

CELEBRATING TRANS LIVES: Local events uplift the community Pg.46

OutSmart

NOV. '21 HOUSTON'S LGBTQ MAGAZINE

HIV AWARENESS

SENIOR OUTREACH

HIV & Aging
Coalition empowers
older survivors

Pg.40

CARE NAVIGATORS

UT Health provides
support to
trans patients

Pg.44

A LASTING LEGACY

Katy Caldwell
retires after
25 years
at Legacy
Community
Health

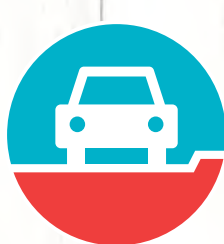
Pg.32

POSITIVE LIVING

Caleb Brown uses
his influence to
destigmatize HIV/AIDS

Pg.36

FREE



H-E-B

curbside™

— AND —

\$5



H-E-B

delivery™

Powered by  FAVOR®



My H-E-B

heb.com

Select locations and standard deliveries only; online prices may vary from ad/in-store; see heb.com

©2021 HEB, 22-0033



Care you can trust.

“Over the years I’ve learned a lot about myself and grown more comfortable in my skin. But there are still many days where I feel like I don’t belong. Sometimes it’s hard to be kind to yourself, and I’m constantly working to be better at that. For those who trust us in their vulnerable moments, it is an honor and privilege to serve you.”

Andy Doan

PharmD, AAHIVP

Pharmacist-in-Charge,
Avita 1036 (Austin, TX)



Pride month may be over, but Avita celebrates Pride all year long. See how Avita’s expert, affirming care can mean better health for you.
Visit [avitapharmacy.com](https://www.avitapharmacy.com) to learn more.

FEATURES

NOVEMBER 2021



HIV AWARENESS

32 A LASTING LEGACY

Legacy Community Health's
Katy Caldwell retires after 25 years

36 COVER STORY POSITIVE LIVING

HIV-positive advocate Caleb
Brown educates via social media

40 LIGHTS OF LOVE

Jereme Scott and Ruth Atkinson
expand the HIV & Aging Coalition,
Houston's community outreach

44 HEALTHCARE NAVIGATORS

UT Health's B'Yancha Lawson
and Riley Burns empower
underserved communities

46 EMPOWERING TRANS LIVES

November events celebrate
the local trans community

48 CONTENT CREATOR

Morgan McAllister keeps the creativity
flowing at a local copywriting agency

50 RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

Queer performers and vendors strive
to make the annual November event
an LGBTQ safe space

58 ONE WITH NATURE

Zachary Logan blends the
human body with the earth
in his new art exhibition

61 NAVIGATING MODERN DANCE

Pilot Dance Project's Adam Castañeda
previews an experimental new work

68 DAYNA STEELE'S NEXT ACT

The local personality debuts an
emotional new play at MATCH

90 WIGGING OUT

Veteran performer Dina Jacobs
embodies 50-plus years of
onstage glamour



THANK YOU, OUTSMART READERS, FOR ALL
YOUR SUPPORT AND FOR VOTING US YOUR
GAYEST AND GREATEST 2021 DENTISTS!

We are proud and honored to serve our community!



Voted Best Male Dentist:
DR. MARCUS DE GUZMAN
Voted Best Female Dentist:
DR. CYNTHIA CORRAL



Dr. Robert
Hines

Dr. Marcus
de Guzman

Dr. Cynthia
Corral

Dr. Quincy
Walker

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND MAKING HOUSTON SMILE SINCE 2009!

FREE Whitening- for Life!

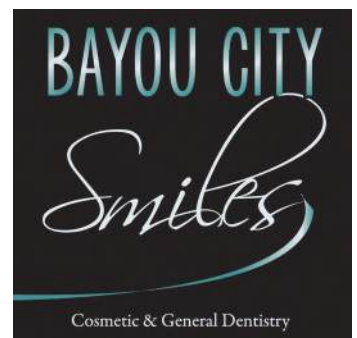
Veneers, Implants, Esthetic Fillings & Smile Makeover | In House Financing
Your Dentist is Certified in Oral Conscious Sedation | Most Insurance Accepted

BAYOU CITY SMILES
Cosmetic & General Dentistry
713.518.1411


YOUR FAMILY DENTISTS

Arts District @ Sawyer Yards
2313 Edwards St., Ste. 150
Houston, TX 77007

BAYOUCITYSMILES.COM





DURHAM HEIGHTS

Amenities:

- Whirlpool Stainless
- Steel Appliances
- Quartz countertops
- Wood-Style Flooring
- Two-story fitness center with wellness bar
- Crossfit/yoga room
- Two Resort Style Pools

SPECIAL

Up to 6 weeks FREE
Call or visit for details

713-843-7081 • 720 W. 26th Street, Houston, TX, 77008
www.DurhamHeightsApartments.com



Steven Hayes, LCSW, CCM

Clinical Social Work/Therapist

SPECIALTIES:

- Men's Issues
- Anxiety
- Depression

My client focus is on Black and African American and Hispanic and Latino members of our community. I deal with adults and adolescents ages 14-19.

If you are dealing with substance or sexual addiction, life transitions, anger management, relationship or self-esteem issues or racial identity, please contact me.

832-400-6614 • stephendhayes@gmail.com

DEPARTMENTS

NEWS & COMMENT

12 NEWS

Governor Abbott signs his anti-trans bill into law;
The Montrose Center's Out for Good gala is back

24 LEFT OUT

26 SMART HEALTH

30 MONEY SMART

54 AN INTERVIEW WITH...

Michael Robinson, Houston Cinema Arts Festival's associate creative director

64 FILM

Transgender lawyer Danielle Healey is portrayed in a new documentary; Local film festival spotlights filmmakers throughout the Gulf Coast

72 BUSINESS

Two local leather shops, The Montrose Forge and Sir Rat Leather & Gear, expand their operations

OUT & ABOUT

18 CALENDAR

74 WEDDING GUIDE

76 OUT THERE

85 BAR/CLUB GUIDE

86 SIGN OUT

88 SCENE OUT

ADVERTISERS INDEX

80 ADVERTISERS

82 CLASSIFIEDS MARKETPLACE



ON the COVER

POSITIVE LIVING

Caleb Brown uses his influence to destigmatize HIV/AIDS

Photography by Alex Rosa for OutSmart magazine

THE EYE GALLERY

THEO
TRUNK SHOW /
NOV 12TH & 13TH
BOOK YOUR SPOT



BLACK FRIDAY SALE / 30% OFF IN-STOCK FRAMES
NOV 26TH & 27TH (SEE STORE FOR DETAILS)

EYEGALLERYHOUSTON.COM

1806 WESTHEIMER RD - RIVER OAKS

713.523.1279

1700 POST OAK BLVD - POST OAK (NEXT TO WHOLE FOODS)

713.622.7470



THANK YOU!

