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- TEXAS NEWS
  8 BBBS welcomes LGBT bigs, littles
  10 Monument controversy in Dallas
  12 Wrapping up the special session

- LIFE+STYLE
  16 Peppermint comes to town
  18 Mercedes puts the hammer down
  20 Todrick on the Yellow Brick Road

- ON THE COVER
  Big Brothers couple Dennis & James Brandanese with Little Brother Roger. Photo by David Taffet. Design by Chuck Miller.

departments

- The Gay Agenda
- News
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Texas Stonewall Democrats: We are not affiliated with new activist group

Texas Stonewall Democrats officials on Wednesday, Aug. 16 issued a press release to clarify that their organization is not affiliated with a new activist organization called The New Stonewall Dallas.

According to the statement: “It has been brought to the attention of the Texas Stonewall Democratic Caucus Leadership that there is a new group (page) calling itself “The New Stonewall Dallas.” Apparently this is a new small activist group and is not a political “Democratic Party” organization. The Texas Stonewall Democratic Caucus would like to state that this group is NOT in any way affiliated with or a part of the Texas Stonewall Democratic Caucus or Stonewall Democrats, which is the only “officially recognized” LGBT Democratic organization by both the state and national Democratic Party.

While the name “Stonewall” is not copyrighted and anyone in the community is free to use the name, we want to make sure that there is absolutely no confusion between the two groups based on nomenclature. Unfortunately, the name that was chosen by this other group can initially give the impression that they may be somehow affiliated with Stonewall Democrats and this is NOT the case.” — Tammye Nash

Trans Chorus of Los Angeles at Interfaith Peace Chapel. (David Taffet/Dallas Voice)

Texas A&M cancels Nazi demonstration on campus

COLLEGE STATION — After consultation with law enforcement and considerable study, Texas A&M is canceling the event scheduled by Preston Wigiton on Pudder Plaza on Sept. 11 because of concerns about the safety of its students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Texas A&M changed its policy after December’s protests so that no outside individual or group could reserve campus facilities without the sponsorship of a university-sanctioned group.

Collegians and preferred gender-neutral “they” pronouns, according to reports online, including this one at PQR-Lesbian.com. Some reports indicate the injured person, who was taken to the hospital, was an adult male, but Dallas Voice has not yet been able to confirm the identity of that person or their relationship with Gwynevere.

According to Trans Pride Initiative President Neil Gaither, Song’s mother was very supportive of her child. The mother has scheduled a memorial service for Aug. 21. The Rev. Nell Gaither of Cathedral of Hope has been asked to officiate at the memorial.

Trans person murdered in Waxahachie

An Aug. 12 argument at a Waxahachie home left trans person Gwynevere River Song, 26, dead and a second person injured, according to a report in the Waxahachie Daily Light.

Dallas Voice has contacted the Ellis County Sheriff’s Office, which is investigating the murder, for information and will update this post as information becomes available.

Gwynevere identified as ‘femandrogynite’ and preferred gender-neutral “they” pronouns, according to reports online, including this one at PQR-Lesbian.com. Some reports indicate the injured person, who was taken to the hospital, was an adult male, but Dallas Voice has not yet been able to confirm the identity of that person or their relationship with Gwynevere.

According to Trans Pride Initiative President Neil Gaither, Song’s mother was very supportive of her child. The mother has scheduled a memorial service for Aug. 21. The Rev. Nell G. Cazares-Thomas of Cathedral of Hope has been asked to officiate at the memorial.

— David Taffet

— From a press release
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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 KNOM-FM; 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 C; Core Group Meeting every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.; Fuse game night every Monday evening except the last of the month at 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 email Jalenzski at 214-760-9718 ext. 3 or Jalenzski@myresoucercenter.org. LGBT square dancing group **Pegasus Squares** meets every Sunday from 2:30–4:30 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church, 4105 Junius St. For more info, email pegasussquares@gmail.com; Dallas Frontrunners meet for a walk or run on the Katy Trail at the Robert E. Lee statue in Lee Park every Wednesday at 7:15 p.m. and every Saturday at 9 a.m.; Leadership Lambda Toastmasters practices and develops speaking and leadership skills from 6:30–8 p.m. on Tuesdays at First Unitarian Church, third floor of the Hallman Building, 4012 St. Andrews; **Gray Pride** support group from 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. followed by mixer every Monday at Resource Center, 5750 Cedar Springs Road; **Lambda AA** meets at 7 a.m., noon, 6 p.m. 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. and has a men’s meeting at 10 a.m. on Saturdays and meets at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Sunday at 1575 W. Mockingbird Lane #625. Call 214-267-0222 for details; **DVTV in Spayse**, news and entertainment discussion live streaming every Friday, 4–5 p.m., on the Spayse Station YouTube channel.

**AUGUST**

- **Aug. 18: Federal Club Mixer** The DFW HRC Federal Club holds it August mixer at Wheelhouse, 1617 Hi-Line Drive, Ste. 390, 6-8 p.m. Admission is free but guests are asked to pre-register online at faucastlemixer2017.eventbrite.com.

- **Aug. 19: Hoot N’ Holler Gaybingo** Monthly fundraiser for Resource Center takes place from 6-9 p.m. at the Rose Room at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. 214-540-4458. MyResourceCenter.org/gaybingo.

- **Aug. 19: Dallas Against White-Supremacy** People who believe neo-Nazi terrorism has no place in the U.S. rally from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Confederate memorial in the cemetery between Dallas City Hall and the convention center, 1201 Marilla St. (See story Page 10)

- **Aug. 19: Car wash** Team ASD LifeWalk washes cars, trucks and SUVs to raise money for LifeWalk from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at BJ’s XS!, 3215 N. Fitzhugh Ave. For information check the Team ASD page at LifeWalk.org.

- **Aug. 19: GALA ally training** Wondering how to be an ally to the LGBT community at work, school or place of worship? The GALA Ally Committee is offering a free two-hour training from 9–11 a.m. at Celebrity Café & Bakery West Plano, 4709 West Parker Road Suite 450, Plano. RSVP to ashlee.howard@att.net.

- **Aug. 20: HRC DFW women’s event** The HRC DFW Federal Club hosts Women Celebrating Women Sunday Funday, for those ages 21 and older, from 2-5 p.m. at Lakewood Brewing Company, 2302 Executive Drive. Tickets are $20 in advance, available online at fccw2017.eventbrite.com, and $30 at the door, and include the chance to try different craft beers as well as mingling and celebrating with other women. For information email co-chairs@dfwderalclub.org.

- **Aug. 20: Pegasus Squares open house** LGBT square dancing group Pegasus Squares holds a free open house from 2:30–4:30 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church, 4105 Junius St. Meet us, watch and try it, and discover if square dancing is for you. For more info, email pegasussquares@gmail.com.

- **Aug. 20: Team Metro’s Taco Time** Team Metro, one of the teams raising funds for LifeWalk 2017, will host a Taco Time fundraiser from 2:30-6:30 p.m. at The Hidden Door, 5025 Bowser Ave. For information check the Team Metro page at LifeWalk.org.

- **Aug. 22: City Budget Town Hall** District 1 Councilman Scott Griggs, District 3 Councilman Casey Thomas and District 4 Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem Dwaine Caraway will hold a town hall to hear input on the proposed city budget for fiscal year 2017-2018 at 6 p.m. at Martin Weiss Recreation Center, 1111 Martinindell Ave. For information call 214-670-0776.

- **Aug. 22: Team LUV Give Back Day** Team LUV, one of the teams raising funds for LifeWalk 2017, hosts Give Back Day at Mi Camino restaurant, 3830 W. Northwest Highway, with 10 percent of sales that day benefitting Team LUV. Includes dine in, take out and catering to Southwest Airlines. For information check the Team LUV page at LifeWalk.org.

- **Aug. 24: Young Professionals Back-to-School event** the young Professionals Advisory council raises money for Youth First with DJ Brandon Moses from 6-8 p.m. at The Goss-Michael Foundation, 1305 Wycliff Ave. #120.

- **Aug. 24: City Budget Town Hall** District 1 Councilman Scott Griggs will hold a town hall to hear input on the proposed city budget for fiscal year 2017-2018 at 6 p.m. at Martin Weiss Recreation Center, 1111 Martinindell Ave. For information call 214-670-0776.

- **Aug. 25: BTD Sneak Peek** First glimpse at this year’s Black Tie Dinner from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Renaissance Hotel, 2222 N. Stemmons Freeway. $35.

- **Aug. 25: The 701 Club** Paul Williams presents a holy perspective on everything benefiting Cathedral of Hope. Church supper at 7 p.m., live broadcast at 8 p.m. and dessert reception at 9:30 p.m. at Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

- **Aug. 26: Hero of Hope award** Honoring Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings at Hilton Dallas Park Cities, 5954 Luther Lane.

