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HOUSTON'S LGBTQ MAGAZINE



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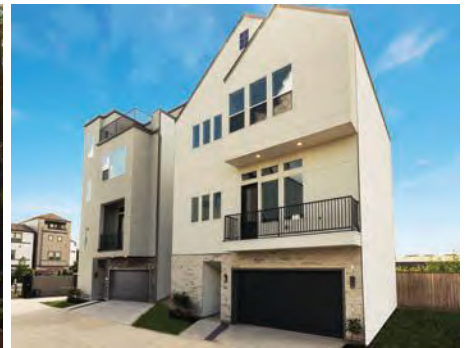
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© **A New Kind of Hero**
(Standing, l-r) chef Scott French, police officer Toni Mascione, and drag performer Regina Thorne-DuBois; (seated, l-r) pastor Troy Treash and fire captain Iris Rodriguez

ASHKAN ROYVAEE

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**ONLINE
EXCLUSIVES**

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Gay Houstonians say The ManKind Project's New Warrior Training Adventure has helped them come to terms with their sexual orientation, and changed their lives. The Project hosts its South Central LGBTQ Getaway in November. Read all about it at OutSmartMagazine.com.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



There's an old adage in LGBTQ advocacy circles: "We are *everywhere*."

When it comes to Tropical Storm Harvey relief efforts in Houston and beyond, this has certainly been the case.

From first responders to drag artists to leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, the LGBTQ community stood exceptionally tall in the wake of the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history.

For example, Memorial Villages police officer Toni Mascione continued responding to calls even as the home she shared with her wife and three children was being destroyed. Meanwhile, after completing one of her shifts, Houston fire captain Iris Rodriguez helped launch a volunteer network, dubbed the "lesbian mafia," that rescued 30 families during the flood and went on to rebuild at least seven homes.

After leading volunteer efforts at the downtown George R. Brown Convention Center shelter, gay real-estate broker Bill Baldwin set up a Harvey Relief Hub in an empty warehouse in the Heights to process donations. And Laura Spanjian, regional public-policy director at Airbnb, was busy coordinating her company's largest relief effort to date.

Spanjian's partner, Susan Christian, helped lead the city's response to the storm as director of the Houston Mayor's Office of Special Events. And Christian's coworker in the Mayor's Office, government-relations assistant Kris Banks, served as night manager at the GRB convention-center shelter.

Angela Blanchard, CEO of BakerRipley, was responsible for setting up Harris County's main shelter at the NRG Stadium complex. And, back at the GRB, Friends For Life founder Salise Shuttlesworth was spearheading the heroic effort that enabled evacuees to shelter with their pets.

The list goes on. And sadly, some of OUTSMART's own writers and advertisers felt Harvey's effects firsthand, including regular contributor Ryan Leach.

Finally, before Harvey's rains even stopped, the Montrose Center launched what has become one of the largest LGBTQ natural-disaster relief funds in history. OUTSMART is donating a portion of its advertising revenue from this special issue to that fund.

When we decided to devote most of our October issue to Harvey coverage, we had no idea that so many remarkable stories would come from within our own community. Unfortunately, it was impossible to include them all.

As Captain Rodriguez says of LGBTQ folks, "Caring for people is a part of our being. It's our fabric. We live this every single day, and we don't know any differently."

We hope you enjoy reading about some of the "Heroes of Harvey."

—John Wright



ON THE COVER

HARVEY'S HEROES

LGBTQ community stands

tall in wake of storm

(Standing, left to right)

Regina Thorne-DuBois,

officer Toni Mascione, and Scott French;

(seated, left to right) reverend Troy Treash

and fire captain Iris Rodriguez

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Turner Asks High Court to Uphold Same-Sex Benefits

Mayor, City appeal Texas Supreme Court's decision in 'Pidgeon v. Turner.'

By Josh Inocencio

"Today I asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review the Texas ruling against marriage rights in *Pidgeon v. Turner*," Houston mayor Sylvester Turner wrote on Twitter on September 15. And with that, a four-year saga that began under Turner's predecessor, mayor Annise Parker, took its latest turn.

Turner, along with the City of Houston, is asking the high court to review the Texas Supreme Court's decision from June saying that same-sex married couples aren't necessarily entitled to equal benefits.

In a news release announcing the City's petition for review, Houston officials wrote that in its 2015 decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the U.S. Supreme Court "recognized a nationwide right to civil marriage for same-sex couples, and held that benefits a state attaches to marriage must be provided equally to all married couples."

The plaintiffs, Harris County taxpayers Jack Pidgeon and Larry Hicks, argue that because Texas law prohibits the extension of spousal benefits to same-sex couples, the mayor is illegally using public monies to fund them. Their core argument is that *Obergefell* provided merely the title of marriage to same-sex couples, and not necessarily the financial benefits.

However, the aims of former Harris County GOP chair Jared Woodfill, the attorney representing the plaintiffs, go beyond eliminating same-sex benefits.

"This particular opinion will go to the U.S. Supreme Court and is a potential vehicle for overturning *Obergefell*, given the changing composition of the court," Woodfill told the *Texas Tribune* in February. "Ultimately, I would like to see *Obergefell* overturned."

Interestingly, Wallace B. Jefferson, the former Republican chief justice of the Texas Supreme Court, is representing the City in the case before the U.S. Supreme Court, thereby challenging the decision of his former colleagues.

"Once a state extends benefits to any married couple, it must treat same-sex couples with 'equal dignity in the eyes of the law,'" Jefferson wrote in the City of Houston's petition to the U.S. Supreme Court, quoting Justice Anthony Kennedy, author of the majority opinion in *Obergefell*.

Widely respected in both political parties,



He's with Her
Mayor Sylvester Turner is trying to put an end to the four-year battle over same-sex benefits that began under his predecessor, Annise Parker.

Jefferson was expected to be on Democrat Hillary Clinton's short list of Supreme Court nominees if she had become president. He is now a partner at a private law firm in Austin.

Kenneth Upton, senior counsel for the LGBTQ civil-rights group Lambda Legal, said it could take months for the U.S. Supreme Court to decide whether to even hear *Pidgeon v. Turner*.

"Keep in mind, out of the 7,000 to 8,000 petitions filed in the Supreme Court each year, the Court only accepts about 75 to 80. So the chances are pretty slim," Upton said.

In the meantime, *Pidgeon v. Turner* could proceed in Harris County's 310th District Family Court, where it was set for trial beginning October 2. The presiding judge is Republican Lisa Millard, who issued an injunction blocking same-sex benefits in the plaintiffs' original lawsuit, *Pidgeon v. Parker*, in 2013. That lawsuit was filed after Mayor Parker extended benefits to the same-sex spouses of City employees.

In response to Millard's injunction, Lambda Legal filed a federal lawsuit, *Freeman v. Parker*, seeking to preserve the benefits. In the wake of the Texas Supreme Court's decision, which sent the case back to Millard's court, Lambda Legal effectively re-filed *Freeman v. Parker* as *Freeman v. Turner*, on behalf of three City employees and their same-sex spouses, in August.

In addition to preserving spousal insurance benefits, *Freeman v. Turner* seeks to ensure that recipients of coverage don't become liable for repayment of past premiums.

"The *Freeman* case is a separate lawsuit and is based strictly on federal law, not the laws [that taxpayers Pidgeon and Hicks] are at-

tempting to enforce," Upton said. "Obviously, if the U.S. Supreme Court decides to review the *Pidgeon* case, that could effectively decide the *Freeman* case as well, but we need not wait until that happens."

Upton said he isn't surprised that the issue has dragged out over four years, even after *Obergefell*. He noted that Texas is among the minority of states where state Supreme Court justices are chosen in partisan elections.

After a Texas appeals court ruled in favor of the City, the Texas Supreme Court initially denied a rehearing of *Pidgeon v. Turner*. But then governor Greg Abbott, lieutenant governor Dan Patrick, and attorney general Ken Paxton joined a right-wing lobbying campaign urging the court to reverse its decision.

"We are seeing efforts in a number of conservative states that have adopted a strategy to whittle away at *Obergefell* in little bits—one benefit, one protection at a time," Upton said.

A similar effort occurred in Arkansas after the state's Department of Health refused to list both names of a lesbian couple on their daughter's birth certificate. The Arkansas Supreme Court ruled in favor of the health department, but earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the decision, saying states must treat same-sex parents the same as opposite-sex ones.

"The [conservatives'] goal in the short term is to make sure that same-sex couples get nothing more than 'skim-milk marriage,' as justice [Ruth Bader] Ginsburg called it," Upton said.

Josh Inocencio is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

News continued on page 17

What is TRUVADA for PrEP?

TRUVADA for PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is a prescription medicine that is used together with safer sex practices to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This use is only for HIV-negative adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1. To help determine your risk of getting HIV-1, talk openly with your healthcare provider about your sexual health.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to prevent getting HIV. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA for PrEP?

Before taking TRUVADA for PrEP:

- ◆ **You must be HIV-negative before you start taking TRUVADA for PrEP.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1. Do not take TRUVADA to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-negative.
- ◆ **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** If you have flu-like symptoms, you could have recently become infected with HIV-1. Tell your healthcare provider if you had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting or at any time while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP:

- ◆ **You must continue to use safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- ◆ **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP:**
 - ◆ Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months.
 - ◆ If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.
- ◆ **To further help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1:**
 - ◆ Know your HIV status and the HIV status of your partners.
 - ◆ Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV to infect you.
 - ◆ Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior, such as having fewer sex partners.
 - ◆ Do not miss any doses of TRUVADA. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- ◆ **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects:

- ◆ **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** TRUVADA is not approved to treat HBV. If you have HBV and stop taking TRUVADA, your HBV may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health.

Who should not take TRUVADA for PrEP?

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- ◆ **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.** If you are HIV-1 positive, you need to take other medicines with TRUVADA to treat HIV-1. TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- ◆ **Also take certain medicines to treat hepatitis B infection.**

What are the other possible side effects of TRUVADA for PrEP?

Serious side effects of TRUVADA may also include:

- ◆ **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with TRUVADA. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking TRUVADA.
- ◆ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ◆ **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- ◆ **Bone problems,** including bone pain, softening, or thinning, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP are stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA for PrEP?

- ◆ **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis.
- ◆ **If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.** It is not known if TRUVADA can harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant while taking TRUVADA for PrEP, talk to your healthcare provider to decide if you should keep taking TRUVADA.
- ◆ **If you are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed.** Do not breastfeed. If you become HIV-positive, HIV can be passed to the baby in breast milk.
- ◆ **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. TRUVADA may interact with other medicines. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.
- ◆ **If you take certain other medicines** with TRUVADA, your healthcare provider may need to check you more often or change your dose. These medicines include certain medicines to treat hepatitis C (HCV) infection.

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.

Please see Important Facts about TRUVADA for PrEP including important warnings on the following page.



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TRUVADA for PrEP™ is a once-daily prescription medicine that can help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 when taken every day and used together with safer sex practices.

- ◆ TRUVADA for PrEP is only for adults who are at high risk of getting HIV through sex.
- ◆ You must be HIV-negative before you start taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Ask your doctor about your risk of getting HIV-1 infection and if TRUVADA for PrEP may be right for you.

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MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Before starting TRUVADA for PrEP:

- **You must be HIV-1 negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-1 negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include flu-like symptoms, tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin. Tell your healthcare provider if you have had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP.
- **While taking TRUVADA for PrEP:**
 - **You must continue to use safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
 - **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.** Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you think you were exposed to HIV-1 or have a flu-like illness while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
 - **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- See the “How To Further Reduce Your Risk” section for more information.

TRUVADA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** TRUVADA is not approved to treat HBV. If you have HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA for PrEP is a prescription medicine used together with safer sex practices to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This use is only for HIV-negative adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1.

- To help determine your risk of getting HIV-1, talk openly with your healthcare provider about your sexual health.

Do NOT take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.**
- Take certain medicines to treat hepatitis B infection.

HOW TO TAKE TRUVADA FOR PrEP

- **Take 1 tablet once a day, every day,** not just when you think you have been exposed to HIV-1.
- Do not miss any doses. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- Use TRUVADA for PrEP together with condoms and safer sex practices.
- Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months. You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about taking TRUVADA for PrEP[™] (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. This does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your medicine.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the “Most Important Information About TRUVADA for PrEP” section.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.
- Bone problems.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP include stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight.

These are not all the possible side effects of TRUVADA. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP.

BEFORE TAKING TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis.
- Have any other medical conditions.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. If you become HIV-positive, HIV can pass to the baby in breast milk.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with TRUVADA for PrEP.

HOW TO FURTHER REDUCE YOUR RISK

- Know your HIV status and the HIV status of your partners.
- Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV to infect you.
- Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior, such as having fewer sex partners.
- Do not share needles or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about TRUVADA for PrEP. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more, including how to prevent HIV infection.
- Go to start.truvada.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit start.truvada.com for program information.

Pioneering Publisher Was 'Mayor of Montrose'

Houston gay media legend Henry McClurg dies at 70.

By JD Doyle

On September 16, Houston's LGBTQ community lost one of its pioneers.

Henry McClurg, the self-proclaimed "Mayor of Montrose" who published local gay newspapers for more than 40 years, died at 70.

"Henry would have been a newspaper guy in no matter what place he would have found himself," said longtime local gay activist Ray Hill. "It was in his DNA. Houston's GLBT community was just lucky he was here at a time when tangible reading material was needed to feed the progress of our cause."

Although there have been many Houston LGBTQ publications over the years, it was McClurg who contributed the most to bringing gay and lesbian news to the city.

"I figured my publications had a purpose—to



Henry McClurg

do good, to educate people and to educate our community, let them know what is going on, to be proud and not be ashamed that you're gay," McClurg said in a 2012 interview.

McClurg served as vice president of the National Gay Press Association, the first professional trade organization for LGBTQ media. Mark Segal, longtime publisher of the *Philadelphia Gay News*, was president during that time.

"Henry was a wonderful and delightful man, and should be recognized for that pioneering work on a national level," Segal said. "Almost two years ago, I was in Houston on the book tour of my memoir, and as soon as Henry knew I was coming to town, he made sure I'd have dinner with him and get his personal tour of Montrose. It was a special evening of the joy that was Henry."

Originally from Mississippi, McClurg spent time in the military before going to work in radio, moving to New Orleans and then Houston. While working for a Houston radio station, he saw the opportunity and need for a gay publication. He wanted an alternative to the only other gay publication at the time, *The Nuntius*, which had a different focus.

McClurg's publication was called *Contact*, and it began in March 1974. With its fare of news stories, bar guides, and ads, its circulation grew in the Gulf States region and ran for 17 issues until October 1975, when McClurg sold it to *The Advocate*.

As part of the sale arrangement, McClurg went to work for *The Advocate* for a year, but he was hungry to start another paper. McClurg's next publication, *The Montrose Star*, was Houston's first "gay newspaper" with a focus on news. It lasted from late 1976 until the end of 1980. According to McClurg, the newspaper's name helped lead to Montrose becoming the name of the city's gayborhood.

continued on page 80

COMMUNITY

Photos by Dalton DeHart and Edgardo Aguilar



On Sept. 15, the **T.R.U.T.H. Project** hosted "Strength—After the Rain," a benefit for Tropical Storm Harvey survivors. Pictured are attendees.



On Sept. 12, Hamburger Mary's hosted "**Together We Are Family—That's What Friends Are For**," a drag show benefiting those affected by Tropical Storm Harvey.



On Sept. 3, the **University of Houston LGBTQ Alumni Association** hosted a Tropical Storm Harvey benefit for the NRG Center shelter at Pearl Bar.



On Sept. 15, **Frontrunners Houston** hosted drag bingo at Guava Lamp, benefitting Tropical Storm Harvey relief funds operated by the Montrose Center and mayor Sylvester Turner. Pictured are Thomas Lopez, Evan Shoemaker, Dixie Wrekt (aka Chris White), Darryl White, Andrew Bergeron, and Ashton Harper.



On July 27, the **Hollyfield Foundation** presented a check for \$12,500 to the **Dalton DeHart Photographic Foundation**. Pictured are Wendy Harshbarger and Dalton DeHart.

Coming-Out Party

Lady Bunny comes to Houston.



Lady Bunny brings her latest blend of raucous, irreverent comedy in the form of her new show *Trans-Jester!* In addition to new parodies that re-work selections from Adele, Rent, and Bruno Mars to hilarious effects punctuated by zany *Laugh-In* style zingers, Bunny has widened her repertoire to include some actual insightful social commentary. (Well, she *thinks* it's

insightful, anyway.) Trashing the current overemphasis on political correctness, Bunny breaks down some of the latest buzzwords that we're all supposed to remember for every occasion as we "evolve." Sometimes, Bunny feels, we're actually evolving away from common sense.

OutReach United was founded in 2006 by Gary Wood

and his husband, Bryant Johnson. The organization has raised over \$350,000 since its inception for worthy LGBT nonprofits.

—Marene Gustin

- **Trans-Jester!**
- **October 14, 7–10 p.m.**
- **Buffalo Soldiers Museum, 3816 Caroline Street**
- **outreachunited.org**

🔊 Radio ★ Performing Arts 📺 Art & Photography 🔄 Ongoing + Other Things 📅 Save The Date

1

In the Studio: Craft in Postwar America, 1950–1970 📺 thru 8 Nearly 40 artworks showcasing the early decades of American craft. mfah.org

2

The Beginning of Everything 📺 thru Feb 18 Drawings from the Janie C. Lee, Louisa Stude Sarofim, and David Whitney collections. menil.org

3

The Mystery of Edwin Drood ★ thru 14 The audience plays detective as the cast plays out Charles Dickens' final work. The show has a different ending every night. obsidiantheater.org



5

The Original Greek Festival + thru 8 Get your Greek fix here. greekfestival.org

6

Exit Laughing ★ thru 15 A hilarious boozy farewell party. theatresuburbia.org

7

Season Kickoff ★ The Met dances its way into the season. metdance.org
Jimmy Webb: The Glen Campbell Years ★ The composer pays tribute to his friend. thegrand.com

8

Boo on the Bayou ★ thru 31 Kemah celebrates Halloween all month long. kemahboardwalk.com

9

A Tribute to George Barris 📺

thru Dec 31 An exhibit paying tribute to the King of Kustomizing, you can see a replica of Barris' 1966 Batmobile and more. nmfh.org



11

A Taste of SPA + Chefs and the arts. spahouston.org

12

Out for Good ★ Houston's premier annual fundraising dinner. monstrosecenter.org

13

Nora's Home Golf Classic + Fourth annual fundraiser. norashome.org

Hocus Pocus Pops ★ The Houston symphony performs magic for free. houstonsymphony.org

14

Bayou City Art Festival + 📺 & 15 Food, fun, and plenty of art. artcolonyassociation.org

Coming-Out Party ★ Lady Bunny's new comedy show *Trans-Jester*. outreachunited.org

15

The Beach Boys ★ Good vibrations at The Grand! theGrand.com

Everybody Talks about the Weather 📺 thru Jan 7, 2018 Solo exhibit by Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz. camh.org



17

Steak Night & Drag Bingo +

Every Tuesday night at Guava Lamp! guavalamphouston.com/events

18

L.I.F.E. Houston Legacy Luncheon +

Celebrate L.I.F.E. Houston's 29th anniversary of feeding hungry babies in the greater-Houston area. lifehouston.org/2017-legacy-luncheon

19

Journey of the Universe ★ & 24

Emmy Award-winning doc narrating the 14-billion-year story of the universe's development in a single hour. eventbrite.com/e/journey-of-the-universe-tickets-37948295373?aff=es2

20

CR Fall Luncheon + Rob Lowe

headlines the Council on Recovery's fundraiser. councilonrecovery.org
Dia de los Muertos 📺 thru Nov 8 Lawndale celebrates Day of the Dead all month. lawndaleartcenter.org

21

Houston Halloween Fest + Fright night. houstonzombiewalk.net
Under the Stars ★ Gladys Knight and Isley Bros. woodlandscenter.org
6th Annual Spirit of Leather Awards + montrosecenter.org

22

Joshua Bell ★ One of the greatest violinists performs for one night only. theGrand.com



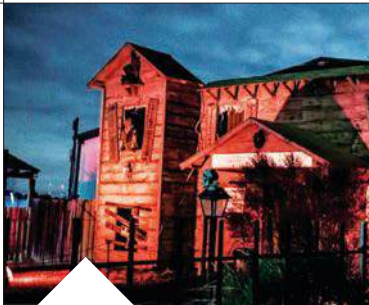
24

For Hire: Contemporary Sign Painting in America 📺

thru Jan 7, 2018 The exhibition showcases a range of contemporary sign painters. crafthouston.org

25

Moody Gardens Ghostly Gardens + Trick-or-treat, creepy crafts and more. moodygardens.org



27

Nosferatu ★ Silent-movie horror classic with live organ. theGrand.com

Island Oktoberfest + thru 28 36th annual Galveston celebration for the whole family. galvestonoktoberfest.com

28

The Sound of Things 📺 last day

The work of artists Bohyun Yoon and Alyce Santoro conceptualizes sound and its latent potential within objects and craft materials. crafthouston.org

29

The Glamour and Romance of Oscar de la Renta 📺 thru Jan 28, 2018 Celebrates the illustrious life and career of the renowned fashion designer. The exhibition showcases nearly 70 ensembles. mfah.org

30

Screamworld 📺 thru 31 Only one more day to get your boo on at this north-Houston haunted house. screamworld.com

31

Happy Halloween!

Save the Date

November 2 Gryffin ★ The longtime guitarist and classically trained pianist comes to Houston. whiteoakmusicall.com

More CALENDAR →

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Calendar of Events

continued from previous page

The Houston Walk

October 7

7



Facing Down Stigma

Since 2011, The Houston Walk has raised more than \$130,000. Openly gay founder C. Patrick McIlvain (kneeling above) started the walk to create an environment for positive public dialogue on mental illness.

Every step you take at The Houston Walk will help people living with mental illness break the stigma. The 5K walk raises awareness and funding for Greater Houston area nonprofit agencies and programs that provide mental-health services. C. Patrick McIlvain, an openly gay man, founded The Houston Walk in 2011 to create an environment for positive public dialogue on mental illness. Since then, the event has raised more than \$130,000. On October 7, walk teams, exhibitors, sponsors, and volunteers will gather at Stude Park for the 7th annual walk. The walk begins with a ceremony and is followed by a luncheon. To participate, register online now or in person on the day of the event. Check-in: Saturday, October 7, at 6:30 a.m.

thehoustonwalk.org/home

Bayou City Art Festival Downtown

October 14 & 15

14 & 15

Food, fun, and plenty of art! We love this outdoor festival from the Art Colony Association held every fall. The two-day festival showcases the works of over 300 of the finest artists in the world. The outdoor event brings out more than 20,000 people to the iconic skyline of downtown Houston, offering visitors the opportunity to meet with exhibiting artists and enjoy food and entertainment. Over the past 46 years, the annual festivals (there's another one in the spring at Memorial Park) have raised 3.5 million dollars benefitting local arts and community-service organizations, Houston parks, and arts education initiatives for children and adults.

artcolonyassociation.org

More CALENDAR →

WORLD PREMIERE

BALLS

by Kevin Armento and Bryony Lavery

directed by Ianthe Demos and Nick Flint
movement direction by Natalie Lomonte

October 11-29, 2017

It's 1973, and Houston's Astrodome is playing host to one of the biggest pop cultural events of all time as Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs face-off in 'The Battle of the Sexes' tennis match!

