Lee Madrid is transforming walls in Oak Lawn with his murals.

by David Taffet, Page 8
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9th Circuit rejects Trump administration’s military trans ban

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco on Wednesday, July 18, rebuffed another attempt by the Trump administration to implement its plan to ban transgender people from serving openly in the U.S. military.

The administration had asked for a stay of the preliminary injunction issued by the trial court in December 2017 in a case brought by Lambda Legal and OutServe-SLDN, Karnoski v. Trump, and joined by the state of Washington. The stay, affirmed last month, blocks implementation of the trans ban and enables trans people to continue enlisting in the military.

The 9th Circuit ruled that the stay requested by the government “would upend, rather than preserve, the status quo,” which currently allows transgender people to serve in the military, according to a statement released today by Lambda Legal. The Trump administration had asked the Ninth Circuit to stay the injunction while it appealed the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington’s April 13 ruling, which affirmed an earlier preliminary injunction and barred implementation of the transgender military ban.

The Trump administration had claimed that its “new” trans ban, released March 23, passed muster. But the court said the “new” plan was really a revamped version of the old plan and that it threatened the same constitutional violations. The court also found that the effort to ban trans people from military service must meet the most demanding level of scrutiny because it clearly targets transgender people.

The case is on track to go to trial in April 2019. — Tammye Nash

Ohio executes gay man’s killer

The state of Ohio on Wednesday, July 18, executed Robert Van Hook, 58, convicted of killing David Self in 1985. Van Hook had earlier this year tried to use the gay panic defense to escape the death penalty, according to a report by LGBTQ Nation.

Van Hook never claimed he did not kill Self but said that he had a difficult childhood that included sexual abuse and undiagnosed mental illness. He tried for years to get his sentenced overturned by claiming that his trial lawyers were incompetent, and earlier this year he begged the Ohio Parole Board for clemency, telling board members that he had been suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and snapped when Self made sexual advances toward him.

Nobody bought it. The Hamilton County Prosecutor’s Office called Van Hook’s claim “cynical,” writing in a filing that referred to Van Hook’s admission that he had been robbing gay men since he was 15 that he “posed as a gay man; he frequented bars that were gay and he preyed on vulnerable victims who were gay.”

Van Hook met Self, then 25, in a gay bar in Cincinnati, and after talking for a few hours, the two went back to Self’s apartment. Once they were there, Van Hook strangled Self, then stabbed him several times in the neck before cutting open his abdomen and stabbing his internal organs.

When Self was found by a neighbor, he had been nearly disemboweled, and Van Hook had left a cigarette butt and a paring knife in his abdominal cavity. Van Hook then stole a leather jacket and some necklaces and fled to Florida where he was arrested and then confessed to the murder.

— David Taffet

Federal judge rules foster agencies can’t discriminate

A federal judge in Philadelphia ruled that foster care agencies that contract with the city must comply with its nondiscrimination ordinance. U.S. District Court Judge Petrese B. Tucker said Philadelphia didn’t violate Catholic Social Services religious freedom when it suspended a contract with the agency because it wouldn’t work with same-sex couples.

A Texas law passed in the last session of the Legislature specifically allows foster agencies to discriminate against LGBT foster singles and couples. While this ruling doesn’t affect that law, it could be cited when questions of its constitutionality are debated in any upcoming lawsuit.

Philadelphia’s local ordinance covers sexual orientation in public accommodations. Catholic Social Services argued the city was requiring the organization to abandon its religious beliefs.

The city said when an agency decides to take public dollars, they must serve everyone. By not working with same-sex couples, the agency was also limiting the pool of the best families and homes to place children.

Catholic Social Services countered it already had 30 good homes that were not being used.

Foster care agencies do home visits to certify that the home is safe for children. A representative for Catholic Social Services testified that certifying the home of a same-sex couple would be “a validation of the relationships in that home.”

The judge said one other practice of the agency was problematic. Catholic Social Services requires a letter from clergy for any foster applicant. Tucker said that raised serious constitutional questions.

Catholic Social Services, which received $1.7 million last year for its foster care placement services, would have to lay off employees and shutter its doors. The city has contracts with 29 other foster care agencies.

— Tammye Nash

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— Tammye Nash
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• July 24: BEN After Hours
Chamber members and their guests are welcome to the monthly social networking event from 5:30-7 p.m. at Two Corks and a Bottle, 2800 Routh St., Suite 150.

• July 24: Federal Club
Recruiting event from 6-7:30 p.m. at Zatar, 2825 Commerce St. Info at shayom.ortiz@gmail.com.

• July 25: Watercolor Pawtraits
Maya X Kiwi is a watercolor artist with a specialty in animals. Participants will be painting their own pets, and the class is aimed at beginners. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. at Gather Kitchen, 1601 Elm St. Suite 140. $60 at prekindle.com/event/89258-watercolor-pawtraits-dallas

• July 26: GALA Volunteer engagement
Learn about GALA and how to become more involved from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Blue Mesa Grill, 8200 Dallas Parkway, Plano.

• July 28: HRC Equality Action Academy
From 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Holocaust Museum, 211 Record St. Info at Criss.Ruiz@hrc.org.

• Aug. 4: Score
Purple Foundation presents Score with DJ James Anthony from 10 p.m.-2 a.m. at The Dallas Eagle, 5740 Maple Ave.

• Aug. 4: TX Latino Pride pool party
Music by DJ Charlie Phresh, photo booth and open bar from 5-9 p.m. at Sisu, 2508 Maple Ave. $15. Tickets at Eventbrite.com.
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Pet of the Week / WALLACE

- Weekly: Lambda Weekly at 1 p.m. on Sunday on 89.3 KNON-FM with David Taffet, Lerone Landis and the late Patti Fink. This week’s guest is filmmaker Byron Hunter; LGBT Sex Addicts Anonymous meets at 6 p.m. every Friday at 1919 Independence St., Room 19, Plano. 972-316-9188 for details; Leadership Lambda Toastmasters gay-identified Toastmasters group meets from 6:30-8 p.m. every Monday at the First Unitarian Church, 4015 Normandy Road (does not meet on Mondays that are holidays); 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 3918 Harry Hines Blvd.; 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 3918 Harry Hines Blvd.; FuseConnect every Wednesday from 7 p.m. For more information call or e-mail Jalenzski at 214-760-9718 ext. 3 or Jalenzski@myresourcecenter.org; 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 pegasusquarquares@gmail.com; Dallas Frontrunners meet for a walk or run on the Katy Trail at Oak Lawn Park, Turtle Creek and Hall Street, 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.

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Muralist Lee Madrid is painting walls on Cedar Springs Road, and there is more to come

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
taffet@dallasvoice.com

Lee Madrid is painting a mural on the side of the Nelson Tebedo Clinic on Cedar Springs Road with a small brush as if painting on a small canvas. That way colors can subtly graduate from lighter to darker, and he can fill small crevices in the brick, he explained.

Madrid has painted about 50 murals on exterior walls. Many are in Utah on public high schools and libraries. Others are in the Texas Hill Country.

In Dallas, one mural is on the side of Jerry’s Supermarket on Jefferson Boulevard in Oak Cliff. Another is outside Wild Salsa on Main Street in Downtown Dallas.

His current project on the wall of the Nelson-Tebedo Clinic on Cedar Springs includes two sets of hands forming hearts with the AIDS Quilt in between them. Dallas Red Foundation is funding the project, which should be complete sometime in August.

