robert Jeffress from the next closest church, First Baptist.

At the end of his speech, Rawlings said he was not running for higher office, which some in the audience took as his campaign kick-off. Rawlings has been mentioned as one of the best possible opponents to face Rep. Pete Sessions, a Republican who represents part of Oak Lawn.

— David Taffet

Medrano named deputy mayor pro tem

Adam Medrano, who was sworn in for his third term in office June 19, was named deputy mayor pro tem. He succeeds Erik Wilson who was not re-elected to the council. Medrano represents District 2, which includes part of Oak Lawn.

— David Taffet
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Cathedral of Hope celebrates its 47th anniversary this summer with a variety of events. The centerpiece is a series of fundraising dinners in homes and restaurants throughout July and August.

The Rev. Neil Cazares-Thomas said two years ago that members did something like this and were very successful, explaining that “It gave people an opportunity to support the church and build relationships.”

He said with such a large congregation, building relationships can be a challenge. The dinners allowed smaller groups to get together to form friendships and help the church, and they allowed people active in the church to invite friends so they can “drag on the church and share its vision.”

A number of other events and speakers are planned throughout the summer.

The Big Bowling Blow-out takes place from 6-9 p.m. on July 7 at AMF Richardson Lane. And for two weeks, beginning July 9, the Cathedral will be transformed into an art gallery featuring a collection of original 20th and 21st century movie posters and art, including Texas artists and commissioned works.

On July 23, writer and producer Del Shores will be on hand, with cast members Ann Walker, Emerson Collins (producer), Rosemary Alexander, Newell Alexander, for a screening of Shores’ new film A Very Sordid Wedding.

The Rev. Elder Troy Perry, founder of Metropolitan Community Church, will be the guest of Cathedral of Hope for the July 29-30 anniversary weekend. Cazares-Thomas said this will be Perry’s first visit to Cathedral of Hope since the church left the denomination and joined United Church of Christ. Perry will attend a reception at 7 p.m. on Saturday and will be the guest preacher at the 11 a.m. service on Sunday.

Cazares-Thomas said the visit would heal the divide created when Cathedral left the denomination. Before coming to Dallas, Cazares-Thomas was pastor of Perry’s former church in Los Angeles.

Mayor Mike Rawlings will be presented the Hero of Hope Award at the church’s Aug. 27 11 a.m. service. A reception on Aug. 26 at Hilton Dallas/Park Cities Hotel honors the mayor’s work for equality in Dallas.

— David Taffet
Say hello to Simba, a bona-fide house panther with sleek black fur and bright yellow-green eyes. Ok — he’s actually a 2-year-old domestic shorthair mix. But like his namesake, he is friendly, loyal, playful and adventurous. He will roar — or meow — excitedly every time you come to visit him. He loves being petted, playing with all kinds of toys, eating yummy treats and making new friends. He is positive for FIV, a manageable but transmittable disease, so he’ll need to be the only cat in the home. Simba has been neutered, microchipped, tested negative for FeLV and has received all age-appropriate vaccinations. #148301

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**JULY**

**July 1: Boom Goes the Dynamite**
Charity America show celebrating America’s freedom benefits Rhonda Mae’s Wall of Food, Tucker’s Gift and the Texas Red Ribbon Wish Network at 7 p.m. at BJ’s, 3215 N. Fitzhugh Ave.

**July 7: Big Bowling Blow-out**
Bowl for Hope supports the mission of Cathedral of Hope from 6-9 p.m. at AMF Richardson Lanes, 2101 N Central Expwy., Richardson. CathedralofHope.com/47years.

**July 7-9: Beyond Vanilla**
Judy Tallwing is the keynote speaker.

**June 25: Fears for Queers LGBT Film Festival**
Seventh annual film festival includes world premiere of Carlos Suarez’s Thieves and benefits GALA Youth from 1-6 p.m. at the Texas Theatre, 231 W. Jefferson Blvd.

**June 27: GALA Mixer**
Monthly family-friendly, networking, socializing mixer benefits GALA Youth from 5-8 p.m. at Durkin’s Pizza, 8930 TX-121 #594, McKinney.

**June 29: LGBT loss support group**
Support group for LGBT people who have lost a same-sex partner or spouse at 7 p.m. at Oak Lawn Library, 4100 Cedar Springs Road.

**June 30: Tyler equality rally**
Area LGBT and progressive groups will join the East Texas Stonewall Democrats in a celebration of equality. The Stonewall Equality Rally & Progressive Pub Crawl begins at 5 p.m. on the downtown square. Facebook.com/EastTexasStonewallDemocrats.

**July**

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**June 25: PriDenton 2017**
Denton Trans-Cendence, GlitterBomb, Oak Street Drafthouse, Outreach Denton, Pan Ector, Pride Alliance, Stonewall Democrats of Denton County and Texas QueerLesque Festival sponsor Denton’s LGBT Pride Month celebration from 2-8 p.m. at Oak Street Drafthouse, 308 E. Oak St.

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QueerBomb takes Pride back to its roots

Celebrating Pride is an ‘act of revolution,’ organizer says

TAMMYE NASH | Managing Editor
nash@dallasvoice.com

“We started QueerBomb four years ago because we sensed a need for change in the community, specifically in the way we celebrate Pride,” explained QueerBomb organizer Daniel Mullens-Spencer. “We wanted to do a Pride celebration that was in Pride Month, one that was free from any corporate entanglements,” he continued. “We wanted a celebration that was a truly raw representation of our whole community, something that was free and fun and some place that everyone can come to and feel welcome.”

QueerBomb is being held Saturday, June 24, from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. at RBC, located at 2617 Commerce St. in Deep Ellum. It will include a rally and a march as well as a dance party featuring live entertainment, and it is designed, Mullens-Spencer noted, to be as much a political statement as a celebration.

“We’re going to have a rally full of all kinds of local organizations. We will have LGBT artists and crafters there. Lawna Jocqui [with the DFW Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence] will emcee the rally, and we will have a whole line-up of beautiful speakers from different parts of the community, parts of our community who don’t normally get their voices heard,” he said.

Those speakers include trans activist Drew Jones, 2017 South Central Leather boy Dontrel Johnson and Niecee X of the Black Women’s Defense League, trans activist Drew Jones, artist and QueerBomb organizer Alex Stone and activist/artist and QueerBomb organizer Daniel Mullens-Spencer.

8:30 p.m.: QUEERBOMB, when the LGBTQ community takes to the streets of Deep Ellum to celebrate Pride.
9:30 p.m.:— midnight: Big D Queer Dance Freakout and Celebrate on the Rally Yard stage with DJ Wiley, DJ Athena and DJ Night Nurse.
10 p.m.: Bombshell Drag Spectacular on the RBC Main Stage, hosted by Raquel Blake, with special guests BLEACH! Nicole O’Hara Munro, Kandy Gayne, Fantasha and a special midnight performance by Starfruit.