- **Aug. 26: Transpose: The Transgender Project** Transpose is a film documentary that explores the extraordinary challenges and triumphs of transgender people as they transition from 4-6:30 p.m. at New Studio
Meet Clayton, a 3-year-old, black-and-white domestic shorthair mix. It takes him a while to trust new people, but if you’re willing to be patient, he’ll warm up to you. His favorite thing in the world is a long, luxurious nap in a comfy cat bed, and he’d like a quiet, relaxed home environment where there are lots of soft places to sit. It might also be nice to have another confident and calm kitty around who will let him snuggle up when he gets nervous. Clayton has been neutered, microchipped, tested negative for FIV/FeLV and has received all age-appropriate vaccinations. Come let him give your hand a good sniff to see if you’ll be a great fit! #154580

Clayton is waiting for you at the SPCA of Texas’ Jan Rees-Jones Animal Care Center in Dallas, 2400 Lone Star Drive, near I-30 and Hampton Road. Hours are noon-6 p.m. Sun-Wed and noon-7 p.m. Thurs-Sat. All adoptions of dogs and cats are $25 or $250 for puppies, $75 for adult dogs 6 months or older and $75 for adult cats 6 months or older and $75 for senior dogs or cats 7 years or older and VIP dogs and cats (available for adoption for 30 days or more.) Fee includes spay/neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, a heartworm test for dogs six months and older and a FIV/FeLV test for cats 4 months and older, initial flea/tick preventative and heartworm preventative, a microchipping, tested negative for FIV/FeLV and has received all age-appropriate vaccinations. Come let him give your hand a good sniff to see if you’ll be a great fit! #154580


• Aug. 26: Anniversary of the 19th Amendment
Women won the right to vote on Aug. 26, 1920. International Women’s Day dallas and the Dallas women’s Coalition honor The women Who Paved the Way for Us from noon-2:30 p.m. at the Bath House cultural Center. $5 and a pot of chili, a bowl of cut up watermelon or a platter of brownies, cookies or baklava.

• Aug. 27: Pegasus Squares open house
LGBT square dancing group Pegasus Squares holds a free open house from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Grace United Methodist Church, Come m 4105 Junius St. Meet us, watch and try it, and discover if square dancing is for you. For more info, email pegasusquases@gmail.com.

• Aug. 27: Hero of Hope award presentation
Mayor Mike Rawlings speaks at Cathedral of Hope after receiving the Hero of Hope Award at 11 a.m. at Cathedral of Hope UCC, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

• Aug. 27: Team Clover Open
Team Clover, a team raising funds for LifeWalk 2017 hosts the Clover Open, a pub crawl including putt-putt golf, beginning with check-in from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at The Round-Up Saloon, 3912 Cedar Springs Road. For details and to register, check the Team Clover Open page at LifeWalk.org.

• Aug. 28: City Budget Town Hall
District 1 Councilman Scott Griggs and District 14 Councilman Philip Kingston will hold a town hall to hear input on the proposed city budget for fiscal year 2017-2018 at 6 p.m. at Dallas City Performance Hall, 2520 Flora St. For information call 214-670-0776.

• Aug. 28: LGBT youth homelessness
Youth activist Mayra Fierro and Zach Bartush of Promise House speak at 7 p.m. at Chino Chinatown at Trinity Grove. School supply drive from 6:30-9 p.m.

• Aug. 29: Grief support group
Grief support group for LGBT people who have lost a same-sex partner or spouse meets from 6:45-8 p.m. in the conference room at Oak Lawn Library, 4100 Cedar Springs Road.

• Aug. 29: Hero of Hope award presentation
Mayor Mike Rawlings speaks at Cathedral of Hope after receiving the Hero of Hope Award at 11 a.m. at Cathedral of Hope UCC, 5910 Cedar Springs Road.

• Aug. 29: HIV 101
Prism Health North Texas hosts “HIV 101: You Don’t Know What You Don’t Know,” with class and meal provided by Gilead, from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Meadows Conference Center, 2900 Live Oak St. For information call 214-521-5191.

SEPTEMBER

• Sept. 1-3: Riverfront Jazz Festival
Three days, three venues, one weekend of jazz, R&B, soul and blues. More than 30 major acts including Martha Wash, Jon Secada, Freda Payne and Erykah Badu at Texas Horse Park, 811 Pemberton Hill Road. Tickets at 214-743-2400. TbaalRiverfrontJazzFestival.org.

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Roger was 5 when his dad died. When Amy Jahnel, Roger’s mom, joined a grief support group, the group leader suggested she look for a mentor for Roger through Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Dennis and James Bradanese had decided to volunteer with BBBS through its Big Couple program. But other parents turned the couple down as potential “bigs” for their children. As far as Roger and his mother, that was good luck.

“God bless their ignorance,” Amy said about the parents that turned down the Bradaneses. “They [her son and the couple] clicked the moment they met.”

Amy said it took almost nine months after she and her son entered the BBBS program before the Bradaneses came into their lives. But now, after nine years together, they’re like family.

Amy recalled the day her son met his Big Couple. He drew them a picture that they still have, and they played video games together. She said over the years, the couple has taken Roger to theater, and they’ve gone to sporting events. They’ve been to Boy Scout meetings and shown up for dads days.

In fact, soon after the Bradaneses came into his life, Roger was upset because it was dads night at his school. All the kids would be there with their fathers. Amy called the couple at the last minute. They were on their way to Fort Worth where they had theater tickets.

But, she recalled, “They turned their car around and went to the father/son event” instead.

Amy said she’s thrilled with any time the Bradaneses spend with her son. They taught him to ride a bike. They took him horseback riding for the first time. Now that he plays varsity football, they go to his games.

“They’re very important to him,” she said. James had a big brother for a couple of years when he was a kid, and now, he has been an elementary school teacher for 14 years. So “Mentoring is something I’ve always been interested in,” he said.

When the couple discussed Big Brothers, Dennis thought it would just be something his husband would do. Then he learned he’d have to go through the screening process whether or not he participated, and they learned they could participate together as a big couple.

While BBBS is looking for a one-year commitment, these particular bigs assumed their commitment would last until their little turned 18.

Roger remembers when he met his big and described how their relationship has evolved.

“Back then, we did fun things I was interested in — movies, horseback riding, ice skating, my first Cowboys game,” he said. “We hit it off the first day. I played video games for hours with James.”

He said he knew from their first visit that these would be people who were going to be in his life for a long time.

“We slowly got closer and closer,” he said. “I could talk to them about stuff from the beginning.”

His mother said she’s heard him discuss things on the phone with the guys a number of times. He agreed but couldn’t be specific.

“Anything going on in my life,” he said of the topics of their discussions. “School. Anything I didn’t want to talk to my mom about.”

Dennis is proud of how they’ve helped Roger broaden his interests. Before becoming a varsity football player last year, Roger was involved in theater. Dennis takes credit for that.

For four years, Roger got a scholarship to go to camp in Colorado. He described it as a “rich kids camp” where he was completely unplugged for a month.

“Dennis and James came up for parents weekend,” Roger said.

Before that, they visited him at Boy Scout camp in West Virginia.

Dennis said they usually do things with Roger together, although sometimes BBBS gets them tickets and it’s only for two. James added that occasionally over the years, one or the other had another commitment so just one of them spent time with Roger.

As Roger enters his junior year in high school and has gotten his drivers license, they don’t always see each other for regular activities as often, but they text and phone often.

“He’s just a part of our lives,” James said, adding that he wants potential bigs to understand one thing about having a little: “We get as much out of it as he does. When we went ice skating, it was my first time too.”

But they’ve all gained something much deeper from the experience.

“Knowing I’ve made a difference,” James said when asked what means the most to him about the experience.
“All of my co-workers know about Roger,” Dennis added. “I can’t wait to see what he becomes. He’s wicked smart and friendly.”

Just as the fact that his bigs are a same-sex couple has never been an issue to Roger, it’s never been an issue to the BBBS organization, either. If anything, the couple has been held up as role models for other bigs and were even once named Big Couple of the Year. They said the organization is looking for more LGBT people to be bigs and that it’s something parents should welcome.

“They want parents to know if their child is struggling, they’ll accept anyone,” James said.

And what do they expect of Roger in the future?

“I could see Roger becoming a big,” Dennis said.

BBBS says welcome

“Each scenario is different,” said Michael O’Teter, chief program officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star, the DFW affiliate. O’Teter, who is gay, wants to dispel any notion that LGBT volunteers are unwelcome in his organization.

LGBT inclusion passed into the organization’s national standards in 2002. Now, BBBS has started an LGBT initiative.

“We serve children who are at risk,” said Pam Iorio, national CEO of BBBS. “LGBTQ children have challenges — higher rates of drug use, drinking, smoking. We’re intentionally reaching out to this community.”

To create the best program possible, they’re working with Human Rights Campaign to tap into its expertise. Iorio said they’ve created a program they piloted in 10 sites and are now rolling out across the country.

While Dallas wasn’t one of those original cities, O’Teter didn’t wait to try some of the ideas from the pilot program. He reached out to Kat Ralph, facilitator of OUTreach Denton, an LGBT youth group that meets at Denton Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

About 22 youth attend OUTreach each week.