Madrid begins painting at about 7 a.m. Because of the heat as well as cars that begin to fill the parking lot, he stops working at about 10 a.m.

He said he learned to paint as a traditional artist, working on canvas.

“I do a lot of canvas painting,” he said. Those canvasses are portraits that range in size from 2-by-3 feet up to 10 feet square. “That translates to become murals.”

After moving to Dallas, Madrid joined forces with Arttitude, the LGBT arts organization with a variety of projects that include numerous cultural and artistic projects. The film Transpose that was recently shown at the Dallas Museum of Art and the current MariconX art exhibit at the Latino Cultural Center are among its projects.

Madrid brought his Dallas Mural Art Project to Arttitude, which has helped him line up a series of walls that he and his team of artists will transform.

Dallas Red Foundation, a nonprofit that provides financial support to North Texas organizations that serve individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, funded the mural on the Nelson-Tebedo Clinic building as a gift to Resource Center, which operates the clinic.

John Anderson, who serves on the Mayor’s LGBT Task Force’s Quality of Life committee and is a member of Dallas Red Foundation, said the Task Force had been discussing the idea of rainbow crosswalks and other ways to distinguish and beautify the neighborhood. He said he was standing in the parking lot off Cedar Springs Road when the thought occurred to him, “Wouldn’t it be great if we could have a plaza of art?”

Councilman Adam Medrano, who chairs the task force, connected Anderson with Madrid. They came up with the idea of murals. And Resource Center got on board with the idea quickly.

“People in the clinic are having a contest to name the mural,” Madrid said.

The opposite wall will be a much larger project because that wall is two stories high. Scaffolding will have to be erected, Madrid explained.

Covering such a large space will take even more time, but Madrid said he’s building a mural team. He said anyone interested in participating should stop by Tuesdays through Thursdays, from 7-10 a.m.

The AIDS mural should be done by early August, he said, and then he will begin work on a mural to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall riots.

Madrid explained that taggers don’t normally leave their mark over space that’s already been painted. In fact, he’d love local taggers to come join his mural team. In fact, he noted, the most famous artist to arise from the AIDS crisis was Keith Haring, who began his career as a tagger on the New York subways.

Once Madrid has decorated the walls on Cedar Springs Road, he said, Arttitude has put together a list of walls that property owners would like to see covered in his work. But he has a few months more work to go on the Strip, and he invites people to come out mornings to watch, chat or join in. Weather permitting, he said the best time to catch him is 8-10 a.m. on Tuesdays through Thursdays.
Local bishop may continue to hamper same-sex marriage in Dallas churches, despite approval of compromise resolution

DAVID TAFFET | Senior Staff Writer
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Despite the vote at the Episcopal Church’s General Convention in Austin approving a compromise resolution allowing individual churches to perform same-sex marriages without the approval of their local bishop, questions remain about how easy it will be for churches in dioceses with bishops who object.

Six years ago, the Episcopal Church appointed a national marriage task force to look at the question of same-sex marriage, which was gaining strength as an issue in states and in other denominations across the country.

At the general convention in 2015, a resolution passed allowing same-sex marriage. But bishops in eight dioceses — including Dallas — blocked churches under their jurisdiction from performing those weddings. Bishops who blocked their members from marrying were required to make some accommodation.

Bishop J. Scott Mayer, the bishop of Fort Worth and of Northwest Texas, stepped in and offered Dallas church members the hospitality of marriage in his diocese. That solved the accommodation problem for Dallas Bishop George Sumner.

At this year’s convention, a compromise resolution passed on July 13 that takes the marriage decision out of the hands of the bishops and puts it into the hands of the rectors at the parish level: The rector of each church will decide who may or may not marry at that church.

The resolution takes effect on Dec. 2.

Part of the compromise is that the Episcopal Church’s Book of Common Prayer will not be altered. Marriage rites for same-sex couples have been approved but will appear in supplemental material.

Katie Sherrod, spokeswoman for the Fort Worth diocese and Bishop Mayer, said, “That’s a large sacrifice to allies.” She said Sumner is violating the spirit...
Kay Wilkinson to receive 2018 Kuchling Award

Kay Wilkinson has been named this year’s Raymond Kuchling Award recipient by the board of the Black Tie Dinner. David Gifford-Robinson, Black Tie Dinner co-chair, said, “We are honored to recognize Kay Wilkinson for her many years of support, activism and leadership in the LGBTQ community. Kay’s commitment to our causes and willingness to speak up make her an exemplary honoree to join this impressive list of leaders who have been recognized with the Kuchling Award.”

Wilkinson has chaired or assisted with an extensive list of organizations in her years of activism, dating back to the beginning of the AIDS crisis. She served on the Turtle Creek Chorale board for 10 years, including three as board chair and three as chair of the advisory board.

She was also among the founders of the supper club at AIDS Services Dallas, regularly cooking for and feeding residents of Ewing House. “The Ewing kitchen at the time was a disaster,” she said.

Wilkinson raised money to redo an interracial kitchen so that it was usable until an industrial kitchen could be installed.

More recently, Wilkinson has been a board member of The Dallas Way. She helped create some of the original fundraisers for the organization to help cover the cost of digitizing material donated to the LGBT archives housed at University of North Texas and mounting exhibits from those archives. One such exhibit remains on display on the seventh floor of the Erik Jonsson Library through the summer.

She also has emceed a number of Outrageous Oral History programs for The Dallas Way.

Before beginning her career as a mortgage banker, Wilkinson was an English teacher and has volunteered for head start. “It’s so important to give pre-K kids a head start in reading,” she said.

Her other civic activities included teaching swimming with the Red Cross and training young children to be lifeguards.

After moving to Oak Cliff in the early 1980s, Wilkinson was active in area code enforcement and neighborhood revitalization in Winnetka Heights. She was active in the Old Oak Cliff Tour of Homes, now one of the largest and oldest home tours in the city. From her Oak Cliff home, Wilkinson held a number of fundraisers to support Equality Texas’ efforts to repeal Section 21.06 of the Texas Criminal Code, the Texas sodomy law found unconstitutional in 2003’s Lawrence v. Texas case. The theme of her parties was to donate $21.06 toward the repeal effort.

Wilkinson is an avid bridge and spades player, and she has been active in a book club that’s been meeting for 25 years.

This year’s dinner will be held at the Sheraton Hotel downtown on Nov. 3.

— David Taffet
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Local experts discuss ramifications of SCOTUS ruling

MATHEW SHAW | Contributing Writer
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A panel of legal experts discussed the consequences of a recent Supreme Court ruling in favor of an anti-gay baker at an event recent at Resource Center.

The panel included Eric Rothschild, senior litigation counsel at Americans United for Separation of Church and State; Rebecca Robertson, chief program officer for Equality Texas, and Dallas lawyer, mediator and arbitrator Shelly Skeen.

Last month, the Supreme Court issued a narrow ruling in the case Masterpiece Cake shop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, declaring that a Colorado law that prohibited discrimination against LGBT people was not applied fairly toward a baker who refused a wedding cake for a gay couple.

The court noted that the Colorado Civil Rights Commission made disparaging comments toward the baker’s religious beliefs.

Though the court did not strike down Colorado’s anti-discrimination law and did say LGBT persons are afforded protection, the ruling says people with religious beliefs against gay marriage should be protected, too.

“The Supreme Court ruled] on the basis of the free exercise clause that the baker did not get a fair shake,” Skeen explained.