QueerBomb Dallas 2017
Saturday, June 24
Rally, march and party
RBC, 2617 Commerce St., Deep Ellum
5 p.m.: Rally Yard opens, with DJ Shams, local organizations and artists hosting booths.
6 p.m.: Countdown to Impact with spoken word artists Lady BSmoove, Gayle Bell and Rodd Gray, followed by a performance by Mercury Rocket.
8 p.m.: Pride Rally, hosted by Sister Lawna Jocqui of the DFW Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and featuring speakers South Central Leather boy 2017 Dontrel Johnson, Niecee X of the Black Women’s Defense League, trans activist Drew Jones, artist and QueerBomb organizer Alex Stone and activist/artist and QueerBomb organizer Daniel Mullens-Spencer.

While some have seen QueerBomb’s more activist Pride events in June as being at odds with Dallas’ traditional Pride events — the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade, this year sponsored by Lakewood Brewing Co., and the Festival in the Park, held each year in mid-September — Mullens-Spencer said there’s room for both.

Mullens-Spencer said that while he personally tends to be more on the in-the-streets, in-your-face end of the LGBT activism spectrum, he knows that those who work behind the scenes play an important role as well. He sees these differences between QueerBomb and the September Pride events as similar to the differences between in-the-street activism and behind-the-scenes activism.

“I certainly don’t want to try and put any
Survey: Parades as relevant as ever in today's political climate

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Full results of this year’s survey will be released on July 5.

Thousands of people traveled to Washington, D.C., from around the country for the June 11 Equality March. Visitors added to the crowd at D.C.’s Pride parade held the day before.

The only large parade held in Texas in June is in Houston. That parade takes place on June 24 and already attracted hundreds of thousands, even before the political climate turned sour.

Dallas Tavern Guild Executive Director Michael Doughman coordinates the Alan Ross Texas Freedom Parade and Festival in the Park in September. He said organizers are “preparing for more people. The theme is Stand Up and Be Counted. In this political climate, we have to raise our voices.”

This year, the parade and festival in the park will take place on separate days — the festival on Saturday, Sept. 16 and the parade on Sunday, Sept. 17. Although he expects more people, Doughman said spreading Pride out over two days makes it logistically easier, especially regarding security concerns. When the parade continued from Cedar Springs Road down Turtle Creek Boulevard into Reverchon Park, police were needed along the entire parade route and additional police were positioned in the park, he explained. But this year, the parade ends at Turtle Creek Boulevard, and the shorter route will be easier to secure.

While some police presence still will be required along Maple Avenue for the Saturday festival, there won’t be the same flood of foot traffic crossing the street, since no one will be coming from the parade.

Because of recent terrorist events, Doughman said Homeland Security has required a couple of extra meetings to discuss additional security procedures.

“It’s the times and escalating anger, which leads to random acts of violence,” Doughman said. “It all blossomed out of the Trump campaign.”

He said safety for the event requires more vigilance, security and planning. In the festival, only clear bags will be allowed for safety.

“See something, say something,” Doughman said. “People have to do their part. We can’t just rely on the police.”

Doughman said they’re preparing for possible disruptions like those that happened in D.C. by protesters who said the parade was too corporate. Without corporate participation, he said, Dallas wouldn’t be able to afford the security the city requires to stage the parade or the festival.

He said the parade doesn’t accept every company or political candidate that applies to participate. Those companies in the parade offer same-sex partner benefits and have LGBT employee organizations.

“We’ve vetted companies and candidates for years,” he said.

This year’s festival should be more inclusive with Teen Pride moving into the park with other community groups and events.

“We’re getting additional mainstream vendors at the festival,” Doughman said. Among the largest group of new booths are vendors from Puerto Vallarta and Canada plus visitor/convention bureaus and LGBT chambers of commerce from other U.S. cities and other Pride events.

A second stage will be added to this year’s festival featuring local talent. Auditions to appear on the stage take place from 1-4 p.m. on July 22 and 29 at The Rose Room.

Doughman said this year’s parade and festival will be as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
Mera Tucker is already known for her cookies. Now she and her spouse Jimmie are putting their reputation to work.

It all started with some Surly Bitches. Surly Bitch cookies, that is.

It was back in 2004, shortly after Mera and Jimmie Tucker first became a couple, when Jimmie showed Mera a cookbook that had been put together and sold as a fundraiser for the leather community in Portland, Ore. It was called The Doomed Rabbit cookbook, and one recipe that caught Mera’s eye was the one for Surly Bitch cookies.

She made the cookies — “The directions were like, ‘Put in the eggs and beat ‘em till they scream.’ It was a cookbook put together by the leather community, after all” — and they were a hit. Before she knew it, Mera had become known for the beautifully decorated — not to mention tasty — cookies that she and Jimmie donated by the dozens for all kinds of charitable efforts in the LGBT community.

“In the gay community, we do a lot of community building and a lot of fundraising in the bars,” Mera said. “Somebody was also looking for a donation for some kind of fundraiser. Jimmie and I couldn’t always afford to donate some expensive item. But we always had the ingredients for cookies!”

Now, some 13 years later, Mera is “semi-retiring” from her job with Neiman-Marcus, and she and Jimmie are setting out on a new adventure: Cookies not for Surly Bitches, but for Tucker Inn Cookies.

“Never really planned to go into the cookie business, but it happened,” Mera said with a shrug. Jimmie added with a nod, “Yeah. It has really snow-balled.”

It was Angela Aaron Winchester [aka Charles Aaron Grimes-Winchester] and Jeffery McGuire, empress and emperor XXIX of the International Court de Fort Worth/Arlington, who were “the first to ask us for a large order of cookies” for a court event, Mera recalled. “We made snowflakes with stained glass centers. They were beautiful.”

She continued, “She was the very first one to give us a chance with a big order like that.” And after the former empress passed away early this year, her husband “asked me if I would take all of Angela’s cookie-making stuff,” Mera added. “It was a huge honor to me that he asked me.”

Tucker Inn Cookies has provided cookies for numerous coronations and other court events since then, for the Imperial Court de Fort Worth/Arlington and for the United Court of the Lone Star Empire in Dallas. (The fact that Jimmie was Emperor XXXVI for the Dallas court means the Tuckers have a special connection and dedication to the court system.)

Mera and Jimmie “donate cookies almost every weekend to somebody” — from leather community organizations and events like the International Leather Sir/boy contest, to court events, to TGRA and more. Every spring with the Texas Bear Round-Up comes to town, they bake up batches and batches of cookies and sell them all weekend long at the TBRU host hotel as part of the United Court’s TBRU bake sale.

“The first year [of the TBRU bake sale], we raised about $4,000 selling cookies to bears,” Mera laughed. “But we are equal opportunity cookie donators. We donate to all the organizations. In fact, I always say that I owe my artistic ability to court and the other organizations because they always have a theme, and it’s always a different theme. They’ve had every freakin’ theme you can imagine, and I have made cookies for every theme they’ve had!”