Created in conjunction with New York's acclaimed One Year Lease Theater Company (OYL), *Balls* is a spectacular new work that bounces one of the most memorable tennis events of all-time off the cultural debates it ignited. Co-written by Tony award nominee Bryony Lavery and Stage Edinburgh award winner Kevin Armento, *Balls* embraces OYL's high-intensity physical groove and features a shot-by-shot re-imagining of the entire match in a carnival-like atmosphere! This World Premiere is must-see theatre from one of the nation's most promising new companies.

FOR MATURE AUDIENCES: Language



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Join us for OutSmart Night
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TELL THE WORLD



Calendar of Events

continued from page 20

L.I.F.E. Houston Legacy Luncheon

October 18

18

Celebrate L.I.F.E. Houston's 29th anniversary of feeding hungry babies in the greater Houston area. L.I.F.E. Houston is the only nonprofit organization in this area that addresses infant hunger and malnutrition. Since 1988, it has provided three million infant feedings to over 100,000 families. This year's celebration honors founding board members Barbara Cauble and Gayle Shadowens, and recognizes Community Health Choice (CHC) as the recipient of this year's Community LIFE-Line Award.

lifehouston.org/2017-legacy-luncheon

CR Fall Luncheon

October 20

20

Rob Lowe headlines The Council on Recovery's fundraiser. With over 27 years of sobriety, Rob attributes his wife as the inspiration to get sober and describes his journey through recovery as the path that brought him everything he values in life. On his 25th sobriety anniversary he tweeted: "To those struggling with addiction, there is true, real hope. 25 years ago today, I found recovery and a life of promise. #Grateful." This should be an entertaining and enlightening event.

councilonrecovery.org ■



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I WE RISE

BY LIFTING OTHERS



Hurricane Harvey left many HCC Interior Design students without the means to be successful this fall but the design professionals of Houston and interior design faculty around the nation reached out to HCC to offer support and supplies. Thank you!



hccs.edu/interiordesign



Annise Parker's Weather Superpowers

Ann Coulter thinks "lesbian mayor" caused Harvey, but I blame the bathroom bill.

As I am certain you have seen on Fox News (and in the works of great literature), the real superhero of Hurricane Harvey is former Houston mayor Annise Parker.

She caused the damn thing.

Republican mouthpiece Ann Coulter thinks lesbians cause weather events. That's ridiculous. Everyone knows stupid people who don't use their car's blinkers cause hurricanes.

Coulter (bless her heart, y'all) tweeted that Harvey was far more likely to have been caused by Houston having a lesbian mayor than it was by climate change. Let me mention here that Parker has not been in office for two years, which I guess means that God has an unusually slow reaction time. (That explains why the Sistine Chapel has no paintings of God swatting flies.)

Parker was wildly popular, and she mopped the floor with her opponents so many times that they had to pass a term-limit law just to get her out of office. (All of that mopping explains why Houston's bill for street sweepers was lower than whale poop during her tenure as mayor.)

To be honest, I did not know that Parker could cause bad stuff to happen all on her own. Hell, while I was watching the forest fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornadoes all at once, I just figured somebody in Ohio was being forced to bake a gay wedding cake.

However, Coulter blamed Parker alone, and who am I to question voodoo science? I guess that means that Parker is the Weather Witch. (Fans of inappropriate alliteration can deduce that this makes Coulter the Blathering Bitch.)

I think I should mention here that we should not give Parker too much credit for her weather superpowers. After all, Houston's weather is a whole lot easier to control than, say, Cincinnati's. Houston only has two seasons—too hot and too cold. I'm exaggerating. Of course we



COLLAGE: BLAISE DITEFANO

Houston's Wonder Woman

Who knew superhero Annise Parker had the power to cause Hurricane Harvey?

have spring. Last year it was on a Tuesday. Fall lasted for a weekend, and it was glorious. We also have only two water events—flood and drought. So hell, Parker can control the weather by just flipping a coin.

However, I need her to display the power to make it snow in Houston just once a decade or so. And if she can't, I guess I'll have to take my future weather needs to openly gay district attorney Kim Ogg.

Through the miracle of big-time journalism, I was able to determine exactly what Parker was doing during the hurricane—other than practicing her newfound weather-control powers and trying to decide on a design for her superhero cape.

Come to find out, she was working for Baker-Ripley, the local nonprofit that was tapped to run the hurricane shelter at NRG Stadium. She was working her patootie off. So, since she was actually doing the Lord's work, I think the blame for this disaster needs to go somewhere else. I'm just saying that governor Greg Abbott calling a special session of the Texas Legislature just so he can hurt transgender children might—just might—have been what really pissed off the Big Guy in the Sky. You know what I mean? That was pure

damn evil on a stick, with a cherry on top.

Thelma over at the beauty salon told me she doesn't understand these damn Republican fundamentalists deciding that the Good Lord holds animosities toward anybody who isn't a white heterosexual Christian. She says she sees the "duh" in fundamental, but the "fun" and the "mental" parts are what totally escape her.

I have a few minutes left before deadline, so I want to tell you that Harris County district judge Steven Kirkland has announced he's running for Texas Supreme Court. Those of you who know Kirkland know that he carries a thermos of justice juice everywhere he goes. This fella can stuff two pounds of work into a one-pound sack. His Twitter handle is @steven-kirkland. Go follow him and let him know he has your vote.

Now, go drink something pumpkin-flavored before you ruin October for everybody else. It's not just a good idea, it's the damn law.

Susan Bankston lives in Richmond, Texas, where she writes about her hairdresser at The World's Most Dangerous Beauty Salon, Inc., at janitaje.com.

WHAT IS GENVOYA®?

GENVOYA is a 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in people 12 years and older who weigh at least 77 pounds. It can either be used in people who are starting HIV-1 treatment and have never taken HIV-1 medicines before, or people who are replacing their current HIV-1 medicines and whose healthcare provider determines they meet certain requirements. These include having an undetectable viral load (less than 50 copies/mL) for 6 months or more on their current HIV-1 treatment. GENVOYA combines 4 medicines into 1 pill taken once a day with food. GENVOYA is a complete HIV-1 treatment and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.

GENVOYA does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS.

To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses, you must keep taking GENVOYA. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about GENVOYA?

GENVOYA may cause serious side effects:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** GENVOYA is not approved to treat HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV and stop taking GENVOYA, your HBV may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking GENVOYA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health.

Who should not take GENVOYA?

Do not take GENVOYA if you take:

- **Certain prescription medicines for other conditions.** It is important to ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with GENVOYA. Do not start a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider.
- **The herbal supplement** St. John's wort.
- **Any other medicines to treat HIV-1 infection.**

What are the other possible side effects of GENVOYA?

Serious side effects of GENVOYA may also include:

- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking GENVOYA.

- **Kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys. If you develop new or worse kidney problems, they may tell you to stop taking GENVOYA.
- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- **Severe liver problems,** which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

The most common side effect of GENVOYA is nausea. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking GENVOYA?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Other medicines may affect how GENVOYA works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Ask your healthcare provider if it is safe to take GENVOYA with all of your other medicines.
- **If you take antacids.** Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take GENVOYA.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if GENVOYA can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking GENVOYA.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.

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.

Please see Important Facts about GENVOYA, including important warnings, on the following page.

Ask your healthcare provider if GENVOYA is right for you.

GENVOYA does not
cure HIV-1 or AIDS.

SHOW YOUR POWER

Take care of what matters most—you. GENVOYA is a **1-pill, once-a-day complete HIV-1 treatment** for people who are either new to treatment or people whose healthcare provider determines they can replace their current HIV-1 medicines with GENVOYA.

Genvoya 

elvitegravir 150mg/cobicistat 150mg/emtricitabine
200mg/tenofovir alafenamide 10mg tablets

LOVE
WHAT'S
INSIDE™

 GILEAD

(jen-VOY-uh)

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT GENVOYA

GENVOYA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** GENVOYA is not approved to treat HBV. If you have both HIV-1 and HBV, your HBV may suddenly get worse if you stop taking GENVOYA. Do not stop taking GENVOYA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

ABOUT GENVOYA

- GENVOYA is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in people 12 years of age and older who weigh at least 77 pounds and have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. GENVOYA can also be used to replace current HIV-1 medicines for some people who have an undetectable viral load (less than 50 copies/mL of virus in their blood), and have been on the same HIV-1 medicines for at least 6 months and have never failed HIV-1 treatment, and whose healthcare provider determines that they meet certain other requirements.
- **GENVOYA does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.

Do NOT take GENVOYA if you:

- Take a medicine that contains: alfuzosin (Uroxatral[®]), carbamazepine (Carbatrol[®], Epitol[®], Equetro[®], Tegretol[®], Tegretol-XR[®], Teril[®]), cisapride (Propulsid[®], Propulsid Quicksolv[®]), dihydroergotamine (D.H.E. 45[®], Migranal[®]), ergotamine (Cafergot[®], Migergot[®], Ergostat[®], Medihaler Ergotamine[®], Wigraine[®], Wigrettes[®]), lovastatin (Advicor[®], Altoprev[®], Mevacor[®]), lurasidone (Latuda[®]), methylergonovine (Ergotrate[®], Methergine[®]), midazolam (when taken by mouth), phenobarbital (Luminal[®]), phenytoin (Dilantin[®], Phenytek[®]), pimozide (Orap[®]), rifampin (Rifadin[®], Rifamate[®], Rifater[®], Rimactane[®]), sildenafil when used for lung problems (Revatio[®]), simvastatin (Simcor[®], Vytorin[®], Zocor[®]), or triazolam (Halcion[®]).
- Take the herbal supplement St. John's wort.
- Take any other HIV-1 medicines at the same time.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about GENVOYA. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- Go to GENVOYA.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit GENVOYA.com for program information.

IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about GENVOYA[®] and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and your treatment.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF GENVOYA

GENVOYA can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the "Most Important Information About GENVOYA" section.
- Changes in your immune system.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis), which is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Severe liver problems, which in rare cases can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms: skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

The most common side effect of GENVOYA is nausea.

These are not all the possible side effects of GENVOYA. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking GENVOYA.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with GENVOYA.

BEFORE TAKING GENVOYA

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Have any other medical condition.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with GENVOYA.

HOW TO TAKE GENVOYA

- GENVOYA is a complete one pill, once a day HIV-1 medicine.
- Take GENVOYA with food.



Are You Ready for the Next Harvey?

Tips on recovering from—and preparing for—natural disasters.

During what may be the worst hurricane season on record, millions across the South have been affected by the damage to homes, vehicles, personal belongings—and ultimately, their lives.

While the emotional toll following natural disasters is significant, many must also deal with the financial cost of rebuilding.

FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) aims to reduce the impact of flooding on public and private structures by offering affordable insurance to property owners, and by encouraging communities to adopt and enforce floodplain-management regulations.

NFIP allows homeowners, business owners, and renters who reside in participating communities to purchase federally backed flood insurance. These policies cover at least some of the costs to repair flood-damaged buildings and replace contents.

Following Hurricane Harvey, NFIP enhanced the flood-insurance claims process and extended the grace period for paying policy-renewal premiums. In addition, the program implemented temporary changes to rush recovery funds into the hands of NFIP policyholders. FEMA may also provide some relief to those whose vehicles have been damaged by flooding.

Regular homeowner's insurance policies don't cover flooding. However, if you have an individual flood-insurance policy through a private company, it may provide some protection. For instance, a private flood-insurance policy can cover out-of-pocket costs that federal flood insurance does not, such as living expenses for those who relocate while their homes are being rebuilt.

As with most other types of insurance, a flood policy is likely to have a deductible that must be met by the policyholder before the coverage will begin to pay out benefits. Typically, there are separate deductibles for your dwelling and its contents. Higher coverage limits are usually available for non-residential structures and their related contents.

Also, even though homeowner's policies don't include flooding, they may provide cover-



age for a leaky roof. Given the harsh rains that plagued Southeast Texas during Tropical Storm Harvey, those who were not flooded might qualify for this type of claim.

As a side note, a new Texas law that went into effect on September 1 reduces the penalty an insurance company may face when a policyholder successfully sues it for a late claims payment.

If you have flood insurance through both NFIP and a private insurer, you can file two separate claims. However, keep in mind that the payment you receive from federal disaster assistance is limited to losses that are not covered by a private flood insurance policy.

Regardless of whether you have flood insurance, there may be other outlets available for relief. For instance, you may be eligible for a federal grant that can be used for a variety of things, such as emergency home repairs and/or money to pay for temporary housing. In addition, as a homeowner, you may be able to borrow up to \$200,000 through the federal Small Business Administration to repair or replace your disaster-damaged primary residence. Likewise, as a homeowner or renter, you may borrow up to \$40,000 via the SBA to repair and/or replace damaged personal property.

SBA is also providing an automatic

12-month deferment of principal and interest payments for SBA-serviced business and disaster loans that were in "regular servicing" status on August 25, in the primary counties designated as federal disaster areas from Hurricane Harvey. Also, the IRS has announced that the October 16 deadline for filing federal tax extensions has been changed to January 31, 2018, for those who live in disaster areas.

Since nobody can predict when a disaster will strike, the time to make sure that you have the right types and amounts of financial protection is sooner rather than later.

Paying insurance premiums is not something most people enjoy, but ensuring that your home and other assets are protected is essential—especially for those who live in areas that are prone to natural disasters. In this case, the "cost" of the premium can be well worth it if and when disasters strike.

Grace S. Yung, CFP, is a certified financial planner practitioner with experience in helping domestic partners plan their finances since 1994. She is a principal at Midtown Financial LLC in Houston and was recognized as a "Five-Star Wealth Manager" in the 2014 September issue of Texas Monthly. Yung can be reached at grace.yung@lpl.com.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Check out these fabulous events co-sponsored by OutSmart and our marketing partners.

October 1: **Bunnies on the Bayou**
Bunnies in Heat at Henderson Heights at 2pm. bunniesonthebayou.org

October 7: **Diana Country Dinner and Dance** at Neon Boots. thedianafoundation.org

October 7: **The Houston Walk For Mental Health Awareness** at Stude Park. thehoustonwalk.org

October 14 & 15: **Bayou City Art Festival** in downtown Houston. bayoucityartfestival.com

October 14 & 15: **Coming Out Party** presented by OutReach United benefits local charities at Buffalo Soldiers Museum. outreachunited.org

October 26: **OutSmart Night at Stages**, presentation of the world premiere of *Balls*, the Billie Jean King play at Stages Theatre stages theatre.com

SAVE THE DATE

November 4: **25th Houston Transgender Unity Banquet**
unitybanquet.com



The Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards will be announced in OUTSMART's November issue. For advertising information, call 713/520-7237 ext. 710.

TimeOut in Paris



📍 **Jennie and Anna Latham** share their first trip to Paris with the OUTSMART edition that featured their wedding. Their historic event was the first lesbian wedding held at the Bryan Museum in Galveston. Love sees no boundaries!

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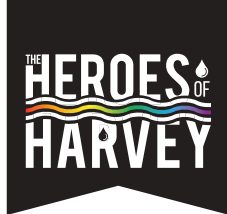
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“We truly cannot think about, even for a split second, our own lives and the devastation we may be coming home to, because in order to make it through the mission, the mission must come first.”

—Memorial Villages police officer Toni Mascione



Answering the Call

Lesbian police officer kept working as her home was destroyed.

By Jenny Block

Photo by Ashkan Image

When Memorial Villages police officer Toni Mascione left her home in Katy on Friday, August 25—the eve of Tropical Storm Harvey—she wasn’t sure if or when she’d return.

Mascione hadn’t done much in the way of preparation, aside from ensuring that her wife, Christina Fedorchenko Mascione, and their three children—nine-year-old Isabella Michelle and five-year-old twins Gabrielle Alexander and Ayden Ronin—would be safe.

For the next three days, Mascione had little time to dwell on the fate of the couple’s home or belongings. In the thick of the storm, her sole focus would be the people she was there to protect. “We truly cannot think about, even for a split second, our own lives and the devastation we may be coming home to, because in order to make it through the mission, the mission must come first,” Mascione says. “As an officer, the mission is always citizens you don’t even know. Families of police officers [also need to] put themselves last every time, because that’s part of it.”

Toni and Christian are both Houston natives, but they had never faced a storm like Harvey. Toni, a nearly nine-year veteran of the police force, is also the head of security at Rich’s nightclub, as well as a sponsored athlete and model for Relentless Defender Apparel. Christina is a financial-account analyst for Quest Software.

Toni called Christina not long into her shift—before checking in would become next to impossible. Because they knew flooding was possible at the house they were renting, Christina took the children to stay with friends. She recalls making sure she had with her the one item she couldn’t imagine living without—a wedding ring that was passed down from her

mother-in-law. “This ring is extremely dear to my wife’s heart, which makes it intensely dear to mine because of all the love and hard work my late father-in-law poured into its purchase at a time when he had nothing,” she says. “The selflessness and unconditional love that he passed down to my wife is something that cannot be replaced.”

Christina also grabbed something much less sentimental—the couple’s guns. “I was fearful that looters might be a possibility, and because I had to be prepared to protect our children from the apocalypse at any point,” she says.

Early on, Christina says she had an overwhelmingly bad feeling about what was to come. Unfortunately, her gut was all too right—Harvey hit Houston with a vengeance and refused to let up.

It wasn’t until Monday that Toni reunited with her wife and children, forever changed by what she had seen. And then it wasn’t until Tuesday that she could get back to their home, because their neighborhood’s streets were so devastatingly flooded. Toni says she went to the house alone because she didn’t want her wife to be the first to see it. The minute she walked in, she fell apart. “I don’t think I had truly prepared myself for what I saw,” she says. “As an officer, you experience tragedy and pain and traumatic events daily. You are trained to numb, compartmentalize, and push through, because that’s your job. You have to be the one to hold it together for everyone else.

“I think seeing my home and all my children’s toys and clothes—everything Christina and I had worked so hard for—destroyed, combined with everything I had seen over the last few days while on duty, I think that just broke me,” she adds. “I cried and cried and cried.”

Their home was destroyed, and Toni and Christina had lost nearly everything. “There were a few clothes that were hanging in each closet that we were able to salvage,” Toni says. “We all lost every pair of shoes we owned, with the exception of what Christina packed for herself and the children. I had the bag I packed for duty for five days and the uniform I was wearing.”

The biggest loss for Toni was an irreplaceable one. “I had saved every single letter and card Christina had ever written to me,” she says. “They were in my nightstand by our bed. They all were ruined in the flood. That was heartbreaking for me. Christina’s words, and the way she expresses her love, is one of the most beautiful things to me. I had saved everything, even down to little notes written on napkins.”

Once they had come to terms with their enormous loss, the couple faced another challenge—explaining it to their children. This time, however, the surprise was a pleasant one—a true relief in the face of it all. “Isabella expressed being happy we were all together, and that I made it through the storm,” Toni says. “She understood the risk I was at during the hurricane, and the details of what my job entailed. Ayden said he was happy with a new home, but wanted to go back to our flooded home because he liked it. And Gabriel, he is my little police officer. He said he wanted to go fight the weather monster with me.”

Remarkably, Toni says she and her family count themselves as incredibly lucky. “We have been blown away by support from the community,” she says.

Toni’s sister in Austin launched a GoFundMe page that raised nearly \$4,000—enough for the couple to rent a new home. Julie Mabry, a close friend and owner of Pearl Bar, staged a benefit for the Masciones, collecting donations of clothes and household items. Gary Wood, a board member for the Montrose Center—which is spearheading LGBTQ relief →

🔴 Service and Sacrifice

Memorial Villages police officer Toni Mascione (l) and her wife, Christina Fedorchenko Mascione, said they’ve been blown away by the LGBTQ community’s support after they lost everything in Harvey. The Masciones are pictured with their three children—nine-year-old Isabella Michelle and five-year-old twins Gabrielle Alexander and Ayden Ronin.

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ANSWERING THE CALL

continued from previous page

efforts—assigned someone to help with whatever the family needed “to restart and rebuild their lives.”

“This could have been an absolutely hopeless and devastating situation, with no end in sight,” Christina says. “But with the immense amount of love and support extended to us, there have truly been moments that I have temporarily forgotten the magnitude of the loss that we are working through. Together we make a whole. Together we make ‘HoUSton.’”

Toni and Christina are on the road to getting back on their feet. While the physical and monetary help has been incredible, Toni comments that “the fact that [the LGBTQ community has] kept hope in my heart and the hearts of my family is invaluable.

“Here is what I can say about Harvey, and about losing everything,” Toni says. “The last five years has been very divided and trying for our nation. It’s been a constant war, in a way I had never seen in my career. The division that existed between society and law enforcement was devastating to many of us officers. Harvey gave us a moment—a moment where none of that mattered.”

Jenny Block is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



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Building a Hub

Bill Baldwin (third from left) organized, launched, and managed the Harvey Relief Hub from September 2-17 with a dedicated team of volunteers, including (l-r) Chris Brombracher, Erin Overhouse Locke, Baldwin, Cindy Clements Hamann, Lisa Greer, and Rick Smaile.



‘Amazing Generosity’

Houston Realtor Bill Baldwin led volunteers at the GRB, then set up Harvey Relief Hub.

By Andrew Edmonson

When Bill Baldwin awoke on August 27, the Sunday morning after Tropical Storm Harvey arrived, he jumped on his bike to survey his Heights neighborhood before heading downtown to the George R. Brown Convention Center (GRB), where a shelter was opening.

When he reached the intersection of Sawyer and Watson, he found that it was flooded with water up to his waist. He hoisted his bike above his head, waded through the water for about 40 feet, and continued onward.

After arriving at the GRB, still wet in his biking clothes, Baldwin was assigned to be the coordinator of volunteers. As flood evacuees poured in, he and his impromptu team scrambled to assemble over 2,400 cots, borrowing towels from the nearby Hilton Hotel so the waterlogged evacuees could dry off.

Thirteen hours later, Baldwin collapsed in a hotel room at the Hilton. After sleeping for three hours, he washed his biking clothes in the shower, dried them with a hair dryer, and set out for his second day of work.

“We got 10,000 people at GRB on day two, and it was overwhelming,” he recalls. “On Monday, there weren’t enough cots. There wasn’t enough food. My experience at the George R. Brown—working 12- to 16-hour days—was amazing.”

With his entrepreneurial background and his commitment to social justice, Baldwin was well positioned to lead the GRB volunteer effort. As the owner of Boulevard Realty, he has a long history of community involvement that includes serving as president of the Houston Heights Association (HHA) and on the boards of Recipe for Success and the Houston Epilepsy Association. In 2011, he was named Citizen of the Year by the HHA.

Along with philanthropist Nancy Kinder, Baldwin served as cochair of newly elected mayor Sylvester Turner’s quality-of-life transition committee, and he currently serves on

the City of Houston’s Planning Commission.

“Bill has amazing generosity. If he feels he can help, he will always rise to the challenge,” says Houston Public Media presenter Ernie Manouse, who cochaired the 2015 and 2016 World AIDS Day luncheons for AIDS Foundation Houston with Baldwin. “He never sees obstacles as barriers. Instead, he views them as challenges that can, and will, be overcome.”

“His leadership is astounding,” longtime Houston public-relations executive Cindy Clifford says of Baldwin. “Keep an eye on him; he’s going places.”

On August 31, with the situation at GRB stabilized, Baldwin turned his attention to launching a warehouse hub that could serve alongside the City’s existing aid and recovery efforts. “GRB stopped taking donations because they were overwhelmed,” he says. “I thought that there should be a place where people could continue to donate. My observation was that Houston’s people wanted to donate, to volunteer—to do something. They needed an outlet. I really wanted to do something to channel that energy.”