“There were a couple of commissioners who made some statements that sounded like they weren’t giving consideration for the baker’s religious beliefs. One said religion was often used as a despicable and deplorable way to tolerate discrimination.”

But the question of whether freedom of speech can be used to deny people services remains unanswered, Skeen continued.

“It was written.

“We have the three branches of government. The one check and balance that has always upheld fundamental rights for the last 150 years has been the Supreme Court,” she said.

In the meantime, the panelists offered suggestions on helping to change hearts and minds to eventually effect changes in the law.

“[Americans United for Separation of Church and State] started an initiative called Protect Thy Neighbor directed at exactly this kind of religious refusals,” Rothschild said. “We encourage reporting from people who are discriminated against on that basis, and we advocate in legislatures and work with coalitions, and we also bring cases.”

Skeen said that victims of discrimination need to create a record of their stories and send them to organizations like Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Commission on Human Rights, LGBT Coalition for Aging and Dallas LGBT Bar Association.

The panel answered questions from the audience and touched on what public accommodations are, what constitutes sincere religious beliefs and what is compelled speech.

 “[Public accommodation is] if you’re a business that opens your doors to the public,” Robertson said. “It could be a bowling alley or hotel or restaurant or shop, but it’s a place that is open for business to the public.”

Rothschild said courts are deferential to persons asserting religious beliefs.

“Most of these cases are coming up with somebody coming from the majority religion,” he said. “If somebody belonged to the Church of I Like to Smoke a Lot of Marijuana, the cases are not treated as sincere religious beliefs. There is a privilege given to mainstream religions.”

Skeen said compelled speech has to do with refusing to speak and not refusal to do things, and the medium of the speech must also be considered.

“Traditionally and historically has it been speech?” she said. “For example, a novel, a song, a painting, all of those things traditionally have been considered a type of speech. But wedding cakes — not a type of speech. Cakes are to be eaten.”

Robertson added that nobody is required to sell wedding cakes. Rothschild said that only Justices Gorsuch and Thomas have signed onto the “free speech as a means to discriminate” argument.

At the end of the evening, Arielle Clarkson, DFW regional field coordinator for Texas Freedom Network, issued a call for action to the audience.

First, she implored the audience to register to vote: “I think we take that for granted,” Clarkson said. “I mostly work with college students, and you would not believe how hard it is to convince them that they need to show up to the polls.”

Clarkson said that the issues we vote on are intersectional, that they affect everybody.

“Other people are affected by these civil rights violations,” she said. “Show up for yourselves; show up for your community, but show up for the other people affected. Share your stories of refusal. We need these stories. How do we create stories without experiences? The personal is political.”
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WEDDINGS, From Page 9

...of the compromise resolution in a letter he sent to his diocese and other bishops after returning from the convention. “If I’m understanding Bishop Sumner’s letter, it appears to me he’s creating unnecessary steps,” she said. “He would have to ask another bishop to step in.”

Sumner seems to be saying in his letter that any church in Dallas that performs same-sex weddings would have to find another bishop to oversee all spiritual matters. For all temporal issues, Dallas would still be in charge.

Fred Ellis, a member of St. Thomas Church on Inwood Road, attended the general convention. He said his church pays its assessment to the Dallas diocese but would be asking the Fort Worth diocese to do all the work if St. Thomas chooses to allow same-sex marriages there.

And, Ellis added, asking another bishop — presumably Mayer, who already is the bishop of two dioceses — without compensating his office for the additional work would be unfair.

He questioned whether the Dallas bishop’s office would split St. Thomas’ assessment with Fort Worth in order to compensate that diocese, or if the Dallas bishop expects the local church to pay additional fees to the facilitating diocese as a way to punish those churches for following the national work would be unfair.

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When I came to Dallas in 2011, I didn’t think a transgender person could marry anyone — of either sex. It seemed that no matter whom we loved, it was considered a same-sex marriage, and thus taboo. (See the cluster f-k that the Nikki Araguz case became.)

I have always been attracted to women. Although my outside presentation has undergone a profound change and my legal documents have been updated, my inner feelings have been consistent with regard to identity and attraction. But for those who would hang labels, they would insist that when I transitioned, I went to bed a heterosexual male and woke up a lesbian.

Wait. It gets better.

I fell in love with Katie, my soon-to-be wife, in 2013. Katie was born in Texas and before the U.S. Supreme Court’s Obergefell ruling on marriage equality, Texas wouldn’t re-issue a birth certificate, like California would, for transgender residents who have had a name and gender marker change.

Although our love for one another was no less real or passionate than that of any heterosexual couple, the possibility of us one day getting married was just not in the cards in pre-Obergefell Texas.

To illustrate just how silly things were, I joked one day that we should go down to the Dallas County Clerk’s office and apply for a marriage license using my California birth certificate, which says I was born female, and Katie’s original Texas birth certificate that still said “male,” and they would have to issue us a marriage license!

So, since we were both born male, would that make it a gay marriage? Or since we both are legally and physically female, is it a lesbian marriage? Or because of the difference in birth certificate laws, would it have been a heterosexual marriage?

Crazy, eh?

Instead, we waited. It took a while, but on June 26, 2015, The U.S. Supreme Court made marriage equality the law of the land. And later this summer, Katie and I will say, “I do.”

It makes me sad that — given the current make-up of the Supreme Court, the retirement of Justice Kennedy (who wrote the tear-inducing majority opinion in the Obergefell v. Hodges case) and the likely confirmation of a new ultra-conservative justice — if there were a challenge to marriage equality (or a slew of other LGBT issues from access to healthcare to employment rights) it would likely be 5-4 decision, with us on the short end of the stick, regardless of how sound the argument.

While there is no case working its way to the high court that would potentially overturn Obergefell, if the religious right has their way, such a case could be in the offing, not long after their No. 1 target: Roe v. Wade.

Rather than abolish same-sex marriage, it seems more likely that opponents will try to weaken it. In June 2017, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the landmark decision legalizing same-sex marriage does not fully address the right to marriage benefits. SCOTUS announced it would not hear an appeal of that case, which centers on Houston’s policy to provide spouses of gay and lesbian employees the same government-subsidized marriage benefits it provides to opposite-sex spouses.

You know, because some things are a little more equal than others, right?

So that brings us to today, as Katie and I walked into the 21st-floor office of the Dallas County Clerk’s Office to get our marriage license.

It bears mentioning that Dallas County Clerk John Warren has been supportive from the beginning, even acting in defiance of accused felon and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton who advised county clerks to wait before issuing licenses immediately following the Obergefell ruling.

The marriage license application is non-gendered, asking for the names of Applicant One and Applicant Two, rather than male/female.

Well, that’s for now.
Just before releasing a hotly anticipated new album with Sugarland bandmate Kristian Bush, duet woman Jennifer Nettles summed up her history of progressive politics and queer advocacy and love for chicken with one defiant tweet: “Steals recipe for world’s best chicken sandwich and opens Chick-fil-Gay. Serves EVERYBODY deliciousness and is open on Sundays. Wins world,” she wrote on May 15, her unfettered outspokenness still a rare but significant thing in country music.

“Or the spinoff of it: It can start as Chick-fil-Gay and then it could just turn into Chick-fil-Heyyy!, which would be super fun too,” she tells me with a robust guffaw.