Mera and Jimmie’s homes — first in Oak Lawn, then in Richardson and now in Irving — have always been known as Tucker Inn, since they always seem to end up housing those who come in from out of town for events or who need a place to stay for whatever reason. Their recent move from Richardson to Irving has given them a chance to set up Mera’s cookie-making paradise, even though it’s a little smaller than their home in Richardson.

Now in the living room, she has her “office” set up — an armoire that holds the equipment she uses to decorate, like the dehydrator and the edible image printer and the enlarger that she uses to create logos and designs. There’s also a huge drawer full of “sprinkles,” because “you can never have too many sprinkles,” and a desk that holds her computer. That way she can watch TV while she decorates the cookies.

But it’s the kitchen and the “cookie rooms” in the back of the house where the wow factor lives. Huge boards on the walls in two rooms hold hundreds and hundreds of different cookie cutters, all meticulously arranged. More cookie cutters are housed in bins beneath the board in one of the rooms.

The other room holds a new, giant freezer where the dough and cookies can be safely stored, and a small round table, that can be expanded to seat up to eight people for the cookie-decorating parties she hopes to hold there.

The kitchen, complete with double ovens, offers plenty of room for the baking part of the process — a part that many people might not realize that Jimmie handles. “Jimmie does all the baking,” Mera said with a grin. “I always get distracted and burn them. Jimmie gets them just right.”

Jimmie also makes a mean batch of brittle, from the usual peanut brittle to her specialty, pecan and bacon brittle. (Yes, really. Bacon.)

And when there’s cake baking to be done, that’s Jimmie’s job, too. “I can’t bake a good cake to save my life!” Mera noted.

“I just love this house,” Mera continued. “It’s really nice that we are so centrally located now, and it’s not hard to get anywhere from here. And we have the house set up really well for the cookie business. I am really looking forward to the classes and the parties.”

Mera and Jimmie admit they have a bit of trepidation, as anyone would embarking on a new business venture. But they are going into it with a bit of an advantage.

“We’re kind of in a unique spot,” Mera said. “Because of the donations, we already have a following and a reputation. Still, we’re just now actually opening our own business. It’s a leap of faith. We’ll see how it goes.”

Finding Tucker Inn Cookies
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already represented everyone,” Mullens-Spencer said. “I tell them to think about it this way, think of the brown and black stripes as a reminder of the diversity of our community. Those two stripes represent the parts of our community that are in the most danger right now, that are the most under attack. It is absolutely appropriate to lift up those people right now. It is the right thing to do at this juncture.

“I think,” he continued, “that we really need to stop and take a step back and look at ourselves right now. We want people to treat us better, but we have to be better, too. We want to get to a place of equality, but if we want to get there, we have to take everybody with us.”

Again, though, he said, Mullens-Spencer isn’t saying that those who choose to stay with the six-stripe rainbow flag are wrong.

“Every expression [of Pride] is valid and has weight,” he said. “I’m not saying everyone has to be the same or think the same. I personally find the brown and black stripes to be very beautiful. I think adding them to the flag mends some rips in our community. There is lots of baggage we have carried with us for a long time; we have to move beyond that. That’s what QueerBomb is about.

“A ‘bomb’ can mean a lot of things,” Mullens-Spencer concluded, “and sometimes, things have to come apart to be rebuilt better. We have to have conversations like these. We will end up being a healthier community because of it.”

Big Pride in Little D

A coalition of groups is celebrating Big Pride in Little D — or PriDenton — with several events on June 25.

The day’s activities begin with Denton Trans-Cendence hosting the first Denton Trans March. The group will gather at Denton Square at 2 p.m. and march “to the Denton Pride Event at Oak Street Drafthouse, where we will join the rest of the LGBT community in celebrating PRIDE in Denton,” Denton Transcendence wrote on its Facebook page.

Oak Street Drafthouse, several blocks east of the square, hosts PriDenton from 2-6 p.m., billing it as “a family-friendly gathering of fun and fellowship with our beautiful diverse community.” Located in one of the oldest houses in Denton, the draftthouse’s outdoor yard has picnic tables and is dog-friendly. Food trucks will be parked on the street for the occasion.

One PriDenton sponsor is t-shirt printer Pan Ector that will offer on-site printing of Denton, Pride and LGBT t-shirts.

Other sponsors include University of North Texas Pride Alliance, Stonewall Democrats of Denton County, OUTreach Denton, Glitterbomb, CRUZ Consulting and Diversity Training and Texas Queerlesque Festival. OUTreach Denton began with LGBT youth programming by the Unitarian Church in Denton and has expanded to offer other LGBT social and activist events. Glitterbomb performs a variety show weekly at Mable Peabody’s.

Mable Peabody’s, Denton’s LGBT bar that is located close to Texas Women’s University of East University Drive, hosts a weekend of Pride events beginning Friday, June 23 with Queeraoke. Saturday is Omni-Freak Dance Night and on Sunday doors open at 4 p.m. for free hotdogs and chips.

On Saturday, the food truck venue Backyard on Bell, 410 North Bell Ave. in Denton hosts comedians, Dezi 5 and RuPaul Drag Race star Sharon Needles. Proceeds from the event benefit local nonprofits and LGBT individuals in need. The event takes place from 7 p.m.-1 a.m. Needles is set to take the stage at 11 p.m.

— David Taffet
The date from Hell

S
ome things in life that happen are just too wild, bizarre, extreme or other-
wise “interesting” that you cannot help but think, “Someone just has to hear
this story.” Well, a recent series of incidents that took place in one evening proved that
to me. And I just can’t keep this to myself.

Let’s start at the beginning: I’ve been chatting with a certain someone for years
on Facebook. He’s an attractive man in his late 30s, with a successful career, a beautiful
home and a nice dog. We’re both introverts at heart but love the limelight to an extent.

We’d chat about how we need alone time, but that we’re both getting to a place in our
lives when we need to be more social and spend more time developing friendships
and potentially find a romantic partner. We had a lot in common in that department.

Mild flirtations back and forth seemed to build into something that could really
go somewhere. So finally we decided to meet.

For the first time in a long time, I felt like I was doing something good for myself. I was
putting myself out there, and I was going to have fun — whether we had chemistry or not.
I wasn’t expecting to be swept off my feet, but I was hoping, at the very least, for
a good night.

We decided to meet at his house on Friday night and I arrived at 7 p.m. sharp, as we
had agreed. The house was gorgeous, with a perfectly manicured lawn and a grandiose
front door with a large dungeon peephole. The drapes were open and I could see into
an open space designed to immediately relax you and impress you. Things were look-
ing up.

He came to the door and I saw that he looked just like his picture (Not to be shall-
low, but so many do not). Another good sign. But little did I know what the night
would bring.

We made our way into the living room. He made me a drink and we began to make
small talk. It was actually divine; either he was an expert schmoozer or we were defi-
nitely hitting it off. When I caught a glimpse of my watch, I realized an hour had passed.
Wow! Time often feels like it’s crawling in these situations, but with him an hour just
blew right by. I was in heaven.

Then, the doorbell rang. Frantic knocking immediately followed.