“A lot of kids come in just once,” Ralph said. “Many of them don’t thrive in large groups. Some kids need one-on-one contact.”

She said a large number of those who come to OUTreach Denton are foster children or come from one-parent families, and while there is often a stigma about LGBT people working with youth, Ralph said that working with O’Teter, she’s learned that’s not the position of BBBS.

The BBBS attitude, Ralph said, is “Hey, we want you.’ Big Brothers/Big Sisters has been welcoming you for years.” Iorio agreed: “We’re all about acceptance.”

She said all the organization is looking for is people who can be stable, caring role-models.

As more young people have become comfortable expressing who they are at a younger age, the organization began including LGBT training for all bigs.

“When a little expresses who they are, we have to make sure the big is trained,” she said.

O’Teter said locally he’s looking for healthy adults who will provide healthy influences on kids’ lives. That includes people of different sexual orientations, races, faiths and gender identities.

Safety is a top priority. Every big goes through a lengthy interview, rigorous background screening and reference checks as well as thorough training. “We put every volunteer through the ringer,” O’Teter said.

But the Bradaneses described the process as simple. Although Roger knew, the cou-
Honoring the losers?

The national debate about removing Confederate memorials comes to Dallas

The issue of memorializing the losing side of a civil war with monuments to its treasonous leaders has simmered for years. But as Nazis gathered in Charlottesville, Va., last weekend to defend these symbols of racism — shouting anti-gay, anti-black, anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant slogans and with one Nazi slamming his car into a group of counter-protesters, killing one and injuring 19 — the issue has come to a boiling point.

The events in Charlotte brought debate to the forefront in Dallas, and a rally is set for Saturday evening near one of the city’s monuments.

In Dallas, we have two problematic Confederate monuments. One stands on the edge of an historic cemetery at an entrance to the Dallas Convention Center. The other is in Lee Park in Oak Lawn.

The Confederate memorial at the Dallas Convention Center was erected in 1896, 32 years after the end of the Civil War. It is the oldest public sculpture in the city. Originally located at Old City Park, it was moved to its current location in 1961, when construction on I-30 through downtown began.

The first piece of the convention center, Dallas Memorial Auditorium, was built in 1957, and the monument would have been about a block away at the time. Now it stands at an entrance to the facility.

In 1936, 72 years after the end of the Civil War, Oak Lawn Park was renamed Lee Park. A statue of Robert E. Lee was installed, and a two-thirds size replica of his home, Arlington Hall, was built.

In 1995, a public-private partnership was formed to manage Lee Park that included the Dallas Tavern Guild, the Oak Lawn Committee and Turtle Creek Association among others, including the Dallas Southern Memorial Association that commissioned and placed the statue in 1936 and was affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan at the time the statue was installed.

Mayor Mike Rawlings held a press conference on Tuesday, Aug. 15, to weigh in on the issue of whether those monuments should be removed from public display. While not directly calling for the immediate removal of the monuments, he did describe them as “problematic.”

“It’s easy to jump on the bandwagon to tear them down,” he said. “I hesitate. We’re better and stronger when not divided.”

Rawlings called for a task force to study the issue and report back to the city council in 90 days.

But Councilman Philip Kingston gathered five signatures to force the issue onto the Dallas City Council’s agenda.

“The council needs to voice its strong disapproval,” he said to send the task force a clear message of where the council stands.

Councilman Omar Narvaez said about the monuments, “What they mean today is what’s important.” And today, they’re a rallying cry for white supremacists.

One idea floated was to move the monuments elsewhere, but both councilmen made it clear that place shouldn’t be public property nor should they be maintained with public funds.

Rawlings asked Mary Pat Higgins, director of the Dallas Holocaust Museum Center for Education and Tolerance, to be part of the discussion.

Higgins said her participation was very new, and she wasn’t sure what her role was going to be. But she said she imagines the Holocaust Museum would be a source of education and reconciliation for the community.

One reporter at the press conference asked if the Holocaust Museum might be the place to move the monuments. But just the dimensions of the statues precluded them from even fitting in the building.

The Rev. Eric Folkerth, pastor of Northaven United Methodist Church, said he was disappointed the mayor didn’t clearly come out in favor of removal. “An issue like this calls for moral leadership,” he said. “That doesn’t preclude conversation, but leaders lead from their convictions.”

Folkerth said by not clearly laying out his position, the mayor could be creating a situation he wants to avoid. The conversation could easily devolve, he said.

“If Saturday [in Charlottesville] proved nothing else, it proved these monuments are revered by white supremacists,” Folkerth said. “As a white person whose relatives fought for the Confederacy, I am offended by that. I want my mayor and council to say the same.”

The Rev. Neil Cazares-Thomas, senior pastor of Cathedral of Hope, was born in England and views the issue from a European standpoint. He compared it to when Germany tore down the Berlin Wall and pieces were disseminated around the world.

Going back a generation farther in German history, he said Germany distances itself from Hitler and the Nazi period: There are no monuments to that dark era to be found in that country — or others.

“These are not monuments to heroes,” said divinity student Todd Whitley. “They’re monuments to the losing side.” He said people claim they feel as if they’re losing their identity, but he added, they say...
they’re “upholding history, but that’s code for what’s evil.”

While rallying around these Civil War monuments, the white supremacists were chanting anti-Muslim, anti-Jewish and anti-LGBT as well as racist slogans. “Nothing historical about their rants,” Whitley noted.

Confederate monument at Pioneer Park

The Confederate monument was moved to the edge of the cemetery at Pioneer Park in 1961 before the main Dallas Convention Center was built. However, today it welcomes people as they enter the facility.

Pioneer Park is made up of four adjoining cemeteries that had all become city property by 1969. One was a Jewish cemetery, and the bodies from there were moved to the current Temple Emanu-el Cemetery on Lemmon Avenue at Central Expressway. The longhorn statues are situated partially on that portion of the park.

Some of the first burials in Dallas took place in areas of Pioneer Park that remain a cemetery. The gravestones highlight the city’s pioneering families with names such as Stemmons, Peak, Akard, Good, Latimer and Marsalis. But historical markers, mostly placed in the 1990s, highlight only those who served in the Confederacy.

For example, Trezevant Calhoun Hawpe was elected sheriff in 1850 and served two terms. In 1862, he organized and was first colonel in the 31st Texas Cavalry, and he is credited with winning the battle of Newtonia for the South. In 1863, he was stabbed to death by a friend on the county courthouse steps. Stand by his headstone and you’ll likely feel the earth churning as he rolls over in his grave knowing who his current successor is.

Barton Warren Stone was a farmer who originally opposed Texas secession but then organized and commanded two Texas cavalry regiments for the Confederacy. And John McClannahan Crockett was mayor of Dallas and then lieutenant governor of Texas during the Confederacy.

But those whose names we remember on our streets? Not a word about their contributions to the city from those same historians who chose to memorialize Confederate leaders.

Lee Park

More than just the statue of Robert E. Lee overlooking Turtle Creek is dedicated to the Confederate general. Arlington Hall is a replica of Lee’s home in Virginia and is part of the memorial to the Confederate general. While Arlington Hall stands as a monument to Lee, nowhere in the park is there an acknowledgment that the original plantation house was built and maintained by slaves.

In 1995, a coalition of community groups joined together to form the Lee Park Conservancy, and renovation and expansion of Arlington Hall was accomplished with private funds.

Among the groups that formed the conservancy was Dallas Tavern Guild, the LGBT bar owners. According to Tavern Guild’s Executive Director Michael Doughman, the Tavern Guild has nothing to do with the operation of the park anymore. A few years ago, they replanted the Alan Ross memorial AIDS garden in the park, but any other connection ended when the Pride festival moved to Reverchon Park over space issues.

The Dallas Parks Department still provides maintenance service for the park, but doesn’t oversee the operation. The Lee Park Conservancy does.

While the city discusses removing monuments, some have suggested a simple first step in removing Confederate memorials would be to revert to the park’s original name — Oak Lawn Park.

And at the Capitol

Meanwhile, Confederate monuments remain standing around the state, including at the state Capitol. This week, state Rep. Eric Johnson, D-Dallas, sent a request to Texas State Preservation Board to remove a particularly offending plaque and other monuments at the Legislature. And, he said, if a second special session is held, he’ll file a resolution demanding their removal.

“I will be introducing a resolution to have this and all other such historically inaccurate and offensive Confederate iconography removed from the Texas Capitol and its grounds,” Johnson wrote. “It sure is great not having to check with any owners or handlers before I make a decision.”

The plaque Johnson is referring to was placed in the Capitol in 1959 by a group called Children of the Confederacy. Among the goals of the group, the plaque claims, is “to study and teach the truths of history (one of the most important of which is, that the war between the states was not a rebellion, nor was its underlying cause to sustain slavery).”
More abortion restrictions among nine items signed by governor

JAMES RUSSELL | Contributing Writer
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The Texas Legislature ended its special session on Tuesday, August 15, one day ahead of schedule, after passing only nine of the 20 legislative priorities Gov. Greg Abbott put on the agenda when announcing the session.