Baldwin met with State senator John Whitmire (D-Houston), who was receptive to the idea, and approached developer John Deal, who agreed to donate the use of a large warehouse at 2500 Summer Street for collecting and distributing donated items for flood survivors.

He assembled a stellar volunteer team with whom he had first worked at the GRB—including Chris Brombracher, Erin Overhouse Locke, Rick Smaile, and Pablo Vega—to launch the Harvey Relief Hub on September 2. Their focus was on accepting and dispensing donated items to flood victims, connecting volunteers with opportunities, and generally serving as an informational hub for hurricane survivors and volunteers. The Hub, which was initially planned to be open for a week, went on for 15 days. “The first Saturday we were open, we →



COURTESY HARVEY RELIEF HUB

AMAZING GENEROSITY

continued from previous page

saw 300 people," he recalls. "The second Saturday that we were open, we had 1,100 people. And then 1,300 clients came through on Sunday."

The operation was staffed entirely by volunteers—recruited from Facebook, other social-media sites, and word of mouth—who worked tirelessly in Houston's late-summer heat for hours in a warehouse with no air conditioning. "The very first Saturday we opened, one volunteer worked all day, and then donated \$1,000," remembers Baldwin. "The needs [of flood survivors] were overwhelming. Volunteers would work all day, and then go to Target and buy bleach and diapers to bring back to the Hub."

Truckloads of donations poured in to Baldwin's warehouse operation from New York, Arizona, Kentucky, and other states. "A significant number of people we served were undocumented immigrants. ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] was at some of the shelters," he says. "The undocumented immigrants couldn't ask for help from FEMA. We were reaching a population that wouldn't otherwise be served."

Witnessing the desperate straits and the many needs of some Harvey survivors was, at times, an intensely emotional experience. "When [our] police chief [Art Acevedo] came, the clients started crying. He started crying, and I started crying," Baldwin recalls. "[Then] he gives them money out of his own pocket. There was the feeling of, 'What resources do these people have at this particular moment?'"

Not long before Harvey, Baldwin and his partner, Fady Armanious, creative director for Tootsies, had spent two weeks in India. They reveled in the beauty of the Taj Mahal, rode elephants, and were deeply moved by a visit to the Mumbai home of Mahatma Gandhi, the icon of nonviolent civil disobedience.

Baldwin was also struck by India's extremes of wealth and poverty, and the way in which hundreds of thousands of people in Mumbai live in huts and tenements under flimsy blue tarpaulins to protect themselves from the elements—especially the monsoon rains.

"I'm sure that that 15-day trip to India had an impact on my immediate desire to go to GRB and serve that first day. [I saw] that same level of families with needs in the city where I live," Baldwin says.

"There wasn't much that I could do about it in Mumbai," he adds. "But here in Houston, I could make an immediate impact. The Hub was about making an impact for individuals who weren't being served."

Andrew Edmonson has served as the chairman of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, and on the board of the Houston chapter of the American Marketing Association.

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Humanitarian in Chief

BakerRipley CEO Angela Blanchard adds to legacy with Harvey response, Heinz award.

By Marene Gustin

Photo by Frida Villalobos

Angela Blanchard has received a lot of media attention lately—from announcing her departure from BakerRipley, to setting up a Tropical Storm Harvey shelter at the NRG Center, to receiving a prestigious award from the Heinz Family Foundation.

But Blanchard is quick to point out she didn't do any of it alone. "Nothing I've done I did by myself," she says.

Blanchard has served as CEO of BakerRipley (formerly Neighborhood Centers, Inc.) since 1995. Under her leadership, it has become the largest community-development nonprofit in Texas, serving more than 500,000 people in over 50 counties, including 70 service centers in the Houston area. BakerRipley's annual budget of \$250 million puts it in the top 1 percent of charitable groups nationwide.

"'Appreciative community building' for us means standing side-by-side with people, and working with them," Blanchard says.

When Tropical Storm Harvey hit, Harris County judge Ed Emmett tapped Blanchard and her BakerRipley team to turn the NRG Center into one of the largest shelters in the area. And they did it within hours.

"I grew up with hurricanes," says Blanchard, who's originally from Beaumont. Although Blanchard's home in Houston's Third Ward survived, members of her extended family in the Beaumont area were hit hard.

"The best part of a large family is that there's always someone to help," she says.

But so many of those displaced by Harvey had no one to take them in. As the shelter that was set up downtown at the George R. Brown Convention Center filled up, the County swung into action to open the NRG Center.

It opened within hours on August 29 and operated through September 23, housing and helping 8,500 people during its most crowded periods.

The NRG shelter was nothing like the Superdome in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, with its raw sewage and desperately overcrowded conditions. "Katrina changed everything," says Blanchard, who travels the world lecturing on shelters and refugee settlements, and aiding the organizations that set them up. Safety and security are the first issues to be addressed when setting up a shelter, Blanchard says. "And then you have to be →



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Tropical Storm Harvey hit just four months before Angela Blanchard's departure as CEO of BakerRipley after 22 years.



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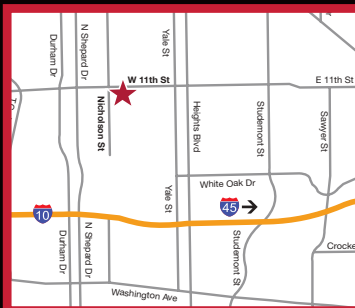


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HUMANITARIAN IN CHIEF

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prepared, from the moment they walk through the front door. We had a specific person to greet each family as they entered, take them to their area, address their needs, and make sure they had food and clothing. BakerRipley workers can speak a combination of 16 different languages, so that was a huge aid because of our area's diversity."

In addition to Harris County and NRG staff, almost every health organization in the city helped out. The shelter was quickly outfitted with a pharmacy, a children's play center, and even a section for displaced pets. Barrio Dogs and the city's BARC shelter assisted with the pet center, and the Children's Museum of Houston lent supplies for the kids' zone. Aztec Rental Center arrived with truckloads of cots, tables, and chairs, while prepared food arrived from some of the city's best restaurants. Money and donated items poured in from around the world.

"And there were hundreds and hundreds of volunteers wanting to work there," Blanchard says. "So many that some days we had to turn them away because we had more volunteers than we had evacuees. But that's just Houston. Everyone wanted to help."

Still, an emergency shelter is just a short-term fix in a crisis. By late September, the long-term work had begun: finding places for people to live until their homes are repaired or rebuilt, finding jobs for many, and seeing to ongoing healthcare and other needs. Harvey caused billions of dollars in damages, left 300,000 people without electricity, and 30,000 at least temporarily homeless. BakerRipley will be in it for the long haul.

And even though Blanchard will be leaving the organization's helm at the end of the year, she won't stop being passionate about her humanitarian concern for the well-being of others. "I can't tell you what I am going to be doing right now," Blanchard says. "I haven't really decided, but I'll be continuing my work helping people whose lives have been disrupted by war and weather around the world."

As an internationally recognized speaker and consultant to aid organizations and governments, Blanchard has been to disaster shelters and refugee camps across the globe. That's where she plans to make use of the \$250,000 unrestricted cash award that comes with her Human Condition Award from the Heinz Family Foundation. "It is a beautiful award; I am deeply honored," Blanchard says. "And this was decided before Hurricane Harvey. It was just announced in the middle of the crisis."

"But I have passion for the work, and hope," she adds. "The human spirit is not extinguishable; it is resilient."

Marene Gustin is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



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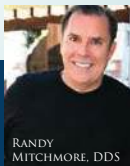


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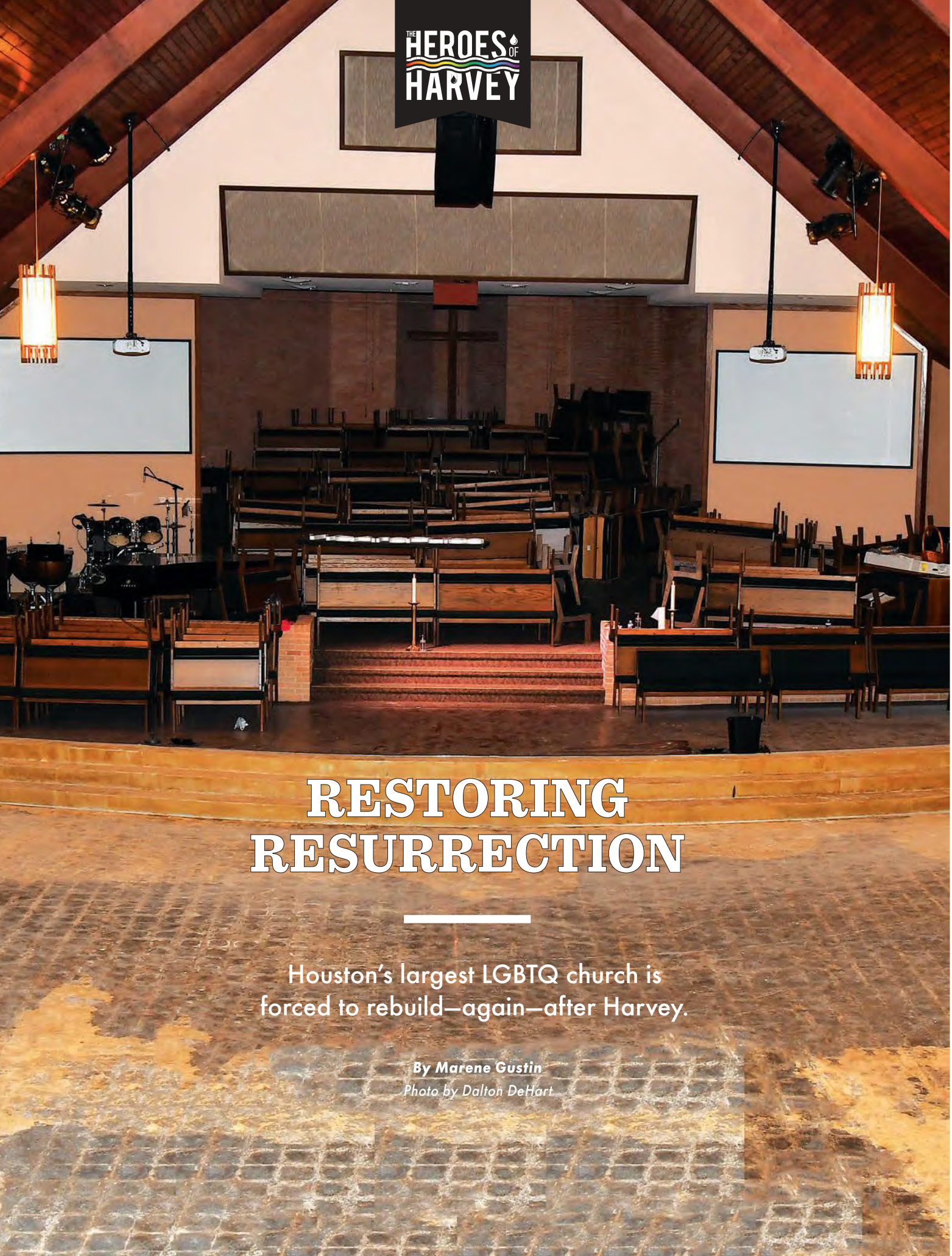
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RESTORING RESURRECTION

Houston's largest LGBTQ church is
forced to rebuild—again—after Harvey.

*By Marene Gustin
Photo by Dalton DeHart*

Debbie Holmes has been a member of Houston's Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, which ministers to LGBTQ people and their families and friends, for 33 years.

With more than 400 members, Resurrection is the fourth-largest MCC congregation in the world, according to Pastor Troy Treash. Situated on West 11th Street along White Oak Bayou in the Heights, the church sustained major flooding during Tropical Storm Harvey.

And it wasn't the first time. "I think it was worse during [Tropical Storm] Allison," Holmes says, recalling the previous flood in 2001. "We only got about a foot-and-a-half of water in the sanctuary this time."

Resurrection MCC, begun in the early 1970s as an inclusive, equality-based house of worship, has had four locations in its history. In 2000, as members outgrew their third space, the church moved to the beautiful nine-acre campus it currently calls home. Today, the church shares its space with 25 other community organizations, from Pride Charities and the Gay Men's Chorus to a local Narcotics Anonymous group.

The church's senior pastor, Rev. Troy Treash, wasn't at Resurrection during Tropical Storm Allison. Treash was with Bering Memorial United Methodist Church in Montrose at the time. "We [at Bering] just had our basement flooded," Treash recalls. "So I was able to come over here to help out. [Resurrection] lost all of their pews in that flood."

This time, thanks to hundreds of volunteers like Holmes, the pews were removed, cleaned, and stored in the choir loft after the storm hit. "That was the hardest part," Holmes says. "But we had to do it to get the wet carpet up. We're just lucky we could save the pews this time." Holmes spent the better part of the week



The Rev. Troy Treash

after Harvey volunteering at the church.

"People brought in breakfast and lunch for us," she says. "People would see our cars in the parking lot and stop and ask if we needed help. One guy stopped and thought we were opening a shelter, but when we showed him the water damage, he just jumped in and started pulling sheetrock. He was amazing."

Thanks to parishioners, neighbors, University of Houston students, and complete strangers, it wasn't long before all of the ruined sheetrock and carpet was pulled.

"They are like a second community center, and by far they were the worst-hit [organization] in the queer community," says Kent Loftin, development director at the Montrose Center, which dispatched volunteers and food to the church in the wake of Harvey. "We need them in the community."

In addition to dealing with damage to church property, Resurrection MCC was busy assisting members who experienced flooding at their homes. "Since the hurricane, we

learned of 31 of our families who needed support," Treash wrote in an email to members on September 15. "You quickly responded and have met many of those needs."

"Some of our Resurrection family are now living with friends or have found temporary housing," he added. "Others have relocated to a second floor in their house. Many are experiencing the space between the immediate activity of tearing out and waiting to start repairing and replacing."

Fortunately, unlike many churches, Resurrection MCC had some flood insurance. "But our elevator is out, and if you remember after Allison, you could get contractors, but it was hard to find any sheetrock," Treash says. "I just pray we can get back in the sanctuary before Christmas."

By September 2, the church was able to set up folding chairs in the one building that didn't flood, their gym, and hold worship services. "The reverend asked everyone to stand up who had helped out with the cleanup, and half the congregation stood up," Holmes says.

"We ended the service with the gospel song 'Standin,'" Treash says. "One of the lines is, 'When the storm is over, I'll be standing.' So it was very appropriate."

But how many times can they rebuild? As with many others who own homes and businesses near the city's multiple bayous, the question on the minds of church leaders is a tough one: rebuild or relocate? "Boy, we've wrestled with that since the last flood," Treash says. "We've been praying and talking about it since Tropical Storm Allison."

By mid-September, the church had convened a small design team, and was consulting with experts and procuring bids. "We will continue to make choices that consider the impact of future flooding in Houston—whether in 15 years or 50 years," Treash wrote to members.

In addition to flooding concerns, Treash says the foundation of the church's gym is settling oddly. "As it turns out, the bayou once looped around under the ground there before the engineers straightened it out," he says. "I think it wants to go back to the way it was."

Many, like Holmes, are opposed to the idea of moving the church. "I don't want to do that," she says. "This is a great area, centrally located, and we have members come from all over. This is the perfect spot."

"We are attached to that space," Treash adds. "It really is beautiful—except when it floods."

You can donate to the church's rebuilding efforts at resurrectionmcc.org.

Marene Gustin is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



Saving the Seats

After Resurrection MCC lost its pews to Tropical Storm Allison, volunteers were able to clean the replacements, then store them in the choir loft, left, after Harvey's floodwaters inundated the sanctuary, right.





ASHKAN IMAGE



Iris Rodriguez

Dispatching the 'Lesbian Mafia'

LGBTQ volunteers form Texas Local Disaster Recovery Squad.

By Lourdes Zavaleta

Buried in an East Downtown neighborhood, a red-brick house doubles as a nonprofit distribution site to help those impacted by Tropical Storm Harvey. Since late August, the volunteers stationed there have been reconstructing homes and delivering supplies to families who lost everything.

The Texas Local Disaster Recovery Squad (TXLDRS), which has dubbed itself the “lesbian mafia,” is dedicated to assisting those who received no federal aid after Harvey’s destruction. The squad’s story began with the rising floodwaters in Houston and two boats delivered by an LGBTQ activist from Dallas.

Like many others, Houston Fire Department captain Iris Rodriguez was at a viewing party for the boxing match between Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor on August 25 when Harvey began to drench Houston.

Rodriguez left the party at the home of her friend Melissa Vivianco early so she could be at her fire station the next day. After assisting with several rescues while on duty, she met up with Vivianco again, devastated. “It was terrible,” Rodriguez says. “I was exhausted, and I knew that we were going to have to work for about four years just like this to get Houston back to where it once was.”

Vivianco, a UPS worker and political activist, wanted to join her friend and help the city. She put together teams of women to help set up shelters and go out into the floodwaters to rescue people trapped in their homes. The women knew their rescue efforts would be more effective if they had boats. They took to Facebook, and within minutes a friend of Rodriguez’s told her that a woman in Dallas had two boats that would be dropped off in Houston.

Karen McCrocklin, an LGBTQ author and spokesperson, was over 200 miles away,

witnessing Harvey’s destruction online. She learned about Rodriguez’s team through a mutual friend. After borrowing the boats from a friend, McCrocklin began planning the trip to Houston. Before she left, she asked her friends for supplies and created a GoFundMe page to accept donations. “I didn’t think she would actually come,” Rodriguez says. “Sure enough, the following morning, I got a call saying someone left two boats and supplies outside of the fire station. I had no idea who this lady was. I was like, ‘Who is this crazy woman?’”

After dropping off the boats at the station, McCrocklin drove all night to evacuate a friend to Austin before heading back to Dallas. She has continued to collect donations and make weekly trips to Houston to deliver them and work on reconstruction with TXLDRS. As of mid-September, her GoFundMe had raised over \$25,000.

“I’m sure that they thought I was nuts,” McCrocklin says. “But I’m incredibly grateful that I have the time, the resources, and great friends from all over the world who have pitched in.

“I’m so fortunate to have been raised in a culture of people who care, and to have been involved in organizations that taught me how to make change effectively,” McCrocklin adds. “LGBTQ people know how to get things done.”

With the boats, TXLDRS headed toward northeast Houston. There, they rescued over 30 families, many of whom were living in one-story homes that had up to seven feet of water in them.

After the flooding cleared, the team went back to the same neighborhoods to start rebuilding. They went door-to-door to find elderly and disabled people who were unable to travel to distribution points for aid. Several of

them were living in toxic environments, their walls and floors covered in mold and rot. To clear homes of water damage, they removed carpets, sheetrock, and sprayed mold retardant on the walls. Seven homes have been reconstructed by the team since mid-September.

Rodriguez says that the life experiences that all LGBTQ people share is what makes her team so willing to help Houstonians in need. “Caring for people is a part of our being,” Rodriguez explains. “It’s our fabric. We live this every single day, and we don’t know any differently.”

Vivianco says that the interconnectedness of the LGBTQ community has helped her and Rodriguez find volunteers and sponsors. “LGBT people are always activists,” Vivianco says. “So when it comes to getting supplies, we have contacts everywhere.”

Rodriguez says that the future of TXLDRS lies with the collaborations it is making with other organizations. The Houston Democratic Party has been referring volunteers and people with damaged homes to the group. The LIFE Association, a Texas-based not-for-profit organization, donated \$5,000 in gift cards. Houston’s Pearl Bar and BakerRipley, the large community-development nonprofit, have also partnered with TXLDRS to help rebuild the headquarters of Sheltering Arms Senior Services.

TXLDRS has also set up a Facebook page for those who need assistance or want to help the group’s cause.

“What these women do is inspiring,” McCrocklin says. “They have built this great organization, and it all started with a Facebook post about a boat.”

Lourdes Zavaleta is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

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Restaurants to the Rescue

How the food industry stepped up when the storm hit.

By Marene Gustin

A few days after the Tropical Storm Harvey floods, I was having lunch at Frank's Americana Revival when two Houston police officers came in. I told my waiter I wanted to pick up their check, but he informed me that restaurant owner Mike Shine had already taken care of it—and that three other tables had also asked to pay for the officers' meals.

Anyone familiar with Houston's food industry knows the generosity and camaraderie that abounds. In the aftermath of Harvey, it escalated to herculean proportions. "The first week after the hurricane, we had maybe 100 requests for hot meals," Shine says. "And of course we said yes. How many and where? A lot of the sheriff's deputies lost their homes and were staying at the jail to sleep and take showers off duty, and we took food to them about three or four times."

Frank's Americana Revival also gladly agreed to extend the Houston Restaurant Weeks fundraiser for the Houston Food Bank through the end of September. "In these trying times for Houston and its residents and businesses, we are touched by the outpouring of support from our generous supporters and donors," says Brian Greene, the food bank's president and CEO.

The Houston Food Bank serves 18 Texas counties, 11 of which have been declared disaster areas. In the storm's aftermath, the nonprofit distributed one million pounds of food per day—three to four times more than usual. In the first week following the storm, 8,700 volunteers showed up to help.

Houston Restaurant Weeks, where restaurants serve special menus and donate a portion of the price to the Houston Food Bank, is the largest annual fundraiser for the nonprofit. "Of course we agreed to extend the event," says Greg Martin, chef and co-owner (with his husband, Paul) of Bistro Menil. "We were lucky. Neither our home nor restaurant suffered any damage, but so many others did." Martin says about half of his customers are asking for the



Catering to Compassion

Volunteers at Mister French's Gourmet Bakery prepared 7,000 meals for Harvey survivors before moving the operation to Catering by George so they could increase their output.

special menu. "That's what we can do right now to help, so we are."

Houston public-relations guru Dutch Small was in Atlanta while his husband, Israel Glass, battled the flooding in their hometown, but that didn't stop Small from helping out. Small took to social media to coordinate restaurants, chefs, and others who wanted to donate food and prepared meals for first responders and evacuees.

The Midtown Kitchen Collective became

a hub for feeding those in need, cranking out 10,000 to 15,000 hot meals (in addition to 1,800 sandwiches) per hour.

Pico's restaurant donated \$1 to the Houston SPCA for every cocktail sold, and chef/owner Arnaldo Richards took to the streets in affected neighborhoods on the north side to distribute lunches. Bollo Woodfired Pizza dedicated \$5,000—an entire day's worth of sales on September 5—to five flood-affected families in the area.



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RESTAURANTS TO THE RESCUE

continued from page 49



Scott French

Bryan Caswell's Reef eatery in Midtown took on some water, but he opened his kitchen to volunteers and began cooking for the relief efforts. Through his Southern Salt Foundation, he and his wife, Jennifer, also delivered hot meals and other necessities to hard-hit coastal towns like Rockport and Seadrift. And they're planning to hold benefits for rebuilding efforts at their two soon-to-be-opened downtown concepts, Oxbow 7 and Hoggbirds.

At the Dessert Gallery, founder/owner Sara Brook and her team spent mornings in the kitchen preparing hundreds of deli sandwiches, before delivering them to some of Houston's hardest-hit neighborhoods. Dessert Gallery also gave nearly \$3,000 worth of food to Second Servings, Houston's only prepared-

food rescue organization, and is donating all proceeds from the sale of #HoustonStrong, #TexasStong, and hoUSton cookies to Mayor Sylvester Turner's Harvey Relief Fund. "It was heartbreaking to see so many families schlepping a lifetime of memories and possessions to the curbs outside their once-beautiful homes. It was also inspiring to see their strength and can-do spirit," Brook says. "We know it was devastating for them—and hard labor. For us, being able to provide fresh meals and our signature chocolate-dipped chunk cookies was a labor of love."