My future husband looked as surprised and confused as I did. He poured me another
drink then went to shoo whoever it was — probably a door-to-door salesman push-
ning a security alarm service or something. No problem.

He peeked through the peep-
hole and — “Oh, God!”

Did he just say “Oh God”? Are we about to get
burgled? Who
could it be at the door. Then came a
booming female voice with a British
accent: “Open that
door NOW!” Mr. Dreamboat turned to me, mouthed “I’m sorry,” and opened the door.

A woman that could have walked right off the set of The Stepford Wives barreled
inside, marched right into the living room and poured herself a drink. She was a
40-something woman that obviously took very good care of herself, was wearing a
pink pantsuit that was both businesslike yet very girly and playful. But she wasn’t in
a playful mood.

“I need to talk to you right this instant!” she insisted, not even noticing me until she
poured her drink. When she did notice me, she demanded to know who I was, and
when he explained he was on a date, she deigned to allow me to stay.

I can stay? What is this, The Bachelor? Do I need to compete for my date’s attention all
night or what?

I probably should have left right then and there, but the feeling that things were just
getting interesting kept me on the couch. She brushed her long brown hair behind her
shoulders, straightened her $2,000 pantsuit and sat down beside me.

We introduced ourselves and I soon
learned she and Mr. Husband-Material were not only best friends, but were also launch-
ing a new business venture that was in the midst of some major difficulties. Those
problems had pushed her husband into full-

oned meltdown mode over those problems, and she was there because she and my date
had to do something to fix it immediately.

It all sounded too personal for me to be
privy to the conversation. But they just kept going while I sat there sipping on my drink.
Ms. Pansuit’s concern for her husband seemed very real and very urgent. But she
stayed calm, obviously having navigated his nervous breakdowns before. “We’ve got
to find him before he does something rash,” she declared.

My date pulled me aside, acknowledging how crazy the situation must seem and telling
me I could leave if I wanted. But his eyes
pleaded with me to stay. I told him I could
leave, or if he really wanted, I would stay. I
was calm, as if I watched these kinds of sce-
narios play out all the time.

“Oh good,” he told me, “because I may
need backup.”

Then he patted me on the back and went
back into the living room like we were
marching into battle. The thought occurred
to me that maybe I should have run for the
door.

Soon they get Stepford Wife’s husband on the phone and the pleading begins:
“Where are you? For God’s sake, you’ve
had me worried sick.” Barely intelligible
words slurred at her through the phone; obviously, he was knock-down drunk.

My date asked where he was, told him they were coming to get him but — Click!
he was gone. Ms. Pansuit really started to
worry and poured herself another drink. She
paced the floor, a drink in one hand while the other waved wildly as she debat-
ed loudly over her husband’s whereabouts.

I stayed calm, chiming in when I thought I could be helpful: “Where does he normal-
ly go at this hour?” She looked up at me with a blank face. I couldn’t tell if she was
suddenly grief stricken, about to lash out like Miranda Priestly from The Devil Wears
Prada or just deep in thought. Then I real-
ized she was staring at a photo, on the wall
directly behind me, of the three of them at a
famous steak house. She barked at my date,
demanding that he “call them, immediate-
ly,” as if he were her assistant. I could tell
she was a loving friend but could be very
demanding.

My date calls the steak house, and they
confirm that he’s there and very drunk. They
want him out of there ASAP, they say, explaining that since he’s a long time
customer who spends lots of money there, they’re glad a friend or spouse can pick him
up instead of them having to force him to
leave.

Before I knew it, the three of us had piled
into luxurious Mercedes-Benz with a ride
so smooth you barely noticed the tension
and worry in the car.

We pull up to the restaurant valet and Ms.
Pansuit and my date look at each other ex-
pectantly, both seemed to be waiting for the
other to get out and get the man they were
so very concerned about moments before.

“Everybody knows me in there, I don’t
want to make a scene,” she said in her
British accent that made everything sound
posh and elegant. “Everybody knows me,
too! How many meetings have we had in
flashed forward five minutes, and I'm walking up to the bar, having easily spotted the plastered husband. I politely tap him on the shoulder and let him know that a car has been sent for him. Motioning to the bartender, he answers, "Can you hear that? They sent a car for me! Guess that means I'm big time now!" The bartender smiles weakly, looking at me with his own pleading eyes that beg me to "get him and go!" I tell him the car is right outside, and he starts to get up, putting his hands on my shoulders for leverage. But I wasn't expecting to be holding up his weight, and we both tumble to the floor.

The entire restaurant is looking at us now, and I am mortified. No wonder Date and Pantsuit didn't want to go in. While I am embarrassed, Drunk Husband is sprawled out on the floor, laughing hysterically. Is this man The Joker?

He starts to get up, then thinks better of it and starts to crawl toward the door. Oh my gawd! "Here...get up. Let's get you home," I tell him.

Finally, the poor man gets up and I really start to feel sorry for him. I resolve to not judge him, to just get him safely to the car. But at the very moment he stands upright and begins to walk, a beautiful young woman in a tight dress walks by. And somehow, the man who could barely walk seconds before has the energy to hold on to me with one hand and slap her ass with the other.

Smack! Right on the side of her right butt cheek. It was so loud you could here it echo through the restaurant. We both turn to look at her. Me in total disbelief. She snapped around, face red and eyes full of fury, and slapped him hard across the face. It was so loud you could here it echo. She was so close to my face that I thought a fingernail was going to slice right through my cornea. But she missed me and instead left his cheek as red as her face.

After what felt like an eternity, but was probably less than a minute after the booty-slap, we made it to the car. I swung open the door and practically pushed him into the back seat. At lightning speed, I zip around the car, hop into the backseat yelling, "Drive! Now!"

Date and Pantsuit knew instinctively that something went terribly wrong, and Date-turned-Taxi-Driver slams the car into drive. But before we can leave, a man who looks like John Cena's bigger brother starts crawling over the patio barrier. My eyes lock with his, and I feel sheer terror. This must be 20-Something's boyfriend. Oh my God! He gets over the barrier, leans back to grab a full glass of some alcoholic beverage and throws it at the back window of the Mercedes, shattering the glass into a million pieces. It sounded like someone had just shot into the car.

I couldn't believe this was happening! Am I dreaming? No! "Drive!" I yell.

I thought glass from the window was going to rain in on us, but it didn't. The glass and its contents were scattered across the parking lot, but the window was still intact. I was so thankful, praying to God that John Cena's more muscular brother wasn't going to follow us home and murder us all with bare hands.

We pulled up to Date's lovely house and I jumped out, leaving my date/getaway driver to wrangle his drunk friend. My eyes were darting up and down the street, waiting to see if the angry Spartan had followed us.

My God! Only hours ago I stood in this driveway full of hope. Now, I was full of terror. It took about 20 minutes for me to believe that the murderous muscle man hadn't followed us and we weren't about to live out a scene from Scream. Thank you, Jesus!