From the bottom of our hearts



**10 LOCATIONS ACROSS HOUSTON
LESS THAN 10 MINUTE WAIT
BOARD CERTIFIED PHYSICIANS
OPEN 24/7/365, RAIN OR SHINE
LGBTQ+ AND ALLIES SAFE SPACE**

**PROUD TO BE OUTSMART'S
READER'S CHOICE 4 YEARS RUNNING!**



**Looking for a vacation home
or maybe a place to retire?**

Now you have a connection
with a broker you can trust.
30 years helping clients in
Houston... now ready to help
you find your home in Palm
Springs... or Fort Lauderdale.

CALL OR TEXT ME...I CAN HELP YOU FIND YOUR PLACE IN PARADISE!

Richard Hill, Broker - 713.863.9494 - Richard@RichardHill.com

GREATER
FORT LAUDERDALE

NOW PUBLISHING IN OUR 28TH YEAR!

OutSmart

Houston's LGBTQ Magazine

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief Greg Jeu
Associate Publisher Tom Fricke

Creative Director Alex Rosa
Managing Editor Lourdes Zavaleta
Copy Editor Howard Maple

Web Editor Lourdes Zavaleta
Staff Reporter Lillian Hoang

Contributing Writers

Olivia Flores Alvarez, Rich Arenschieldt,
Bill Arning, Susan Bankston, Connor Behrens,
Jenny Block, Sam Byrd, Blase DiStefano
Andrew Edmonson, Ste7en Foster, Alys Garcia
Carrera, Martin Giron, Sarah Gish, DL Groover,
Marene Gustin, Kim Hogstrom, James Hurst,
Lisa Keen, Ryan M. Leach, Don Maines,
Zachary McKenzie, David Odyssey, Joanna
O'Leary, Lilly Roddy, Adriana Salazar,
Terri Schlichenmeyer, Gregg Shapiro, Janice
Stensrude, Henry V. Thiel, Terrance Turner,
Megan Wadding, Brandon Wolf, Grace S. Yung

Photographers/Illustrators

Edgardo Aguilar, John-Paul Arreaga,
Dalton DeHart, Yvonne Feece, Frank
Hernandez, Ashkan Roayae, Alex Rosa

Interns

Brandon Norvell

Marketing Department

Jack Berger, Gene Mikulenska,
Adriana Salazar

National Advertising Representative

Rivendell Media - 212.242.6863

OutSmart Media Company

Publishers of OutSmart Magazine
3406 Audubon Place • Houston, TX 77006
713.520.7237 • 713.522.3275 Fax

Subscriptions: \$30/12 Issues, \$58/24 Issues

E-mail: letters@outsmartmagazine.com

Website: OutSmartMagazine.com

OUTSMART is published monthly. Estimated readership in Houston and surrounding areas is 60,000. OutSmart Media Company is not responsible for claims and practices of advertisers. The opinions and views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the staff or management of OutSMART. Inclusion in OutSMART does not imply sexual orientation. ©2021 by OutSmart Media Company. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited. Unsolicited material is accepted. No manuscript returned without SASE.



"I LOVED MY DENTIST SO MUCH, I MARRIED HIM!"

SAMUEL A.
CARRELL, DDS

AUSTIN T.
FAULK, DDS



BEST
DENTISTS!

MONTROSE  DDS

GENERAL & COSMETIC DENTISTRY

620 West Alabama | Houston, TX 77006
713.529.4364 | MONTROSEDDS.COM



Most insurance plans accepted.
No insurance? In-house membership plan available.





Celebrating the fall and winter holidays is an important part of many people's traditions. Some of

the LGBTQ community's most meaningful observances also occur during these final months of the year.

World AIDS Day is recognized annually on December 1 to promote HIV awareness and remember those we have lost to AIDS-related illnesses. Transgender Awareness Week occurs November 13 through 19, and promotes trans visibility ahead of November 20's Transgender Day of Remembrance, which memorializes those we have lost to anti-trans violence.

This November issue of OUT-SMART honors all of these LGBTQ observances by highlighting local

leaders in their respective movements.

Our cover star, Caleb Brown, uses his influence to dismantle HIV stigma. Writer Zach McKenzie chats with Brown about being a "sex-positive, body-positive, and HIV-positive" social-media star. McKenzie also speaks to healthcare workers B'Yancha Lawson and Riley Burns, who provide vital HIV resources to trans Houstonians.

Writer Sam Byrd sits down with outgoing Legacy Community Health CEO Katy Caldwell, who is retiring next month after 25 years at the helm of that organization. And writer Brandon Wolf interviews HIV & Aging Coalition, Houston board members about their plans to engage with younger HIV-positive Houstonians.

Writer Lillian Hoang speaks

to trans organizers about the importance of the November transgender-awareness events after a challenging year for trans Texans. The Mahogany Project founder Verniss McFarland believes there is a lot for the community to celebrate in spite of the relentless right-wing attacks.

For example, several trans Houstonians are making headlines this month. Attorney Danielle Healey is the subject of a new award-winning documentary. Writer Ryan Leach chats with Healey about the film, which chronicles her efforts to make the world a safer place for trans people. Writer Kim Hogstrom interviews trans director Angelo Madsen Minax ahead of the local premiere of his new film at this year's Houston Cinema Arts Festival.

Finally, don't miss writer Sam Byrd's Wiggling Out column that features a Q&A with Dina Jacobs, who is being honored with the Montrose Center's 2021 LGBTQ Community Vision Award. The legendary trans drag performer will take center stage during the Center's Out for Good gala on December 3.

See you next month!

Lourdes Zavaleta
Managing
Editor



Village Medical Primary Care Now Open in Houston

We bring high-tech, high-touch care to patients. Our doctors and staff partner with you to understand your needs and work with you—not just on treatment, but also education and preventive care.

Abel Flores, MD



Full-service Primary Care | Management of ongoing conditions | Same day-appointments available | Virtual visits

Here to serve you: 4543 Post Oak Place, Houston, TX, 77027 | Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00-a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



Call to schedule an appointment:
713-797-1087 or visit villagemedical.com
to get more information

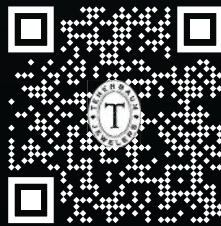


© 2021 Village Medical



I CAN'T...

GET OFF THEIR WEBSITE!



TENENBAUMJEWELERS.COM/I-CANT

A Texas Legislature Recap

Advocates shut down dozens of anti-LGBTQ bills,
Abbott signs attack on trans children into law.

By STAFF REPORTERS

After over nine months of the most conservative lawmaking Texas has seen in recent history, the state legislature's latest special session has come to an end. While it's still unknown whether Governor Greg Abbott will keep pushing, his legislative achievements thus far have been especially grueling for the queer community, which faced a record-breaking number of political attacks in 2021.

The Texas Senate and House of Representatives adjourned their third special session on October 19. Lawmakers filed over 75 anti-LGBTQ bills—the most in state history. More than a dozen of these bills directly impacted transgender youth.