Among the bills that failed was the so-called “bathroom bill,” which would have prohibited transgender men and women from using appropriate public restroom facilities and, in some versions, would have rolled back local nondiscrimination ordinances.

The bathroom bill by Sen. Lois Kolkhorst, R-Brenham, and Rep. Ron Simmons, R-Carrolton, passed in the Senate but did not even get a hearing in the House (the same bill during regular session passed easily in the Senate but never came to a vote in the House). Its defeat came after a year-long campaign against the legislation by corporations, the business community and activist groups. House Speaker Joe Straus has consistently opposed the bill since it was first-filed during the regular session.

Numerous business groups celebrated the bill’s demise after the special session was declared sine die, the formal term for the end of a session.

“VisitDallas and the convention and visitors bureaus across Texas are proud of our efforts to defeat the bathroom legislation in Texas. We will always fight to protect the Texas brand and to keep the Texas economy thriving,” said VisitDallas President and CEO Phillip Jones in a statement. “Our broad-based Texas Welcomes All and Keep Texas Open for Business coalition campaign to defeat the discriminatory and unnecessary bathroom bill is consistent with our fundamental belief that a stronger Texas is grounded in policies and laws that foster an open, welcoming and business-friendly state for businesses, their employees and their families.”

Kathy Miller, president of Texas Freedom Network, said, “The failure of a ridiculous bathroom bill shows that business, faith leaders and everyday Texans can come together to stop politicians obsessed with singling out and discriminating against vulnerable people simply because of who they are.”

But other harmful bills, including those limiting access to reproductive health, still passed.

“The reality is our state’s elected leaders for the past eight months have treated the civil liberties of LGBT people, women and immigrants as negotiable at best and irrelevant at worst. We now have even more unnecessary anti-abortion laws that limit the ability of women to make their own decisions about whether and when to have children,” Miller said.

Among those bills were bills banning private insurance from covering abortions, enhanced reporting requirements by doctors when an accident occurs during an abortion and requiring doctors to obtain explicit patient or caregiver consent before issuing do-not-resuscitate orders.


“Most Texans can breathe a sigh of relief, now that Gov. Abbott’s radical special session has come to an end,” Blanco said, echoing the comments of other Democrats. “Instead of focusing on meaningful policies that matter to working families, our economy, or communities, Gov. Abbott decided to pander to the extreme-right at the expense of everyday taxpayers.”

After sine die, Abbott threatened to call legislators back for a second special session to take up another one of his priorities: property tax reform. A last-minute deal to cap property tax hikes without elections fell apart between the House and Senate.

The bill previously died in the regular session in the face of resistance from counties and other municipalities.

If he does not call them back for taking up property taxes, Abbott may have to call another special session anyway. That’s in part because of a unanimous court decision this week that two of Texas’ congressional districts are unconstitutional. If the court does not draw the maps, the legislature will need to reconvene to redraw them.

Legislators will know as soon as Friday, Aug. 19, if they will return for another session.

How the bathroom bill came undone

PAUL J. WEBER | Associated Press
Twitter.com/PaulJWeber

Looking to North Carolina

The main version of the Texas bill would have required transgender people to use public bathrooms that correspond with the sex on their birth certificate. It was similar to the law North Carolina passed in 2016 but then partially repealed in the wake of political and economic backlash, including the NCAA canceling tournaments and voters booting the Republican governor from office.

That upheaval deterred most GOP governors in the country from pursuing copycat measures. Abbott was publicly noncommittal about a Texas bill at first but ultimately joined with influential social conservative groups and Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, a popular firebrand who is seen as a potential political rival.

Republican supporters dismissed the fallout in North Carolina as overhyped and argued that Texas needed a bill for privacy and safety protections. Police chiefs from Texas’ largest cities, including Houston and San Antonio, say they have not found examples of restroom-related sexual assault and argued that the bill would make Texas more dangerous by emboldening discrimination.

Big business opposition

Just like in North Carolina, some of the world’s biggest companies came out against the Texas bill, including Apple and Amazon. Even big oil joined the fight by

Special session agenda items

- Sunset legislation: Passed
- Teacher retirement benefits: Passed
- Teacher pay increase: Failed
- School finance reform: Passed
- “Private school choice” for kids with disabilities: Failed
- Property tax reform: Failed
- Caps on state government spending: Failed
- Caps on local government spending: Failed
- Limits on local tree regulations: Passed
- Expediting local government permitting: Failed
- Preventing local rule changes on already acquired properties: Failed
- Texting while driving local pre-emption: Failed
- Transgender bathroom bill, nondiscrimination ordinance pre-emption: Passed
- Union dues deduction: Failed
- Taxpayer funding for abortion ban: Failed
- Abortion insurance: Passed
- Abortion reporting: Passed
- Do-not-resuscitate protections: Passed
- Mail-in ballot fraud: Passed
- Maternal mortality Task Force continuation: Passed
- Municipal annexation reform: Passed

Here’s how the bathroom bill came undone:
summer, with top Exxon Mobil and Shell executives saying the bill would harm Texas’ reputation and negatively impact economic growth.

Senate Republicans, who twice passed the bill, have brushed off predictions that Texas would lose jobs or Super Bowl bids. But House Republicans, whose leaders are more moderate, have heeded those warnings and stalled the bill at every turn.

Republican House Speaker Joe Straus has grown increasingly vocal in his rejection of putting bathroom restrictions on transgender people and has not allowed a vote on the Senate version.

Near the end of the regular legislative session in May, the House passed a watered-down measure that would have applied only to schools, but it was rejected by the Senate as not going far enough.

The deadlock laid bare the escalating GOP infighting in Texas between ascendant social conservatives and business moderates whose numbers and influence have waned with the rise of the Tea Party. But on bathroom restrictions, the House hasn’t budged.

**One more try**

In dragging lawmakers back to the Texas Capitol to try again this summer, Abbott endorsed a proposal that stopped short of requiring people to use the bathroom that correspond with the sex on their birth certificate but would roll back transgender protections in major Texas cities.

But the House has again stood firm and refused to grant even a hearing. The Senate gavelled out around 10 p.m. Tuesday, meaning the Texas Legislature adjourned its special session a day early.

Supporters say they’re not giving up, but given the legislative roadblocks, the battle is now likely to shift outside the Capitol and into the 2018 elections.

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It is imperative that people of conscience stand together against the evil that marched in Charlottesville.

I believe we have reached a turning point in this country.

I have been thinking a lot over the past week about that iconic video from April 2003 that shows U.S. troops stepping in to help Iraqi citizens topple a statue of despotism — and by that time, overthrown — leader Saddam Hussein in Firdos Square in Baghdad.

I was reminded, most vividly, of that moment as I watched a video of a crowd tearing down the Confederate Soldiers Monument at the Old Durham County Courthouse in Durham, N.C., on Monday, Aug. 14. I wondered what those Iraqis in that 2003 video would say if somebody came along and told them, “No, leave that statue up. It represents part of our history; it’s part of our heritage.”

I don’t think those Iraqis would be swayed by that argument. And I wonder why so many Americans are swayed by that same argument when it comes to the monuments to the Confederacy and those who fought for that still stand across the South.

I’m also wondering why it is so many people are having a hard time condemning the Nazis who marched last weekend in Charlottesville, Va. I mean, white people (mostly men) marching through the streets, chanting hateful things about Jews and people of color (and yes, LGBT people, too) as they waved around Confederate battle flags and Nazi banners bearing swastikas and snapped off a “siege, heil” salute here and there … . One of them even killed a woman and injured several others when he drove his car into a peaceful crowd of counter-protesters.

Seriously, what’s not to condemn?

And yet, so many feel compelled to defend these fine, upstanding sons (and some daughters) of the South. “They’ve got the right to free speech.” “They’re just defending their heritage.”

Sure … except, no.

Yes, we here in America do have the First Amendment, which guarantees that we are entitled to free speech. But it does not say that we are free to say what-the-hell-ever we want, when-the-hell-ever we want. The First Amendment does not protect obscenity, fighting words, defamation, child pornography, perjury, blackmail, incitement to lawlessness, true threats or solicitations to commit crime.

I can guarantee you that many — if not the waaay vast majority — of the Nazis (white supremacists, fascists, alt-righters, whatever you wanna call them) were spouting speech that falls into at least one of those categories. I know, because I heard them.

See, there’s another video making the rounds this week. It’s a 22-minute documentary-style piece by Elle Reeve and her crew from Vice News Tonight. Reeve and her crew embedded themselves with the Nazis last weekend, interviewing them on
The power in a symbol

It was a pink triangle, a simple piece of cloth sewed to the pocket of an overcoat. A symbol that declared the man wearing it was a pariah, sub-human, worthy only of scorn and derision.

He received much the same treatment as those forced to wear two yellow triangles forming a Star of David. He also had a tattoo, a number on his forearm that was now his identity until he and the rest of those wearing those symbols were erased from the face of the earth. Symbols are powerful things.