And the list goes on. So many in the food industry—from chefs, restaurant owners, publicists, grocery stores, and media outlets—have donated time, money, and food to those in need.

The story of the bakers at El Bolillo Bakery went viral after they decided to bake bread for two days straight while they were trapped in their store during the flooding. They produced so much bread that they were able to feed thousands after the water receded.

And the folks at Mister French's Gourmet Bakery—Scott French, Roy Alvarez Jr., and chef C.J. Dilan—opened their doors to help feed first responders. The Mister French's kitchen produced more than 7,000 meals before that crew moved to Catering By George so they could increase their output. "We're a bakery and a caterer," French says. "So even before the storm, most of our orders were cancelled. And since we didn't have any flooding here, it just made sense to open up the kitchen and get to work helping those in need."

"We did 1,000 meals the first day, 2,000 the second, and 4,000 the third day," he adds. "It was a very rewarding experience."

But even without damage from Harvey, the business is still hurting. "The catering business has been hit a lot harder than other food businesses," he admits. "People aren't throwing parties and galas—and they shouldn't be right now. But the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce has been really helpful to small businesses like us, helping to direct some business our way."

French says things are far from normal, but like so many others, he's confident Houston will recover.

Marene Gustin is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



Sweet Gesture

The Dessert Gallery is donating proceeds from the sale of #HoustonStrong, #TexasStong, and hoUSton cookies to Mayor Sylvester Turner's Harvey Relief Fund.

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Drag artists raise money online and on stage in wake of storm.

By Josh Inocêncio

As Tropical Storm Harvey's floodwaters rose, Regina Thorne-DuBois and her friends were trapped in their apartment complex. But she knew she had to do something, since her weekly gig at Michael's Outpost that Monday was a lost cause.

"We were thankfully in a spot where we were not getting damaged too much by the rain," Thorne-DuBois recalls. "But we were seeing people all over the city in situations infinitely worse than where we were."

Thorne-DuBois, who studied theater at the University of Houston and now works for the Houston Grand Opera, organized a drag performance on Facebook Live to entertain those in distress and raise money as quickly as possible for relief efforts.

"I said, just because the show is cancelled doesn't mean we can't do one. We can put it on Facebook and do it in our living rooms," Thorne-DuBois recalls. "And others can do mini-performances in their living rooms. Plus, people can donate money to charities."

Two Facebook Live marathons later (the first was 9 hours and the second was 12), Thorne-DuBois had raised \$4,800 singing some of the same Broadway tunes she normally performs at Michael's Outpost. Special guests on the live feed—who also performed from their living rooms—contributed renditions of songs by Beyoncé, Mariah Carey, and Macklemore. "We were all over the place," Thorne-DuBois says. "[It was] quite the diverse drag show."

All proceeds from those marathons went to the Montrose Center and Legacy Community Health for Harvey relief. But Thorne-DuBois isn't finished. In addition to raising money for the Houston Food Bank, she wants to assist families affected by the storm—including one that had helped out with her drag career. So she plans to continue with Facebook Live performances once a month for the rest of 2017. "I want to donate my talent because I'm not able to go around and build houses," she says. "So I can do something I'm really good at while raising money and entertaining people."

Thorne-DuBois' broadcasts, which made national news, were just one example of how Houston's drag community participated in relief efforts in the wake of the storm.

Another Houston performer, Chloe T. Crawford, was also trapped by floodwaters at her father's house near Sugar Land. Motivated by drag's tradition of supporting charitable causes, she knew she had to contribute. "Most times during tragedies, the gay community looks to drag queens to raise money," Crawford says.

"So naturally we were involved with efforts to create fundraising outlets for the community."

Since then, Crawford has appeared at a string of impromptu events across Houston benefiting displaced people, including at South Beach, Hamburger Mary's, and Rich's. For comic relief, she's sung her trio of storm songs: "Here Comes the Rain," "I Can't Stand the Rain," and "Brand New Day."

Fellow drag performer Angelina DM Trailz was also flood-bound in her parents' home after they evacuated to Dallas. "The entire time I was alone with a fridge full of vegan food," says Trailz.

While the flooding cancelled Trailz' regular Saturday-night performance, she banded together with a few other performers the following weekend for a show benefiting AIDS Foundation Houston. "As a drag queen, I live paycheck to paycheck," Trailz says. "A lot of us lost work that week of the hurricane, but I told a couple of girls, 'I know we haven't had work, but we should raise money for the relief.'"

Trailz also tackled another issue alongside Harvey's wreckage: president Donald Trump's announcement that he plans to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) protections for young "Dreamer" immigrants. "Houston has a ton of Dreamers, and many of them are now displaced," explains Trailz, opening up about her Dreamer status. "They already don't know where they're going. It's like Trump made the announcement at that moment so Dreamers would just get up and leave, [thinking that they] might as well start all over again somewhere else if they have nothing in Houston."

"Some of us who are your entertainers every Saturday happen to be DACA recipients," she adds. "I think I'll be fine, but still, we don't know what's going to happen."

Since the storm, Thorne-DuBois has returned to her weekly show at Michael's Outpost, Crawford has resumed a monthly brunch appearance at Boheme, and Trailz has lined up a special gig hosting the Gender Bender Ball at the Texas Renaissance Festival in November.

But they collectively emphasize one thing: all of their upcoming Harvey-related performances will raise funds for *local* charities rather than national ones like the Red Cross.

"When the Red Cross is gone in a few months, it's the organizations here that will need funding the most to continue rebuilding Houston," Thorne-DuBois says.

Josh Inocêncio is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



Regina Thorne-DuBois



“A lot of us lost work that week of the hurricane, but I told a couple of girls, ‘I know we haven’t had work, but we should raise money for the relief.’”

—Angelina DM Trailz



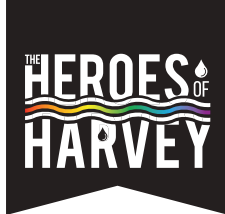
Show of Strength

Days after Harvey hit, drag performer Angelina DM Trailz emceed an arm-wrestling benefit for survivors, hosted by the LGBT veterans of the Lone Star Veterans Association at Guava Lamp.



Public-Private Partnership

Susan Christian (r) helped lead Tropical Storm Harvey response for the city of Houston, while her longtime partner, Laura Spanjian, spearheaded Airbnb's efforts. They are shown in 2014 with their older son, Eli.



Family Emergency

Longtime partners Susan Christian,
Laura Spanjian team up for Harvey response.

By Megan Wadding

Photo by Yvonne Tran

Longtime partners Susan Christian and Laura Spanjian became a tag-team relief duo in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Harvey—bridging the private and public sectors to coordinate food, housing, and support for first responders and evacuees.

For Christian, who serves as director of the Houston Mayor's Office of Special Events, the week leading up to Harvey was especially hectic. She spent long hours in meetings planning the City's response to the storm.

"Throughout the year, we are a cohesive unit and work seamlessly on major events and other special projects, including extreme weather events," Christian says of the Mayor's Office of Special Events.

Christian, who's spent over 32 years in public service, was first involved in major relief efforts during Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. When Harvey hit, she was ready. "I knew many of the needs: finding generators, securing housing for first responders, securing food for first responders—and not just sandwiches," Christian says. "Our first responders, whether they work for the City, another agency, or are neighbors down the street, are the true heroes of Harvey."

Spanjian, who serves as a regional public-policy director at Airbnb, was busy coordinating the company's largest disaster-response effort to date, which included working with Christian and mayor Sylvester Turner's office to help find housing for first responders. Christian assigned City staff to work with Airbnb to prioritize families and match needs with open homes. "Because Harvey was an unprecedented rain and flood event, and so many were displaced, Airbnb worked closely with the

City of Houston Mayor's Office to help house families of first responders who had lost their homes, but were still working 18-hour days," Spanjian says.

When a disaster strikes in her region, Spanjian works directly with the Airbnb Global Disaster Response and Relief team to ensure they are helping as many people as possible find free temporary housing. When their online Airbnb tool is activated, it automatically contacts Airbnb hosts near the impacted areas to see if they wish to participate, and waives all booking fees.

In addition to connecting emergency relief workers and volunteers with Airbnb hosts who agree to open their homes free of charge, Spanjian and the Airbnb team also work directly with evacuees to find appropriate housing in the right locations, based on family size as well as their transportation, school, and job needs. Over 1,000 free temporary accommodations have been offered in Texas and Louisiana for Harvey survivors since the program was launched. "During a disaster such as Harvey that displaces so many people from their homes, temporary housing is probably the most critical need, particularly for families," Spanjian says. "People want to help their neighbors in disasters like this. Our community's generosity is truly humbling, and we are thankful to those who have volunteered their homes."

Spanjian, who spent 18 years in the public sector (including a stint in the Houston mayor's office), says she went to work for Airbnb because of the company's values and its constant drive to find ways to use the platform to help others. "The Airbnb community,

coupled with Houston's spirit of giving back and helping neighbors, has made the Airbnb Harvey disaster-response effort the largest and strongest to date," she says. "I am so proud to be a part of these efforts to provide temporary housing to evacuees."

Christian and Spanjian said damage to their home was minimal compared to the loss and suffering of so many of their neighbors. Their street and yard flooded, but no water entered their house.

Although they were without power for a week and lost one of their vehicles that had been parked downtown, they still feel fortunate. "A crisis is always difficult. When you get the call, you go, and I am appreciative of my family and friends being there for me through the many long hours," Christian says.

Christian and Spanjian say friends pitched in to help care for their two young children, Eli and Ethan, whom they called "amazing troupers." It was important for the couple to model an example of community service for their sons.

Looking back on the disaster, Christian and Spanjian say they saw a city come together with one goal and one purpose: to help neighbors.

"Our city is unique because of our people," Christian says. "Together, we are all 'Houston Strong,' and many are working around the clock to help others. There is no question that so many are doing their part for the betterment of Houston. That's who we are. I am proud to be a part of the fabric of our city."

Megan Wadding is a frequent contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

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Flooded: A Story in Four Acts

Moving forward after the water recedes.

By **Ryan M. Leach**

Photo by John Wright



Vanity of Vanities

OUTSMART writer Ryan Leach, shown in his living room with his bathroom vanity, says Harvey taught him how fragile and fleeting things can be.

I stood on my upstairs balcony and screamed at the giant trucks as they raced down my street through the high water, “Stop speeding down our streets, asshole! You’re pushing water into our homes!”

It felt good to scream at them. Truth be told, I already had about a foot of water downstairs, and it was rising. In that moment, as yet another truck sped through the floodwater, I realized why people love their guns so much. It was probably best that I didn’t have one.

When water floods your home, it doesn’t come cascading through the front and back doors. It comes through the walls. It encroaches from every corner and point of vulnerability in the exterior. It pushes you to the middle of the room like a rat.

There was a brief moment, as the clear rainwater started seeping in over my wooden floors, that I thought, “Wow, it sort of looks pretty.”

The water eventually topped out at about 18 inches, or halfway up the electrical outlets. This is when the real problem starts.

ACT II: The Body Electric

Once the water reaches your outlets, you run the risk of electrical current running through it. They say you’re supposed to turn off the breakers if your house begins to flood. I suppose I could have done this in between frantically moving my dog upstairs, trying to save valuables and furniture, collecting food to bring upstairs, and crying.

During the first night of Harvey, water flooded my home and then receded—three times. After the second time, I went to a neighbor’s house on higher ground. That is where I stayed for the next few days.

The first day, I called my family and my friends and my boyfriend, and I cried. I didn’t cry about the house as much as about their kindness, love, and support. I was truly beside myself. I cried in the kitchen while we made dinner. It was an ugly cry. It was not soft and quiet, but loud and painful. I couldn’t get enough air in, and I couldn’t get my tears out fast enough. There was nothing that could soothe me. I couldn’t eat dinner, and eventually

I cried myself to sleep.

The next night, the rain came again. When the water rose to the highest level it had ever reached, my neighbor started to worry that *his* home would flood. I just thought about my home, only a block away, sloshing around. My trash can was probably floating on top of the brackish water, spilling out garbage. It likely bumped into my table and cabinets, also swollen with water. Maybe it floated into the outlets, causing a spark and catching my house on fire. The bottom floor would be flooded while the top half burned. That’s poetic, I thought.

The water subsided again. No fire.

ACT III: The Black Mold

Everyone is an expert on floods. I discovered that pretty quickly. My neighbors, my family, my friends—all of them were experts. Every time I picked up the phone or walked out the door, there was someone *should*-ing me. “You should really call ServePro.” “You should really do demo.” “You should really try not to worry about it.” →



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FLOODED: A STORY IN FOUR ACTS

continued from previous page

One thing they all talked about was black mold. The terrible truth is that the flooding itself is a very small part of the overall experience. There isn't much you can do before or during the flood. It's the weeks and months after that are the most enduring. You have to stop looking at the flooded part of your house as a home. The water ruins it and everything it touches. It's almost liberating, in a way. That yearbook is now just wet pages and a soggy binding. Trash it. The photo album that's so old it was made back when people had photo albums is trash, too.

At some point in the future you will wonder where your shoes are, only to realize that they probably floated right out the door when you were racing to get your car to higher ground.

The house smelled like wet towels and swamp when I was able to begin cleanup. I had ordered in my mind what I was going to do. Pick up the trash, then dry up the sludge. Then clean the floors. Then pack what survived. This is all done in preparation for demolishing the walls to prevent the growth of black mold.

You have to first take out all of the sheetrock, about two feet up the wall from the high-water mark. Then you must pull out the insulation. It will be soaked, like a sponge. Pull out the cabinets, too. Take your home down to the slab and the studs, and then spray them with bleach. Then blow about 10 giant electric fans through it for five to six days. You have now successfully prevented the growth of black mold—probably.

Houses, you discover, are just glorified tents. There isn't much to them, other than the emotions we project onto them.

After I completed the mold-prevention steps, and my house started smelling more woody than wet, I started to feel a sense of control and normalcy. By the time the fans were removed, I had moved back in upstairs and was entertaining a new insurance adjuster, contractor, or repair person on a daily basis. All I needed was money, and that just involves waiting.

It should be noted that my experience was smooth sailing compared to that of other people. Factor in that I had insurance, my house drained, and I have an employer who understood my predicament. Many people who were flooded by Harvey didn't have these things to lean on. Floods are about balancing leaning on others and prioritizing your tasks.

You can't pull the covers over your head, lest the black mold gets you. You can't stop going to work, lest the black mold gets you. You can't stop living—unless the black mold gets you.

Act IV: Dust to Dust

The checks from the insurance agent eventually arrived. I have not, in what is now two floods, encountered an adjuster who tried to haggle with me. Sure, they need photos and quotes to justify the costs, but they generally

work with you. It never happens fast enough, but it does happen. The last phase of the flood is the rebuilding. If you are fortunate enough to be able to continue living at home, your personal space eventually becomes covered in construction dust. I started to develop an asthma problem, along with my dog.

But at some point, your walls come back up. I forgot what it was like to have walls until I had them again. They are comforting.

Then the floor goes down. Floors are luxuries, I discovered.

The kitchen cabinets are replaced, doors are put back on, and furniture returns. In most ways, my home will be even better after the flood than it was before. Everything that had been broken will be fixed, and everything that was old will be new.

But you are never quite the same after you live through a flood, or any harrowing event. This experience made me realize how fragile and fleeting *things* can be. Things, and even places, are temporary. *I* was the constant, however. I could survive and rebuild. People talk about how “moving on isn’t an option.” That’s actually not true. We all *move on* from terrible things. Time keeps moving us on, like a broom and a dustpan. The trick to overcoming the trauma is learning how to move forward.

Houston is moving forward.

Ryan Leach is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

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Coping with Post-Harvey Trauma

Experts say 50 percent of survivors will experience mental-health symptoms.

By Kim Hogstrom

For Angela and Ellen, a lesbian couple from South Houston, the mere memory of Tropical Storm Harvey is a nightmare.

“The water was scary as hell,” Angela says.

The couple, who asked that their surnames be withheld to protect their privacy, said floodwaters gushed down their street and knocked a large oak tree onto their house, taking out a chunk of the roof.

“Our house was drenched inside, and both our cars flooded,” Ellen says. “I was so disorientated. I lost my sense of time and day. We made it through mostly by watching Houstonians in dire situations on the news. The memory is a nightmare—literally.”

Angela says that after the storm, every time she saw a flat-bottom boat being pulled behind a truck, or a loose dog, she began to cry.

“But the worst part is probably now—this feeling of being overwhelmed,” she says. “It’s like there’s a double dose of gravity dragging me to the Earth.”

What the two women are describing is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and experts say 50 percent of those who experience natural disasters will exhibit symptoms.

However, if you think PTSD is limited to those who lost property in the flood, think again. Almost every one of us lost something to Harvey.

The Healer

Legacy Community Health, with clinics throughout Houston and southeast Texas, has been serving the LGBTQ community since 2005. The agency accepts most insurance plans but will provide care for anyone, regardless of ability to pay.

Legacy had specialists in shelters at both the NRG Center and the George R. Brown Convention Center from day one—and the agency continues to provide help.

“Many of the people that we normally



assist are either marginalized, have significant socioeconomic strain, or have limited psychosocial support. For some, all apply,” says Dr. Chad Lemaire, Legacy’s medical director of behavioral health. “These are the people who we are most concerned about, as far as recovering from the significant losses presented by Harvey.”

Lemaire cites a number of debilitating sinkholes associated with post-Harvey trauma, including depression, anxiety, hypervigilance, difficulty sleeping, risk for self-medicating and increased substance use, and fear. In the case of fear, it’s often associ-

ated with water or rain, and other reminders such as hearing a helicopter or seeing a boat. Harvey may be in the rearview mirror, but Lemaire suggests there could be more suffering to come. A cluster of symptoms can present in a delayed reaction to the event.

But there is hope.

“As people recover from Harvey, some will develop PTSD or depression,” he explains. “However, for the majority, the waves of grief and anxiety will go through stages and eventually get better. Symptoms usually peak in the first several months to one year, and the vast majority of the time, survivors get better.”



Lingering Trauma

Dr. Chad Lemaire (l) says mental-health symptoms typically surface in the first several months to one year after a disaster. Kris Banks, who works in the Houston mayor’s office, says he felt “overwhelmed” after serving as night manager of the Harvey shelter at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

The Helper

Experts agree that the degree of exposure to a disaster is related to the risk of emotional problems. At highest risk are those who go through it themselves. Next are those who are in contact with victims.

One example from this second tier is Kris Banks, the former president of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus who serves as mayor Sylvester Turner’s special assistant for government relations.

After Harvey, Banks served as the night manager at the George R. Brown Convention Center’s shelter, where he was responsible for 10,000 men, →

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COPING WITH POST-HARVEY TRAUMA

continued from previous page

women, and children.

In a recent Facebook post, Banks wrote that his most memorable moment came during a 3 a.m. walk-through, when he spotted a 5-year-old boy in a vacant corridor outside the dorms. "He was frantically tugging on the door handles to get back in," Banks wrote. "He was small for his age, and wearing shorts that were too large. It is likely the boy came into the shelter wet and was assigned the ill-fitting attire."

When Banks asked whether the boy needed help, he shook his head no without making eye contact. "Do you want me to walk you back to your cot so you can find it?" Banks asked. "The child nodded yes. As we proceeded, I noticed the front of his pants were wet and realized what happened: he woke up and had an accident. Old enough to be embarrassed, he panicked and ran through the first door he saw, not realizing he would get locked out and isolated from his sleeping family. 'Do you want some new clothes?'"

The boy shook his head "no," again without eye contact. Together, they made the long walk back to the child's cot and family. Then Banks stopped, knelt down, and made sure the two were eye-to-eye. "Are you sure you don't want some fresh clothes? I can get you some—it's no big deal," he said to the child. "We can bag up what you're wearing and just put it in the laundry."

The boy nodded yes. Then the two went through the clothing to find something that would fit. Banks stood outside the bathroom as the little boy cleaned up. "I keep thinking about that kid," Banks reflects. "I think about how it must have felt to be displaced by a huge, life-threatening disaster, and then move into a cavernous shelter with 10,000 strangers. I think about what it must have been like to be isolated from his family in a strange, dark place in a state of shame."

How is Banks feeling about Harvey today? Normally a decisive, eloquent man, he has difficulty answering. Finally, he responds.

"Overwhelmed," he whispers.

The Human Toll

Christian was a 21-year-old junior attending the University of Houston and living with his family when Hurricane Harvey devastated their home. The water was waist-level when the family of five packed up and squeezed into a small house with an aunt, where they remain today. The repair of their home is under way, but completion is months down the road.

The young man, who identifies as gay but is closeted to his family, is putting himself through college by working as a barrista, and had been having a tough time prior to the hurricane.

"I am really a private person," says Christian, who asked that his surname be withheld.

"I have experienced depression many times before, and I have always dealt with it myself."

"Being private has also helped me with dealing with my family," he adds. "I have gotten very good at suppressing being a gay man. You get better at suppressing it with practice."

Christian's family is religious. He was considering coming out to them this fall, and he suspects that some of them would eventually accept him. However, his current circumstances do not portend a positive outcome. "It would not be a good idea at this point," Christian states.

The student also acknowledges that his living situation, combined with the financial and intellectual stress presented by school, have acted in concert to produce a rogue wave of depression that consumes him. "I am doing what I always do when this happens: I am trying to get through it. I know where the dangers are. I know I must stay active, because I know it can catch you and pull you out of motion. It produces an inertia, and when that happens, it's not easy to move forward again," he explains.

"Maybe this time I will call Legacy or tell someone at school. Maybe I will reach out with a request," Christian says. "Maybe this time, it's a little bigger than I am."

Kim Hogstrom is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



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LGBTQ Harvey Relief Fund Tops \$500K

Montrose Center campaign among largest for a natural disaster.

By Marene Gustin

As shelters close and volunteers move on, the devastation remains. The residual effects of Tropical Storm Harvey may not be as traumatic as the storm itself, but life in Houston won't return to the status quo anytime soon.

That's where the Montrose Center's LGBTQ Hurricane Harvey Disaster Relief Fund comes in.

"Although it is a challenge, we must look past the immediate response to the massive flooding and displacement of LGBTQ individuals and families," says Montrose Center board member Daryl Shorter, who chairs the board's Philanthropy Committee. "This recovery will take months to years, so providing sustained support will be necessary to ensure that no one slips through the cracks. Montrose Center services, such as case management, counseling, and support groups, can serve to help bolster people as emotional and mental-health concerns become more and more evident—as they are sure to do in the aftermath of a natural disaster."

Thanks to celebrity support, the Montrose Center's fund went viral on social media. Created even before the rain stopped, the fund was covered by CNN, the *New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, and even *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

As of mid-September, the fund had raised \$503,495 from 5,936 donors, with an additional \$50,000 in matching gifts pledged.

"The LGBTQ Hurricane Harvey Disaster Relief Fund is one of the larger natural-disaster funds the LGBTQ community has ever raised," Montrose Center executive director Ann Robison says. "We are in awe of the tremendous support we received from LGBTQ networks and organizations across the nation. It is an honor to be trusted with funds to help the community rebuild. I am also proud of the

incredible staff at the Center who have sacrificed to serve those impacted by the storm, even when many were impacted themselves."