Despite pleas from hundreds of activists, politicians, and pro-equality organizations, Abbott placed a bill targeting trans children on each of the three special-session agendas until one was finally passed during the most recent session. Beginning January 18, 2022, trans student athletes will be prohibited from playing on K–12 school sports teams that align with their gender identity under HB 25, which Abbott signed into law on October 25.

HB 25, authored by State Representative Valoree Swanson (R-Spring), will require student athletes who compete in interscholastic competition to play on sports teams that correspond with the sex listed on their birth certificate at or near their time of birth, according to *The Texas Tribune*.

The legislation goes further than current rules from the University Interscholastic League (UIL), which governs school sports in Texas. Under current UIL rules, a student's gender is determined by their birth certificate. But UIL also accepts legally modified birth certificates in which someone may have had their gender marker changed to align with their gender identity.

Swanson said she was “overjoyed” at Abbott's decision to sign HB 25 into law. She has argued that the bill intends to ensure fair competition in girls' sports and uphold Title IX, the federal law that prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of sex.

“It's so very, very important that we protect everything that women have gained in the last



50 years,” Swanson said during a committee hearing.

Trans Texas advocates have claimed Swanson's argument is detrimental not only to trans youth, but also to cisgender girls and women who may not strictly adhere to societal standards.

Ricardo Martinez, CEO of the LGBTQ political-advocacy organization Equality Texas, said in a statement that the harm caused by HB 25 is “already prevalent.”

“Transgender youth bravely told their stories while advocates like Equality Texas presented data on the increase in bullying, calls to suicide hotlines, and physical assault stemming from the rhetoric from hearings and debates about anti-trans sports bans,” Martinez said. “Our pleas for dignity, respect, and the safety of trans and intersex kids in schools went unheard, and in some cases blatantly ignored by the elected officials responsible for this law.”

In an August 18 op-ed for them, 18-year-old trans Houston activist Landon Richie discussed the psychological toll of the constant stream of anti-trans legislation on Texas youth who are forced to defend their rights over and over again. Richie has been testifying in support of trans rights at the Capitol since he came out at the age of 12.

“While this session has been especially brutal, trans youth in Texas endure the cruel political spectacle of their existences being debated every two years,” Richie wrote. “When your formative years are predicated on defending your humanity and begging to be treated

with dignity, respect, and love, you forget what it's like to just live. You forget what it's like to be a kid.”

The Biden White House condemned HB 25 after it was passed by the Texas House, further hinting at a potential fight with the state over the new law.

“Our message to young transgender people in Texas and across the country: these hateful bills are bullying disguised as legislation, and @POTUS and our Administration will always keep fighting for the full equality LGBTQ+ folks deserve,” said Matt Hill, senior associate communications director for the White House.

Because the third special legislative session ended without passing two of Abbott's priorities—legislation to increase penalties for illegal voting and to ban vaccine mandates by any entity in Texas—some lawmakers expect there to be a fourth special session. Abbott has declined to say whether another session will be necessary, but he did issue a statement applauding lawmakers for their work, suggesting he was satisfied with what they had gotten done.

“These dynamic achievements would not have been possible without the men and women of the Texas House and Senate who worked tirelessly through the third special session to ensure these priorities made it across the finish line,” he said. “Because of their efforts, the future of Texas is stronger, safer, and freer.”

But the unfinished bills could result in intraparty politics and expose Abbott to attacks from his right—a faction he has been increasingly attuned to as he prepares for his reelection campaign. Last month, the Texas →

WORLD AIDS DAY

A Virtual Commemoration

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2021, 6:30 PM



Hosted Live By:

Ernie Manouse

Host of Town Square with
Ernie Manouse

POWERED BY



Featuring:

Celebrity Appearances
and Interviews

Pop-ins by AFH Staff, Officials and Partners

Surprise original performances and so much more!



Keynote Speaker:

Paul Kawata

Executive Director,
National Minority AIDS Council
2021 Shelby Hodge
Vision Award Honoree

Buy Tickets or become an Underwriter at **WorldAIDSDayHouston.org**



GILEAD



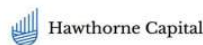
BBVA



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF
HOUSTON



ExxonMobil



BeDESIGN
FURNITURE | LIGHTING | BUGS



Walgreens



Ballroom
AT ASTOR PLACE



ckp



OUTFRONT



**No Drama
...Just Results**



Debbie Levine

**TOP PRODUCER
2002 -2020**

**Virtual Tours
Available**



**VOTED BEST
REAL ESTATE AGENT**

Outsmart Readers'
Choice 2021

**GREENWOOD KING
PROPERTIES**

dlevine@greenwoodking.com

713.942.6857

Department of Family and Protective Services removed a webpage that offered resources to LGBTQ youth following complaints from one of Abbott's far-right GOP primary challengers, according to internal agency communications.

Equality Texas speculates that the spike in harmful legislation was caused by Abbott and other lawmakers' efforts to gain far-right political support in advance of the 2022 general election.

"We know why this is happening: this year, in special session after special session, the

legislature cruelly fanned the flames of anti-LGBTQ+ hate in this state in an attempt to gain votes through fear," Martinez said. "Only by electing pro-equality candidates can we ensure that horrific legislation like HB 25, and worse, doesn't pass in 2023."

Moving forward, Equality Texas plans to focus on supporting lawmakers "who understand our issues and prioritize representing the vast majority of Texans who firmly believe that discrimination against trans and LGBTQ people is wrong." ▼

ACLU of Texas Sues Houston-Area School District over Gender-Based Dress Code Policy

Six boys and a nonbinary student were
disciplined for having long hair.

By Allyson Waller, Texas Tribune

The American Civil Liberties Union of Texas is suing a Houston-area school district over a dress code policy it says has led to multiple students being disciplined for having long hair.

Plaintiffs in the lawsuit include six boys and a nonbinary student ages 7-17 from Magnolia Independent School District. According to the lawsuit, which was filed in federal district court Thursday morning, the Magnolia ISD gender-based policy "imposed immense and irreparable harm" on the students, some of whom claim they have worn long hair for years while attending school in the district without any repercussions.

The lawsuit says the students have been threatened with or sent to in-school suspension for weeks at a time; some were placed in a "disciplinary alternative education program," leading three of them to unenroll from the school district. The suit also states that while the plaintiffs have been disciplined for the length of their hair, other students with long hair, such as those on high school football teams, have not faced discipline.

"To be kicked out, pushed out, of school simply because of their gender and their hair is really unconscionable," ACLU of Texas staff attorney Brian Klosterboer said.

Klosterboer said the ACLU warned Magnolia ISD numerous times about how its dress code policy's gender-specific requirements violate equal protection under the 14th

Amendment and Title IX, which prohibits discrimination in educational institutions on the basis of sex.

In a statement, Magnolia ISD disagreed with the ACLU's claims and said it was reviewing "the lawsuit with its legal counsel and looks forward to the opportunity to respond to the Court."