When I first came out, my first outward statement was to wear a lapel pin in the shape of a pink triangle. I wore it not because I considered myself a pariah, but because I was refusing to let the world forget what it once meant, and to take back the power to oppress that symbol once had.

After all, symbols only have power if we give it to them. So what does this have to do with anything? Well, right now there are Americans waging symbols of oppression and inhumanity and claiming they are doing it to “take our country back.” I want to know, what is the face of the earth.

Symbols still hold terrible power, and it’s time we retired a few of them for good.

The stars and bars flag, like the swastika, belongs in a museum, not on the streets of America. The foolish men and women shouting the only words of German they know and screams insults at people of color, gays, lesbians, and Jews are really insinuating their own ancestors. They take those who died to give them their freedom and defecate on their graves.

Strong symbolism? Absolutely, but it is intended to make it clear that symbols can have tremendous power and should be used with care.

The swastika and the Confederate Battle Flag and other emblems like them are symbols of the oppressor, not the oppressed, and as such they are beyond reclaiming. The fact that hate-filled fools are still waving them as they riot in the streets is ample proof.

Worse still is an insane marketing attempt to create a “rainbow swastika” line of clothing! When I saw this travesty in a Facebook post, I actually said out loud: “What were they thinking?”

The fact that this idea even came up shows we do little to educate our country about the horrors of wars and the hubris of those who start them. I have no doubt that our current resident in the White House has given those who do not know their history tacit permission to expose their ignorance and hatred and call it “alt right.” It’s not “alt” and it’s not “right.” It’s just plain-old garden variety hate.

They wave their flags and carry their garden torches and scream to the cameras to show the world how little they understand — a parade of ignorance fueled by a blind hatred — and they are dangerous. We cannot afford to ignore them, nor can we be bullied by them.

We must stand with our fellow Americans — black Americans, brown Americans, gay Americans, lesbian Americans, transgender Americans, bisexual Americans, native Americans. We must stand with Americans of every ethnicity and ancestry, of every religion or of no religion at all. We must stand together and say, “Put down those swastikas. Put down those battle flags. Lay aside your hatred and come to your senses.”

Our forefathers fought and won this battle already, let us not ignore their sacrifices. Our nation was forged in battle, but it does not need to be at war with itself anymore. We have better things to do; we have greater achievements yet to make. We have a brighter future ahead.

But to reach it, we must lay aside those symbols that inflame and terrorize.

I watched it. It literally made me sick to my stomach. I listened to the vile, evil things they said. I watched while they showed off the weaponry — firearms and knives and clubs — with which they had armed themselves for their “peaceful” march. I heard them threaten to kill people who dared stand up to them and I heard them applaud the murderer who attacked people with his car.

I watched them. I listened to them. I felt my disgust — and my blood pressure — rise.

And to hear Donald Trump — the president of the United States, for Christ’s sake! — defend those people and claim there were some fine folks in that crowd, that made me even sicker. I wonder if Trump watched the Vice News video — or any actual coverage of Nazi rallies and marches in Charlottesville last weekend — before he took his belligerent bully self before the TV cameras for his temper-tantrum of a press conference and defended about those fine folks waving swastikas and giving Nazi salutes.

This is what our country has come to. Appalled is way too mild a word to describe my state of mind.

The time has come, it is absolutely imperative, that the people of conscience in this country come together and stand up, stand firm and speak out against this hatred — no, this evil — that has risen up and shown its ugly face so plainly in the last week.

This is not an issue of political partisanship. We can’t just point at one party and blame everything on them. Not all Republicans are evil racists just because the Republican president is an evil racist.

That is simplistic and, ultimately, unhelpful, and it gives each of us who aren’t Republicans too much of a pass. We all have to take a long, hard, honest look at ourselves, our temper-tantrum of a press conference and defend about those fine folks waving swastikas and giving Nazi salutes.

Until we confront our personal truth, we cannot effectively fight for the greater “truth.”

And this isn’t about skin color or ethnicity or country of origin. We cannot let ourselves be divided along those artificial lines. Are we all different people, with different beliefs and different cultures and different backgrounds? Yes, we are. But are we all part of the human race, equals in humanity? Yes. And that is where we must focus right now.

We can’t play word games about “heritage” and “history” and “tolerance” and such. And we can’t pretend that the Confederate monuments the Nazis claimed they were marching to protect are anything more than an homage to and a celebration of a time in our history and a system of business and government that were based on the oppression of a whole race of people.

Are these monuments a representation of a piece of history that should be preserved? Yes, but it wasn’t a part of our history to be celebrated and these monuments should only be preserved in context. And “in context” does not mean on display in our public parks and at government buildings.

The time has come.

I believe our country has reached a turning point. I hope we turn the right way.
Minty fresh

Drag Racer Peppermint sashays into Dallas with transgender awareness

SCOTT HUFFMAN | Contributing Writer
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PEPPERMINT
Marty's Live, 4207 Maple Ave. Aug. 16. 9 p.m.
OneNightinBangkok.org.
Before striking out on their own, novice drag queens are often first schooled in the time-honored art of female illusion. Many veteran queens, affectionately known as drag mothers, offer beginners a practiced eye to assist with makeup, hair, wardrobe and accessories. But NYC-based dragster Peppermint was not the beneficiary of such early mentoring.

“My first time in drag was at age 16 for a drag contest in high school,” Peppermint recalls. “I won and was hooked. I didn’t look very good, though. I didn’t have much help or a drag family… just the help of the school’s wardrobe closet.”

It didn’t seem to slow her down, though. A semifinalist on last season’s RuPaul’s Drag Race, Peppermint will appear at Marty’s Live on Saturday. And she hasn’t lost sight of what got her started down this path.

Unlike many teens who may try drag on a dare or lark, Peppermint was on a mission. She viewed drag as an opportunity for a young woman born in a male body to express her burgeoning gender identity covertly. In many ways, it was for her a coming of age.

“Drag was the best way for me to explore my idea of female gender expression without being chastised for wanting to be a woman, as many would say … although I was already a woman,” she says. Indeed, one of her most memorable moments on Drag Race wasn’t on the runway, but when she came out to her fellow contestants in the dressing room as a trans woman — one of only a few transgender Drag Racers openly to acknowledge their gender identity during competition. For her, it was an important step, and she welcomed the acceptance she received from her competitors.

While Peppermint did not take home the crown — Sasha Velour won the prize after a heated lip-sync battle — her standing as runner-up has provided a stage from which she is able to advocate for transgender equality during a time when such activism is perhaps more important than ever.

“Since I have more visibility, I can easily draw attention to gender equality [issues] including bathroom bills and military service bans, [actions] which I think are attempts to erase individuals for lack of clarity and understanding on [the part] of those who are proponents of such nonsense,” she says. “Therefore, the most effective way for myself or anyone different to affect change is to live our lives openly. So I’m very grateful I’m able to do that, and I plan to use my platform as long as I have it.”

As for the Drag Race experience itself, Peppermint says she was able to confirm a few things about herself, including the fact that she is “not a morning person.” She calls the competition “tough,” and reveals that — besides RuPaul of course — her favorite judge was Michelle Visage, whom she has loved since her days co-hosting VH1’s The RuPaul Show.

“The finale was surreal and relieving,” Peppermint says. “I was happy to finally bring everything to a head. Speaking of heads, Sasha really killed the finale, though I’m not surprised. She is a brilliant performer, and I always said if I don’t win, I’d want her to. I was bummed not to take the crown, but I really feel like a winner.”

Lip-sync battle aside, Peppermint and Sasha remain great friends. In fact, the two are planning a 2018 college tour “to speak about gender, the influence of drag, and the future of our communities.”

Peppermint has no regrets about participating in the competition and is “still in touch with all the girls.” In fact, she says she might even consider returning for an All Stars cycle, provided her now-bustling schedule would allow.

“I would do it again if the time was right,” Peppermint says. “I’m so happy I participated. Before the show, I was mostly working in New York and only traveling occasionally to perform. Now I’m on the road most days of the week. It’s exhausting, but it gives me a chance to connect with some really great audiences.”

Her showbiz hustle isn’t limited to club appearances, either. Peppermint recently released the Black Pepper EP, her second recording, which she says showcases her “spicier, deeper side.” She attributes this exploration to the fact that many of the EP’s songs were written after experiencing “a devastating breakup.”

Peppermint is also working on becoming a screen queen, of sorts. Production continues on Project Peppermint, the working title of a documentary offering a behind-the-scenes look at the diva’s day-to-day life while examining fame, gender identity and the drag world. In it, Peppermint reveals some unexpected truths, including the fact that she once considered sex work — “a reality for many women, cisgender or trans,” she says. In Peppermint’s case, however, the motivation was to pay for gender reassignment surgery.

“I asked the director, Oriel Peer, to film a few shows and take some pics,” Peppermint says of the documentary. “The movie started out very small and got huge and follows my daily life before Drag Race.”

Peppermint has experienced many things along her journey from 16-year-old drag contestant to drag superstar. Yet her advice regarding gender identity remains simple.