By then, I had decided I had had enough of this highly interesting trio for one evening, and I took my leave. How did a simple date turn into such a complete and total disaster?

I can't say that I regret the evening, because it was a little fun to watch this shit-show unfold. But I definitely had had enough drama for one evening, God knows what happened after I drove away, with Mr. Wonderful watching me from his front steps with the "I'll probably never see you again" eyes. In fact, that's exactly the text I got later that night: "Never see you again?"

I thought about it and realized I may be an introvert, but I don't mind a little drama here and there. You only live once, right?

I responded, "Never see you again, huh? I wouldn't be so sure about that."

Until next time,

XOXO

Brent Paxton is a writer, screenwriter and filmmaker living in Dallas. You can follow him on Facebook at Facebook.com/BrentPaxton, and contact him at bpax@outlook.com or 903-922-4988.
When someone asks you who your favorite gay band is, what do you usually answer? Culture Club? Indigo Girls? Queen (led by gay Freddie Mercury)? Fanny? Judas Priest (led by gay leather-clad Rob Halford)? R.E.M. (led by gay Michael Stipe)? The B-52’s? Smokey? Husker Du? Pet Shop Boys? The Murmurs? The Runaways? Erasure? These names only scratch the surface of musical groups featuring all (or mostly all) out members. The following are a few more current LGBTQ bands well worth your time and attention.

Led by the brilliant Stephin Merritt — himself a cross between Stephen Sondheim and David Sedaris — **The Magnetic Fields** have been making music as a band (in various formations) since the early 1990s. Merritt has talent to burn: He has released solo recordings and has composed film and theater scores and fronts other bands as well — among them, Future Bible Heroes, The Gothic Archies and The Sixths. The triple-disc set *69 Love Songs*, released in 1999, was one of The Magnetic Fields’ most ambitious and well-received projects. Merritt describes the equally impressive...
new five-disc set 50 Song Memoir (None-such) as his “autobiography in 50 songs,” one for each year of his life. Disc 1 covers ’66 through ’75, Disc 2 ’76 through ’85, and so on through 2015. As delightfully gay as ever, songs such as “Judy Garland” (Disc 1), “Why I Am Not a Teenager” (Disc 2), “Me and Fred and Dave and Ted” (Disc 3), “Lovers’ Lies” (Disc 4) and “You Can Never Go Back To New York” (Disc 5), are just a few of the welcome additions to The Magnetic Fields’ massive songbook.

At first, when you hear the amazing song “Living in the City,” the second track on The Navigator (ATO) by Hurray for the Riff Raff, you might think you were listening to a new Michelle Shocked album (minus the religious fanaticism and homophobia). But you’d be wrong. Like The Magnetic Fields, Hurray For the Riff Raff is the creation of one person — in this case, Alynda Segarra — working with several guest artists, including Yva Las Vegas. A folk/punk concept album masterpiece, it’s Woody Guthrie meets David Bowie, as pop as it is political. Thrilling and theatrical (“Pa’lante” sounds like an homage to Hedwig’s “Midnight Radio”), international and inspirational (“Rican Beach” and “Finale”) and undeniably powerful (“Hungry Ghost” and “Life to Save),” The Navigator will leave you cheering.

Returning with its first album since 2013’s Tales of Us, Goldfrapp, featuring queer lead vocalist Alison Goldfrapp, delivers the shiny Silver Tree (Mute). The 10 tracks effortlessly incorporate the band’s musical styles and directions. Goldfrapp’s dance-club heartbeat pulses throughout “Anymore.” “Everything Is Never Enough,” “Become The One” and, to a lesser degree, “Systemagic.” The synth experimentation for which Goldfrapp is known can be felt on “Moon in Your Mouth,” “Ocean” and “Tigerman.” The band’s warm chill-out side is represented by “Beast That Never Was” and “Faux Suede Drifter.”

About U (RCA) by queer female trio MUNA is a blast from the ‘80s past. From the vocoder on “Winterbreak” to the irresistibly persuasive dance energy of “Crying on the Bathroom Floor,” “End of Desire,” “Around U,” “I Know a Place” and “Loudspeaker.” Songs such as “So Special” and “Promise” sound like 21st-century updates of underrated queer Canadian band The Parachute Club (of “Rise Up” fame).

Born in L.A.’s “queer punk under-
ground,” French Vanilla is a feminist punk band that makes the best use of a saxophone and bassline since Romeo Void (of “Never Say Never” fame). The band’s self-titled Danger Collective Records debut channels the ‘80s through a modern lens and amplifier. French Vanilla pays homage to everyone’s favorite telekinetic in “Carrie” and “Anti-Aging Global Warming” (with its accept your days are...
While you wouldn’t necessarily call original cast recordings of Broadway musicals “queer music,” let’s face it: That’s the target audience. And we’re living in a mini-Golden Age of soundtracks to big stage musicals. It wasn’t always that way. Maybe Hamilton brought them back or The Book of Mormon, but you can get most musicals on CD, MP3 or streaming nowadays.

Of course, that doesn’t have anything to do with excellence. While composers Benj Pasek and Justin Paul continue to rack up awards not just for their Tony-winning stage hit Dear Evan Hansen but also for their movie musical La La Land, what about the rest of the crop of current B’way shows? Here’s our rundown for theater queens everywhere.

Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812 (Reprise). The other big new musical of the 2016–17 B’way season, this spirited adaptation of a portion of War and Peace is a dazzling piece of stagecraft when seen live, with actors dancing in the aisles (literally). But that also means the acoustics in a live theater can be challenging, and lyrics get lost. That’s the perk of having this disc to deliver hi-fi stereo sounds to your ears in the privacy of your car or through your headset at the gym. For many, a big part of the sonic appeal of this show is recording star Josh Groban — making his Broadway debut — offering his rich baritone to composer Dave Malloy’s rousing score, but Denée Benton as Natasha and Brittain Ashford as Sonya deliver some exquisite moments on memorable ballads. Don’t worry too much about following the storyline — just enjoy the ride.