Bigger, the band’s first release since their long-established country sound was cranked to arena-rock heights on 2010’s The Incredible Machine, reflects on our emotionally and politically strained modern world (their powerful lament, “Tuesday’s Broken,” addresses America’s gun problem and school shootings) with love, hope, unity and inclusiveness, themes near and dear to Sugarland since the release of their 2002 debut. “These are the days of the underdog, the counted out, the ones you don’t see coming; times of the left-behinds...,”

Nettles sings on “Not the Only,” counting herself among us. “Silent voices I’ve never heard, all waiting to say the words, held up and kept inside, but we don’t have to hide.”

Here, prior to the Sugarland concert at Verizon Friday, Nettles wins the world by talking about Sugarland’s mission to shine a light on the unseen, being political post-Dixie Chicks, and why it’s important for people (see: homophobes) to not get it twisted: that “Mother” lyric is most definitely referring to a gay couple in love.

— Chris Azzopardi

Dallas Voice: Did recent world tragedies and the country’s overall divisiveness have anything to do with you getting back to your Sugarland roots? Jennifer Nettles: Yeah. I had been feeling the urges to get back and do something and see what that would feel like again. At first it seemed to be a matter of the calendar, and then we started writing and then when we looked at this collection and what was coming out of us we realized, “Whoa, we have a lot to say, and this is actually the reason for the timing” — that these messages that we have are, well, no pun intended, bigger than what, initially, this reconvening was going to be. It was very much a bigger message for the world.

I hear myself and my community’s struggles represented in some of these songs, and I feel emboldened by them. To what extent was the queer community on your mind while creating this album? It was on our minds significantly. You hear those messages poke through within the music: messages of unity and inclusion, and of not only tolerance — sometimes tolerance to me is such a... ack!... it’s not even the right word anymore. We need to move beyond just tolerance. And it even needs to move beyond acceptance. It needs to move into celebration and just outright humanism.

I don’t think any person wants to just be tolerated. Tolerated, no — I don’t even know where that word came from. It’s clear that whoever started throwing that term around was already coming from a defensive standpoint. So that being said, I think you hear those messages celebrated in songs like “Tuesday’s Broken,” “Mother” and “Not the Only,” and even in songs like “Bigger.” But you hear it much more clearly and outright on “Mother,” where it says, “She’s got a ring to give to you she hopes you’ll give away. She don’t care who you give it to, where they’re from, if they pray like you...” And “first thing she taught you is love is love.” Yeah, that love is love, right? So you hear it very distinctly and you hear it in the messages of heartaches in “Tuesday’s Broken.” Even in the second verse you don’t know why the teenage girl is on the bed and
why she is possibly considering self-harming because of not feeling love and not feeling celebrated and not feeling a part of her community and being online, dear God help us all. So you hear those messages, for sure, throughout.

And for me, obviously always being a champion of the marginalized, always being a champion of those who are being oppressed — and all of these really horribly divisive tones that we hear now in our culture and in our community that have always been there but we're hearing them now in a way that is super ugly — when you hear those messages of self-love and of inclusion on this record, absolutely the LGBTQ+ community was on our minds when we were writing this.

In the lyric video for “Mother,” two gay men are seen holding hands. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a gay couple featured in a major, mainstream country music video. Is that precisely why you chose to include them? Yes! I mean, not to say like, “Hey! We’re the first ones in country music to feature a gay couple visually!” But to be able to say, “Just so you know, what you hear in this and what you might be assuming is absolutely visually and literally true. Like, if you might be toiling around with the idea of what this might be about, let’s go ahead and show you.”

It feels bold, but in 2018, I feel like it shouldn’t feel that way. No, you’re right, it should not feel bold. But the interesting thing is the reason many times it feels bold within the country music community is because everyone talks about the Dixie Chicks syndrome of what we saw all those years ago. I think times are different. I think it is time for people within all of the music community, but especially in the country music community, where we have such a beautifully diverse audience — we are not preaching to the choir here. We are offering messages. We are offering them to hopefully inspire people to be open and think differently for those who may not already.

Did you learn that love is love from your mom? Absolutely. I have a mother who’s beautifully open and unconditionally loving, not only to myself but to the world and, yeah, she definitely taught me very, very early on.

How have you passed that same sentiment onto your own son? Magnus is 5, so certain concepts feel abstract in terms of “let me teach you a lesson.” What I do is show him through life. The gay community is a big part of our lives in terms of people. My manager is gay and my personal assistant is gay, and these are people who are family to me. My PA was my roommate all four years of college. You know what I’m saying? It’s a family.

So, it’s in life, it’s just a matter of fact. And if questions arise, as children many times will have, I will be very open and celebratory in that way. But children live what you show them, and if you show them love and if you show them openness, that is what they will enjoy. If you keep them closed off and you show them hate, that is what they will reflect. So, he reflects my values in that way.

When confronted with backlash from conservative country fans, how do you stay motivated to keep letting your voice be heard in a genre that once sought to quiet artists like, for instance, the Dixie Chicks? I believe that times are different and social media is an echo chamber. People shout their hate and other people shout hate back. So, I try to be mindful. Don’t get me wrong, I would love to keep people in check. But really, at the end of the day, that’s just noise. The importance is the message that I am putting out there. And if somebody fires back and they don’t like it on social media, who cares. And if people are going to judge someone’s art and someone’s music based on this really new concept of an artist being more personally connected, because now we do have immediate access through social media between fans and artist, then you know, don’t listen to the music, don’t buy it. To each his own. [Laughter]

There used to be a direct connection between the two, that you couldn’t say too much because people wouldn’t buy your music and record labels would worry, but that doesn’t seem to be the case anymore. No, I don’t think it can be because, especially now — again in the age of social media where you have a direct outlet to the world, not just to your fanbase but to the world — I don’t think that dynamic exists anymore. The publicists and labels can’t worry about that in the same way because it’s like, look, you’re gonna be who you are.

Especially once you’ve opened the floodgates. And you’ve opened the floodgates. Yes, yes. [Laughter]

But some artists choose not to use their platform for political reasons. For instance, your collaborator on “Babe,” Taylor Swift, isn’t known for making political statements and she gets a lot of flak for that. Really?

Yeah, she isn’t as politically outspoken as you, for example. Do you think artists have a responsibility to use their platform to speak out on matters of concern? I think human beings have a responsibility. I definitely feel a calling within myself to speak my truth. I’m very outspoken in my own personal life as well so it bears to reason that I would be that authentic in my public life. Some people aren’t very outspoken, even in their private lives.

Have you prepared for the country conservatives who may have an issue with you broaching gun policy on “Tuesday’s Broken?” Yes, but I feel really confident, Chris, in the sense that, look, what happens is everyone on the far margins scream and are terribly afraid that suddenly each of their rights are going to be completely obliterated by comprising at all. If you give anyone an inch, they’re gonna take a mile and pull you to the opposite pole — I don’t believe that. I believe that sensible gun control is possible.
Edgy queer filmmaker Gus Van Sant discusses his dark comedy about alcoholism and quadriplegia ‘Don’t Worry, He Won’t Get Far on Foot’

Gus Van Sant is the independent-tiest of directors who still have legit Hollywood cred. He has made Oscar-winning hits like *Good Will Hunting* and *Milk*, as well as the wickedly perverse *To Die For* and the controversial shot-for-shot remake of *Psycho*. But his cult status owes in large part to his micro-budget outsider films about people living on the fringe of society: *My Own Private Idaho, Drugstore Cowboy, Elephant, Gerry, Last Days*.