“Don’t suppress your feelings,” she says. “Trust yourself. You are exactly who you are meant to be. And you will be so happy!”

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AMG has a long history of being Mercedes’ in-house gym, delivering cars as diverse as the GT-S supercar that blips 0-60 mph in 3.7 seconds and G65, a 621-horsepower brick-square mountain goat with a biturbo V12. But, its card was swiped with the “Hammers” — modified 1980s E-Class sedans wagons that could move Porsche 911s out of the Autobahn’s left lane. Somewhere in the middle of this display of this speed orgy and motorized hostility is the GLC43 that drops a hammer on crossovers.

In the flesh, the GLC43 is a compact crossover sharing basic architecture with the Mercedes C-Class sedan, but fortified for trashing fast lanes. Beneath its smooth flanks is a 3.0-liter biturbo V6 engine delivering 362 horsepower through a 9-speed automatic transmission. Fully throttled, it scamps from 0-60 mph in just 4.8 seconds. Fuel economy, partly due to ECO stop/start technology that pauses the engine at rest, is rated 18/24-MPG city/highway. Yeah, a Prius it won’t challenge.

I’m warming to its streamlined flanks — especially when hunkered over 21-in. alloy wheels and lit with LEDs front and rear. A large grille star, twin bumps on the hood and wrap-around taillamps honor Mercedes heritage. Large air intakes, badging and spoiler tell you it’s an AMG.

Beyond the threshold is a comfortable and special passenger space. Hugging MB Tex and suede heated seats up front, carbon fiber trim, flat-bottom steering wheel and red accent stitching are the opening barrage. Settle in to notice the sweet-sounding Bermester audio system, dual pane sunroof and Bluetooth. Take a big whiff of the perfume atomizer. Control the whole infotainment shebang via console dial, buttons and writing-recognition touchpad. Ambient lighting adds allure.

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The Tribute Artist

By Charles Busch

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Todrick Hall grew up in Plainview, Texas, with a dream to be "one of these black women who could sing all these crazy notes." It is, after all, in his blood — his cousin is none other than Dreamgirls song slayer Jennifer Holliday.

But first, as a child, the aspiring soul singer found life in The Little Mermaid, replicating Ariel's crimson hair with a red towel on his head and gadgets and gizmos a-plenty. Clasping a fork, he created a makeshift fishtail by binding his feet together with a water hose. Meanwhile, to channel another shero of his, Catwoman, he got his hands on some blue tape, nails and a jump rope, which doubled as his whip and tail.

"My backyard was my playground," the 32-year-old singer says of his childhood, when he discovered another one of his female role models: Mariah Carey. His adoration for the biracial diva ran deep.

"I think I just was more inspired to be like Mariah Carey," he says. In 1993, he had a revelation after seeing the "Dreamlover" music video: "I was like, 'Oh my god.' I had never seen anyone who appeared to be Caucasian sound like that. I was just fascinated.

His propensity for female vocalists extended to Lauryn Hill's singing in Sister Act 2 and Brandy in the Whitney Houston-as-the-fairy-godmother version of Cinderella, along with '90s R&B girl-group sensation SWV. And, because he felt destined to become all these ladies, "I would practice day in and day out.

That practice led Hall beyond his own

Todrick Hall walks the Yellow Brick Road

LIFE+STYLE profile

Hall and his mom
‘Kinky Boots’ star and doc subject on finding his courage, shero emulation and inspiring ‘little Todricks’

Todrick Hall grew up in Plainview, Texas, with a dream to be “one of these black women who could sing all these crazy notes.” It is, after all, in his blood — his cousin is none other than Dreamgirls song slayer Jennifer Holliday.

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That practice led Hall beyond his own backyard, from ballet at age 9 to The Color Purple with American Idol alum Fantasia Barrino. Then, in 2009, he impressed the American Idol judges himself, nabbing a spot in the semi-finals. With vocal tributes to artists such as Rihanna, Taylor Swift and Beyoncé, his “4” series on YouTube gave his career a nice boost. (Soon, he says he’ll be honoring his childhood idol with a webisode dedicated to Mariah Carey: “I just have to be on vocal rest for, like, three weeks; her music is so hard!”)

After releasing an ambitious, 57-minute conceptual album in 2016 and replacing Billy Porter as Lola in Kinky Boots on Broadway that same year, Hall says, “I think my younger self would be really shocked [about my career now] because I didn’t have very high expectations for my life, and I’ve just gotten to do some really, really cool things I never thought I’d get to do.”

The album, called Straight Outta Oz, reflects thoughtfully and powerfully on Hall’s coming-of-age as a gay black kid in Small Town Texas, through his rise to fame while struggling to adjust to a new life in Los Angeles. “Color” ruminates on his first boyfriend, a handsome Londoner named Garrett, “the first to really know me.” Visually, it replicates Dorothy’s own life in a new world, as yellows, blues and greens pop into the video’s stark, black-and-white frame.

Guest stars include RuPaul’s Drag Race vets Kim Chi, Bob the Drag Queen and Willam Belli, as well as Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Nicole Scherzinger and, as Hall’s mother, Amber Riley, who contributes the moving tear jerker “See Your Face,” about a woman yearning for her distant son. “Got a picture framed of you on stage at your very first ballet, and I
After he directed *Side Effects*, Steven Soderbergh announced he was retiring from directing feature films — he’d produce films, and he’d work in TV (including directing *Behind the Candelabra* and the series *The Knick*), but he was through with Hollywood as a big-time, Oscar-winning movie director.

That was in 2013. Didn’t last long.

Soderbergh has just released his latest directorial feature, *Logan Lucky*. He returned to films, he said, because he found a way to circumvent the studio system and put out a film truly independently, with the artists getting paid what they’re due instead of begging for scraps from bean-counting CPAs in corner offices. And what vehicle did he use to make this point? A story about working-class men who stick it to bean-counting CPAs in corner offices.

Big stretch, right? Not at all… in multiple respects. Not only does the film’s plot reinforce its message of scoundrels outsmarting The Man, but it’s a theme Soderbergh has revisited time and time again. Not only does *Logan Lucky* seem like an unofficial sequel to the *Ocean’s* heist movies, it also recalls Soderbergh’s cult hit *Out of Sight*: Hip romance, jazzy, not-too-serious pacing, whackadoo timeline jumps and a casual attitude. It’s not a thriller (the stakes never seem that high), but a procedural: How will the Logan siblings — lovable loser Jimmy (Channing Tatum), one-handed veteran Clyde (Adam Driver) and sexy sister Mellie (Riley Keough) — manage to rob the Charlotte Motor Speedway and get safecracker Jack Bang (Daniel Craig) out of jail and back in before anyone notices?

The premise is delicious. The film is a lot of fun. And that’s about it.

Going back to *Columbo*, watching the villains getting away with a crime (until they don’t anymore) is one of the most satisfying jigsaw puzzles of plotting. The trick is to entice the audience as co-conspirators from the outset. Get them to wonder how the heist will be pulled off by establishing insurmountable obstacles … and then surmount them. Jimmy even writes a decalogue of “rules” in getting the job done before he even begins. The enjoyment should come in checking off that list with him.

Only that doesn’t really happen… not entirely satisfyingly, at least. After the initial list-making, the rules aren’t consulted again until nearly the end. The mechanics of the plan less impressive than you hope, including the prison break (and return) which is not so much clever as profoundly unlikely and downright lucky. It feels, in fact, like *Ocean’s 6 — Lite Edition*. (Craig even gets the same tongue-in-cheek “and introducing” credit that he gave to Julia Roberts.)

Soderbergh’s biggest errors are in letting some of his actors’ performances get away from him. Katherine Waterston has the most grounded role as Tatum’s possible paramour, and the bright-eyed doofiness of Craig, Jack Quaid and Brian Gleeson as hicks with more tattoos than teeth brush up to the edge of parody without crossing it. But the accent Driver gives to his dopy redneck is one step shy of Yosemite Sam (amusing, but hardly...
authentic)... although he’s Meryl-Frickin-Streep next to Seth McFarlane’s woefully awful British accent (I guess? Maybe Australian? Probably though Notfuckingwayistanian) and painfully cartoonish performance, including a moustache that looks like it was borrowed from the Groucho Marx Collection at Kmart.

Aside from McFarlane’s distracting (but mercifully small) role, these are mostly nitpicks. Logan Lucky feels derivative, but still worthwhile. The real puzzle is why Soderbergh chose it for his heralded comeback. He didn’t exactly challenge himself, or his audience, with something groundbreaking. But maybe that’s the result of swimming in the shark-infested waters of Hollywood. He’s treading familiar, warm waters very close to the shore. But the scenery is still relaxing.

Channing Tatum, Riely Keough and Adam Driver are the Logans in ‘Logan Lucky.’

Steven Soderbergh returns to filmmaking with the familiar caper ‘Logan Lucky’

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know that you won’t answer,” she wrenchingly sings, “but I’ll call you twice a day, just in case today might be the day I get to see your face.”