"This system of differentiated dress and grooming standards have been affirmed by courts and does not inhibit equal access to educational opportunities under Title IX," the district said. "The rules are included in the student handbook each year and are similar to the codes of approximately half of the public school districts in Texas."

In a letter sent to the district in August, the ACLU of Texas said it filed a grievance in 2019 on behalf of a Magnolia ISD parent who said her son was told to cut his hair or he'd be sent to in-school suspension. The letter also cited reports the ACLU of Texas received about students repeatedly being threatened with disciplinary action or being suspended for having long hair.

Danielle Miller, whose 11-year-old child is nonbinary and a plaintiff in the lawsuit against the district, said she received a phone call from her child's school at the beginning of this school year and was told that her child would have to cut their hair. *The Texas Tribune* does not disclose children's names for privacy reasons. →



The Miller Law Firm

Follow us on
Social Media
for Cash Prize
Drawings!



Adam H. Miller

Nichole Nech

Proudly Serving Houston's
LGBTQ+ Community Since 1995

We are always on your side,
Call Your Legal Allies

At The Miller Law Firm we give every client our full attention. We understand the toll a serious injury or death can have on an accident victim and their loved ones. The Texas Bulldog will never sit, stay, or roll over for the insurance adjusters.

You didn't ask to be injured,
so don't wait for justice.



We know that the success of your case depends on our hard work and dedication. Our attorneys will always go the extra mile from the initial investigation through all facets of the legal process to help you get the best outcome possible.

Car Accidents
Truck Accidents
Uber and Lyft Accidents
DUI and DWI Accidents
Wrongful Death
Slip and Fall Accidents
Employment Lawsuits
Motorcycle Accidents

Bicycle Accidents
Pedestrian Accidents
Offshore & Maritime Accidents
Workers' Compensation
Product Liability
Homeowner Storm Claims
Construction Accidents
Train Accidents

The Miller Law Firm
4900 Woodway Ste 900
Houston, TX 77056



Follow us on Instagram
@TexasBulldogLaw



Like us on Facebook
@TexasBulldogLaw

713-572-3333 | TexasBulldogLaw.com

Miller said her child was “just in absolute devastation and tears” when she told them they would have to cut their hair.

“... Based on [my child’s] reaction and how harsh and traumatized they were, I realized that we weren’t going to be cutting [their] hair,” Miller said.

Miller’s child was placed in in-school suspension for nine days, she said. The suspension was postponed during a 60-day window to appeal the decision, which has almost run its course, Miller said.

Miller said her child has had long hair for a couple of years and that their hair length had never been a problem before.

“I have no idea what changed,” Miller said. “[The district is] not saying anything, they’re not responding to anybody in the community about it.”

The district said its administration and board of trustees have heard from a small group of parents about concerns over the dress code policy, and they “are currently in the process of considering parent grievances on this subject matter.”

According to Magnolia ISD’s 2021-22 student handbook, hair must “be no longer than the bottom of a dress shirt collar, bottom of the ear, and out of the eyes for male students.” Hair also cannot “be pinned up in any fashion” or

“worn in a ponytail or bun for male students.”

However, the ACLU argues many of the plaintiffs have worn long hair for years while enrolled in Magnolia ISD and have not faced any discipline until this year. Klosterboer said some school districts in Texas tend to rely on “old and outdated case law” as the basis for their dress code policies.

Another plaintiff, a 9-year-old Latino student identified in the lawsuit as A.C., wears long hair that he keeps in a ponytail and out of his face. His family was told on the first day of school this year that he would need to cut his hair or be sent to in-school suspension, the lawsuit says. His mother said many men in A.C.’s family wear long hair, including his dad and uncle. A.C. did not cut his hair and was placed in in-school suspension for five weeks, where he was separated from other students and wasn’t able to attend his regular classes.

In September, he was sent to a “disciplinary alternative education program” outside of school for seven weeks, where he faced potentially harsher punishment. According to the lawsuit, students who don’t comply with the school district’s hair length policy and are sent to the alternative education program may be required to have a parent sit in class with them, go to before- or after-school detention, or lose their desk, among other measures.

This month, A.C.’s family unenrolled him from the district. However, the suit says his

placement in an alternative education program has made it difficult for him to enroll in another district and he is now being home-schooled.

“Magnolia ISD has harshly punished my son and driven him out of school entirely because he is a boy with long hair. ... The district needs to stop harming our children,” Azucena Laredo, A.C.’s mother, said in a statement.

In 2020, a federal judge granted two Black students from a Houston-area school district temporary relief after they were told they would have to cut their hair, which they wore in dreadlocks, to abide by district dress code policy. The case, which caught national attention, also landed on the radar of Texas lawmakers, who introduced their own version of the CROWN Act, legislation that would prohibit hair discrimination based on hair texture and protective styles that are usually associated with race. The legislation, House Bill 392, advanced out of committee during the regular session but was not taken up on the House floor for a vote.

Outside of Texas, federal courts have ruled in cases from Indiana and North Carolina that gender-specific dress codes could be linked to gender discrimination under federal law, according to the ACLU and the Texas Association of School Boards. ▼

This article first appeared in The Texas Tribune at texastribune.org

KNOW the signs RECOGNIZE the patterns END the cycle of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Knowing the facts about domestic violence, recognizing the predictable patterns and talking about it can help end the cycle of domestic violence and abuse.

If safe, call
1 (800) 799-SAFE (7233)
or visit www.hawc.org

OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY
HARRIS COUNTY, TX



KIM OGG

HARRISCOUNTYDA.COM

Out for Good

The Montrose Center's good time for a good cause.

By MARENE GUSTIN

The Montrose Center's Out for Good gala is back, live and in person, on December 3.

"First and foremost," says the Center's communications and marketing manager, Austin Ruiz, "it's going to be the first time we will be back together in person." The event was held virtually last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This year," says Ruiz, "it was supposed to be October 8 in honor of National Coming Out Day, but we were seeing cases of the delta variant rising across Harris County." But as cases slowed and vaccine and booster-shot numbers increased, the Montrose Center's board decided to reschedule the event for December.

Even so, the Center is asking participants to book tickets early and show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test within 72 hours of the event.

"But we will have rapid tests available that night," Ruiz adds. To ensure social distancing, they will only sell tickets for less than half the capacity of The Ballroom at Bayou Place—which means you should book your tickets early. There will be limited seating outside on the balcony as well, and all staff and volunteers will be masked.

For those still being extra-careful, the Montrose Center will record the gala so donors and sponsors can view highlights during the following week. They will also receive a "Thank You" box of goodies to enjoy on the night of the event. "Last year we had cookies and Stoli vodka (a major sponsor of the Montrose Center), and various party favors for the donors," says Ruiz.