His latest film is yet another darkly comic look at what should be difficult subject matter: A biopic of quadriplegic alcoholic cartoonist John Callahan (played by Joaquin Phoenix) named *Don’t Worry, He Won’t Get Far on Foot*. (The title itself is a cruel riff on its protagonist’s use of a wheelchair; it’s now playing in Dallas.) Because it’s Van Sant (he’s directed two actors to Oscar wins), his calls get returned; he was able to assemble a high-powered cast that in addition to Phoenix includes Rooney Mara, Jack Black and Jonah Hill. The film genre-surfs between addiction-recovery melodrama to biography of a disabled man to AIDS crisis drama, all of which is indelibly Gus Van Santy.

We chatted with the gay filmmaker about his familiarity with movies dealing with alcoholism, his friendship with Callahan and the film’s most surprising casting.

— Arnold Wayne Jones

Dallas Voice: There’s a tradition of films about addiction; were you familiar with any of them before you started working on *Don’t Worry*? Gus Van Sant: I think there are three of them about going through the steps of AA that I was aware of; I saw the Sandra Bullock movie, *28 Days*; I don’t know if I ever
High fashion is about fantasy — idealized bodies exuding impossible cool strutting in form-fitting garments that evoke a world you can barely imagine. But not all fantasies are sunny and friendly; some are dark. Some are nightmares.

For Lee Alexander McQueen — Lee to his friends, Alexander to the pages of Vogue and Marie Claire — fantasies were subversive things. He trafficked in a world of beauty but scoured it for the seedy side. Pudgy and with an impenetrable lower class East End accent and the look of a skinhead, McQueen himself was hardly an avatar of haute couture. (Ever notice how many designers appear at the end of their own shows in ill-tailored T-shirts and dad jeans?) And when he began to emerge in the early 1990s, his concept of clothing was some of the most subversive the universe had come upon.

“IT was modern and it was classical,” one pundit observes in McQueen, the new documentary about the radical fashionista’s life and work. “IT was tradition and it was sabotage. IT was beauty and violence.” It was, in sum, everything the ’90s were, writ on fabric.

It can be arresting to realize how little we know about many celebrities — names that instantly evoke images in our mind’s eye, but whose faces, voices and histories we aren’t all that familiar with. (Quick! What did Princess Diana sound like? How tall is Berry Gordy?) McQueen — using grainy cellphone and Super 8 archive footage and old news reports, as well as contemporary interviews (its style quickly recalls another documentary about a troubled Brit, Amy) — looks deep into Lee’s personal life, his relationships, his ambitions, his process. His art was guerrilla-esque, like Basquiat or Banksy or even Pollock or Van Gogh; the only difference is, his medium was clothing.

With the exception of Banksy, all of those artists ended tragically, which also befell Lee; he dealt with a lot of personal loss (family, friends, lovers), including an HIV diagnosis and drug abuse. In some ways, that makes his story almost predictably rags-to-riches-to-rags-to-redemption-to-tragedy; but that doesn’t make his story less poignant nor his creativity less profound; indeed, it could be the exact opposite. Lee was a Roman candle, burning brightly before fading just as the illumination becomes most intense.

“You don’t discover talent; talent is there. You open doors for talent,” a colleague opines. “[But] no one discovered Alexander McQueen — Alexander McQueen discovered himself.” And by the end of his life, what he discovered made living unbearable.

Opens Aug. 3 at the Angelika Film Center Mockingbird Station.
Thanks for Cher-ing

How do you make a sequel to a film that shot its wad the first time? With Cher, dammit!

ARNOLD WAYNE JONES | Executive Editor
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The 2008 movie version of Mamma Mia! was, until Wonder Woman, worldwide the highest-grossing live action film ever directed by a woman, so making a sequel of any monster hit would seem to be a no-brainer.

Except how do you make a sequel to a musical whose entire raison d'être was a showcase for the hit songs of the disco-era supergroup ABBA? Once you exhaust their catalogue of hits — 15 impressively catchy, Zeitgeisty dance club classics dot the original, with a half-dozen less memorable songs filling out the set-list and cobbled into the rough outline of a plot — what’s left to get your toes tapping?

Sophie’s (Amanda Seyfried) grandmother (Cher) shows up at the end of ‘Mamma Mia,’ but that’s not a spoiler — the film is too sweetly predictable to deny you her appearance.
to? Sure, *Mamma Mia!* notably omitted “Fernando” and “Waterloo;” that’s two you can work with. But that’s not a feature film; it’s barely a short.

But no studio ever let an impossible task stand in the way of its quest for a box office bonanza. It fell to Ol Parker — a British screenwriter (*The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*) whose sole directorial effort to be released this side of the pond was 2005’s lesbian romance *Imagine Me & You* — was saddled with the responsibility.

And boy did he make it work. *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* won’t make many (any?) year-end-best lists, and while it does utilize “Fernando” and “Waterloo,” it pads the soundtrack with a slate of songs that would feel shoehorned into the plot if only they were worth listening to in the first place. (He also sneaks in “reprises” of “I Have a Dream,” “Dancing Queen” and “Super Trouper” to flesh out the storyline.) But all that seems incidental to the squishy, happy mood the film leaves you with.

One risky decision is that while virtually the entire original cast returns, only Amanda Seyfried as Sophie could be considered to have a major role in this one. It’s been a year since Sophie’s mom Donna (Meryl Streep) has died, and she’s reopening the Grecian hotel with a huge party. That puts her in a sentimental mood, as we flashback to how Donna (played as a young woman by Lily James) ended up on this Mediterranean island in the first place: Meeting the string of men who could be Sophie’s father and putting down roots here.

To be honest, it doesn’t make a lot of sense. But let’s face it — the very nature of most musicals is confectionery; style and tone and attitude predominate over character development and (usually) plot. Musicals trade in familiar tropes and then explore them by having people break out into song and dance to embody their emotions. And that’s just what it delivers.

There’s a surprising sophistication to Parker’s visual design, lots of cross-cutting and matching shots that draw people and places separated by time and space together. And he builds to the big reveal: The first appearance in feature film since 2010’s *Burlesque* by the iconic Cher as Sophie’s grandmother.

Is it a gimmick, a stunt to get the gays into the theater? You betcha. (She’s only in the last 20 minutes, and speaks, by my count, 16 lines of dialogue in addition to two songs.) But it’s a thrill nonetheless when she croons out “Fernando” as a surprising, kitchy duet with Andy Garcia. It’s the cherry on this fluffy meringue.

Still, it’s mostly James who carries the picture, which she does brightly with a lovely singing voice and open, golden aura. Seyfried — the only really good singer in the original — also lends her vocals to several songs. They more than make up for the occasionally croaking by Pierce Brosnan, Stellan Skarsgard and a few others.

After the revolutionary development of the movie musical with *La La Land* and The Greatest Showman, *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* does feel a bit quaint. But that’s also something most musicals embrace. Be the first in line and take a chance on it.

Now playing in wide release.

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There are jukebox musicals based on songwriters’ catalogues (ABBA for Mamma Mia, the Four Seasons for Jersey Boys, Carole King for Beautiful). And there are jukebox musicals than hinge around a genre or period (’80s pop for Rock of Ages, for instance, though Jersey Boys and Beautiful also magpie from other artists). But Priscilla Queen of the Desert may be the only such musical that compiles its set list from a vast array of camp hits and classic drag queen lip-synch. Which means one inescapable truth: When a company like Uptown Players stages a production of it, as is now onstage at the Kalita Humphreys Theater, the audience can barely control itself not to treat it as a sing-along.