For Hall, “I think I was honestly very naive growing up and thought I was a Disney princess my whole life,” he says, laughing. “I still kind of think I do feel that way! So, I didn’t feel super different as a child, minus the moments where my dad made me feel really weird. My mom always applauded me for wanting to do ballet. But I didn’t attach a sexual orientation to my life until much later.”

Even if “this is gonna sound really crazy,” during a rough patch with his mom caused by his relationship with Garrett (they’ve since reconciled), he found comfort in Nicole Richie. He says the star and her reality show, The Simple Life, were his pick-me-ups. “I just think she’s so funny and so whipetty,” he says. “I literally had dreams about being friends with her. So, when I meet her one day, I’m gonna lose my mind.”

Now, “not only am I not ashamed,” he asserts, “I’m so proud to be an openly gay black man and so proud that me using my voice to tell my story can help people.”

Hall’s galvanizing story is the kind that makes for movie magic, which is what filmmaker Katherine Fairfax Wright set out to create with the new documentary Behind the Curtain: Todrick Hall, currently making the rounds on the film festival circuit. The documentary goes deep into the entertainer’s struggles to find his place in Hollywood as a gay black man. “There’s not a lot of roles for gay African-American men,” he says during the film. “I was like, ‘I’m gonna create my own opportunities because they don’t exist if I don’t.’”

His moxie and unflappable ambition resulted in 16 videos — miraculously, all shot in a two-week period — for Straight Outta Oz, its creation covered in depth during Wright’s Behind the Curtain. Post Straight Outta Oz, he began receiving calls from Broadway producers. Publishers offered him book deals. Even Taylor Swift, who came to see him in Kinky Boots, is a fan — and friend — now.

During Thanksgiving last year, Hall celebrated with Swift and her crew, and, like a full-circle dream-come-true, the two even sat down at a piano to sing “Part of Your World” from The Little Mermaid. “It was such an epic moment,” he recalls, gushing about how she’s the “ultimate great best friend. She gives me the best advice, and when I watch her, it’s much like watching RuPaul — RuPaul is not only where he is because he’s a legend in his own right, he treats every single person who he works for and works with so well and that’s why he has people who’ve been around him for years.”

After guest-judging on RuPaul’s Drag Race, Hall’s relationship with the drag and cultural icon has given him new aspirations: He, like RuPaul, hopes to empower people who once felt as discouraged and hopeless as he did.

“Every time I sit next to RuPaul on our panel, I’m like, ‘I want to be this one day.’ When you walk into a room and people say, ‘Thank you for doing what you have done.’”

“I wanna be somebody who’s a trailblazer for our community — so a little Todrick in Texas right now can look up to me and say, ‘You know what? I can do it because Todrick did it.’”

— Chris Azzopardi
Thursday 08.24 — Sunday 09.24

Beat the Texas heat with a trip to the ‘Royal Society of Antarctica’

What would it take to get you to live in the coldest, remotest location at the bottom of the world? (That’s an easier question to answer if you live in Texas during the summer.) What if you were born there and all your life you knew only misfits and scientists — gadabouts who create their own world? That’s the premise of The Royal Society of Antarctica, the latest show from Fort Worth’s Stage West. Lee Trull directs an exceptional cast that includes Drew Wall, Michael Federico, Christopher Dontrell Piper and Grace Montie.


Saturday 08.19

Hoot and Holler with cowboys at Gaybingo

Hey, we’re in Texas, we like cowboys … even those who just dress up like ’em. Tight Wranglers and an aw-shucks smile? That’s why we don’t live in New Hampshire. So come out to celebrate what makes Texas great — and do some good for charity — at the monthly Gaybingo event this weekend, with the theme Hoot & Holler. It’ll be a blast, dagnabit!

DEETS: The Rose Room at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. 5 p.m. doors, 6 p.m. show. $25–$45. MyResourceCenter.org.

Sunday 08.20

See the top singers in Dallas compete for Voice of Pride

All summer long, the Voice of Pride competition has proceeded through a series of preliminaries and elimination rounds of just so the best of the best could turn out to compete in a wonderful display on singing talent throughout the Metroplex. The finalists compete this Sunday at the Rose Room for cash prizes, bragging rights, a ride on the float at the Pride parade and a chance to perform at the Pride festival. Come root for your favorite and hear all the Voices of Pride.

DEETS: The Rose Room at S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. 7 p.m. doors. DallasPride.org.

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THEATER

All About Bette. The return of the acclaimed one-woman show, with Morgana Shaw transfixing as screen legend Bette Davis. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road, Aug. 18–26. AnEveingWithBetteDavis.com.


Hit the Wall. A play with music about the Stonewall Riots that triggered the modern gay liberation movement. Addison Theatre Centre, 15650 Addison Road. WaterTowerTheatre.org.

The Minotaur. Anna Ziegler’s contemporary take on love and honor, with the mythic creature of the title as its symbolic center. Reviewed this week. Theatre 3, 2900 Routh St. in the Quadrangle. Through Aug. 27. Theatre3Dallas.com.


FINE ART


FRIDAY 08.18
COMMUNITY

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

SATURDAY 08.19
COMMUNITY

GayBingo. This month’s theme is Hoot & Holler at this game and fundraising party benefiting Resource Center. Station 4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. 5 p.m. doors, 6 p.m. curtain. $25–$45. MyResourceCenter.org.

Peppermint. The recent Drag Racer performs, with Nicole O’Hara Munro, Raquel Blake and more. See story Page 16. Marty’s Live, 4207 Maple Ave. 9 p.m. OneNightInBangkok.org.

CONCERTS

ABBA The Concert — A Tribute. The actual band hasn’t toured in decades, but you can get close to the experience with this tribute performance at the disco legends, Annette Strauss Square, 2389 Flora St. 8 p.m. ATTPAC.org.

SUNDAY 08.20
COMMUNITY

Voice of Pride Finals. The finalists compete for the title, prize and right to headline Dallas Pride in September. The Rose Room inside S4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road. 7 p.m.

MONDAY 08.21
CABARET

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

TUESDAY 08.22
FILM

Hello, Dolly!. Barbra Streisand was miscast, but this big-budget musical benefits from Jerry Herman’s bubbly score. Look for Tommy Tune in a rare film appearance. 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.
Horns of a dilemma ‘The Minotaur’ updates mythology at Theatre 3

Anyone who has ever read Joseph Campbell knows that even ancient myths were meant to resonate in the modern world: quests are quests whether you’re talking about Argonauts, Hobbits, Jedi or Avengers … it’s just that many myths are so couched in the iconography of the past, audiences don’t realize it.

So when a trio of masked actors step onstage at Theatre 3, incanting the legends of ancient Crete at the outset of The Minotaur, it feels familiar, but old-fashioned: the Greek chorus. But then the masks come off as we meet a black female rabbi (Renee Jones), a priest (Randy Pearlman) and a lawyer (David Lugo), and these stories take on the aura of a coffee klatch. They dish about the cursed Minotaur (Darren McElroy), a half-breed man-bull doomed to wander the unsolvable maze known as the Labyrinth, craving only human flesh. He’s a monster whose fate is sealed … or is he a tragic hero given free will and the gift of human choice? Even he doesn’t know.

And so goes Anna Ziegler’s modern retelling of the dark fable of the warrior demigod Theseus (Kyle Igneczi) who at the behest of Ariadne (Cora Grace Winstead) delved into the Labyrinth to meet — or overcome? — his destiny. The play toggles back and forth between the classic texts and the contemporary idiom, sorting out the nature of mankind and how our passions can control us, whether by a face that launched a thousand ships or a selfie in an online chatroom for royals. Destiny and desire, demons and dreams, guilt and appetite have been around forever. It’s how we deal with them that defines us. “We cannot be monsters — we are heroes,” Theseus assures Ariadne … until he’s not sure he believes it himself.

Jeffrey Schmidt launches his first full season as the new head of Theatre 3 with this sure-footed directorial effort (he also designed the sparse but evocative set). Schmidt has always been a resourceful director — a problem-solver — and he blends the competing styles superbly. A strong suit is the casting: Igneczi cuts a swashbuckling mien with the boyish charm of Leonardo DiCaprio; McElroy is a brooding, sexy beast; Pearlman kvetches and Lugo mansplains like nobody’s business.

The play has its weaknesses. Sometimes the plot can get twisted or drift its focus, but the humanity and thoughtfulness shine through the darkness. The Minotaur hooks you.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Why I hate drag (and still love it)

Hello, my lovelies. This is going to be a weird one. Last night when driving home from the show, I had to laugh at myself for the bullshit I put my body through to do drag — I was hurting from head to toe. So I thought I would compile a list of all of the reasons I sometimes hate drag. I will also list some things that I used to do that I grew out of for the betterment of my body.

First, of course, is tucking — i.e., hiding my junk “down there.” Usually it is not a problem, but last night I tucked in a hurry. I yanked it back a little too far and yanked my gaff (a gaff is like a dance belt that holds everything in place) up a little too tight. I am way too hairy down there to ever use duct tape as panties. The next few sentences are kind of graphic and some of you may want to skip to this paragraph: The thong part of my gaff literally spent the night tight against the head of my peen and damn near split it in half. It was fine while it was on, but when I removed it...let’s just say my dick is not happy with me today. He is usually so cute, but now he looks like a domestic abuse survivor with one black eye.