On August 29, musician Jack Antonoff tweeted: "I'm going to match donations up to 10K to the montrose LGBT center in houston for harvey relief PLEASE donate!"

Antonoff's girlfriend, HBO's *Girls* star Lena Dunham, replied with a donation. Other donors in the early days of the campaign included Hillary Clinton, Patricia Arquette, Stephen Wrabel, Tig Notaro, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Jazz Jennings, and transgender activist Aydian Dowling.

On August 30, *Orange Is the New Black* star Ruby Rose received some backlash on Twitter after donating \$10,000. "The LGBT center does not just help LGBT members in a crisis like this," Rose replied. "It does not discriminate [against] people in need based on gender, sexuality, race, or religion. It is one of the most inclusive organizations I can think of. Unfortunately, many organizations have in the past denied entry to people based on the above... I am extremely proud to hear how Texans have joined forces in such a beautiful, heartwarming way."

Echoing Rose, Shorter called the fund "critically important to the Greater Houston LGBTQ community." The fund is designed to be a payer of last resort, catching those who fall through the cracks of more traditional aid agencies.

"Unfortunately, LGBTQ people can still be victims of discrimination from, or simply forgotten by, many of the organizations that have mobilized to help those who have been impacted by the storm," he says. "That's why Montrose Center programs that focus on re-housing and providing food, furniture, and supplies are so vital at this time."

Beginning just two days after the storm hit Houston, more than 80 staff members—half of them social workers, case managers, and mental-health professionals—began contacting the Center's 35,000 core-programming clients. Hundreds of these clients have applied to receive help from the fund, and 257 new clients have come to the Center for help.

"The fund is a great resource for many LGBTQ Houstonians impacted by the disaster, especially considering how many in our community are facing recovery without traditional family support," says Gretchen Myers, president of the board for the 39-year-old center. "I am impressed with the incredible reach the fund achieved around the globe, and how supportive the LGBTQ extended community has been—publishing information [about the Center and its relief fund], donating, and sending in-kind support. It is awesome to be in a position to provide not just short-term, but long-term recovery support."

Marene Gustin is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.



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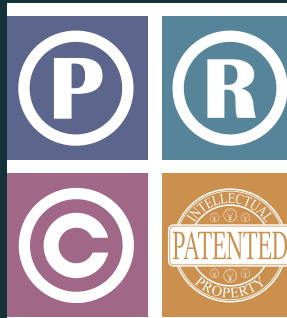


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The Show Must Go On

Hard-hit Theater District begins to rebuild.

By Josh Inocêncio



Scene from a Tragedy

The lobby of the Alley Theatre's Neuhaus performance space is shown before and after Tropical Storm Harvey.

As Harvey's floodwaters receded, theater professionals quickly assessed the storm's damage to both performance venues and ticket sales. Representatives from smaller and larger institutions alike—from Rec Room and Gravity Players to Stages Repertory Theatre and the Alley Theatre—wondered how best to unite communities in the wake of the wreckage.

Among the hardest hit was the Alley, situated in downtown Houston's Theater District, which suffered extensive flood damage to its Neuhaus stage—a black-box-style space below street level.

"We're trying to get the Neuhaus up and running for *Lover, Beloved* in February," says an undeterred Dean Gladden, the Alley's managing director. "We're making a few tweaks, but the Neuhaus will look exactly the same to the audience once it's renovated."

The Neuhaus, a smaller and more intimate space than the main Hubbard stage, has served as a launchpad for the Alley's newer—and often edgier—work. Last season in the Neuhaus, the Alley produced the hip-hop play *Syncing Ink* by NSangou Njikam as well as *Hand to God* by Tony-nominated playwright Robert Askins.

Before Harvey, the Alley was in final production for *Describe the Night* by Rajiv Joseph.

The Brooklyn-based Joseph has premiered two of his plays at the Alley, *Gruesome Playground Injuries* (2009) and *The Monster at the Door* (2011).

Despite the damage to the Neuhaus, Gladden refused to cancel or even reschedule Joseph's *Describe the Night*, a product of the Alley All New festival that showcases readings of new work. Instead, Gladden is relocating it to the Quintero Theatre at the University of Houston. "We had to redesign the whole staging because [the Quintero stage has] a thrust configuration instead of in-the-round," Gladden says. "But we were able to build a new set and lighting design in time."

"And it's selling very well," he adds. *Describe the Night* runs through October 15.

Fortunately, Alley's larger Hubbard stage wasn't damaged, as floodwaters didn't rise into the lobby or above the basement. (In 2015, the Alley underwent an extensive renovation, most of it concentrating on greatly expanding the Hubbard stage and refurbishing the lobby area.) Thus, Gladden aims to reopen the Alley for *A Christmas Carol*—one of the season's biggest sellers—by mid-November.

While costumes and sets survived on upper floors, only 25 percent of the Alley's props are salvageable. Plus, the lighting and sound equipment in the Neuhaus were destroyed along with the surrounding dressing and laundry rooms. "The best way to help is contributing to the theater through our website," Gladden advises. "We're looking at about \$15 million in losses, and our insurance only covers about \$7 million."

Next door to the Alley, the Wortham Theater Center also suffered damage to its two performance spaces and won't be fully operational again until May 2018. That means both the Houston Ballet and the Houston Grand Opera will have to relocate their entire seasons. The Houston Ballet moved its September production, *Mayerling*, to the Hobby Center, and managing directors from both companies advised patrons to follow email press releases for updates.

Smaller theaters, some of which are nomadic and jump among various venues across Houston, are recovering in different ways. Many didn't sustain flood damage, but had to cancel performances due to the inclement →



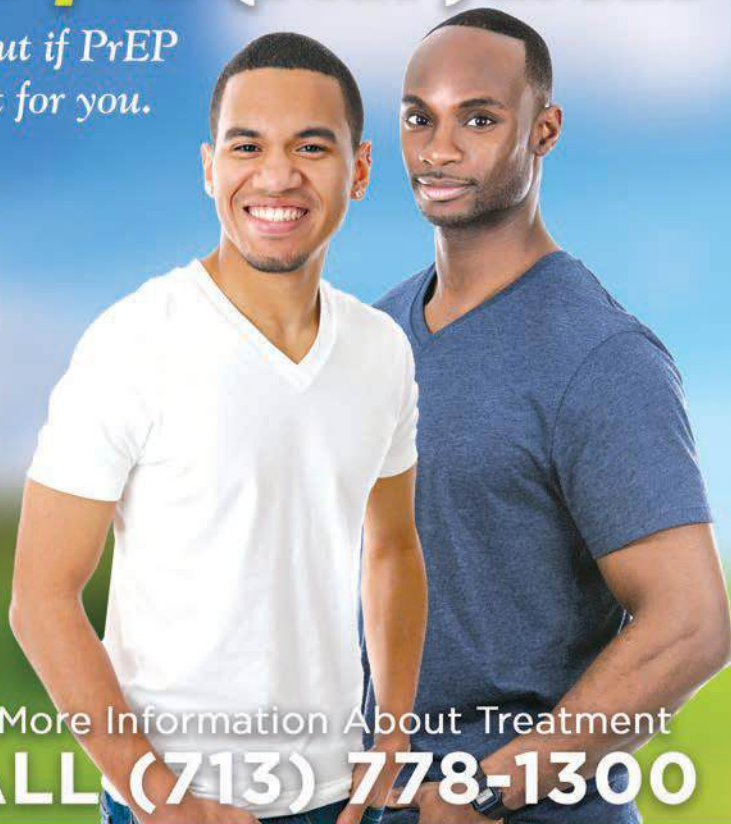
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THE SHOW MUST GO ON

continued from previous page

weather. The freshly formed Gravity Players, as well as Firecracker Productions, Rogue Productions, and Dirt Dogs Theatre Company, all suffered due to lost ticket revenue or cancelled fundraisers that had been scheduled during Harvey.

As Trevor Boffone, a Houston-based theater scholar, noted in his HowlRound roundup of small theater companies post-Harvey, "Houston's smaller theatres [are] more likely to be without comprehensive insurance policies, or deep donor bases to stem the tide of inevitable loss ahead."

Thankfully, the MATCH in Midtown, which has four performance spaces and houses resident companies like The Catastrophic Theatre, survived Harvey unscathed.

Rec Room Arts—a performance company based near Minute Maid Park that produces a range of work from plays to stand-up comedy—has organized an October installment of its ongoing LGBTQ event Story Hole, subtitled *Holidays & Hurricanes*, which will showcase Harvey-related stories from local writers such as Ryan Leach and Russell Etherton.

Kenn McLaughlin, the artistic director of Stages Repertory Theatre in Montrose, reluctantly cancelled 20 performances—10 of *Always... Patsy Cline* and 10 of *Woody Sez*—resulting in a loss of over \$50,000 in ticket revenue. "That's not going to kill us, but it is going to challenge us throughout the year to make up that loss," says McLaughlin, who was particularly fond of the urgent political message *Woody Sez* offered to Houston audiences. "We have a board who will make sure we don't run deficits. So we're really lucky in the face of what others have faced."

Despite a steep climb to recover the theater's losses, McLaughlin remains optimistic—especially after Stages' two-night revival of its 2014 production of *Xanadu* at the Miller Outdoor Theatre last month. The musical drew 9,000 audience members in the wake of Harvey. "There's a line in *Xanadu* where a character says, 'Just because there's two wars doesn't mean there's no time for art!'" muses McLaughlin. "That had an incredible resonance when we did it after the storm."

McLaughlin, who also teaches directing at Sam Houston State University, wants to uplift the spirit of the community, but is determined to keep challenging it as well. "You can deny global warming until the end of time," McLaughlin says. "But we're on, what, our sixth hurricane of the season? There's only so much denial before we have to ask really hard questions about how we can be better with the community. That's always our responsibility as artists."

Josh Inocêncio is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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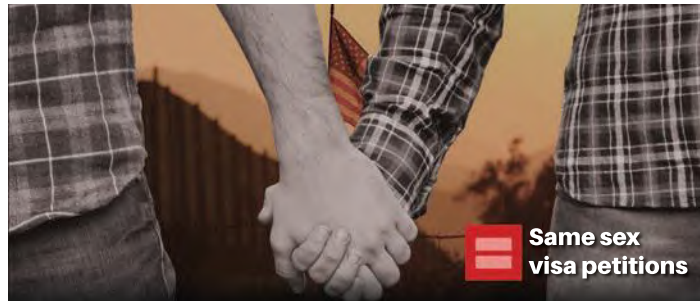


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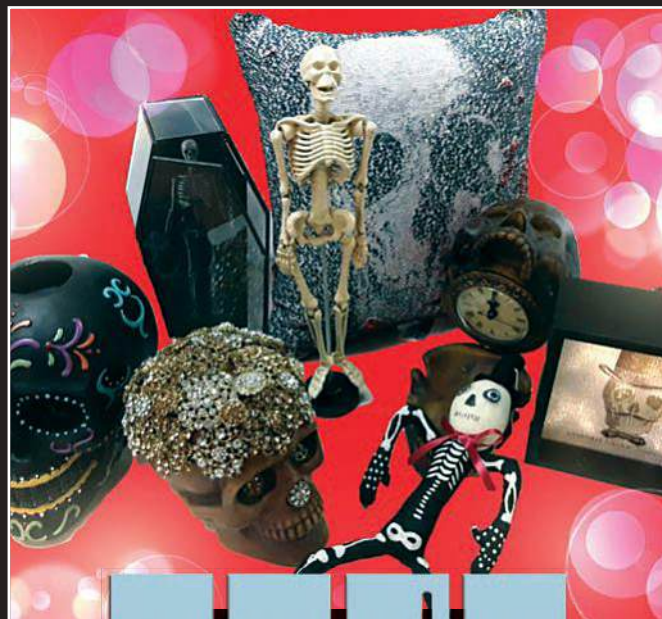


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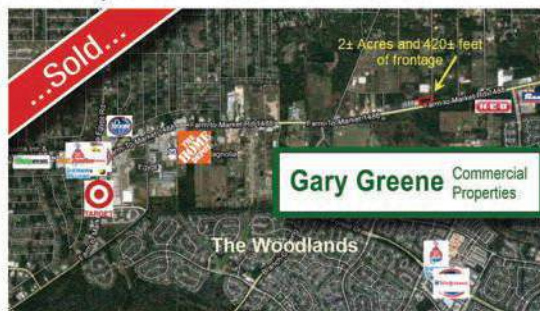
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Putting on a Clinic

Heights-based nonprofit sets new standard for people-pet sheltering.

By Kim Hogstrom

Tropical Storm Harvey brought several tragic “firsts” for Houston. The record-setting rain event marked the first time that some areas flooded, and the first time that many residents had to evacuate their homes. What some don’t know is the wonderful “first” that happened without fanfare at the George R. Brown Convention Center (GRB) shelter—one that is changing disaster response worldwide.

Volunteers from Friends For Life (FFL), a nonprofit, no-kill shelter in the Heights, worked nonstop for two weeks to help evacuees shelter with their pets in the GRB. Sheltering pets and people together had never been done on this scale, but thanks to FFL, it won’t be the last time.

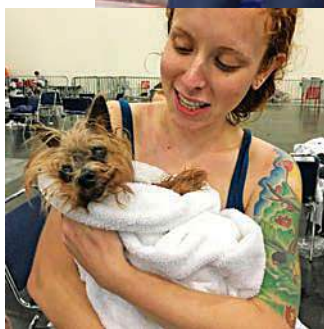
Katrina’s Tragic Legacy

The nation learned a sad lesson from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Some residents of New Orleans refused to evacuate their homes because pets weren’t allowed in shelters.

An estimated 140,000 pets died in Katrina, prompting the American Red Cross to revise its sheltering model and admit animals. While noble in intent, the new sheltering approach had not been tested, or even organized, until Friends For Life stepped up.

Salise Shuttlesworth, FFL’s founder and executive director, also sits on the board for the City of Houston’s animal shelter, and on Sunday night, August 27, she received a phone call. “There were evacuees arriving with animals at the GRB, but no people or supplies to help them,” Shuttlesworth says.

So she and her wife, Halina Dodd, raced through the pounding rain to the GRB. When they arrived, there were hundreds of people in line outside holding cats, dogs, rabbits, kittens, and more. “It was raining so hard that the manhole covers in front of the building were



unloading from dump trucks—entire families with pets. Some were in wheelchairs, animals in their arms. It was people and pets, nonstop.”

The ‘Doggy Dorm’

Shuttlesworth and Dodd set up a table in the corridor outside the only “Pets Permitted” hall, soon to be dubbed the “Doggy Dorm,” and authorities started letting in people with pets. The two women registered each evacuee and animal, and assigned them a number.

That was the beginning of a long, sleepless night that turned into a two-week marathon. They were told to expect 35 or 40 pets. In the first 24 hours, the team registered 671.

The GRB would ultimately host 10,000 evacuees, while Friends For Life’s volunteers and veterinarians would help more than 1,200 pets—including dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, ferrets, and one chicken—before it was over. “Our challenge was sheltering hundreds

lifting off,” Shuttlesworth recalls. “The evacuees were huddled over their animals trying to keep them dry. And people continued

of pets and people together. There were no manuals or templates for it, let alone on such a massive scale,” Shuttlesworth says. “We were flying blind.”

By Monday morning, FFL’s volunteer army was on the ground working throughout the dorm. They cleaned cat boxes, swept up litter, laughed with children, listened to adults, walked dogs, and more.

Shuttlesworth placed calls requesting donations, and soon pet provisions arrived by the truckload. Cleaning supplies, crates, leashes, litter boxes, litter, and mountains of pet food appeared. Volunteers quickly opened a sort of on-site PetSmart, but everything was free.

‘I Hope the Nation Takes Notice’

When Dr. Katie Eick heard there were evacuees housed with their pets at the GRB, she knew she could help. On Monday morning, Dr. Eick drove her South by South Vets mobile clinic to the center to volunteer. “I just showed up,” she says. “It didn’t take long to find Salice and the Friends For Life army. I thought I would walk into chaos in there, but it wasn’t. It was calm, even peaceful.”

What sort of pet ailments did Dr. Eick treat

continued on page 78

Raining Cats and Dogs

Friends For Life, led by executive director Salise Shuttlesworth (far right), sheltered 1,200 pets at the George R. Brown Convention Center after Tropical Storm Harvey. Shuttlesworth is shown with volunteer Eveylyn Cutts (l) and Jayne, a woman who was first an evacuee, then came back to work for FFL. *INSET: an evacuee tries to warm up her cold, wet companion.*

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Living Historians

Annise Parker, Kathy Hubbard become cochairs of UH collection.

By **Brandon Wolf**

Photo by Dalton DeHart



Proud Preservationists

Former mayor Annise Parker (l) and first lady Kathy Hubbard donated 17 boxes of archival material to the LGBT History Research Collection at the University of Houston, for which they now serve as capital campaign co-chairs.

Former Houston mayor Annise Parker and first lady Kathy Hubbard recently committed themselves to important leadership roles that will advance the LGBT History Research Collection at the University of Houston (UH). Parker and Hubbard will serve as capital campaign cochairs and cabinet members for the collection, which are not merely honorary titles. These are working roles, and the couple has committed to bringing in both financial and archival contributions.

The LGBT History Research Collection is one of 13 special collections housed at the university's M.D. Anderson Library. The library works to secure official sponsors for each collection—people with credibility, visibility, and connections in the community.

Filling these positions is vital to each collection's maintenance and growth, and UH representatives say they're pleased to have attracted two high-profile members of Houston's LGBTQ community.

Parker and Hubbard are leading by example. Last month, they gave 17 boxes of archival material to the collection in addition to a sizable financial donation. "I gave them my new kitchen," Parker laughs. "I'll just have to wait a couple more years for that."

Rice University is Parker's alma mater, but her mother graduated from UH after meeting her father there. Parker has taken a few one-off courses over the years at both the main and downtown UH campuses.



Hubbard notes that her mother was a professional librarian. "I know what libraries do and what they stand for in preserving ideas and events, so it's quite an honor to be carrying on my mother's commitment," she says.

Parker's political papers are already part of the Shuart Women's Research Collection at UH. "They approached me when I was city controller and asked for them," Parker says. UH already had the papers of Houston's first female mayor, Kathy Whitmire, and Parker liked the idea of her own papers being in the same collection. She admits that Rice University was disappointed not to house the materials, but she feels they will be more accessible to students and researchers at a public university. →

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LIVING HISTORIANS

continued from previous page

Hubbard says UH has been “groundbreaking” in many ways, and she often spoke about the university in her role as first lady. “UH is the future of Houston—it’s our hometown university,” Parker adds.

Parker also says they both wanted to give their archives to a college that had a history of being welcoming. UH had a gay student group before Rice established theirs, and she recalls attending LGBT conferences at UH as early as the 1970s. “We are both pack rats,” Parker says, flashing a smile at her wife. “We understand the importance of saving history. We are two people who have touched so many Houston LGBT organizations over the years—as members, officers, and advisors.”

Among the materials they recently donated are records from the early days of the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, in the 1970s and ‘80s. “Most people didn’t seem to understand how important the papers were,” Hubbard says. “Sometimes they would recycle documents, using the reverse side for Xeroxing something else.” The early Caucus had no office—only a post-office box—so Hubbard volunteered to be custodian of the organization’s papers.

This same scenario played out in other organizations, and both women took charge of archiving documents. They ended up with 17 boxes of papers that they recently reviewed before giving them to UH.

As a financial advisor, Hubbard often prepared IRS reports for nonprofit organizations. She carefully kept copies of all reports and supporting documents. When she advertised her accounting business in an event program, she always insisted that she be given a complete copy of the printed program—not just a clipping of her ad.

Among the archival donations are cassette tapes made in 1985. During a referendum on gay rights that year, the Caucus received a number of death threats on its answering machine. Before turning over the original tapes to the police, copies were made. “They are as frightening to listen to today as they were 32 years ago,” Parker says.

Propped against a chair in their living room is a large fiberboard poster made for an LGBTQ history event years ago. One item on the poster is the front page of the *Houston Post* with a picture of Mayor Whitmire thanking patrons in a gay bar for helping to re-elect her. “We are giving the whole board to UH,” Parker says. “We didn’t want to damage anything on it.”

“We helped create this history,” Parker says. “Now we have a home for the items we’ve been stewards of for decades.”

Looking ahead, Hubbard hopes materials from every LGBTQ organization and event in Houston will find their way into the collection. “So many social and cultural clubs that were

once active are gone now," she says. Parker looks forward to items being available on the Internet via scanning and digitization.

"A lot of activists are older now, and are downsizing. We want to get their materials safely into UH," Hubbard explains.

"We gave them so much material that we needed to give them money to process it," Parker added, without a hint of regret that the sizable donation would delay their new kitchen plans.

Both women have been activists since the 1970s—Parker in Houston and Hubbard in the Northeast before moving to Houston in 1980. Parker remembers the first Texas gay conference and the first Houston Pride parade.

Hubbard remembers driving cross-country to Los Angeles with a group of friends to attend the first national lesbian conference.

The couple plans to hold a kickoff event at their historic Montrose residence later this fall, to introduce the UH collection to the community and explain what is possible as the collection matures. They also plan to hold annual fundraisers for the collection.

Reflecting on their activist history, Parker says, "We thought we could make the world a better place, but never dreamed we would be where we are at today."

Brandon Wolf is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

'Houston Voice' Archives Now Searchable Online

Gulf Coast Archive and Museum partners with UH on digitization project.

More than 30 years of Houston LGBTQ history is being brought to the Internet through an ambitious new project of the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum (GCAM). In a joint effort with the LGBT History Research Collection at the University of Houston (UH), GCAM is making digitized copies of the weekly *Houston Voice* available to the public.

Over the last 20 years, GCAM has accomplished the impressive feat of locating every issue of the *Voice*. The newspaper was published under a variety of names—*The Montrose Voice*, *The New Voice*, and the *Houston Voice*—from 1980 through 2014, with numerous incarnations and publishers.

GCAM is loaning its collection to UH, which has scanners that can digitize pages as high-resolution images. These digitized images will be accessible through both the GCAM and UH websites. Physical copies of the newspapers will be returned to GCAM.

The scanners are also capable of reading text through optical character recognition, allowing for articles to show up in web search engines. "It's part of our mission to make Houston's LGBT history easily accessible to the public," says Ty Burns, GCAM's executive director.

Until now, researchers have had to go

through issues of the *Voice* manually to find information. This requires considerable effort and exposes the issues to the physical effects of handling. Many issues in the collection are already yellowed from age and becoming more fragile. The digitization project will permanently preserve the content of the *Voice*, unaffected by aging. Research time will be a fraction of what it has been, and won't

require trips to GCAM headquarters.

This project opens up a wealth of Houston LGBTQ history. The *Voice* was the only publication that printed detailed news about local events. *This Week in Texas* included only news capsules, and OUTSMART has always been feature-oriented.

Whitney Cox, an adjunct professor at UH, facilitated the collaboration between GCAM and

UH. Cox has been going through copies of the *Voice* at the GCAM archive for a research paper. She was aware of the UH scanning capabilities and connected the two entities. Burns says both groups felt the joint effort was "a natural fit."

GCAM has delivered 85 boxes to UH to be digitized. The first wave of 266 issues of the *Voice* can be accessed at <http://digital.lib.uh.edu/collection/montrose>. —Brandon Wolf



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PUTTING ON A CLINIC

continued from page 73

while working in the GRB? "It was mostly pet wellness: vaccinations, skin conditions, fleas, those sort of things," she says. "The thing to remember is that a large portion of the people in there would not have evacuated without their pets. I know that for a fact. For many, their pets were the only family they had. I hope the nation takes notice, because this sheltering experiment worked very well, and there are reasons why."