I admit some culpability myself during the opening night of Priscilla, which ends Act 1 with Gloria Gaynor’s “I Will Survive” and Act 2 with Pat Benatar’s “We Belong” and crams in songs by everyone

Resist the urge to treat the stage version of “Priscilla Queen of the Desert” as a sing-along. (Photo courtesy Mike Morgan)

Endlessly catchy, ‘Priscilla’ rules the desert … and the Kalita

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from Burt Bachrach to Jimmy Webb, John Denver, Verdi and Cyndi Lauper, plus tons of disco. Some are sung live; some are themselves lip-synced; some actually do both (you have to see it to understand). The score is as infectious as Ebola.

That helps mask a number of weaknesses in the script and the casting in this version. The story — adapted from the low-budget cult sensation — is about three drag queens (Tick/MITZI, Adam/Felicia and Bernadette) traipsing across the Australian Outback in a beat-up bus christened Priscilla, on the way to a gig at a casino in the hinterlands. Along the way, they encounter Aborigines, rednecks and outsiders who embrace and/or bash them. It’s all outrageously kitsch and almost aggressively sentimental. It wears its heart on its chiffon sleeve.

Each of the three main characters serves a unique role in driving the plot: Bernadette (Jack Donahue), the transgender widow, is the heart; Adam (Blake McIver), the hot youngster, is the humor; and Tick (Kelly Groves), the middle-aged veteran, is the schmaltz. Two-thirds of that triumvirate work out.

McIver is charismatic and sexy — and best of all, has a strong singing voice — as the most flamboyant of the lot, mercilessly goading Bernadette and throwing more shade than a full solar eclipse. While Donahue’s voice isn’t as strong, his acting skills are; especially in his scenes with Sonny Franks, as the starry-eyed mechanic who accepts all the girls for what they are, Donahue brings a lovely, mature pathos to the show.

But Groves’ Tick never hits. His voice is shaky, and his pacing on the songs idiosyncratic to the point of distraction — he sounded entirely off-beat on “Always on My Mind” and seemed perpetually ill at ease. (Maybe it’s the fault of the orchestrations, but taking a buoyant song like “Say a Little Prayer” and turning it into a dirge near to top of the show is a serious misfire.) Tick’s plot is also the least interesting, though the one that propels the story; it requires more fire and authenticity to be effective.

Fortunately, we have the exaggerated costumes (they elicit their own set of cheers), the campy craziness and the hopeful message of empowerment to carry us through the rough patches, and by the end you’re tempted to run onstage and hand out a few bills to the queens. They worked hard for the money.
I believe we are in a challenging time right now with lobbyists and the NRA and different money powers, and I believe the waters are convoluted. I believe there needs to be tort reform within our congress and within the ways we vote on all of these issues. Those are huge, broad issues, but at the end of the day, I believe it’s absolutely possible for us to do anything we want to. We can change the rules, we can remake the rules. We wrote ‘em the first time. It’s possible to fix this. It’s possible to look at gun laws, it’s possible to look at mental health, it’s possible to look at all of these pieces. We just have to be willing to do it and to elect the people who are going to do it.

Have you thought about how this album could bridge gaps between people who think like you and your conservative fanbase? Look, art has many purposes. Sometimes it’s to entertain, sometimes it’s to inspire and sometimes it is even to provoke, and all of those are valid. What I hope we are able to do in Sugarland and in all of my music is to be able to inspire dialogue and to invite conversation. Rather than pressing the buttons, I want to sit in a corner, point a subversive finger and say, “What do you think about this over here? How could we make it better?”

To ask you a lighter question that’s tour related: Do you have a favorite Christian Siriano dress that you can’t wait to wear? Mmmm! There are several pieces I cannot wait to wear! I mean, he really did his thing on this, and we had such fun in this collaboration just because it already had a theme to it. So, he was able to then just take that and really have fun with it because the theme for the tour, visually and aesthetically, is this beautifully, other-world vintage circus-y look, so we had a lot of fun doing research for that.

How will the healing vibes of the album translate to the stage? We try to make it feel transportive so when you leave you feel like you have been offered an escape and some asylum and some refugee, and that you leave feeling seen.

Sugarland is known for sneaking cover songs into the shows. Have you considered any cover songs that may fit the healing vibes of the album? The fun part about the live shows is that over the course of the tour they will continue to evolve. We’ve got some cover choices and a remix situation that’s super, super funky and fun, and we also have a sort of an all-skate that we like to do at the end with all of our openers to come on and join us, and that’s usually a big, fun party.

I am sure that within that we will be able to figure out messages of unity; the potential is ripe for all of those messages. [Laughs] Right now, we’re leaning toward the fun party side, but that’s not to say that isn’t about unity too.

What do you hope your queer fans take away from this album? I would harken back to our conversation regarding the tour: to feel seen. I think it’s such an interesting time where we are supposedly more technologically, in terms of ideas, connected than ever. But at the same time — the last song on the album, “Not the Only,” especially speaks to this — a lot of us still feel very alone and very unseen, and I hope that within the queer community, within the gay community, the trans community — the LGBTQAI! All the letters! I hope that everyone feels seen, and let’s say again: celebrated.
Asian Film Festival of Dallas returns for 17th year

For 17 years now, the Asian Film Festival of Dallas has showcased a variety of films representing about half the planet, from those by and about Asians, and those from the region, including horror, romance, animation and documentaries. There’s some of all that at this year’s festival (including the dark, edgy anime film *Have a Nice Day*, pictured), which numbers more than 30 feature-length films and even more shorts, including a women’s showcase and student films, several of which (*Bo & Mei*, *Her Bath* and *Monogramish*, all screening July 20) are specifically LGBT.

DEETS: Screenings take place at the Angelika Film Center at Mockingbird Station. Visit AsianFilmDallas.com for complete schedule and tickets.

Friday 07.20 — Thursday 07.26

Asian Film Festival of Dallas returns for 17th year

At the end of *Phantom of the Opera*, the Phantom has disappeared. What happened to him? Well, it turns out, he moved to Coney Island. Seriously, *Love Never Dies* is Andrew Lloyd Webber’s sequel to the juggernaut musical about the tortured but elusive impresario who stalks a charming young ingénue. The national tour of the show opens this week for a two-week run in Dallas before heading over to Fort Worth’s Bass Hall next month.


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**ARTSWEEK**

**THEATER**

**Festival of Independent Theatres.** The 20th annual series of eight rotating performances from small companies, including WingSpan, Echo, Imprint and more. Reviewed this week. Bath House Cultural Center, 521 E. Lawther Drive. Through Aug. 4. Visit FestivalOfIndependentTheatres.org for complete schedule.


**My Son, the Waiter.** Brad Zimmerman's one-man show about trying to make a career as an actor. Eisemann Center for Performing Arts, 2351 Performance Drive, Richardson. Through July 29. EisemannCenter.com.

**FILM**

**17th Annual Asian Film Festival of Dallas.** Festival of films by and about Asian culture. All screenings take place at the Angelika Film Center Mockingbird Station. Through Thursday. Visit AsianFilmDallas.com for a complete schedule.

**Laura Owens.** The controversial, eclectic artist is featured at a show at the Dallas Museum of Art 1717 Harwood St. Through July 29. DMA.org.