Next is the pain from my toes. I’ve been doing drag long enough that I know how to put on tights in a way that won’t kill my tootsies, but last night I guess I rushed. I put four pairs of tights on and they put a lot of pressure on my little pigs. Once again, everything was fine until I took them off and blood rushed back into my feet. Plus heels are the devil. I have small feet, so I can have my pick of fabulous shoes, but I usually tend to wear the same few pair because they are less painful to parade around and dance in.

I used to glue my wigs down or wear them really tight, but after years of headaches from the band in the back of a wig or the rip of skin when you removed a glued-down wig, now I just barely put it on my head like a hat. A stiff wind could blow it off my head. Not to mention how hot wearing a wig makes you. Your body releases heat out of the top of your head, so when you keep it covered, you are basically baking your brain.

I wear the biggest eyelashes I can find and then double them up, so when you see me, I’m sporting two pair of 301 lashes glued to my eyelid. I know how to do it to keep from ripping my skin off every time I remove them, but I learned that the hard way. I put a thick coat of base and eyeshadow on my lids so that I am basically removing just the makeup when I rip those fuckers off. Before I started doing that, after a few nights in drag I would remove skin when I took my lashes off. My lids would swell, and I looked like bees had stung me in my eye. And it hurt…especially when I would have to do it all again the next night.

Now let’s talk about earlobes. I know a lot of girls that use Super Glue to adhere earrings to their ears; I used to. How else do you think we get those big-ass beauties to stay put? Doing this is very bad for you, though. It turns your earlobes into hamburger meat. Valerie Lohr was told by her doctor that she had glue poisoning. That’s a real thing. My ears are pierced so now I only wear earrings for pierced ears because I am fishy like that. They still hurt my earhole but not as bad as ripping glued flesh.

I wear the most sickening corset. It makes my fat ass look like I have a nice female base and eyeshadow on my lids so that I am set in my ways and couldn’t care less about realism. I get made fun of regularly for not wearing nails. I love how they look, but back in the day the only choice was to Super Glue them to your own nails. I would do it for pageants or getting photos done, but it would ruin my boy nails. Once, after doing Miss Texas, I wore nails every day for a week, and it messed my fingers up. Two of my fingers got a painful infection that took forever to heal. I decided then to never wear nails again. I don’t care if I get called “man hands.” Nowadays they have these great press-ons that actually stay in place for the most part and don’t ruin your nails, but I am set in my ways and couldn’t care less about wearing nails. Truth is, I can’t do anything for myself once I have nails on. You don’t realize how much you use your thumb and forefinger until you can’t use them because you don’t want to lose a nail.

I don’t know what it is about getting out of drag that makes me sneeze, but every night post-show, I sneeze at least seven times. I am sure my lungs and insides are 80 percent Coty powder. The day after doing drag, I always wake up to black crusty eye boogers. It is very glamorous.

Drag will also ruin your home. My shower and tub are already a hideous shade of beige, so you don’t immediately notice the years of hard-to-clean makeup remnants. Getting in drag at home always leaves a light dusting of powder in my bathroom. I probably don’t need to make such a mess, but I have a process when I power my face that can get ridiculous.

Thank God I have my dressing room at the club. Wig hair is magic. Once a hair leaves a wig, it magically reproduces and gets everywhere. I find wig hair in the craziest places, including in my husband’s storage shed where my wigs have never been. I think they come to life and go out on adventures. Eventually I am sure Disney will do an animated feature film about my crazy, sassy wigs and their epic quest to become styled once again.

I know this must sound like drag is the worst thing in the world and sometimes it does hurt. But pain is beauty — beauty is pain, blah blah blah. I feel bad for the girls that use tape on their junk. They use Goo Gone to get the residue off of their “below places!” That shit has gotta burn. I guess doing drag feels like a constant STD flare up.

Seriously, though, I put myself through all of this bullshit because I love what I do. Driving home last night, in pain from head to toe, I still thought of myself as lucky. You know, hashtag blessed and stuff.

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 Aug. 7-13

- **BJ’s NXS!**: Charity Showcase on Sunday. The final original *Trashy Tuesday* tent party on Tuesday.
- **Club Changes**: Imperial Court show at 7 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Club Reflection**: Cowtown Leathermen cookout at 4 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Dallas Eagle**: United Court of the Lone Star Empire holds a fundraiser for the Sharon St Cyr Fund at 7 p.m. on Saturday. *Onyx: Central Southwest Chapter* club night at 10 p.m. on Saturday.
- **JR.’s Bar & Grill**: Cassie Nova hosts *Turn About: The Glamour Within* at 10:30 p.m. on Monday. See all your favorite JR.’s, TMC, S4 and Sue Ellen’s bartenders perform in drag.
- **Marty’s Live**: Back-to-school supply drive benefiting *Promise House* from Friday-Sunday.
- **Round-Up Saloon**: Bear happy hour on Friday. School supply drive sponsored by *Lost Souls Rugby Club* benefits Mi Escuelita on Saturday. *Teddy Bear Auction* benefiting AIDS Services of Dallas at 7 p.m. on Sunday.
- **S4**: *Trash Disco* with DJ Craig Reed on Friday.
- **Sue Ellen’s**: *The Tuxedos* on Saturday. *Kathy & Bella* at 3:30 followed by Jennie Dale Lord on Sunday.
- **The Rose Room**: Voice of Pride finals on Sunday.
- **Urban Cowboy Saloon**: Matt and Jake’s Wedding and show benefits Bunkhouse Fund at 7 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Woody’s Sports & Video Bar**: Indianapolis at Dallas at 6 p.m. on Saturday. 2017 *DIVA* fall draft party from 5-7 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Zippers**: Tipsy Tuesday with music by DJ Rude Boy.

Scene Photographers: *Kat Haygood* and *Chad Mantooth*
Hugging it out in the gayborhood

Sittin’ pretty at Liquid Zoo

Beary good times in The Strip

Glamour time on The Strip

Wine walking on The Strip

Hugging it out in the gayborhood

Glamour time on The Strip
Ready to dance at Club Stallions

All smiles at Club Stallions

Getting cozy at Dallas Eagle

John, Chris and Tyler on The Strip

Wine walking on The Strip

Sittin’ pretty at Liquid Zoo

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In the Nick of Time

Solution on Page 27

Across
1 Haul ass
5 Chocolate factory vessels
9 School of Marcel Duchamp
13 Poet Broumas
14 Bygone pump name
15 Word after “penis”
16 Closet opening
17 Cover for Adam’s privates
18 It goes before one’s time
19 Nick’s brother who just came out on Twitter
22 Doug Mattis, for one
23 Touched a vampire’s heart, like Buffy
27 Say “there, there” to
30 Egypt and Syr., once
31 Nice buns, for example
35 Prefix with political
36 Woodcarver’s tool
37 Nick’s vocal group
40 You might see a polar bear there
41 Lube brand
42 Hoped for responses to come-ons
43 TV character from beyond Uranus
44 Gene Robinson’s office
46 Hoofing it
48 Queer one, to straights
53 Kids’ TV network where
19-Across made many guest appearances
56 Collette of The Hours
59 “I Could ___ Danced All Night”
60 Nathan of Modern Family
61 Spread it on your muffin
62 It’s taken over in a coup
63 Forbidden fruit site
64 Part of a hard head
65 Bear necessities
66 Like Easter eggs

Down
1 Bubbly drinks
2 Dracula accessory
3 Socrates’ market
4 Ouija alternative
5 “Zipperless zipper”
6 Cruising
7 Russian ruler of old
8 One dance style of Gregory Hines
9 Messing of the Will & Grace reboot
10 Singer DiFranco
11 Burned item
12 “Yes” in the navy
13 Pooh-pooh
14 Bygone pump name
15 Word after “penis”
16 Closet opening
17 Cover for Adam’s privates
18 It goes before one’s time
19 Nick’s brother who just came out on Twitter
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40 You might see a polar bear there
41 Lube brand
42 Hoped for responses to come-ons
43 TV character from beyond Uranus
44 Gene Robinson’s office
46 Hoofing it
and Hart Crane?
21 Sorbonne summer
24 Praise for Lammies, e.g.
25 “Straight Outta Compton” rapper
26 Get decent
28 Shrek and others
29 Saw things
31 BBC sitcom
32 Late NASA astronaut Ride
33 Pooh-pooh
34 Just make, with “out”
36 Guys and Dolls co-creator Burrows
38 Imitated Samantha
39 Universal donor
44 “Unhappy” rapper Big ___
45 Little hooters
47 Optional item between meat and bun
49 Sat on one’s bottom
50 Willing and able partner
51 Gift recipient
52 Erect
54 Funny lady Clinton
55 Wolfson of Freedom to Marry
56 Lover that you can’t get over
57 Arena cry, to Lorca
58 Name divider

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