Concerns about COVID are being taken seriously, as the two honorees this year are in the high-risk group for the disease due to their age. Dina Jacobs will be the recipient of the 2021 LGBTQ Community Vision Award. Jacobs has been a headlining drag queen for more than 55 years, winning over 70 pageant titles and spending countless hours performing and raising money for charity.

"Dina is an amazing performer who is still working," says Ruiz. Jacobs is originally from Hawaii, and Ruiz says the gala will feature a Hawaiian theme to honor her, complete with



Dina Jacobs

hula dancers. Jacobs currently resides in the Montrose Center's new LGBTQ-affirming Law Harrington Senior Living Center. Ruiz reports that Jacobs thinks living there "is like winning the gay lottery," and a thank-you for all that her generation has been through in the struggle for queer rights. The Law Harrington Center features 112 one- and two-bedroom independent-living apartments for low-income individuals and couples who are 62 years and older. Additional features of the property include a social-services department managed by the Montrose Center, a geriatric primary-care clinic provided by Legacy Community Health, a group dining area, meeting and game rooms, a fitness center, dog park, and outdoor recreational spaces. Opened earlier this year, it is the first facility of its kind in Texas and the largest in the nation.

There will also be a special award presentation to Dalton DeHart, who was the 2020 Community Vision Award recipient. Since last year's event was virtual, Ruiz says it is important to honor DeHart in person this year.

"We are really hoping this in-person event will be a celebration for both Jacobs and DeHart," says Ruiz. DeHart has been a supporter of LGBTQ rights for decades, and is known for photographing almost every important event



Dalton DeHart

and milestone for Houston's LGBTQ community.

Besides the sit-down dinner, entertainment, and testimonials, Emmy Award-winning television host and producer Debra Duncan will host the event once again. After hosting the virtual event last year, Ruiz looks forward to seeing her back in person.

While the event invitation requests business casual or cocktail attire, the Montrose Center wants everyone to be comfortable and express themselves. That means you're welcome to come in drag, something sparkly and fancy, or just come straight from work.

VIP tickets start at \$250, which includes a special reception at 6:00 p.m. Tables and sponsor opportunities range from \$1,500 to \$5,000. An after-party will follow the presentations.

Besides being a fun time, the gala benefits the Montrose Center, a leading full-service LGBTQ center that has been empowering Houston's queer community since 1978 with a wide range of social, HIV prevention, and mental-health services.

What: Out for Good

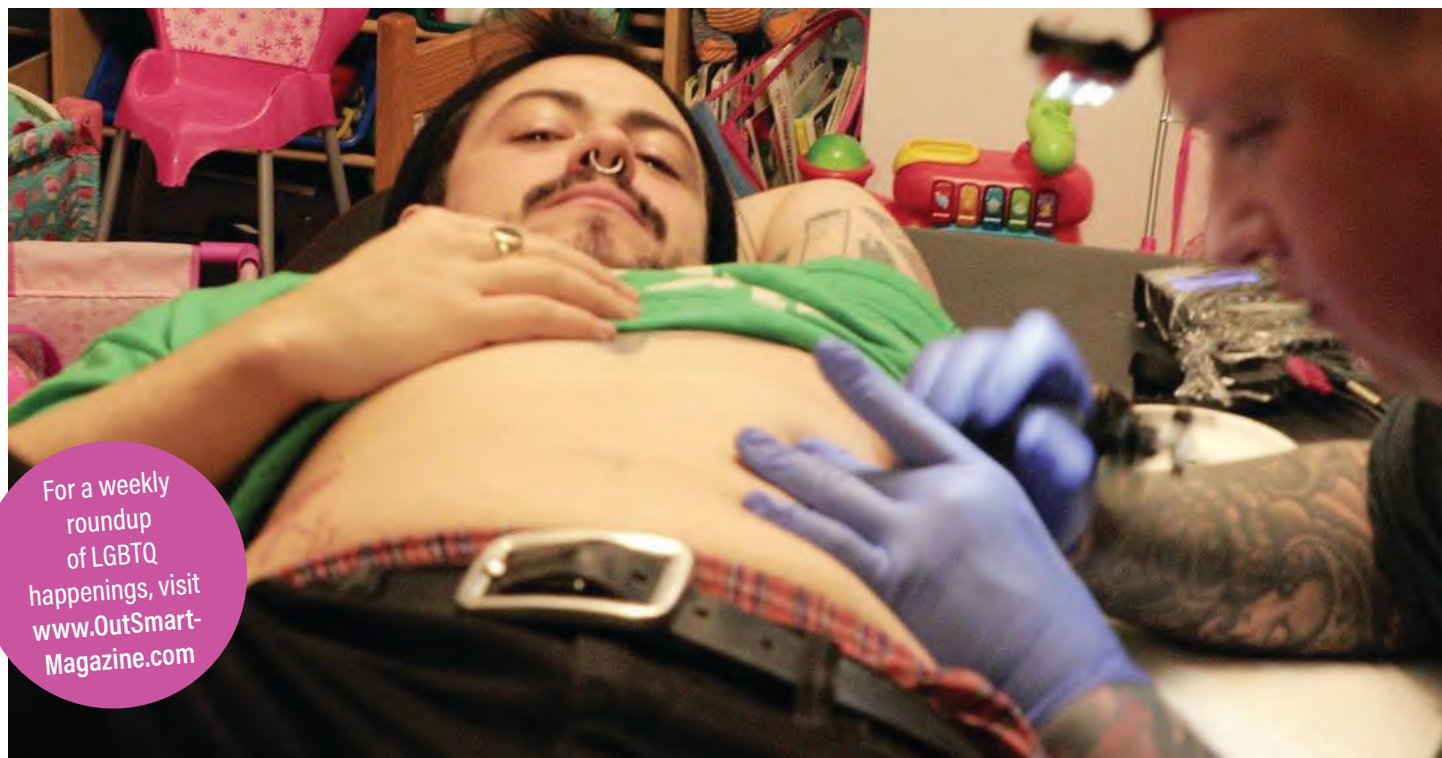
When: December 3, at 7:00 p.m.

Where: The Ballroom at Bayou Place

Tickets: at montrosecenter.org

By Adriana Salazar

QUEER THINGS to DO



For a weekly
roundup
of LGBTQ
happenings, visit
www.OutSmart-Magazine.com

COMMUNITY

November 11-22

Houston Cinema Arts Festival

The Houston Cinema Arts Festival (HCAF) takes place this month, with over 40 films and short programs. This year's theme, Third Coast, spotlights often-overlooked talent throughout the Gulf Coast. This year's lineup includes several films that are sure to pique the interest of LGBTQ viewers.

On November 12 at the Rice Cinema, ticket holders can see the Houston premiere of Angelo Madsen Minax's *North by Current*. The transgender director takes his audience on a captivating journey into the depths of drug and alcohol addiction, trans embodiment, and domestic violence. The documentary-style

film reveals the relationships of family members struggling to understand each other.

Another standout queer film, *Petite Maman*, will screen at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston on November 17. The latest work by Céline Sciamma tells the story of two girls becoming fast friends, but whose eerie similarities yield revelations that merge past and present events.