**FILM**

**CineWilde Presents The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert.** As the stage musical plays in Uptown, the source material — this 1994 Australian film — runs as this month’s CineWilde screening in Oak Cliff. Presented by CineWilde, with a pre-show discussion and followed by a post-show party and amateur drag contest. Texas Theatre, 231 W. Jefferson Blvd. 8:30 p.m. doors, 9 p.m. screening, 11:15 p.m. contest. $10.

**SATURDAY 07.21**

**COMMUNITY**

**FrontRunners.** Gay jogging/walking group meets weekly at 9 a.m. in Oak Lawn Park at Hall Street and Turtle Creek Boulevard for a run along the Katy Trail.

**Gaybingo.** This month’s theme is Orange You Glad It’s Gaybingo 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.

**SPEAKER**

**Seven Things I Have Learned: And Evening with Ira Glass.** The creator and host of radio’s This American Life appears. Winspear Opera House, 2403 Flora St. 8 p.m. ATTPAC.org

**TUESDAY 07.24**

**FILM**

**Dark Victory.** Bette Davis received one of her 10 Oscar nominations for best actress for this tearjerker about a woman losing her eyesight. 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.

**THEATER**


**THURSDAY 07.26**

**CABARET**

**Glitterbomb Denton.** Weekly queer variety show with a new lineup every Thursday, now at a new locale and new time. Andy’s Bar, 122 N. Locust St., Denton. 8 p.m.

**CONCERTS**

**Pentatonix.** The North Texas a capella vocalists perform with guests Callum Scott, Echosmith. Dos Equis Pavilion at Fair Park, 3839 Fitzhugh Ave. 8 p.m. Ticketmaster.com

**FRIDAY 07.20**

**COMMUNITY**

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

**CONCERTS**

**Sugarland.** See Story, Page 16. Verizon Theatre. 1001 Performance Drive, Grand Prairie. AXS.com
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An average day with Cassie

Some days, being super-average is annoying. None of what I am about to write is meant to be a pity party or a fishing expedition for compliments, it is just something that has been on my mind for a while.

First I will start with what I am above average at. (Donna Day would have killed me for ending that sentence with at, she hated that.) I am a great emcee. My ability to host a show and entertain is above average. I’m very good at drag. I may not be the best but I am certainly better than average. I am an above average home cook — not a chef or even ready to go on MasterChef, but I can slay a casserole and my grilling skills are on point.

I am probably slightly above average with useless trivia — not enough to go on Jeopardy but enough to beat most of my friends at Trivial Pursuit. In high school, I was voted “Most Friendly,” so at some point I was good at being friendly… boy, did I lose that skill. But that is about all where I am better than the norm.

The list of things I am below average at could fill 10 encyclopedias, so let’s go there. I’ve just always wondered how it felt to be the absolute best at something. Does Michael Phelps’ dick get extra erect knowing he is the best at swimming? I will never know. (Not about Michael Phelps’ dick, but about being the best at something.) I am even average in my averageness. Since most everybody is average, am I making any sense? I know being average is not a bad thing but there will always be a part of us that wants to outshine all the rest. I guess I am being petty and I should be happy in the middle, it could always be worse. I will continue to aim for the stars but be okay with the moon.

Being petty, that’s another thing I excel at! Ha! Suck it, average!

Dear Cassie, I have been dating a guy for the past nine months. He is wanting to move faster than I want. He thinks we are ready to move into a place together but I don’t know if I am ready. I enjoy my space. Our real problem is that every one of my friends and most of my family absolutely hate him. He is a bit over-protective and very jealous. He constantly needs to know where I am and who I am with. I wish he treated me better than he does, but he’s really not that bad. I think I love him but am not sure I want to lose everyone else to be with him. My friends have gotten to where they don’t invite me out because they don’t want to be around him.

I was single for such a long time and felt overwhelming loneliness before we got together. Other gay guys always think there must be something wrong with you if you have been single for a long time. I am almost 35 and it just feels good to have someone that wants to be with me. In the beginning, I liked that he got jealous, but now it’s getting to be too much. I don’t need anything to think in line like he is one of my parents. I am grown. Being single for so long sucked but being in a relationship has come with a high price. What would you do in my place? Thank you. Anonymous.

Dear Anon-o-mouse, Listen baby, you need to grow a pair. Break up with this motherfucker and quit acting like you are his little bitch. Nine months and you don’t know if you love him? You don’t. Is that dick good or somethin’? Have you been dickmatized?

What do your friends and family see that you don’t? You are too old to be letting someone treat you like property. If you loved him you would want to move in with him. If you loved him truly, there is usually only one speed for a relationship and that is all out speeding. Your brain is telling you what your heart already knows: He is not the one.

Look, I get it. Before my husband and I got together, I allowed myself to be treated like shit just so I would not be alone. I put up with so much ridiculous shit that I am so ashamed of. I dated one bisexual guy that brought a date — a female! — to my show the night after we first had sex. And my dumb ass continued to date him. One guy “dated” me because as long as everyone thought we were together he would get free drinks, and I remember thinking, At least I am not alone.

Loneliness can play tricks on the mind and can make you forget your worth. It can make you blind to what is going on right in front of you. Fear of being alone is just as bad. You get it in your head, what if this is all I get. You mentally allow yourself to settle. You are better than that, and you deserve better. Settling only worked for the pioneers of the Old West. This guy is not for you and you know it. When you break it off with him — and you know you should — don’t think of it as a loss. Think of him as a stepping-stone to get to who you are supposed to be with. You learn from each relationship you have; sometimes all you learn is how you don’t want to be treated.

For me, I think I allowed myself to be treated badly in the past to know how to recognize when I was being treated right. I think you have learned all you need to from this guy — you have graduated. The new school year will start as soon as you are ready. Move on.

If you don’t already have a pet, get one. My dogs helped curb my loneliness and helped me erase the smell of desperation. They helped me realize that I was worthy of love and to know it when it came to me. Good luck, my friend. You deserve love — we all do — and never settle.

Cassie. Giving advice. That’s something else I am good at doing, maybe even above average.

Actually, the more I think about it, the more I think it is way too stressful to be the best at anything. You’re always expected to be the best. There is comfort in mediocrity. Being average at things is the norm. I think I am going to take the advice I would give someone that is struggling with being average. I would tell them to chill the fuck out and just do you.

So I am going to take a chill pill on the subject and give myself a break. I will strive for greatness and maybe not beat myself up for just being average to above average!

Remember to always love more, bitch less and be fabulous! XOXO, Cassie Nova.

If you have a question or comment, email it to AskCassieNova@gmail.com.
Making the SCENE the week of July 20–26:

- **Club Reflection**: Trinity River Bears Cookout from 4-7 p.m. on Sunday. Miss Turnabout Show at 6 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Dallas Eagle**: United Court Show from 6-10 p.m. on Friday. DIVA Night with DJ C-Rail at 10 p.m. on Saturday. Onyx: Central Southwest Chapter Club Night on Saturday. Dallas Bears Club Night on Saturday. Diablos Cookout from 5-9 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Havana**: Mayra D'Lorenzo raises money for Miss Gay Texas State Pageant System at 10:30 p.m. on Sunday.
- **Hidden Door**: Messy Mondays at the Hidden Door.
- **JR.'s Bar & Grill**: Dreamgirls at 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Marty's Live**: Tuesdays with Blake.
- **Pekers**: Totally Twisted Karaoke at 9:45 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Round-Up Saloon**: Bear Happy Hour at 6 p.m. on Friday.
- **Sue Ellen's**: Mustache Envy on Friday. Devils Burlesque on Saturday. Southpaw Preachers at 3:30 p.m. and Anton Shaw Band at 6 p.m. on Sunday.
- **The 515 Bar**: Sunday Funday free food at 4 p.m. on Sunday.
- **The Rose Room**: Taryn Taylor appears Friday through Sunday. Miss Universo Latino on Wednesday. Doors open at 8:30 p.m. and pageant begins at 10 p.m.
- **TMC: The Mining Company**: Trashy Tuesdays at TMC.
- **Urban Cowboy Saloon**: Crown Jewel Ball at 6 p.m. on Saturday.
- **Woody's Sports & Video Bar**: Jada Pinkett Fox at 11 p.m. on Thursday.
- **Zippers**: Monday Madness with sounds by Rudeboy Dallas from 9 p.m.-2 a.m. on Monday.