Shuttlesworth says she and her volunteers knew they would be "on trial." "We understood the objections to the new model—'It will be too noisy; it will be filthy—complete chaos,'" she says, adding that they tackled each issue head-on.

"The dorm remained so clean that the health department became our leading advocate and asked if we would send our team to other dorms," she says, laughing. "There was very little noise, because a volunteer was always there to calm or feed a pet in need. And the organization started on the first night."

Owners received crates, leashes, and I.D. bracelets, and pets got corresponding I.D. collars. The data was entered into a spreadsheet used to track admission, inventory, vet care, and checkout.

"We learned a lot, and we are putting it to use," Shuttlesworth says. "Friends For Life is writing the first manual for people-pet sheltering ever. We've already had a call from Sri Lanka requesting one."

Sheltering Pets, Saving Lives

The "Doggy Dorm" was a cavernous space containing hundreds of cots lined up in rows. Beside the cots sat piles of belongings and pet crates. Sometimes the crates were empty.

"Red Cross rules called for pets to be crated at all times, but we didn't strictly observe that," Shuttlesworth explains. "If the animals walked around, they had to be leashed, but both the pets and owners were exceedingly stressed. Often, pets slept with families, which helped everyone—two-legged and four—through this horrible time in their lives."

The situation was both emotionally exhausting and uplifting. "Did I cry? Yes, we all cried," she adds. "Sometimes we cried alongside the people evacuated. But we were happy to help because we knew, for so many, it meant the difference between life and death."

"There were also great rewards," Shuttlesworth adds. "The best part was the relief you could see wash over someone when we said, 'Yes, you can bring your pet,' or 'Yes, we have food, litter, or a leash.' These are the moments that sustained us. And these are the reasons we will do it all again."

Kim Hogstrom is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

Take a Walk on the Wilde Side

Gay-owned Heights store puts the 'fun' in funeral.

By Kim Hogstrom

Have you ever wondered about the best place in Houston to buy body parts bobbing in formaldehyde? How about a shrunken cyclops head? And where can you go to procure your rodent-taxidermy-themed Victorian funeral attire?

For those who want nothing but the finest in morbid oddities, nowhere but The Wilde Collection in the Houston Heights will do.

In its second year, The Wilde Collection has garnered many fans and provoked more than a few nightmares. According to its promotional material, the remarkable shop features “oddities, gifts, taxidermy, and decor.” But this doesn’t do it justice.

A visit to The Wilde Collection is roughly akin to gawking at freaks in a turn-of-the-century circus sideshow, perusing the vignettes at a natural-science museum, soaking up the wonders of a mystic art gallery, and attending an authentic Victorian funeral. Oh, and there’s an aviary, too—with live peacocks strutting and preening amidst skulls and skeletons.

Take a walk on the Wilde side. To pass up the chance to visit here would be a grave mistake.

The Spirit Moved Them

“The Wilde Collection is the result of decades of a passion for collecting bizarre things,” says co-owner Tyler Zottarelle.

“Both of us have always been interested in the Victorian era,” adds co-owner Lawyer Douglas. “We were friends first, then discovered that each of us enjoyed the art of oddities. And here we are.”

Douglas, an artist and sculptor, creates many of the unusual works in the shop. His work is often breathtaking, sometimes haunting, and occasionally mortifying. Some of the sculptures are animated, and Zottarelle acts as the animatronics engineer who makes them come to life.



The Wilde Collection will host “Till Death Do Us Part,” a Halloween ball at Rockefeller Hall in the Heights on October 28. Pictured are co-owners Tyler Zottarelle (r) and Lawyer Douglas (c), with their employee, Amanda.

“I grew up in a superstitious household,” Douglas explains. “All the women on my mother’s side were faith healers. My father is from Louisiana, and there’s voodoo on that side. As I grew up, I became fascinated by things that frightened me. That led me to create art with those same scary things. I thought that I could minimize the fear if I created them myself. I started collecting things that were really bizarre—items that were studies of light and dark, good and evil, life and death. Now I am actually making those things.”

“I am a big animal lover, so I first started collecting taxidermy,” Zottarelle says. “From there, my collecting grew. The shop is hard to describe, but there is an elegance to everything we have here. While a few people view the items as grotesque, many people see the beauty and mystery in it all.”

There is an entire room devoted to taxidermy at The Wilde Collection. Visitors can wander through a selection of museum-quality animals such as wolves, tigers, and a zebra. All specimens were collected in the 1950s and

’60s, before any faced extinction and hunting regulations were tightened. Some of them did, in fact, come from museums.

It is rare to find business partners who are so sympatico. Even the shop’s branding is a collaboration. Douglas is a fan of Victorian writer and bon vivant Oscar Wilde. Zottarelle reveres the work of American writer Edgar Allen Poe from the same period. When the two launched The Wilde Collection, they named the store after the notorious British Victorian, while drawing from Poe’s *The Raven* for their logo.

This is the second business that the friends have operated. The first was called Vanity Transformations, which specialized in products to help trans people transition. Douglas is openly gay and has been with his husband for 26 years. Their one full-time employee, Amanda, is gender expansive.

Gallows Humor

All of this may sound a bit dark, but it’s also funny. The ouija-board handbag (a clutch that looks like a Bible) and the scorpion jewelry →

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TAKE A WALK ON THE WILDE SIDE

continued from previous page

all made us laugh.

Last year, Douglas produced a line of *Silence of the Lambs* Buffalo Bill body lotion that is presented under a bell jar. We could almost hear "It puts the lotion in the basket or else it gets the hose again!" when we took a whiff.

In one corner of the shop we found a new favorite: a beautiful terrarium diorama with a little live tree and a small fountain, chock-full of animated tree roaches. It was a work of art. When we asked Amanda how Zottarelle and Douglas were able to make the roaches look so real, she said, "They *are* real! They're our pets!" Dark? Yes, but funny.

With Halloween approaching, the business partners are throwing a party called "To Death Do Us Part"—a must-do Halloween and masquerade ball set for October 28 at Rockefeller Hall in the Heights. Two couples in costume will wed on stage, and the \$75 ticket price includes food, drinks, and dancing all night.

Knowing Douglas and Zottarelle, the décor alone will be worth the price, and the party will surely be to die for.

For tickets, go to wildecollection2017.eventbee.com.

Kim Hogstrom is a regular contributor to *OutSmart* magazine.

News

continued from page 17

Next, McClurg started what would become a series of *Voice* newspapers and a long-running publishing empire. *The Montrose Voice* began in October 1980. In early 1991, it became *The New Voice*, and at the end of 1993, it became *The Houston Voice*. Later that year, McClurg sold the *Voice* to its then-editor. It later became part of Window Media, which closed in 2009.

McClurg also had several other short-running publications, including *The Star* (1977–1978), *Out in Texas* (1983), the *Dallas Gay News* (1982–1984), and the *Montrose News* (2011). In addition, McClurg ran the Montrose Guest House for about 15 years, beginning in 1993.

McClurg suffered from liver problems for several years, but his mind was always full of new publishing ideas and plans for his website. He is survived by his sister, Ann Williams, and her husband, Gary.

"He knew everyone, and everyone knew him," Gary Williams said. "When we would go visit him, it was like Norm walking into Cheers. Everyone welcomed Henry."

For more on McClurg's publications, visit houstonlgbthistory.org/voice.html.

JD Doyle is an LGBTQ historian in Houston. His website is HoustonLGBTHistory.org.

News continued on page 103



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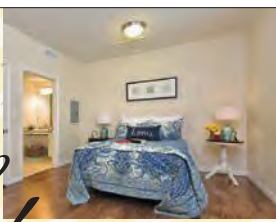
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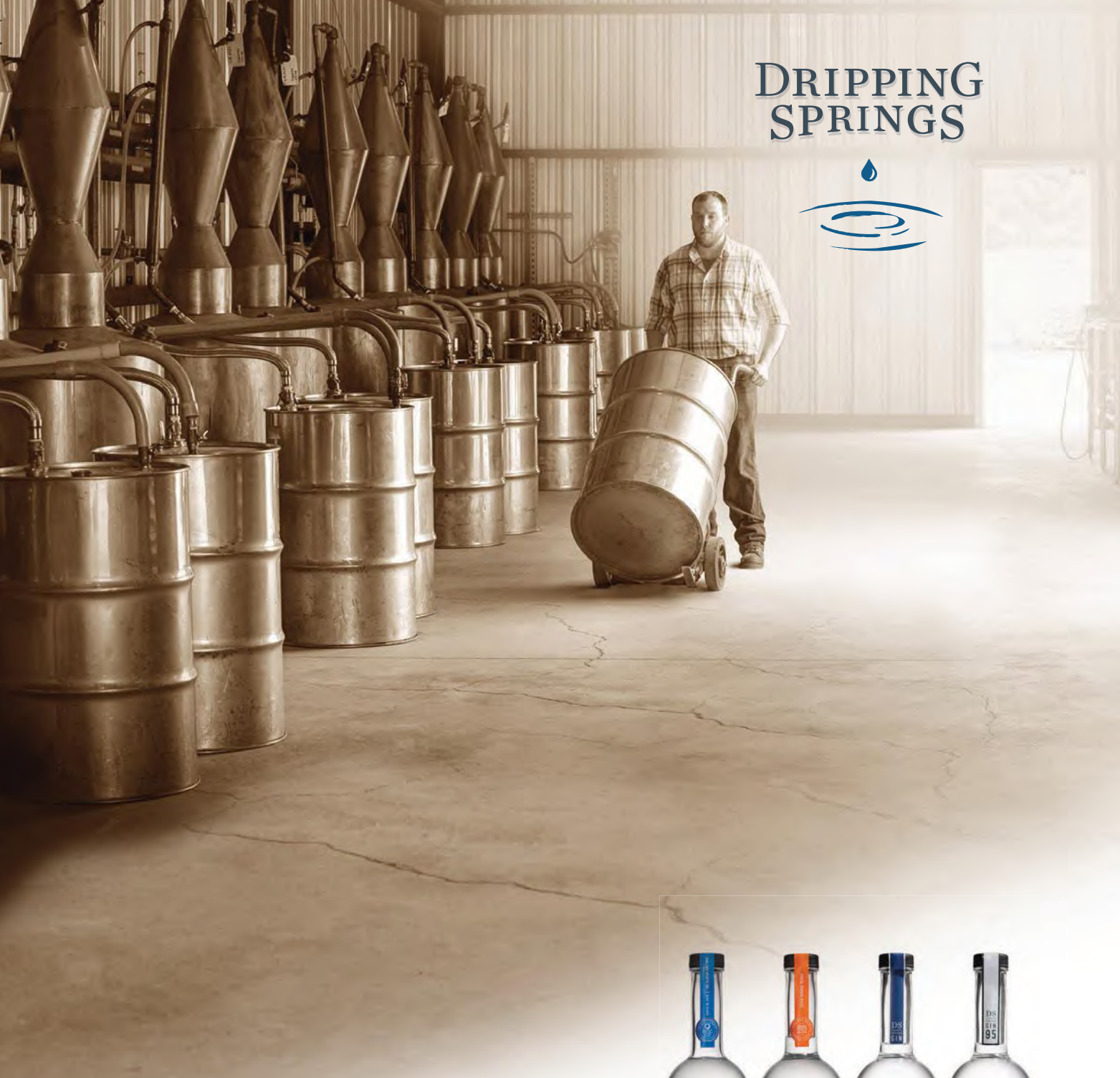
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Ghoulish Grub

These treats are just the trick.

By Joanna O'Leary

For some people (this author included), the most wonderful time of the year occurs not in December, but in the weeks preceding Halloween. Decorations? Up by October 1. Costume? Oh, please, I've got several. Candy? At least seven types on hand.

But even if All Hallow's Eve isn't your favorite holiday, get in the spirit (hah!) with some ghoulish grub that ventures beyond the usual saccharine baked goods with orange frosting. Houston is home to plenty of establishments offering "scary" dishes that promise a more sophisticated Halloween dining experience.

Those looking to enjoy a dark dinner, literally, should head to **Mein Restaurant** for their fried black rice infused with squid ink and garnished with peppery sausage, scallions, and a sunny egg yolk. A similarly flavored dish can be found at **North Italia**, whose squid-ink Mafaldine lets in some light via white shrimp and calamari. If you prefer to prepare your own black cephalopod carbohydrates for Halloween, **Central Market** has easy-to-cook squid-ink fettucine.

In the same vein (attention, vampires!) of themed hues, blood-red fare is also abundant in H-town. For sanguine sips, head to **Benjy's** or **Backstreet Cafe** for their blood-orange mimosas. Maison Burdisso has you covered when it comes to scarlet sweets with their blood-orange macarons. Looking for non-abstract hematological dishes—i.e., real blood? Stop in at the **British Isles Shop**



④ **Orange-and-Black Attack**
Celebrate Halloween with the Mein Restaurant's fried black rice infused with squid ink (left), or blood-orange mimosas at Benjy's or Backstreet Cafe (below).

for some blood pudding. Or, if you like it even rawer and redder, head to **Brasserie 19** for their bloody-good steak tartare crowned with a quail egg and adorned with frisée.

As an homage to the apparitional aspect of Halloween, try to survive eating one of the many culinary creations involving ghost peppers designed by Houston's more sadistic chefs such as Jay Hengtgen at the **Little Bitty Burger Barn**. His Charlie's Five-Alarm Burger is a mouth-searing masterpiece stacked with six

freshly sliced jalapeños, six freshly sliced habaneros, and "Nitro Sauce," which combines ghost chili sauce with arbol peppers, diced dry chilies, crushed red pepper, garlic salt, cayenne pepper, jalapeño salt, liquid capsaicin, and fresh habaneros. This towering inferno of a burger, which registers 10,000,000 (that's seven zeros—10 million!) on the Scoville unit scale, comes crowned with a fire hat. But bring your pen (and maybe your attorney), because attempting this challenge requires signing a waiver. The creative minds at **LA Crawfish**

are equally enamored with tempting their customers to tackle mouth-burning dishes. In the past, they offered intense ghost-pepper consumption experiences such as the crawfish pho challenge, which required finishing every last deathly-hot drop of a massive 24-inch bowl of pho in under 30 minutes. Those who succeed in draining their bowls are refunded the \$21 cost of the challenge and also receive T-shirts that will get them 10 percent off whenever they wear it to the restaurant.

If guts, gore, and skeletons are your thing, Houston's dining scene is rife with opportunities for not-so-awful offal and bones. The chopped liver at **Kenny & Ziggy's** requires no fava beans (but does pair well with a nice chianti), while **Taqueria Tacambaro's** mollejas tacos stuffed with sweetbreads (think thymus gland, not toast with jam) are so popular that they often sell out early. Following their September transition to a "Romance Languages" concept, **One Fifth Houston** now offers a Bolognese *secondi* that is probably nothing like your nonna's, because it's flavored with duck heart. Finally, it's hard to pick a bone with James Beard-nominee Hori Horiuchi for providing consistently excellent food at **Kata Robata**, and this month I'll be eagerly relishing in his unctuous miso-crusted marrow dusted with pickled mustard seeds, onions, panko, red miso, and bonito flakes.

Joanna O'Leary is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.



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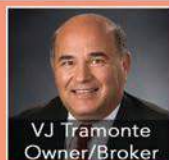
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Hallowed Haunts

Five ghastly 'Gay Christmas' getaways.

By Joanna O'Leary

Each Halloween, I find a plethora of ways to have a hell of a good time in Houston, given the abundance of parties, bar crawls, and pumpkin patches—not to mention the impressively decorated houses in West University and River Oaks.

And while it's easy to do the same thing every year, succumbing to foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. Consider opening yourself up to some new experiences via an out-of-town Halloween holiday. Chances are good that goblins will still be involved.

Dallas. This Halloween, set aside any sister-city rivalry with Dallas and visit one of their many spooky venues such as the Cutting Edge Haunted House. The setting, an abandoned meatpacking plant (sufficiently scary on its own for vegetarians), becomes that much more terrifying via the addition of live actors and special effects. And on October 28, tens of thousands of Halloween revelers will flock to the LGBTQ entertainment district on Cedar Springs Road for the largest street party in Texas, which features a live DJ, food booths, and a costume parade.

Estes Park, Colorado. A necessary bucket-list destination for Stanley Kubrick and Stephen King fans, Estes Park is home to The Stanley, a sprawling mountain resort that served as the inspiration for *The Shining*. On the weekend before Halloween (October 21), the hotel hosts a murder-mystery dinner as well as The Shining Ball with theme décor and cocktails, as well as a costume contest. In previous years, Jack "Heeeeere's Johnny!" Nicholson has been known to make an appearance. Then on October 28, The Stanley pulls out all the stops for its Halloween Masquerade Ball with gourmet appetizers and live music. Those looking to enjoy less-raucous, family-friendly fun on Halloween night should head to downtown Estes Park, where the main thoroughfare (Elkhorn Avenue) is closed to traffic so that children can go trick-or-treating at the



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The Big Queasy

Although it's better known for Mardi Gras, New Orleans features a variety of Halloween attractions, including the House of Shock (shown).

shops that line the street.

New Orleans. Although it's better known as the mecca for Mardi Gras, New Orleans also boasts a wide range of Halloween events. Take advantage of the city's open-container laws as well as its walkable boulevards and attend one of the many ghost tours of the French Quarter and various street parties, the grandest of which is on Frenchman Street in Faubourg Marigny. NOLA is also a great place to pick up Halloween supplies and souvenirs, given its many costume boutiques and voodoo shops. Each Halloween weekend, New Orleans hosts the Voodoo Arts & Music Experience, in which local and national artists from various musical genres (2017 headliners include the Foo Fighters and Kendrick Lamar) perform for the costumed crowds. Surrounding the stages are other outlets for revelry, including a marketplace featuring many fried edible things, art installations, and a beer hall.

Los Angeles. The West Hollywood Carnival on Santa Monica Boulevard draws hundreds of thousands of attendees who weave (often wobbly) in and out of the adjacent bars and restaurants offering special holiday food-and-drink specials, as well as costume contests. The event culminates in the crowning of a celebrity as the "Queen of the Carnival," with past winners including Rihanna and Queen Latifah. Nautical enthusiasts can experience thrills and chills at one of the country's most

unique Halloween attractions: a haunted ship. During the month-long "Dark Harbor" event in Long Beach, the *Queen Mary*, a retired ocean liner that's now a floating hotel and restaurant, is the site of claustrophobia-inducing haunted mazes as well as festive Halloween feasts and 3-D shows.

Sleepy Hollow, New York. I think Washington Irving would turn over in his grave (but in a good way) if he were to observe the annual Halloween festivities held throughout October in the town best known as the setting for his famous short story. The first stop on your itinerary should be Sleepy Hollow Cemetery to pay your respects at the tomb of the creator of the Headless Horseman. Then head to Horseman's Hollow at Philipsburg Manor. In the course of following the trail built around this 17th-century farm, visitors (none of whom should include children, according to the website) will bear witness to scenes of horror and encounters with fearsome creatures including (but not limited to) vampires, witches, and the ghosts of deceased soldiers. For seated scares, buy tickets to *Irving's Legend*, a dramatic interpretation of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Performances are held at the very creepy Old Dutch Church, which plays a key role in the story.

Joanna O'Leary is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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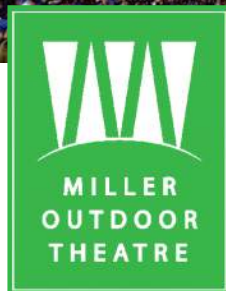
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'Balls' Takes the Court

'Battle of the Sexes' premiere comes to Stages.

By Don Maines

Billie Jean King gets outed as gay in *Balls*, but the season-opener at Stages Repertory Theatre is mainly about King's "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match with huckster Bobby Riggs, which played out like a circus under the big top of Houston's Astrodome in 1973.

"I was around. I remember it very clearly, and the ballyhoo around it," says gay actor Donald Corren. He portrays Riggs, a self-described male chauvinist, who famously claimed that, even at age 55, he could defeat any woman on a tennis court, including the then-29-year-old King, who was a recent Wimbledon champion.

"The play acts as a prism through which 1973 is seen as the very center of that whole cultural movement of sexual freedom, women's rights, the Vietnam War, politics, and the nature of celebrity," says Corren.

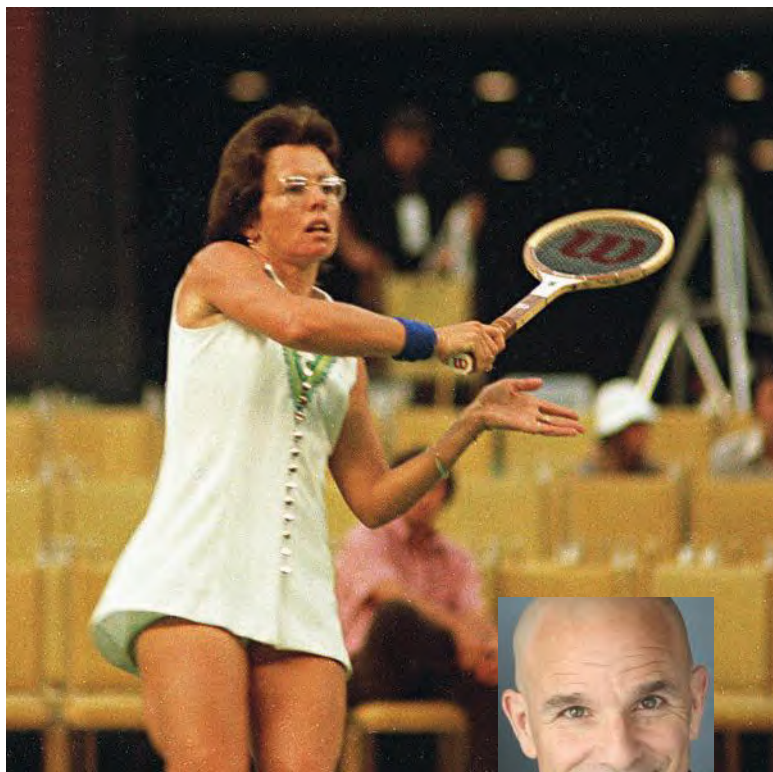
A sell-out crowd attended the tennis match on September 20, 1973, while another 90 million viewers reportedly watched it on TV sets across the globe.

Balls features a shot-by-shot reimagining of the entire match, "abstracted a little," says Corren. "It moves in and out of reality."

The veteran actor grew up about 80 miles east of San Francisco, in Stockton, California. "Stockton was the setting for the TV show *The Big Valley*, with Barbara Stanwyck," he boasts.

Corren studied acting at The Juilliard School on Manhattan's Upper West Side before "kicking around, sowing some wild oats, and starting my career in Chicago."

A big break came when Corren followed Tony winner Harvey Fierstein as Jewish drag queen Arnold Beckhoff in *Torch Song Trilogy*, winning awards in San Francisco and Los Angeles for his starring role in the show's tour.



Game, Set, Match

In *Balls*, out actor Donald Corren (inset) plays Bobby Riggs, who took on lesbian sports icon Bille Jean King (left) in the "Battle of the Sexes" at the Houston Astrodome in 1973.



"*Torch Song* was revolutionary, because at that time [in the early 1980s] there were no gay heroes in plays," says Corren. "If you were gay in a play, you committed suicide. Harvey did drag, so the show was autobiographical in that respect, but Arnold could have been a mechanic. He was just a guy who wanted a husband and a kid—and for his mother to accept him."