View these films, as well as many others, at indoor and outdoor venues across the city and virtually. Filmgoers can purchase an all-access pass or tickets for individual screenings. cinemahtx.org/hcaf

STAGE

November 4

MR. & MISS SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DRAG 2021

JR's Bar & Grill presents the 10th annual Mr. and Miss So You Think You Can Drag pageant. Hosted by Kofi, the competition measures contestant presentations in formal wear, Q&A, and talent. The event also features performances from Mr. and Miss So You Think You Can Drag 2019 winners Leilani L. Jackson-Ross and Jermani Oz Jackson.

tinyurl.com/ccucr5v

COMMUNITY

November 4-14

THE WOMAN IN THE MIRROR

Head over to MATCH in Midtown for Dayna Steele's *The Woman in the Mirror*, a theater production based on the local personality's book *Surviving Alzheimer's with Friends, Facebook, and a Really Big Glass of Wine*. Steele will portray the story of being her mother's caregiver after she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2013.

tinyurl.com/4j8h4j6c



COMMUNITY

November 5

ENRIQUE IGLESIAS AND RICKY MARTIN

Enrique Iglesias and Ricky Martin will appear live in concert at the Toyota Center, with special guest Sebastián Yatra. Ricky Martin, a gay artist, came out in 2010. tinyurl.com/j8baecyv



COMMUNITY

November 6-7

EXTRA LIFE 2021

The Houston Gaymers presents Extra Life 2021, a 24-hour game-a-thon benefiting the Texas Children's Hospital. The digital charity drive can be streamed on Twitch. For more information on the event, join the Houston Gaymers Discord server on their Facebook page. tinyurl.com/ypuftse9



COMMUNITY

November 6-7

DIANA COUNTRY DINNER WEEKEND

The nation's oldest LGBTQ organization, Houston's Diana Foundation, hosts its annual Diana Country Dinner Weekend at Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon (Saturday night dinner and dancing, with tunes by Sam Turner and the Cactus Cats) and at Brennan's for Sunday brunch featuring New Orleans-style cuisine and jazz. Tickets to the event are \$65. thedianafoundation.org

COMMUNITY

November 17

TRANSGENDER AWARENESS BALL

The Mahogany Project presents the Transgender Awareness Ball at Hamburger Mary's Houston. Hosted by the legendary JRock Ebony, winners will receive cash prizes in seven pageant categories. tinyurl.com/2547t9vr

COMMUNITY

November 18

SOULGIVING

The Mahogany Project and Save Our Sisters United, Inc. are teaming up to host SoulGiving at Maggiano's Little Italy. While the community fellowship dinner is centered around Houston's Black LGBTQ community, the event is open to all queer folks who have been vaccinated. tinyurl.com/57npeh2u

COMMUNITY

November 20

DÍA DE RECORDACIÓN TRANS AND TRANSGIVING

The Organización Latina de Trans en Texas (OLTT) presents Día de Recordación Trans (Transgender Day of Remembrance) to honor victims of trans violence in 2021. OLTT's Transgiving will also be devoted to a night of remembrance, love, and family. tinyurl.com/2nj3mpw8



TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

The Transgender Education Network of Texas (TENT) will observe Transgender Day of Remembrance virtually on its social-media platforms. The event will honor all trans people who lost their lives due to anti-transgender violence during 2021. tinyurl.com/ysme7wtd

COMMUNITY

November 23

ANNUAL TGIVING DRIVE-THRU CELEBRATION

The Montrose Center presents its annual Thanksgiving celebration. The drive-thru potluck provides transgender community members with a socially distant way to celebrate Thanksgiving during COVID-19. Attendees will be given pre-packaged meals, fun care bags, handwritten holiday cards, and more. tinyurl.com/22uy2dxf



COMMUNITY

November 26

RANCH LIGHTS

The Ranch Houston, owned by local queer couple Tamika and Lenie Caston-Miller, hosts Ranch Lights, a nighttime holiday market with Christmas lights, art, music, and shopping. tinyurl.com/zeh63wmc

More QUEER THINGS TO DO →

QUEER THINGS to DO

SAVE the DATES



COMMUNITY

December 3

OUT FOR GOOD

The Montrose Center presents Out for Good at The Ballroom at Bayou Place. Houston's premiere LGBTQ annual gala features dinner and a program honoring Dina Jacobs, a legendary drag performer for 55 years. Tickets to the event can be purchased at the Montrose Center's "Give Lively" page. tinyurl.com/bs3vzvry



STAGE

December 3-4

URBAN NUTCRACKER

Go to the Stafford Centre to see *Urban Nutcracker*, an exciting twist on the holiday classic choreographed by openly gay Houston dancer and activist Harrison Guy. Tickets at houstonurbannutcracker.org. tinyurl.com/3emwecun3



COMMUNITY

December 11

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Pride Chorus Houston presents its annual Holiday Traditions at Lambert Hall, featuring holiday classics and new music. tinyurl.com/4t6a3tp2

Wedding Packages starting at just \$89/pp.



Smart. Modern. Seamless. IN THE HEART OF IT ALL

Situated in the Houston Medical Center, within walking distance to world-class medical facilities, we offer spacious guest rooms, smart amenities, and dedicated service.

Join us at our Bar 9 Rooftop Lounge and pool as you take in the breathtaking views of Downtown and Rice University.



Jake Paulhamus
Catering Sales Manager

**HILTON HOUSTON PLAZA/
MEDICAL CENTER**

6633 Travis Street | Houston, TX 77030
713-557-0740 HoustonPlaza.Hilton.com





AHF

is resilience

HIVcare.org

AHF Healthcare Centers

Houston

1200 Binz St, Ste 1040
(713) 524-8700

Houston Fannin

7400 Fannin St, Ste 1118
(713) 799-8994

TUTS

MUSICAL THEATRE IS

GAY

GET TICKETS AT [TUTS.COM](https://tuts.com)



SISTER ACT

OUT@TUTS: THURS. NOV. 11
THE HOBBY CENTER

MUSIC BY **ALAN MENKEN** LYRICS BY **GLENN SLATER** BOOK BY **CHERI STEINKELLNER & BILL STEINKELLNER**

ADDITIONAL BOOK MATERIAL
DOUGLAS CARTER BEANE

Based on the Touchstone Pictures Motion Picture "Sister Act" written by Joseph Howard

DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY
DAN KNECHTGES

"SISTER ACT" IS PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL (MTI). ALL AUTHORIZED MATERIALS ARE ALSO SUPPLIED BY MTI. WWW.MTISHOWS.COM

Children's
MEMORIAL
HERMANN
Hospital

Hampton
HOSPITAL

HOMewood
SUITES
HOSPITAL

THE
CITY OF HOUSTON

FUNDED IN PART BY
THE CITY OF HOUSTON
HOUSTON ARTS ALLIANCE

abc
13

FREEPORT
LNG

DISNEY'S THE LITTLE MERMAID

OUT@TUTS: THURS. DEC. 16
THE HOBBY CENTER

MUSIC BY **ALAN MENKEN** LYRICS BY **HOWARD ASHMAN & GLENN SLATER** BOOK BY **DOUG WRIGHT**

Based on the Hans Christian Andersen story and the Disney film produced by Howard Ashman & John Musker and written & directed by John Musker & Ron Clements.