*Scene Photographers: Kay Haygood and Chad Mantooth*
Men about town on The Strip

All smiles on The Strip.

Guys’ night out at The Tin Room

The Cast of *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* at Uptown Players (Photo courtesy Kris Ikejiri)

Working the pole at Club Stallions

Getting close at Alexandre’s

John, Chris and Tyler on The Strip

The bartender at The Round-Up has his hands full.
Furries on The Strip
Hugged up on The Strip
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All smiles at The Round-Up Saloon
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Across
1 Teacher in The King and I
5 Bell bottoms, perhaps
10 First two quarters of a New York Liberty game, e.g.
14 Lysol target
15 Like Mary’s little follower
16 Midnight in the Garden of Good and ___
17 It’s glorious, in Oliver!
18 Brand for cutting leaves of grass
19 Prefix with gravure, in “Easter Parade”
20 More of a quote that begins “There is nothing stronger than...”
23 “Bust a Nut” band
24 9-digit ID org.
25 Weapon pointed at James Bond’s crotch
26 Britney Spears’ “___ Curious”
28 Rhett Butler’s final word
30 With 33-Across, comic from Tasmania and source of the quote
33 See 30-Across
34 “Canvas” for tats
35 Shuttlecock
36 Votes of approval
37 River at Pittsburgh
38 Corydon author Gide
42 Dust Bowl refugee
43 Supposed gay percentage of the population
44 Greeted the milkmaid
45 “I Got Rhythm” writer Gershwin
46 Overhand stroke, for Amelie Mauresmo
49 More of the quote
50 Small, wet bodies
52 Arizona tribe
54 She and she or he and he
56 More of the quote
59 End of the quote
60 More of the quote
63 Working hard
64 Member of a Dumas threesome
65 Food for a stallion
67 Russian duo that sings “All Things Said”
69 Utah Starzz and Houston Comets
70 From A to B, to Debussy
71 “Weed ’em and ___” (gardener’s motto?)
72 “___ good turn daily” (Scout motto)

Down
1 Like a dancer’s diet
2 Reader computer program
3 Othello on peaty ground?
4 Dirty Dancing director Emile
5 Heavy metal band?
6 “But still...”
7 Vistas in a gay bar?
8 Penetrating path
9 “I __ to recall...”
10 The Pajama Game hideaway owner of song
11 Admits openly
12 Like a ballerina
13 Blow away
17 Dated
20 Like a ballerina
22 Summer and Smoke heroine
23 Amorous affection, with “the”
24 “___ good turn daily” (Scout motto)
25 Rock Hudson’s marriage, perhaps
27 Sound deep in the throat
28 Penetrating path
29 Dated
30 Big name in oil
31 “Screwed again!”
32 Actress Foch
33 Dated
34 “___ good turn daily” (Scout motto)
35 Bed occupant
36 “Screwed again!”
37 Place for two persons to hide away
38 Bed occupant
39 Feat in Glenn Burke’s sport
40 “___ good turn daily” (Scout motto)
41 Admits openly
42 Rival of “DuPont”
43 Penetrating path
44 Earth’s core
45 “___ good turn daily” (Scout motto)
46 Overhand stroke, for Amelie Mauresmo
47 “Zip it!”
48 “Screwed again!”
49 “___ good turn daily” (Scout motto)
50 A shot
51 Bed occupant
52 Dated
53 Bed occupant
54 “Screwed again!”
55 Bed occupant
56 “Screwed again!”
57 Vermont, to Vivien
58 Word before “my shorts”
59 Bed occupant
60 “Screwed again!”
61 Bed occupant
62 Bed occupant
63 Bed occupant
64 Bed occupant
65 Bed occupant
66 Bed occupant
67 Bed occupant
68 Bed occupant
69 Bed occupant
70 Bed occupant
71 “Weed ’em and ___” (gardener’s motto?)
72 “___ good turn daily” (Scout motto)
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Important Safety Information
Mytesi is not approved to treat infectious diarrhea (diarrhea caused by bacteria, a virus, or a parasite). Before starting you on Mytesi, your healthcare provider will first be sure that you do not have infectious diarrhea. Otherwise, there is a risk you would not receive the right medicine and your infection could get worse. In clinical studies, the most common side effects that occurred more often than with placebo were upper respiratory tract (sinus, nose, and throat) infection (5.7%), bronchitis (3.9%), cough (3.5%), flatulence (3.1%), and increased bilirubin (3.1%).

IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION
This is only a summary. See complete Prescribing Information at Mytesi.com or by calling 1-844-722-8256. This does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What Is Mytesi?
Mytesi is a prescription medicine used to improve symptoms of noninfectious diarrhea (diarrhea not caused by a bacterial, viral, or parasitic infection) in adults living with HIV/AIDS on ART.

Do Not Take Mytesi if you have diarrhea caused by an infection. Before you start Mytesi, your doctor and you should make sure your diarrhea is not caused by an infection (such as bacteria, virus, or parasite).

Possible Side Effects of Mytesi Include:
- Upper respiratory tract infection (sinus, nose, and throat infection)
- Bronchitis (swelling in the tubes that carry air to and from your lungs)
- Cough
- Flatulence (gas)
- Increased bilirubin (a waste product when red blood cells break down)

For a full list of side effects, please talk to your doctor. Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Should I Take Mytesi If I Am:

Pregnant or Planning to Become Pregnant?
- Studies in animals show that Mytesi could harm an unborn baby or affect the ability to become pregnant
- There are no studies in pregnant women taking Mytesi
- This drug should only be used during pregnancy if clearly needed

A Nursing Mother?
- It is not known whether Mytesi is passed through human breast milk
- If you are nursing, you should tell your doctor before starting Mytesi
- Your doctor will help you to decide whether to stop nursing or to stop taking Mytesi

Under 18 or Over 65 Years of Age?
- Mytesi has not been studied in children under 18 years of age
- Mytesi studies did not include many people over the age of 65. So it is not clear if this age group will respond differently. Talk to your doctor to find out if Mytesi is right for you

What Should I Know About Taking Mytesi With Other Medicines?
If you are taking any prescription or over-the-counter medicine, herbal supplements, or vitamins, tell your doctor before starting Mytesi.

What If I Have More Questions About Mytesi?
For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information at Mytesi.com or speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

To report side effects or make a product complaint or for additional information, call 1-844-722-8256.

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Mytesi comes from the Croton lechleri tree harvested in South America.

For Copay Savings Card and Patient Assistance, see Mytesi.com

Please see complete Prescribing Information at Mytesi.com.