Patti LuPone and Christine Ebersole double-down on divaness with “War Paint,” opposite, ‘The Great Comet’ recording gives listeners a more complete appreciation for the lyrics than live audience members get while the revival of “Falsettos” highlights William Finn’s clever lyrics.
**War Paint** (Ghostlight). The team responsible for the cult hit musical *Grey Gardens* — lyricist Michael Korie, composer Scott Frankel and book writer (and Dallas native) Doug Wright (plus director Michael Grief and co-star Christine Ebersole) — reunited for this feminist anthem, about two women who help make the 20th century what it was: pioneering cosmetic queens Helena Rubenstein (Patti LuPone), who had the chemistry background but a brusque, Eastern European hardness that made her less appealing to the ladies of the Upper East Side; and Elizabeth Arden (Ebersole), a packaging genius whose nouveau-riche-ness kept her away from the salons of the women she transformed. Onstage, LuPone’s powerhouse alto could overwhelm Ebersole’s more lyric mezzo, but the mix on the cast recording gives each equal appeal. The men in their lives don’t have songs that are as catchy, but Wright somehow manages to supply these two women — who never met in real life — with the structure to deliver three duets, which sound just as cheer-worthy on a disc as they do at the Nederlander Theater. This is diva central of the Broadway season. *A Bronx Tale: The New Musical* (Ghostlight). Whither the obsession with turning every old movie into a current Broadway musical? Chazz Palminteri’s big break was his one-man autobiographical show about life in the 1960s on Belmont Avenue. But the flash of a musical led him to adapt it into a sprawling show, with music by Alan Menken and lyrics by Glenn Slater … and what an unmitigated disaster it has become, at least as a show score. It doesn’t miss a single cliché on its romp through the mean streets of Noo Yawk — clichés only exacerbated by Slater’s lazy, inane lyrics (I counted nine times he used “kid” as the last word of a lyric) with painfully underdeveloped characters, frightful imagery and cringe-inducing rhymes. Menken’s score is better, but even he cribs from himself (detect motifs that echo *The Little Mermaid* and *Little Shop of Horrors*). This is a lesser work — *Jersey Boys* lite — that probably didn’t deserve a cast recording. *Hello, Dolly!* (Sony Masterworks). Of course, singing along to Carol Channing’s 1964 recording of the original Jerry Herman bombard was probably the moment most men of a certain age realized they were gay. But as much as we love Carol (and, for that matter, Pearl Bailey, who also did the role and recorded an album), when yer talkin’ gay icons, yer talkin’ Bette. Midler proved her can-you-hear-me-in-the-balcony? delivery in the stagy TV version of *Gypsy*, but she’s more character-driven here, as are Davie Hyde Pierce and Gavin Creel, among others. It’s the definitive old-school Broadway show and as close as you’ll get to an acceptable substitute to seeing La Midler live. **Falsettos** (Ghostlight). The original Broadway production of this show already won composer William Finn the Tony in 1992, when it first ran, but the limited-run revival this past winter birthed an all-new cast recording, which features some of the biggest stars of this century: Christian Borle, Andrew Rannells and Stephanie J. Block. They form part of a love triangle — really more of a dodecahedron — of gay men, ex-wives, lesbians next door and straight kids in this rondelet of coping with life and love in the world of HIV. The new two-disc set (the musical is really two one-act musicals, both sung-through) luxuriates in Finn’s witty wordplay (his tunes are more traditional) with standout acting-vocals that develop character and explore humor in the face of confusion and sadness. If you’re not familiar with the show, this is the time to get acquainted… or reacquainted. 

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**Hiraeth**, the new six-song EP by queer “indie Americana” duo The Harmaleighs (creative and personal partners Haley Grant and Kaylee Jesperson) is as soothing as a milk bath. The harmonies are gorgeous (“Diamond Ring” and the difficult “Birds of a Feather”) and the pair is not afraid to crank it up a bit when necessary (the subtle country-rock of “Mouthful of Cigarettes”).

— Gregg Shapiro

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**Tweens these days**

From diverse families to trans teens, it’s hit-or-miss time in children’s lit


Nine-year-old Sumac Lottery knew that her family was unique. It was no big deal, though; that’s what happens when a man from the Yukon and a man from India fall in love, and a Mohawk woman and a Jamaican woman fall in love, too. It’s what happens when there are seven kids, most of them from other “bios.”

It wasn’t always that way. When Maxi-Mum was giving birth to Sic 16 years ago, PapaDum and PopCorn were rubbing MaxiMum’s back when CardaMom found a winning lottery ticket that someone lost. They got lots of money, which allowed them to change their surnames and buy a big house for the big family that the four parents always wanted.

That all happened long before Sumac was born. And it might’ve stayed that way, too — 11 Lotterys (plus pets) in one big, rowdy, happy family — but then PopCorn got a call from the Yukon. His father had accidentally almost burned his house down, and he could no longer live by himself so the parents decided that Iain (PopCorn’s pop) should be moved into Camelottery. And because Sumac had a main-floor bedroom, she was asked to give it up and move her things to the Arctic (also known as the attic).

That was something she really didn’t want to do. She really didn’t want Grumps to come live at Camelottery at all because he was mean and nasty and racist and he hated everything and everyone. To be truthful, Sumac didn’t like him very much either, so she started to think up a plan.

*The Lotterys Plus One* is too: too messy, too cutesy, too padded with not-pertinent-to-the-story scenes, and — with a plethora of names (see above) — too confusing. It’s as if the acclaimed author Emma Donoghue tried too much to put an Age of Aquarius spin on what could have been a simple story of diversity and inclusion.

That’s quite the departure from Donoghue’s adult novels, which are tight, vivid and brimming with stunning plausibility; instead, this story is just plain weird, starting with character names that are new-agey and forced-clever. These same characters give funny-not-funny names to rooms (“Derriere” is — wait for it! — the backside of the house), and much of the dialogue consists of inside-jokes and preschooler misunderstandings (“Spare Oom.” Say it aloud). It’s as if Pippi Longstocking moved into a House of Wordplay, only not as charming and nowhere near as much fun.

At its very basic, this story — a large, diverse family welcomes an elderly relative — is solid, even good. It’s the peripherals that are hard to get past, and 8-to-12-year-olds may not have much patience for it. For sure, adults can spot *The Lotterys Plus One*, and move on.

*The Pants Project* by Cat Clarke (Sourcebooks 2017) $17; 272 pp.

The first day of middle school stinks to begin with, but it was worse for Liv. It wasn’t just the newness that bothered her. It wasn’t that Bankridge Middle School was bigger. The thing she dreaded was that the school had a dress code, which meant wearing a skirt.

Liv hadn’t worn a skirt in years. This was going to be horrible.

Admittedly, the first day didn’t kill her, though she learned fast that Bankridge had its share of Mean Girls. The boy she had to sit next to in home room, Jacob, was cool...
(she’d rather’ve sat with her best friend, Maisie). And P.E. class wasn’t bad, as long as Liv changed before everybody else got to the locker room.

Changing clothes in a crowd of loud girls made Liv uncomfortable. That’s because she knew she was transgender — a boy in a girl’s body. Being trans was the secret she wished she could tell somebody, but she was afraid. Her moms would probably understand but Liv wanted to wait, for many good reasons. She’d tell when the time was right; until then, she’d endure sixth grade.

Except life took a turn for the worse. Maisie started hanging with the Mean Girls, and she didn’t want to be Liv’s best friend anymore. Everybody started teasing Liv about having two moms. A family member got sick. And ugh! those skirts.

It wasn’t fair that Liv lost her best friend; or that Mean Girls bugged her, though she tried to ignore them; or that she couldn’t reveal the Secret. And it definitely wasn’t fair that boys didn’t have to wear skirts. Un. Fair. So Liv cooked up an audacious plan.

Without a doubt, The Pants Project is a good book, for kids or adults. It’s also a great reminder that adolescence is hard, kids are mean, support is key — and it’s all wrapped up in a wise, self-aware preteen you’ll enjoy meeting.