In 2005, Corren made his Broadway debut as Cosmé McMoon, the closeted, Cole Porterish pianist in *Souvenir*. McMoon's story would be retold in last year's Meryl Streep movie *Florence Foster Jenkins*, with *The Big Bang Theory*'s Simon Helberg on the piano as Flo-Fo's embarrassed accompanist.

Balls was written by Kevin Armento and Bryony Lavery (a 2004 Tony Award nominee for penning *Frozen*), and workshopped by One Year Lease Theater Company in New York, before Corren came on board to play Riggs in Houston.

"When we finish this month, we go back to New York and open off-Broadway in January," he says.

"It's a terrific script," adds Corren. "It has the potential to be a really remarkable piece—extremely important, actually."

According to One Year Lease's artistic

director, Val Day, "The play delves into the history of tennis and gender and so many other exciting and fanciful, crazy ideas."

Kenn McLaughlin, the out artistic director at Stages, adds, "To take the seminal, historic event and crack it open in a modern and fresh way kind of breaks down the barriers of time."

What: *Balls*

When: October 11–29, 7:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays; 8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays; and 2:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays

Where: Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway

Tickets: stagestheatre.com

OUTSMART will host a *Balls* viewing party for its family of advertisers, readers, and friends on Thursday, October 26. To request a complimentary ticket to the 7:30 p.m. show, email Marketing@OutSmartMagazine.com.

Don Maines is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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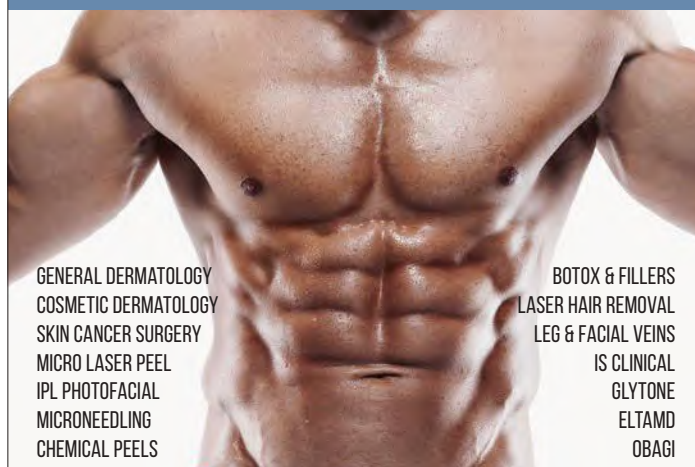
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Goin' to the Chapel

Candice and Megan Gonzalez had a traditional Catholic ceremony, but without the priest.



Modern Family

Candice Gonzalez (l) wore the wedding dress that belonged to Megan Gonzalez's grandmother for their ceremony, which was officiated by Candice's cousin.

By Henry V. Thiel

Photo by Eternal Stories Photography

Candice and Megan Gonzalez met in a dog park in Huntsville while attending Sam Houston State University's music school.

Megan, 25, is a special-education teacher, while Candice, 22, is still studying music.

They both had beagles that day, and Candice was wearing her school music shirt—all of which proved to be good conversation starters. They hit it off instantly and were soon talking about everything.

Eventually, Candice convinced Megan to go on a date, and they ended up spending the entire day together. Candice kept thinking of things to do and places to take Megan so their date would never end. And actually, it still hasn't.

"Her smile was the first thing that I noticed when we met," Candice says. "I soon learned that Megan is very outgoing, her smile and laughter is infectious, and she can always make me laugh. At the same time, she's passionate and hardworking, and she always knows exactly what she wants."

Megan describes Candice as sweet and kind-hearted. "She's extremely intellectual and has a passion for music and theater. The best thing about her is that she always knows how to make me smile, and puts everyone before herself."

Candice proposed to Megan on December 14, 2015, while they were having photos taken for Christmas cards. Secretly, Candice had hung Megan's ring on the Christmas tree that was behind them for the pictures. She waited and waited for Megan to see it. "Eventually, I

"I know it's kinda crazy, but I knew I wanted to marry Megan from the very beginning."

had to ask her to turn around. She was so adorable when her eyes popped open wide, like her mouth, as she reached for it," Candice recalls. "I asked her to marry me at that very moment." Megan said yes.

Unbeknownst to Candice, Megan had been working on a custom engagement ring since May of that year, three months after they met. "I had planned to propose the following Febru-

ary, but she's always one step ahead of me," Megan says.

"I know it's kind of crazy, but I knew I wanted to marry Megan from the very beginning," Candice says. "I think I knew the moment we met. I just remember thinking, 'Wow! I'm going to marry this girl.'"

When Megan moved to Houston for her internship as a music therapist, Candice would drive straight from class on Fridays to spend the weekend with her, and then drive back to Huntsville on Monday morning. "I remember driving down on my days off just to spend what time I could with her, even if it was only for a few hours. She was worth it," Candice says. Eventually, the separation became too hard, and they decided that they didn't want to be apart from one another ever again.

Megan is originally from McKinney, and Candice is from Nederland, Texas. They decided to get married in Frisco, where Megan grew up and her family lives.

They were married on February 18, 2017, →



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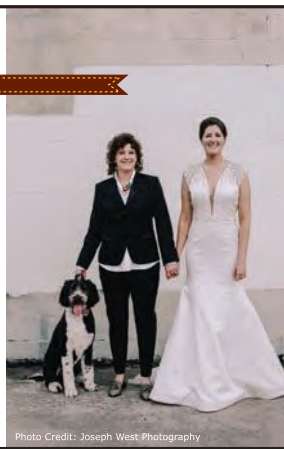


Photo Credit: Serendipity Photography

Photo Credit: Joseph West Photography

WEDDING GUIDE

continued from previous page

at the Frisco Heritage Center's Lebanon Chapel, and had their reception at the Grand Ballroom and Hotel in McKinney. Their officiant was Candice's cousin, Robert Hamilton.

They tried to make the ceremony as traditional as possible. They are both Catholic and chose to use a lasso rosary, which is a common Mexican Catholic wedding tradition. "It's common to use a rosary in the ceremony," Megan says. "It's used during the unity part of the ceremony. While it may look like a large rosary, with one loop, the lasso rosary actually has two loops, allowing a member of the wedding party to slip the rosary over each person's head while the priest says a few words. However, we were not able to get a Catholic priest (for obvious reasons), so Candice's cousin officiated. He said a few words about unity, and added a scripture or two. It was the most moving part of the ceremony for me."

"Another really cool thing about our wedding was that I actually wore Megan's grandmother's wedding dress," Candice says. "I'm technically the third generation in the Gonzalez family to wear it. Her aunt wore it, as well. I think the only thing we omitted from the traditional ceremony was the 'speak now or forever hold your peace' bit."

At the end of the evening, the beautiful brides rode off into their future in a horse-drawn carriage driven by Shannon from Happy Trails Carriage Services. "She was really awesome," Megan says. "All of our vendors were really great, actually. We didn't have any issues. Everything went smoothly."

Megan and Candice, who reside in Houston, chose to forgo a honeymoon in favor of saving for a new home and to travel in the future.

Henry V. Thiel is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.



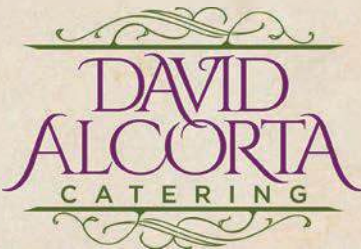
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Beware the Homophobic Vendor

Wedding planners can help same-sex couples navigate industry.

By Henry V. Thiel

Be forewarned: there are some snakes in the Garden of Love, and they may be disguised as wedding vendors.

"To be completely honest, there are a lot of a-holes in this industry," says Lauren Burnham, owner of EventSmith, a lesbian-owned, full-service wedding- and event-planning firm that specializes in all things LGBTQ.

"There are many vendors in Houston who are out for themselves, or who just simply have black hearts and do not support our community," Burnham says. "There are even vendors who will not work with us simply because we are gay, or they will just take our money and end up delivering a terrible product."

So how can same-sex couples separate the snakes from the angels? Well, they can start by hiring an LGBTQ-friendly consultant like Burnham, David Alcorta of David Alcorta Catering, or Claudia de Velasco of A Day To Remember.

"I am very protective of my clients, and I will refer them to only vendors that I personally know and trust—people who will not belittle or hurt them," Burnham says. She emphasizes that couples should also look for a wedding planner whose personality meshes with theirs.

"Is this someone you want to spend the next 12 to 18 months with?" Burnham says. "Make sure you want to have conversations with this person—lots of conversations."

Another mistake couples make in planning their weddings is booking vendors based solely on price, Burnham says. "You get what you pay for," she warns. "Hire someone that you value, someone whose work you appreciate. Find that person with great reviews, and don't be afraid to ask for—and to follow up with—all references. And please, get everything in writing."

Alcorta, the proprietor of David Alcorta Catering, seconds Burnham's warning about homophobic vendors. "It's just sad that there



Baking as Fast as He Can

David Alcorta of Alcorta Catering, creator of this cake, says he planned only a few same-sex weddings prior to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Obergefell*, but since then "gay men and women are getting married in record numbers."

are some vendors who will not work with those in our community," Alcorta says. "I know who they are, and will steer my clients away from them [and toward] those who will."

Alcorta's services include everything from drop-off trays of finger foods to full-service catered events, complete with a staff of culinary artists, servers, and mixologists. "Our menus include Mexican, Latin, Italian, and American cuisines," Alcorta says. "And I am very proud to say that our chefs can even recreate your grandmother's favorite family recipe."

Alcorta offers an extensive menu of bite-size desserts and cakes for all occasions. It's a one-stop shop for the two stars of any wedding reception—the food and the cake.

"The first thing one should look for in a wedding planner is just how well-engaged they are in the community. Do they have relationships with the vendors and resources you need to make your dream wedding come true?" Alcorta says. "A good wedding planner should be able to envision your dream wedding within the first hour of meeting the happy couple."

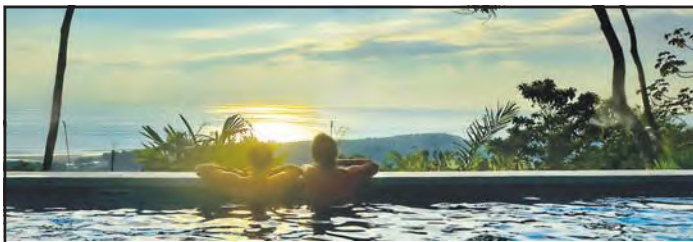
Alcorta says the biggest mistake couples

make is not knowing how big or small they want their wedding to be. "They start off small and intimate, and two weeks later decide they want a big event so everyone they have ever met can attend," he says.

Regardless, Alcorta says he loves working with same-sex couples. "I'm gay, and I'm in a same-sex marriage, and I personally planned our wedding," he says. "Prior to the 2015 Supreme Court decision, I had planned a few same-sex weddings. Afterward, I am happy to report that gay men and women are getting married in record numbers. I am currently working with two same-sex couples for weddings in November and January. Both are big weddings, and are going to be lots of fun."

De Velasco, lead event-planner and creator of memories at A Day To Remember, believes couples need to connect with their planner. "Not on just a business level, but on a personal level as well," De Velasco says.

"When planning and designing a wedding, we personalize each and every wedding; we are definitely not in business to generate cookie-cutter weddings," she adds. →



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WEDDING GUIDE

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De Velasco says the biggest mistake couples make is not planning their budget. "Often-times, couples are not fully aware of the costs of a wedding," she says. "Having a planner who is familiar with the costs, based on their needs and vision, will not only save them money but also help alleviate some of the stress."

De Velasco also reported an increase in same-sex clients since the Supreme Court's 2015 ruling in favor of nationwide marriage equality. "[Same-sex] weddings tend to be even more emotional, as they are still a new concept, even though it's been two years," she says. "Many of our same-sex couples grew up thinking they could never get married, so the possibility of a legal marriage is even more sacred, and definitely not taken for granted."

"The challenge same-sex couples face when it comes to planning weddings is that, even today, there are sadly many ven-

dors who are not very accepting," de Velasco says. "It is truly a sad reality that we must continue to vet professionals before considering them for our same-sex couples. We have vowed never to let any of our same-sex couples feel uncomfortable as they begin their happily-ever-after life together."

David Alcorta

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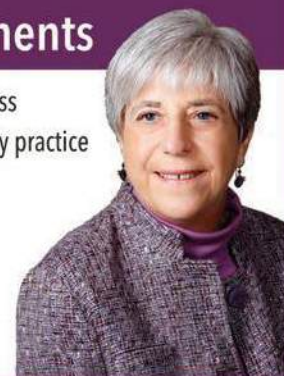
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Jussie Smollett ▼

(SiriusXM Progress, 9/25/17, Michelangelo Signorile)

I hear so many people being like, "Oh my God, it's the end of the world!" No, I think it's more like a new world order. Like a new form of consciousness that people are going to be forced to have. That, somehow, white gay men are no longer going to be able to be like, "Well, I got the right to get married, so now, in actuality, on paper, I'm on the same level as a heterosexual white man." No, you not, boo. No, you not. They don't like your ass. They don't like me. Let's keep it real. If we all were to come together—and that means people of color, and that means Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, LGBTQ community, disabled people, immigrants, whomever—if we all came together, our marginalized groups (they want to call us minorities), at the end of the day we'd be a majority.



In the Majority 

Jussie Smollett (pictured here in Fox's *Empire*): is it the end of the world?

Seth Meyers ▶

(Late Night with Seth Meyers, 9/27/17)

The winner of [the Senate primary in Alabama] is judge Roy Moore. . . . Moore is a darling of the far right known for his many years of open bigotry and homophobia. He defied the Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage, and he's also . . . said homosexual conduct should be illegal. Now, Trump himself endorsed Moore's opponent, senator Luther Strange, after repeated prodding from the GOP establishment. . . . [After Strange's loss] Trump immediately offered his support [to Moore].



Less Is Moore 

Seth Meyers (seen here on his late-night show on NBC): what does he have to say about judge Roy Moore (inset)?

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She's Still the King

Billie Jean King (seen here at the premiere of *The Battle of the Sexes*): what surprises her?

Billie Jean King

(AARP Bulletin, 9/17, Jon Saraceno)

Jon Saraceno: Bruce Jenner was a star of the same era [as you]. Did his transformation to Caitlyn shock you?

Billie Jean King: I didn't know him well. He always was very kind. In the '70s, women on the tour were up in arms about [tennis transgender pioneer] Dr. Renée Richards. I talked to medical people, then to Renée for four hours. I told our players she was going to play. I said, give her a chance, you will love her. They did. When Bruce became Caitlyn, it did not surprise me. I'm 73—nothing surprises me.

Scientology

(Leah Remini: Scientology, 9/19/17, A&E)

Producer/director/screenwriter Paul Haggis (*Million Dollar Baby*, *Crash*) was a member of the Church of Scientology for 35 years, but left the church after their support of Proposition 8, the ballot initiative that banned same-sex marriage in California. Haggis, who left the church in 2009, has a gay daughter. • Mike Rinder is a former senior executive of the Church of Scientology International. He left the church in 2007. • Following is a very small part of Haggis and Rinder's discussion (which also included actress Leah Remini) on A&E's *Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath*.

Paul Haggis: The church [of Scientology] will tell you that it embraces all people, that they do not discriminate, [that] they love gay people, and there are many gay members. It's a complete lie.

Mike Rinder: This is where we get to the real issue of "is Scientology homophobic or not?" Absolutely is, but it's not publicly stated to be the case. Scientology's view of homosexuality is two-faced: on one hand, they present to the world that they are open and tolerant, but within the writings of Scientology, homosexuality is viewed as an aberration. From *Dianetics* by L. Ron Hubbard: "[W]ith an effective science [Scientology] to handle the problem, a society which would continue to endure perversion and all its sad and sordid effects doesn't deserve to survive."



'It's a Complete Lie'

Paul Haggis (seen here in a screen grab from A&E's *Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath*): what's his view on homosexuality?





LGBTQ History Month Playlist

Pet Shop Boys,
Kesha, Grizzly
Bear, and more.

Hercules & Love Affair Omnion



In a departure from their previous dance-based music, Hercules & Love Affair has released the political album *Omnion*, shifting toward a "re-immersion in the wider world." Featuring collaborations with other artists, "Rejoice" is about an encounter with a gender-nonconformist, "Are You Still Certain?" touches on the terrorist attacks in Paris and Beirut, and "Fools Wear Crown" is out front-man Andy Butler's "attempt to make amends" after his years as a drug addict. "Not everything has to be so serious," Butler says, "but this Hercules record is."

More: herculesandloveaffair.net.

—Josh Inocêncio

Oliver Oliver

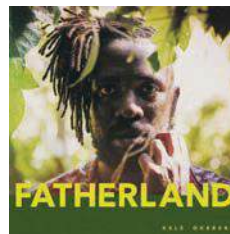


With an eclectic musical palate, the electronic duo Oliver—Oliver Goldstein and Vaughn Oliver—have released their titular album that combats the isolation of the digital age. Based in Los Angeles, they have played at "massive shows and gritty clubs" all over the world, putting "humans of all kinds into states of aural euphoria." Combining their experience with drums, keyboard, guitar, piano, as well as computer programming and engineering, they've created an array of diverse music tracks that tap into pop, hip-hop, electro, and R&B. Interscope Records (interscope.com).

—Josh Inocêncio

It's been more than 30 years since the UK duo Pet Shop Boys, led by out front-man Neil Tennant, burst onto the music scene. Early PSB hit singles "West End Girls" and "Opportunities" led us straight to the dance floor. The Dusty Springfield duet "What Have I Done to Deserve This?" became an instant classic, and their reverent cover of Village People's "Go West" took on new meaning when it was released in 1993 at the height of the AIDS era. PSB's first five albums received the expanded reissue treatment in 2001, and three later releases—1999's *Nightlife*, 2002's *Release*, and 2006's *Fundamental* (all on Parlophone/Rhino)—are getting their due. Each set contains remastered versions of the original discs, as well as "further listening" bonus discs featuring demos, live tracks, and more—some of which are either previously unreleased or heretofore unavailable on CD.

Nightlife is notable for the heart-breaking "You Only Tell Me You Love Me When You're Drunk," the clubby "Closer to Heaven" (also featured in the stage musical of the same name, co-written by PSB and *Beautiful Thing* playwright Jonathan Harvey), and the Village People homage "New York City Boy." The *Nightlife* package includes two additional bonus discs with songs from 1996 to 2000. Easily one of the most daring and enduring albums in the PSB oeuvre, *Release* features The Smiths' Johnny Marr (with whom Tennant collaborated on the Electronic side-project), giving the material a new edge. PSB doesn't abandon its trademark sound but simply augments it, as you can hear on "Home and Dry," "I Get Along," "You Choose," and Eminem jab "The Night I Fell in Love." As with *Nightlife*, *Release* features two bonus discs with songs from 2001 to 2004. The third installment in the reissue series, *Fundamental* (featuring the brilliant "The Sodom and Gomorrah Show") is a bit of a curiosity. When it was initially issued, it included an eight-song *Fundamentalism* bonus disc. The bonus disc for the *Fundamental* reissue, consisting of 22 previously unreleased songs from 2005 to 2007, only includes a few songs from *Fundamentalism* (the



Elton John duet on "In Private" has been scuttled to the expanded *Release* reissue).

It's unfortunate what bisexual pop star Kesha had to go through regarding her legal battle with music-Svengali Dr. Luke. At the end of the day, however, she has emerged a better, more mature and original artist than she was while under his thumb. Her new album *Rainbow* (RCA), which is as celebratory as it is serious, is a career high point. Anthemic and empowering numbers such as "Bastards," "Let 'em Talk" (featuring Eagles of Death Metal), "Woman" (featuring The Dap-Kings Horns), "Hymn," "Praying," "Learn to Let Go," and the title tune are good examples of making the personal universal, and many of her LGBTQ fans are sure to find something to relate to in her struggles. Kesha even unleashes her inner cowgirl on "Boots," "Hunt You Down," "Spaceship," and "Old Flames (Can't Hold a Candle to You)," a duet with Dolly Parton co-written by Kesha's mother, Pebe Sebert.

The Kele Okereke you hear on *Fatherland* (BMG/The End) isn't just vastly different from the one you heard when he was the openly gay front man of art-punk band Bloc Party, but also (unlike the one you heard on his solo albums) 2010's *The Boxer* and 2014's *Trick*. First of all, he's no longer a one-name artist. Gone are the synths and electronic beats, replaced by a more stripped-down approach. What you get is an honest-to-goodness organic singer/songwriter album with standouts including "You Keep on Whispering His Name," "Streets Been Talkin'," the flirty cabaret of "Capers," the retro soul of "Do U Right," the emotional "Savannah," and the stunning "Portrait." That's Olly Alexander (gay front-man of Years & Years) joining Okereke on "Grounds for Resentment" and Grammy-winner Corinne Bailey Rae on "Versions of Us."

There may be some Grizzly Bear fans who will struggle with the more accessible (read: commercial) sound of *Painted Ruins* (RCA/Grizzly Bear Music), and that's to be expected. Ever since openly gay front man Ed Droste released the first Grizzly Bear album *Horn of Plenty* as a solo artist (before being joined by band members Daniel Rossen, Christopher Bear, and Chris Taylor), there has been an ongoing

evolution of sound from lo-fi to chamber pop—and even inclusion in TV ads, giving the band some of its greatest exposure. In a way, it makes sense that Grizzly Bear's first album for a major label would have a more wide-reaching musical appeal (even if the lyrics remain somewhat obscure). "Mourning Sound," "Three Rings," "Aquarian," and "Neighbors" could easily earn Grizzly Bear an even larger following.

You may be familiar with LP as a performer of her own songs on albums including 2001's *Heart Shaped Scar*, 2004's *Suburban Sprawl and Alcohol*, or 2014's *Forever for Now*. Or you may recognize her as Laura Pergolizzi, songwriter for other artists including Christina Aguilera and Rihanna. Either way, you don't want to miss her fourth full-length album *Lost on You* (Vagrant/BMG). Aside from opening with "Muddy Waters," featured in the devastating season-four finale of *Orange Is the New Black*, it's easy to understand why LP chose to record these songs herself rather than share them with others. She raises the roof with the stomping "No Witness," explores her inner dance diva on "When We're High" and "Up Against Me," cuts deep on the emotional "Switchblade," and deserves to have her own hits with songs including "Death Valley," "Strange," and "Other People."

To this day, there are at least two musical genres—jazz and hip-hop—in which LGBTQ artists are still firmly in the minority. To be fair, that is changing rapidly, thanks to artists such as Gary Burton, Patricia Barber, Lea Delaria, and Andy Bey in jazz; and Frank Ocean, Thee Satisfaction, and Big Freedia in hip-hop. We can now add out performer Tyler, The Creator to the queer-rapper roster, especially due to the frankness of his buzzworthy new album *Scum F--k Flower Boy* (Columbia). The most cited line, "I been kissing white boys since 2004" from "I Ain't Got Time!" is especially notable, given that just a few years ago Tyler was considered homophobic due to the number of slurs he spat out on his 2011 debut disc *Goblin*. Similarly, "Garden Shed," with its references to "hiding" and a "garden shed for the garçons/and feelings that I was guarding," is making an unexpected but welcome statement. Of course, time will tell how the hip-hop world will respond and the impact it will have on Tyler's future creations.