ORIGINALLY PRODUCED BY
DISNEY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS

DIRECTED BY
DAN KNECHTGES

"DISNEY'S LITTLE MERMAID" IS PRESENTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL (MTI). ALL AUTHORIZED MATERIALS ARE ALSO SUPPLIED BY MTI. WWW.MTISHOWS.COM

Children's
MEMORIAL
HERMANN
Hospital

Hampton
HOSPITAL

HOMewood
SUITES
HOSPITAL

THE
CITY OF HOUSTON

FUNDED IN PART BY
THE CITY OF HOUSTON
HOUSTON ARTS ALLIANCE

abc
13

Apache

ENBRIDGE

Austin Turkeys

Our local and national state of affairs is nothing short of amusing.



Okay, so here's the deal. Donald Trump has an attorney named Lin Wood, who is a jumbo-spiked rolling wad of wackadoodle. Sometimes you gotta wonder which comes first—being weird, or being a Trump attorney. (Somehow, I think one causes the other, so it doesn't matter which end you begin on.)

So Attorney Wood made an announcement. He said he's damn-near certain that Congresswoman Majorie Taylor Greene is a communist. A communist, of all the things! I suspect Majorie Taylor Greene is a lot of things, but that wasn't on my list. Not even at the bottom. (Lemme check... Nope, not there.)

First off, communists believe in sharing the wealth. Greene thinks the money is all hers. So right there, we've got a big ol' red flag.

Here's his exact words, quoted from the newspaper: "In my opinion, Marjorie Taylor Greene is a communist," Wood said in Friday remarks."

See, I told you.

I wonder if Wood knows what *communist* means. He's an attorney, after all, which ups the odds of him having read a book or two.

Personally, I believe Woods thinks calling someone a communist is just a general insult, like *dumb* or *sloppy* or *obnoxious Trump lawyer* or... Well, you get what I mean.

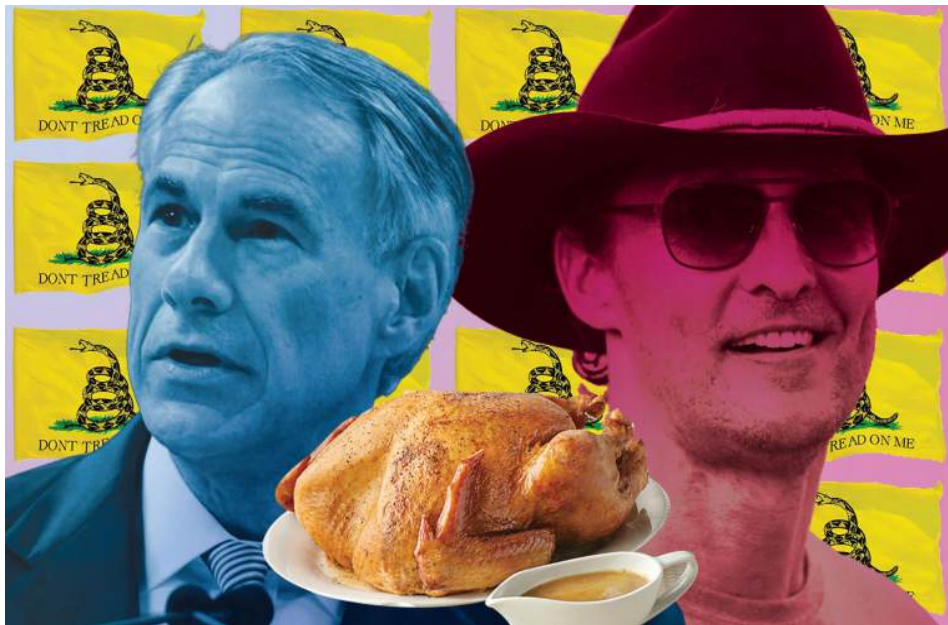
So let's get to the meat of this: why does Wood think Greene is a communist? In his own words: "Marjorie Taylor Greene is running around saying 'Impeach Biden!' That says that Biden won—he didn't."

Aha! So a call for impeachment means that you must believe that Biden is the actual president. And calling Biden the president is communism. Shame all over her.

And then the two of them get into a word-slapping brawl on Twitter. Somebody please tell them that Twitter is the tool of communists. Instead, they should do as our forefathers did: I call for a duel.



In case you missed it, Matthew McConaughey was caught ruminating in front of a live mic about running for governor of Texas. When asked if he would run, he replied, "Well thank



you, man—I'm measuring it. Look, it's going to be in some capacity. I just—I'm more of a folksy and philosopher-poet statesman than I am a, *per se*, definitive politician."

He continued, "So I go, 'Well, that's a reason not to,' but then I go, 'No, that's exactly why you should, because politics needs redefinition.' But I'm measuring. You know—what is my category? What's my embassy?"

Okay, I'm going to roll my eyes out loud, so stand back and hold my peppermint mocha frappuccino.

First off, keep a copy of his answer in your back pocket so if anyone ever asks you to give the definition of *word salad*, you'll have this handy. It might even win you the right to host *Jeopardy*.

McConaughey's answer would also pass as "Most Hilarious Misuse of a Latin Idiom" in the board game of your choice. And secondly, our regal honor of "Philosopher Poet Statesman" is currently held by His Royal Highness Willie Nelson.

On the other hand, if he wins, Texas could enter the highly competitive "Whose Governor Is the Most Baked Today?" sweepstakes.

Sweetie, here's my worry. I fear that Matthew McConaughey is just Donald Trump with

a better butt and hair. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that, except that Trump's hair and ass didn't help the situation at all.



Okay, so here's the deal. The QAnon woman who was trampled to death by her own friends at the January 6 coup attempt was carrying—wait for it—a *Don't Tread On Me* flag.

She was warning people not to tread on her, and they did it anyway, dammit. So remember that when you show up at the next coup attempt with your "Don't Violently Overthrow My Government" T-shirt.



And lastly, there's always *arithmetic*. That's what you should limit your conversations to during Thanksgiving with the family. Everything else is pretty much debatable, and you know that won't end well.

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



Houston,
**let's create some
fierce LGBTQ+ wealth.**

Daylight
joindaylight.com



Confronting Stigma

Reducing shame around STIs promotes better sexual health.

Much of our exposure to the shame and stigma of our sexual behavior begins before we even fully understand what sex is. As children, we are rarely taught in a nonjudgmental way about the functioning of our bodies.