Indeed, Clarke gives readers a good peek inside the life of a kid who has things figured out… almost. Liv has a good understanding of her situation and is willing to carefully dip her toes into the coming-out pool, but that’s not the best part.

No, the appeal of this book is that every middle-schooler alive will recognize the perfectly-written supporting cast of characters here — Mean Girls, nerds, jocks, nice teachers, jerks — making it easy to sympathize with our hero and her situations.

Meant for readers ages 10-to-14, it could be fast and fun for an older kid; if your child needs a reminder to be herself, she’ll especially love it. She’ll start The Pants Project, in fact, and it’ll quickly grow on her. — Terri Schlichenmeyer

‘ANN,’ FRANKLY

Linda Leonard transforms into the firebrand guv

The current production of Ann, about firebrand Texas Gov. Ann Richards, begins with the actual video of her infamous keynote address at the 1988 Democratic National Convention. Then actress Linda Leonard walks onstage to take over, and I’ll be damned if there aren’t several moments (especially if you just listen) where you forget you’re watching a performance. Leonard manages the same folksy bite — a steel claw masked by a velvet glove, dripping in Texas honey — that made Richards iconic, whether you liked her or not.

The play itself has structural issues — it opens on a bare stage at a commencement address for an unknown college, transitions to a long stretch of one day inside the governor’s office, then goes back to the lecture — but the portrait it paints is pure Ann: Her feisty, foul-mouthed, not-always-correct, indecisive, exacting, troubled comic energy. I was never in a room with the woman in real life, but I feel like I was after this uncanny performance.

— Arnold Wayne Jones


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Friday 06.23 — Sunday 07.25

Danielle Georgiou's 'Donkey Beach' promises to kick ass

The Danielle Georgiou Dance Group isn't just a "dance group" at all. What they do is more meta-theater, combining music, spoken word and, of course, movement in creative and artistic ways — usually addressing issues like sex, identity and just having fun. And that's what you'll do at Donkey Beach, DGDG's newest show, set on magical sands with quirky characters and an enchanted donkey. This limited run will be performed as part of the Dallas Arts District's Elevator Series.

DEETS: Hamon Hall at the Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. $25. ATTPAC.org.

Thursday 06.29

Melissa Etheridge performs live at the Majestic

She's a Grammy winner, an Oscar winner, a hard-rocking guitar shero, but as much as anything, Melissa Etheridge is an icon for the gay community. Ever since coming out (at Bill Clinton’s first inauguration, no less), she's been a leader not just from the concert stage, but the political stage … and boy does she deliver live. She arrives for a one-night-only show at the Majestic this week. (And check out DallasVoice.com's InstanTea blog for our recent interview with her.)

DEETS: Majestic Theatre, 1925 Elm St. 8 p.m. ATTPAC.org.

Friday 06.24 — Sunday 07.23

Stage West hooks you up with ‘Sex with Strangers’

A man and woman with similar but wildly divergent careers — she's an unsuccessful but serious literary novelist, he's a fashion, widely-read relationship blogger — find themselves holed up in the same B&B alone. And the idea of a hookup intrigues them … but will this work out? Stage West continues its racy season with the aptly-titled Sex with Strangers. The company's artistic director, Dana Schultes, joins Jake Buchanan in this modern romantic comedy.

DEETS: Stage West, 821 W. Vickery Blvd., Fort Worth. StageWest.org
ARTSWEEK
THEATER
New Works Festival. Kitchen Dog Theater presents its annual festival of new plays, including student works and staged readings. The centerpiece production is *Br'er Cotton*. Trinity River Arts Center, 2600 Stemmons Freeway. Through July 1. KitchenDogTheater.org.


*Quixote*. Shakespeare Dallas continues its 2017 with this stage adaptation of Cervantes’ *Quixote*. Performed in rep with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Samuel Grand Amphitheater, 1500 Tenison Parkway. Through July 22. 8:15 p.m. curtain. ShakespeareDallas.org.

*Native Gardens*. Two neighboring couples get into a comic pissing match over a fence. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. WaterTowerTheatre.org.


*FAR*. A sketch comedy revue as part of the Tuesday Big Screens as part of the Tuesday Big Screen series at the Landmark’s Magnolia Theatre in the Uptown Theater, 120 E. Main St. Special guests and a good time. Landmark’s Magnolia Theatre in the Uptown. 8 p.m. until sold out. Visit Eventbrite for tickets.


*The Soul Gatherer*. Two neighboring couples get into a comic pissing match over a fence. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

*Mothers* & *Daughters*! A new cabaret series. Dallas Comedy House, 3025 Main St. 9 p.m. Saturday. Visit DCH.com for tickets.

*Drunkard*. A brief, endless love story in the tropics. Presented by North Texas Repertory. B&B at remote location in this comedy, presented by Dallas Comedy House, 3025 Main St. 9 p.m. Visit DallasComedyHouse.com.

*Sleepless in Seattle*. Presented by Dallas Comedy House, 3025 Main St. 9 p.m. Saturday. Visit DallasComedyHouse.com.

*The Soul Gatherer*. Two neighboring couples get into a comic pissing match over a fence. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. WaterTowerTheatre.org.


*Rhythm*. Presented by Dallas Comedy House, 3025 Main St. 9 p.m. Saturday. Visit DallasComedyHouse.com.


*Sundays*. Enjoy a Sunday cabaret at Dallas Comedy House, 3025 Main St. 9 p.m. Visit DallasComedyHouse.com.

*Upright Citizens League*. Friday. Presented by Dallas Comedy House, 3025 Main St. 9 p.m. Visit DallasComedyHouse.com.


*Elevator*. Presented by Dallas Comedy House, 3025 Main St. 9 p.m. Visit DallasComedyHouse.com.

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CABARET
Glitterbomb Denton.
Weekly queer variety show with a new lineup every Thursday. Mable Peabody's Beauty Parlor and Chain Saw Repair, 1125 E. University Drive, Denton. 9:30 p.m.

CONCERTS
Melissa Etheridge. The rocker performs. Majestic Theater, 1925 Elm St. 8 p.m. ATTPAC.org.

THEATER

To submit an item for inclusion in the Community Calendar, visit Tinyurl.com/dvevents.

Sue Birch, artistic director of Theatre Britain (far right), steps onto the stage for the first time since 'Vincent River' for the next show in the company’s final season, the farce 'Nobody's Perfect,' now performing in Plano. (Photo courtesy Michael C. Foster)
Hello, my lovelies! Run! Run for your lives! The oppressive heat of Texas summer is here, and it turns me into a recluse for most of the day. My vampire instincts take over in the cool darkness of my house. I hiss at the brightness of the day knowing I should endure a little sunshine to help build up some vitamin D. But the heat… the humidity… I can’t… I am… a heat pussy. And apparently a little dramatic.