Gay pianist and composer Fred Hersch's new album has the fitting title *Open Book* (Palmetto), as it is being released at the same time as his memoir *Good Things Happen Slowly*. Four of the seven tracks feature Hersch's piano interpretations of the Benny Golson classic "Whisper Not," Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Zingaro," Thelonious Monk's "Eronel," and even Billy Joel's "And So It Goes," which rounds out the disc. The original compositions include "The Orb," "Plainsong," and the album's epic centerpiece, "Through the Forest," which clocks in at almost 20 minutes.

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.



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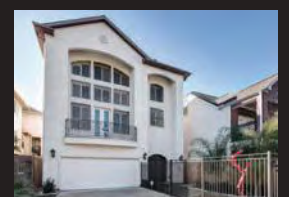


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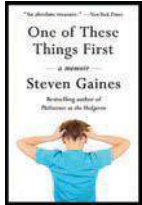
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'The Gang's All Queer'

Exploring the lives of gay gang members.

One of These Things First Steven Gaines



In what the *Boston Globe* deems "shocking, funny," and "a real treasure," best-selling author Steven Gaines charts his journey as a 15-year-old boy in 1960s Brooklyn and his trajectory from his grand-

parent's bra-and-girdle store to, after a failed suicide attempt, one of the most exclusive psychiatric hospitals in the world. Here he meets a brilliant psychiatrist who promises to cure him of his homosexuality. With *One of These Things First*, Gaines takes a wry look back at his early years and coming out in Brooklyn. Delphinium Books (delphiniumbooks.com). —Josh Inocêncio

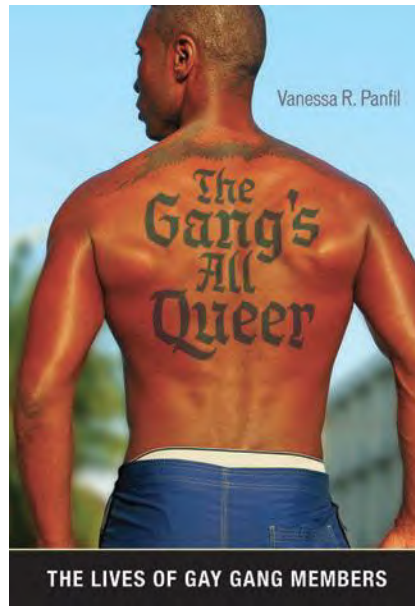
An Unkindness of Ghosts Rivers Solomon



With the "breathtaking science fiction debut" of *An Unkindness of Ghosts*, Rivers Solomon depicts Aster, who lives in the low-deck slums of the HSS *Matilda*, a space vessel organized much like the antebellum South.

When the autopsy of Matilda's sovereign reveals a surprising link between his death and her mother's suicide, Aster retraces her mother's footsteps. Embroiled in a grudge with a brutal overseer, Aster learns there may be a new way off the ship if she's willing to fight for it. Akashic Books (akashicbooks.com).

—Josh Inocêncio



The Gang's All Queer: The Lives of Gay Gang Members

by Vanessa R. Panfil
2017
New York University Press
(nyupress.org)
312 pages
\$28

You felt surprisingly safe. There you were, in a place that was certainly iffy, but you were totally comfortable. No danger, no darkness, no problems—and in the new book *The Gang's All Queer* by Vanessa R. Panfil, no world that you've ever seen before, either.

Everybody knows that being a teen isn't easy. Being a gay teen is even harder—which, as a white lesbian woman, Panfil knew. Her work in a Columbus, Ohio, LGBTQ center for young adults showed her realities beyond what she'd lived herself, and it sparked an interest in examining the Columbus gang culture. She already knew a handful of gay gang members, and after she had gained their trust, those men introduced her to a web of people who shared their world with her.

When most people think of gangs, the image that comes to mind is one of tattoos and machismo. Panfil found some of that, but it was often used to hide LGBTQ sexual identity; indeed, many (though far from all) of the

men she interviewed were not out to their fellow gang members. Panfil says there are three distinct kinds of gangs: all-gay gangs (of which there aren't many), heterosexual gangs (in which being gay could be dangerous), and the more tolerant, easy-going "hybrid" gangs (with perhaps a 50/50 mix of gay and straight members).

Panfil points out that most of the men she interviewed were careful to stress that they were very masculine. In spite of that, more than two out of three gay men fought someone else over homophobic harassment, and protection from such was not the main reason for joining a gang. The main reasons were the perception of "family" that gangs provided, or because of deep friendships. Furthermore, while there was a certain amount of crime—mostly petty theft or selling drugs and sex (although fierce violence was not unknown)—many gay gangs

offered encouragement, a more democratic atmosphere, help for job-seekers, and educational support, thus acting more as "cliques" than gangs.

Let's start here: *The Gang's All Queer* is a bit on the academic side, so it won't be on anyone's relax-in-a-hammock-and-read list. Having said that, it's a very interesting take on a world that never makes the headlines.

Not only did author Vanessa R. Panfil have access to a group of men who were willing to tell all, but she fully used that access to understand why a gay man would turn to groups that are typically antigay. This leads her to the bigger picture, and the larger questions of violence and remaining closeted, as well as problems with being black, gay, and a gangster. And because her subjects so casually use offensive slang labels, that language, as well as the issues of sex workers, are examined.

Even readers who might struggle with the college-thesis feel of this book will ultimately come away with a better grasp of a world that they probably had never thought about before. Certainly for scholars, but also for readers interested in LGBT culture, *The Gang's All Queer* is a pretty safe bet.

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was three years old, and she lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 11,000 books.

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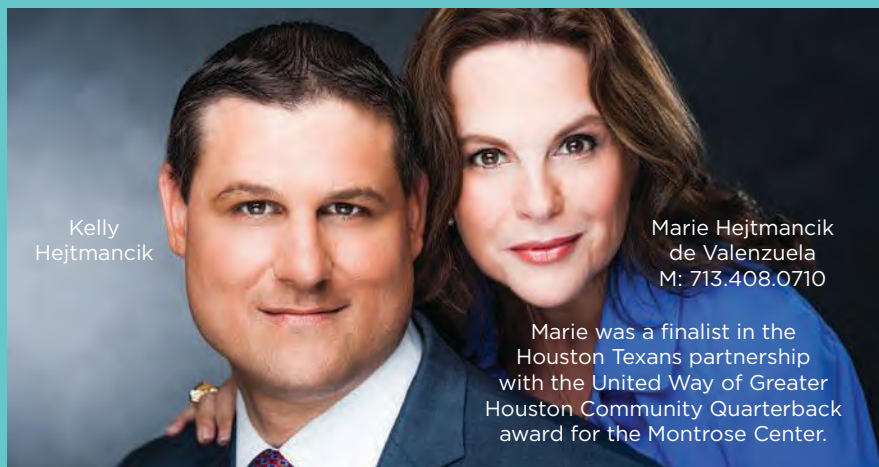
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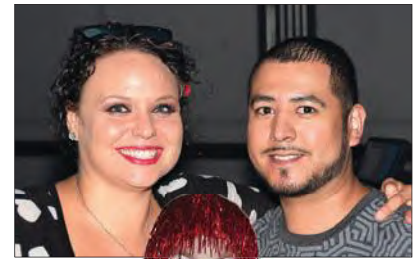
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Houston's 'Music Man' Takes His Final Bow

Arts pioneer Frank Young built Theatre Under the Stars from the ground up.

By Andrew Edmonson

Frank Young, one of the founding fathers of the Houston arts scene who brought Houstonians hundreds of nights of free, joyous musical theater at Miller Outdoor Theatre, died on September 20 in Palm Springs, California. He was 77.

In 1968, as a pre-med student working part-time at Houston Grand Opera and in the medical-research department at Baylor, he decided to mount a production of Jules Stein's *Bells Are Ringing* using an all-volunteer cast and orchestra at the recently opened Miller Outdoor Theatre. He produced, directed, and conducted the show. The opening-night performance was rained out, but thousands turned out the next night—and a major Houston arts organization was born.

Working at first from his two-bedroom apartment, he grew Theatre Under the Stars (TUTS) into one of Houston's largest arts and cultural organizations, which today presents touring musicals and self-produced shows for tens of thousands of Texans each season in its stunning Hobby Center home in the Theater District.

"He truly was a pioneer, both in arts and in the gay community," observed Broadway director Michael Wilson, who served as Alley Theatre associate director from 1990 to 1998.

Along the way, Young built a regional theater empire. In April 1985, he created the National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT) after inviting the directors of 43 theaters and operas to come together at TUTS to discuss the state of musical theater in America. Today, NAMT numbers 160 member organizations.

"Frank could see where things were going," said David Greiss, director of marketing and sales for TUTS from 1997 to 2016. "He knew that there needed to be a counterbalance to Broadway Across America. For the independent, non-Broadway Across America producers like TUTS and other companies, if they banded together [through NAMT], they could put together 50 markets for a show. They could be a powerhouse that could compete more effectively with Broadway Across America in getting shows like *Wicked*."

From 1989 to 2000, Young served as executive director of Seattle's 5th Avenue Theater, building a robust subscriber base of over 30,000 that allowed the company to develop educational and internship programs in the community. He was twice named one of TheatreWeek's "100 Most Powerful People in Theatre." When he stepped down as CEO of TUTS



King TUTS

Frank Young stepped down as CEO of Theatre Under the Stars in 2006, 38 years after he put on the company's first show.

in 2006 after almost four decades at the helm, he had served longer than any other leader of a major Houston arts organization.

As an impresario keenly attuned to the desires of his Houston audience, Young developed a winning formula of enticing stars of a certain vintage to perform beloved musical theater classics, including Juliet Prowse in *Mame*, Sandy Duncan and Cathy Rigby in *Peter Pan*, Debbie Reynolds in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, and Robert Goulet as King Arthur in *Camelot*, a production that toured across the U.S. before opening on Broadway in 1993.

In 1993, Young scored a major coup when he landed the out-of-town tryout of Disney's blockbuster musical version of *Beauty and the Beast* before it debuted on Broadway in 1994, where it ran for five years.

"Frank was a showman. He wanted his shows to be bigger than life," Greiss said. "When TUTS did *Gone with the Wind* at Miller Outdoor Theatre, he was so excited that they were going to have Atlanta burning on stage. He wanted to take classic musical theater and up it a notch, in every way, shape, or form."

Young was also committed to nurturing young musical-theater artists. "In 1972, when TUTS opened the Humphreys School of Musical Theatre, he was so passionate and so proud of being able to start a theater school to pre-

pare the next generation," Greiss said.

Some theater critics faulted Young for hewing too closely to the tried and true, and not being more artistically venturesome in his programming choices. In 1999, Misha Gerson, theater critic for the *Seattle Times*, observed, "But 5th Avenue's own resident productions have been artistically erratic. And Young too often assumed that some of the bland, middle-of-the-road revival fare presented at Houston's Theatre Under the Stars (the other theater Young manages) would also wow Seattle."

Young did develop some new musicals at TUTS that were based on unconventional source material, including *Ninfa!*, inspired by the eponymous Houston restaurant entrepreneur; *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* in 2002; and *Zorro: The Musical*, a 1998 work featuring a book co-written by Young and Jim Bernhard, which Young directed.

A showman with a big, theatrical personality and a keen wit, he once confided to an interviewer, "You know the musical comedy *The Music Man*, where Harold Hill comes to town? I sort of think that I'm a Harold Hill." In that musical-theater classic, Hill was a charismatic con man who dazzled an Iowa town by posing as a school band organizer until he realized that he loved Marian the Librarian.

"I started in 1958 as a dancer in *Carmen* when Houston Grand Opera was performing in the Music Hall; that was before Jones Hall was built," he told houstontheatre.com in a 1998 interview. "And over the years, I sang in the chorus, sang little walk-on parts. I ended up doing backstage conducting, and sort of learned on the job."

"I started out in Houston musicals as a dancer and a singer and an actor with Tommy Tune and Jaclyn Smith and a lot of people that went on to big careers," he continued. "And over the years, I have learned all the different skills. I also direct, I choreograph some of our shows. I conduct the orchestra frequently on our shows."

"So I'm sort of dangerous. I'm one of those that knows a little about a lot of things. Jack of all trades, and master of none. But, as I grew older, I realized that you put all those elements in a Broadway musical together, and that's what a producer does."

Young's longtime companion, Jon Nelson, died shortly before Young in Palm Springs.

Andrew Edmonson is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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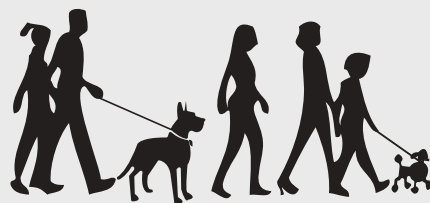
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SIGNOUT

continued from page 112

groups can be very good for your business or personal life this month. Toward the last week of October, you are ready for some R&R.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Career and long-term security continues to take the spotlight for you this month. You have been busy, and that is not likely to stop. After doing some reassessing, you are ready to take on a greater leadership role at work or in your community. Family life has been unsettled, but you are ready to move on. You don't want to be bound by the past. Associating with business or community organizations is very beneficial for you this month and through the coming year. This can have very positive effects for you and your friends, but these organizations must have clear goals and benefits or you won't be interested.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). You have been working on cutting the cord on your past history and obligations, and you

want to be free from previous commitments. This is a period of reinvention for you. You want to feel passionate about what you do and break free of the routine. In the first half of the month, you are in a philosophical mood. You are looking at the bigger picture and how you fit—or don't fit! After mid-October, your career energies really open up for you. This is an excellent time to promote yourself and your work, teach a class, or travel around the world. It's going to be a busy year!

PISCES (February 19–March 20). Relationships have been the focus for the last couple of months as you have improved some relationships and gotten rid of others. You are not as flexible and easygoing about things as you used to be. This month you want to create trust and intimacy with your partner. In business partnerships, this could mean you'll want to have some new contractual agreements. By the end of the month, you are ready for some travel or a change in your routines. Friends continue to be fickle, but that gets better in November.

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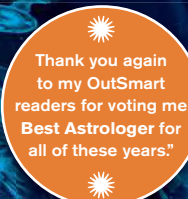
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CLUB 2020

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CLUB CRYSTAL

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CROCKER BAR

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HAMBURGER MARY'S

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JR'S BAR & GRILL

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THE RIPCORD

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RUDYARD'S

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SOUTH BEACH

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A Busy Month Ahead

With so many planets entering new signs, get ready for big changes.

October is a busy month, especially during the first two weeks—although the pace will remain active through the end of the month. Jupiter (planet of growth and expansion, optimism, and overcommitment) enters Scorpio on October 10 for the next 12 months. Jupiter will have the strongest impact on the fixed signs of Scorpio, Taurus, Aquarius, and Leo. Those who fall in these signs should be busier than usual in all areas of their lives.

- Lots of planets are changing signs this month, making for a busier and more changeable environment. The sun starts the month in Libra before it enters Scorpio on the 23rd. Mercury, our communicator, also enters Scorpio on the 17th. Venus, the planet of desire, begins the month in Virgo and will enter Libra, her home sign, on the 14th. Mars is close behind in Virgo, but also enters Libra on the 22nd. Jupiter enters Scorpio from Libra on the 10th. Saturn, our inner parent, remains in Sagittarius but will enter Capricorn, her home sign, in December for approximately 28 months. Uranus, our inner rebel, continues through Aries but will enter Taurus in January for a seven-year visit. Neptune swims in Pisces as Pluto trudges through Capricorn. The end of the year is going to be a time of big changes!

- And looking ahead, our next Mercury retrograde is from Thanksgiving through Christmas. Now is a good time to start looking at plans for the holidays, rather than waiting until the last minute.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). Relationships are definitely the focus for October. You will be hoping to reinforce your existing partnerships through clear communications and planning. You are willing to look at the more difficult aspects of your partnerships, especially in the latter half of the month. Getting some time away to renew those vows can remind you who is important in your life. If things are going well, this is an excellent time to work on those issues. Finances hold your attention toward the end of the month. Money and trust become more important as you continue to maintain your focus on relationships.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). This month you are getting your workplace, your health, and your routines in better shape! You are making what you do at work more efficient, improving communication with coworkers, and getting the bugs out of your operating system. If you

have children, they could be strong-willed and demanding in the first half of the month. By midmonth, relationships play a major role in your life as Jupiter positively influences your relationships for the next year. You are wanting more from your relationships, both business and personal.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). October should be a better month for you because you will be more focused than you were last month. You are in a decision-making mode through December. You are ready to move forward in career and relationship decisions, and let go of relationships that aren't working. With your family, you are setting your boundaries and speaking the truth with few filters. By the last half of the month, you are looking for some relaxation and fun. Even your routines could become more pleasant!

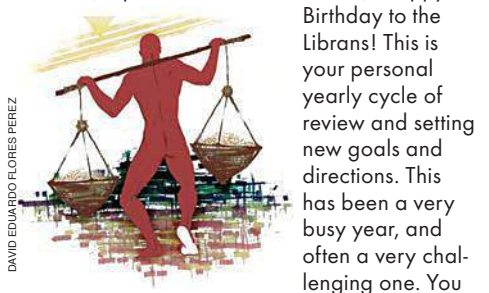
CANCER (June 22–July 22). As the month begins, you are interested in making your home a more beautiful and comfortable place. This can include remodeling or relocating. You will want to be around family to give you that sense of centering. In relationships, you are clearing out old patterns and wanting to have more authentic partnerships. This also affects your sense of responsibility to your family. You become more independent and outspoken when Mars, planet of action and short tempers, gets active in the latter part of the month. Act on what you think is right, so you don't have to get angry before you take action.

LEO (July 23–August 22). You have been working on getting things organized while trying to get your family on board. You are examining your resources and finances so you can make better use of them. You are busy taking care of a lot of small projects. The activity level may be too much for you toward the end of the month as you reexamine your boundaries and your temper. Family activity takes over at the end of the month. This can be a time of healing and reconnection, but everyone still needs their own space. Continue on the quest to improve your health—you are making progress.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). You continue to be in a time of action and decision-making, and seem to welcome the challenge. Follow what you are drawn to, as that is what

energizes you. Obligatory responsibilities will sap your energy, and you'll struggle to finish what you started. You are focused on your finances in the last half of the month, and you should watch your impulsive spending during that time. Career decisions take a bigger role in your life through the end of the year. You want to redefine and refine what you do!

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). Happy



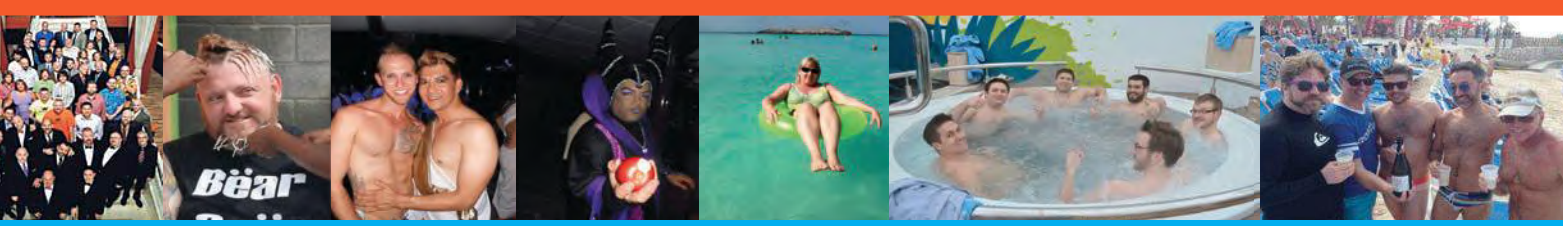
Birthday to the Librans! This is your personal yearly cycle of review and setting new goals and directions. This has been a very busy year, and often a very challenging one. You

have been trying to break out of your mold and do something that really revives your spirit, and you're ready to make some decisions about that. Your courage increases toward the end of the month. You are continuing to clear out relationships that demand a lot but only give a little. This is a good month to start any kind of health or exercise program! You are taking better care of Number One.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). You are in a time of rest and retreat. The first half of the month is better for reflection and having some "me" time. Even though there are plenty of social options, you are selective about your choices. As we get to mid-October, you are feeling more social. This is a great month for promoting yourself or your services. You are looking for really interesting new projects, rather than just doing what you have done in the past. You are open to new ideas and new technologies. Life gets busy and may not slow down until November 2018.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Since the end of August, Sagittarians have been feeling that this is an important decision-making time. You are clearer about your boundaries and expectations—both yours and theirs! You may be pushing yourself too much at work, where there is a lot of activity. Social activities increase this month. Business or community

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OUT IN HOUSTON



On September 17, the John Palmer Art Gallery & Studio hosted an auction benefitting Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church. Pictured are **John Ross Palmer, Ryan Lindsay, Jan Golden, Stephanie Gonzalez, Rudy Villarreal, and Eddie Domingue.**



On September 11, **Barbara Radnofsky** signed copies of her book, *A Citizens' Guide to Impeachment*, at Brazos Bookstore. Pictured are **Andrea Roth, Mark Haber, Steven Duble, Radnofsky, ACLU of Texas executive director Terri, and Benjamin Rybeck.**



On September 13, the Harris County Democratic Party hosted a Brown Bag Lunch featuring a representative from the Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector's Office. Pictured are **Delilah Agho-Otochile, Lillie Schechter, and Mili Gosar.**



On September 16, Milford Studio hosted an open house featuring Patrick Palmer's fall 2017 paintings. Pictured are **John de la Cruz, Michael Golden, Diane Griffin Gregory, Matt Adams, and Patrick Palmer.**



On September 16, Urban Eats hosted a champagne reception featuring artist **Ernesto Guerra**. Pictured are **Eric Munos, Desiree Flores, Henry Flores, Antonia Flores, Ernesto Guerra, Jorge Calderon, and Levi Rollings.**



On September 22, the Harris County Democratic Party hosted a Meet and Greet at Teotihuacan with DNC vice chair **Maria Durazo** with **Lillie Schechter, Maria Durazo, and Belinda Castro.**



On September 22, Kindred Spirits hosted its annual Celebration Dance at SPJST Lodge. Pictured are **Trudy Deny and Marion Coleman.**



On August 13, Outreach United hosted a Coming Out Party Art Unveiling Brunch with **Arturo Rodriguez** at the home of **Bill Baldwin**. Pictured are **Angel Santiago, Michael Reeves, Bob Briddick, Tim Stokes, Gary Wood, Baldwin, Rodriguez, Bryant Johnson-Wood, Jack Berger, Ty Frazier, Carol Wyatt-Woodell, Sallie Wyatt-Woodell, and Meghan Schlaff.**



On September 23, a celebration of life for Bobby Reynolds was held at La Griglia. Pictured are **John Heinzerling, Michael Leibbert, Brian Teichman, Randall McGill, and Nathan Wright.**



On August 19, Neon Boots hosted a Queer Queens of Comedy show benefitting the Lesbian Health Initiative. Pictured are **Jim Gerhold, Sandra Valls, Jen Kober, Debbie Storrs, Poppy Champlin, Lou Anne Smoot, and Brenda McWilliams.**



On June 17, the Houston Fire Department launched the sale of its 2018 calendar benefitting the Houston Burned Children's Fund. To purchase a calendar, visit houstonburnedchildrensfund.com.



On September 18, Meyerland Democrats held their September meeting at Fadi's, with mayor **Sylvester Turner** and other guests discussing Tropical Storm Harvey recovery. Pictured are **Art Pronin, Turner, and City council member Ellen Cohen.**



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