Last week, I watched the reunion episode of this season’s RuPaul’s Drag Race. I love the show and have watched every episode. There is a young, beautiful Latina queen named Valentina that got folks on the social medias going crazy. Raquel, a fellow drag queen and personal friend, made a Facebook post about not liking Valentina, and people lost their damn minds. Raquel got called names and even received death threats over not liking a drag queen on a reality show. What the actual fuck?! What has this world come to?! If you disagree with someone and you feel you have to respond, then have a good ol’ debate about the subject. If some of y’all woulda been as passionate about this last election as you are over some queen on TV, then we wouldn’t be in the mess we are in right now.

I appreciate fans defending their favorites. Lord knows I love knowing I have fans who love me, who will argue for me and defend me if ever I need it. But threatening someone is ridiculous. Just because it seems that the world is tolerating bullying doesn’t mean that we have to do it. We as a community are better than that. Hiding behind a keyboard and saying awful things doesn’t make you look cool, it makes you an asshole. Argue, disagree, have a heated discussion… but show respect, please. We don’t all have to always agree, but we should strive for understanding. Oh and entertainers, if your fans are crossing a line in their defense of you, it’s on you to tell them to chill out. A true fan will respect your wishes. I know there will always be folks that wanna be mean, but we can choose to ignore them and move on.

Speaking of moving on, let’s take some callers.

Dearest Cassie, Hi — long time listener, first time caller. I am also a drag queen and wanted to get your advice on something. I was recently asked via Facebook to perform at a wedding for a cute little gay couple. I have been Facebook friends with one of the grooms for a few years, and I know they have been to a few of my shows, but I have never actually spoken to either of the grooms — my point being that we are not close friends. I asked how much they were going to pay me, and they seemed upset that I asked for payment. They proceeded to tell me it was an open bar, and they promised I would have a good time. Gurl, I’m kind of worked. What would you do in this situation? Signed, Help a sista out!

Sista Gurl, You should be worked. I would be. I may piss people off for saying this, but those grooms are cheap-asses! Look, drag queens do our fair share of benefit work — every queen I know will do a charity event at the drop of a hat. But a wedding is not a charity! It might be different if you were close friends with them; I am ordained and have been asked on numerous occasions to officiate for couples, but even my friends know to pay me if they want me at their function.

I was recently asked to do an event on a random Thursday afternoon at a big company. They wanted a funny drag queen, so someone gave the guy my name. We messaged back and forth a few times and I asked about payment. Pause. It took a while for him to get back to me on that one, then he asked if they could pay me with gift cards. I don’t know about you, but I can’t pay my bills with an Applebee’s gift certificate. I don’t think that people realize that for some of us lucky few, drag is our job. I wouldn’t ask you to do your job for free. So I said “no, thanks — I prefer cash or a check,” and a few days later, he informed me that they were “going in a different direction.” It bothers me that some people don’t see what we do as a job. Yes, it is fun, but drag is still a lot of work.

If you are good at what you do — and I am, toot-toot — you should get paid a decent wage for your services. I appreciate drag’s charitable roots. But if you are being asked to perform at a private function, you have every right to be paid.

I hate it when they ask “How much?” I never want to offend the person with some crazy amount, but I also don’t want to devalue myself. I usually ask what their budget for entertainment is and go from there. I take into consideration if I have to take off from a show or if I can still make it to my regular show after the function.

I am past the phase of being in drag just to be in drag. Drag is my livelihood. Anyone who wants a drag queen at their party just for the coolness factor… pay that bitch! For all the companies that want to be trendy and show how open-minded your company is… pay that queen! And just because you go out to the shows and tip a drag queen on a regular basis does not mean that queen wants to be at your party in full face, even if it is an open bar. So good luck Sista Gurl. Get your coins.

Speaking of paid bookings, years ago I was asked to perform at a bachelor party in The Colony. They paid me $250 and all I had to do was perform one number and hang out for about an hour. It started off being one of the most horrible experiences of my life — nothing but uncomfortable straight guys and a few catty bitches laughing at how awkward the whole situation was.

I brought my friend Lee so I would know at least one person there. The lady that booked me kept passing out shots, so by the time I did my song, everybody was feeling good. It ended up not being as bad as I thought, but that first hour there almost killed me. The other awkward thing was that I was dancing around their living room with giant hair and platform shoes and I kept hitting my hand on their ceiling fan. It was so weird. They literally just moved the coffee table so I would have a place to prance around. There were looks of disgust, confusion and a few guys loving every second of it. It was crazy, but I got paid!

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.
Just hanging out at Marty’s Live

Beary happy men on The Strip.

Making the **SCENE** the week of June 23–29:

- **Alexandre’s Blondtourage** on Friday. **Bad Habits** on Saturday. **Wayne Smith** on Sunday. **Walter Lee** on Tuesday. **Blanka** on Wednesday. **Chris Chism** on Thursday.

- **BJ’s NXS! New Years in June** with $1,000 in cash prizes, free champagne at midnight, two balloon drops — at midnight and 1 a.m. on Tuesday.

- **Club Changes: Imperial Court presents Pre-Independence Day Show benefiting Reign XXXVIII Charities** at 8 p.m. on Sunday.

- **Club Reflection: The Imperial Court presents an evening of TV theme songs benefiting HELP PrEP Clinic** at 8 p.m. on Saturday. **Trinity River Bears** meeting at 2:30 p.m. and cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday.

- **Dallas Eagle**: **Sir LT’s Bearlesque Brigade show and silent auction** from 6-10 p.m. on Friday. **United Court of the Lone Star Empire presents Diva Devo fundraiser for the Sharon St. Cyr Fund** from 6-10 p.m. on Saturday. **Texas Gay Rodeo Association presents Miss Firecracker** from 6-10 p.m. on Sunday.

- **JR.’s Bar & Grill: Cassie’s Freak Show** at 11 p.m. on Monday.

- **Kaliente: Voice of Pride** on Tuesday.

- **Mable Peabody’s: Celebrating Pride all weekend with Queeraoke** on Friday. **Omni Freak Dance** on Saturday and **free hotdogs and chips** at 4 p.m. on Sunday.

- **Marty’s Live: Aja from RuPaul’s Drag Race with special appearances by Nicole Ohara Munro, Bleach, Raquel Blake, Leyla Edwards and Mulan. Meet and greet** at 10 p.m. and show at 11 p.m. on Sunday.

- **Pekers: Linda Petty and the Main Event** at 7 p.m. on Friday.

- **Round-Up Saloon: Boys, Boots and Boxer Briefs** at 10 p.m. on Monday. **Mr. and Miss Round-Up 2017** at 10 p.m. on Thursday.

- **Sue Ellen’s: Ponder the Albatross** on Saturday. **Bella and Darla** at 3:30 p.m. followed by **Bad Habits** on Sunday. **Miss Golden Globe State and State at Large Preliminary — A Night of Black Magic** at 6 p.m. on Sunday.

- **The Rose Room: Mr. and Miss Texas Wessland 2017** at 10 p.m. on Thursday. $15 admission. $40 VIP.

Scene Photographers: **Kat Haygood** and **Chad Mantooth**
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