We may have been taught to avoid touching ourselves, and perhaps we were even discouraged from examining our bodies in the mirror. Abstinence-based educational programs and a pervasive lack of sex positivity in our school systems reinforce the overall sense that sex is something that we should be ashamed of and not discuss openly.

These messages are magnified even further for LGBTQ individuals. Parents and families sometimes struggle with talking openly about queer identity, so discussing the nuts and bolts of sex with LGBTQ kids can be even more of a challenge.

Schools are no better for LGBTQ youth, since ‘How to have queer sex’ is definitely not an approved topic in health class. Additionally, anti-LGBTQ messaging from religious organizations and discriminatory legislation all create an environment of intolerance, making it even more difficult to initiate honest dialogue about sex and sexuality.

The Consequences of STI Stigma

Without proper instruction about the mechanics of sexual activity, queer people are oftentimes forced to find information on the Internet—all without explanation, context, or nuance. Learning—or rather, *not* learning—about sex from the Internet can negatively impact and complicate one’s understanding of what constitutes queer sexual activity.

But perhaps worse than not knowing what to do in the bedroom is the implicit message that LGBTQ people receive about their sexual desires: Queer sex is on the fringe, abnormal, and beyond discussion. Queer sex is unworthy of consideration because it is immoral or unnatural, and not procreative. We learn to be quiet and secretive about our sexual desires.

It is no surprise, then, that LGBTQ people with sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

are routinely stigmatized in this repressive environment.

Dismantling Stigma against STIs

It is vitally important that we reduce the stigma surrounding STIs. Stigma prevents people from getting tested for STIs and notifying partners about their exposure to an STI. Stigma drives much of the reluctance to share health information with family or friends. Stigma discourages people from seeking treatment and adhering to life-saving medication regimens.

Claiming your queer identity can be a liberating step in releasing personal shame related to sex. Begin by looking at your own sense of internalized sexual shame. For example, are there sexual activities that you tell yourself you’re not going to do because they might

make you less masculine, or too feminine? Too “dirty” and unclear? What negative judgments do you carry about your past and present sexual behaviors?

Because shame is a driving factor in the development of stigma, when you work to release your negative feelings and hang-ups about sex, you create a space to be who you really are, regardless of your health status. Freeing yourself from worrying about the opinions of others regarding your sexual identity is not only emotionally and psychologically healthy, but it also reduces many internalized negative feelings within the LGBTQ community.

Get tested. Frequent testing is a big part of reducing personal stigma and shame. By testing for STIs, you acknowledge that any sexually active person can get an STI. You are also promoting the idea that STIs are *treat-*



able conditions. Negative outcomes are much less likely to happen when you are receiving competent medical care.

The language you use also makes a difference, so it's important to be thoughtful about the way you talk about STIs with friends and family. Be careful to avoid language that suggests the superiority of someone who is not infected. It is important to challenge the stigmatizing hierarchy between those who do and do not have STIs.

When friends make negative comments or statements about people with STIs, you can challenge their language and misconceptions about sexual health. Queer activism begins within our network of family and friends.

If you encounter negative STI messaging in the media or from our trusted institutions, consider responding with direct feedback that calls out these sources of STI shaming.

"REDUCING STIGMA RELATED TO AN STI IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF ENCOURAGING QUEER FOLKS TO SEEK OUT SUPPORTIVE HEALTHCARE RESOURCES, REGARDLESS OF THEIR STI STATUS."

Sexual Health beyond STIs

Reducing stigma related to STIs is an important part of encouraging queer folks to seek out supportive healthcare resources, regardless of their STI status.

Routine appointments with a primary-care provider play a crucial role in maintaining good health. Getting a complete physical exam and a laboratory blood-work evaluation is an important first step. LGBTQ people tend to experience more frequent chronic medical conditions because of the disparities in health-care delivery, so routine STI, cholesterol, and colonoscopy screenings, mammograms and pap smears (for women), and prostate exams (for men) are essential.

Curiosity and exploration are natural parts of your sexual development. Cultivating deeper insights into your sexual self can ground you while confronting the societal factors that unfairly stigmatize LGBTQ sexuality.

Daryl Shorter, MD, is a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and is board certified in both general and addiction psychiatry. His clinical practice focuses on veteran care, and he lectures widely on LGBTQ mental health.

MEDICAL | RESEARCH | DENTAL | PHARMACY | VISION

Get PREPARED!

FIND OUT IF PREP IS RIGHT FOR YOU BY SCHEDULING YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!

BENEFITS OF CHOOSING ST. HOPE FOUNDATION AS YOUR PREP PROVIDER:

- LOW COST, SAME-DAY SERVICE
- BOARD-CERTIFIED EXPERTS
- TELEHEALTH FOLLOW-UP
- FREE PHARMACY HOME DELIVERY



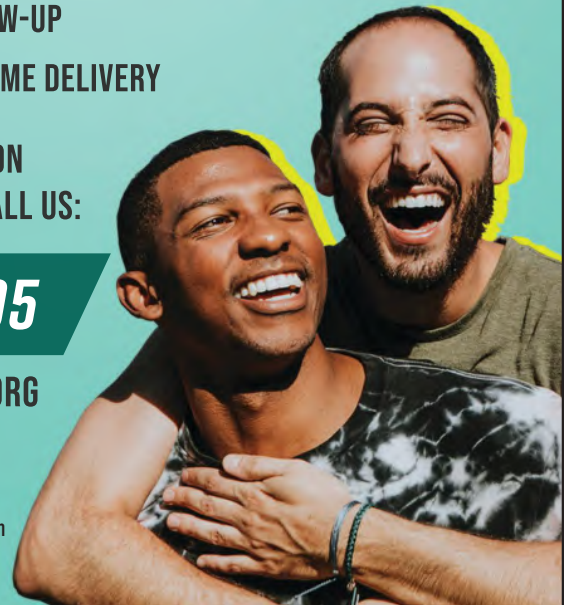
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TREATMENT, CALL US:

281-779-8705

WWW.OFFERINGHOPE.ORG



Voted One of the Best for Favorite HIV/AIDS Organization



THE MONTROSE FORGE

YOUR LOCALLY OWNED LEATHER & FETISH BOUTIQUE!



**IN OUR NEW LOCATION
3423 WHITE OAK DR
713-893-5002**

WWW.THEMONTROSEFORGE.COM

WendyTaylorPhotography

IMPORTANT FACTS FOR BIKTARVY®

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

(bik-TAR-vee)

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

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

ABOUT BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults and children who weigh at least 55 pounds. It can either be used in people who 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.

BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS. HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS.

Do NOT take BIKTARVY if you also take a medicine that contains:

- ▶ dofetilide
- ▶ rifampin
- ▶ any other medicines to treat HIV-1

BEFORE TAKING BIKTARVY

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- ▶ Have or have had any kidney or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- ▶ Have any other health problems.
- ▶ Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed 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, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- ▶ BIKTARVY and other medicines may affect each other. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist about medicines that interact with BIKTARVY, and ask if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with all your other medicines.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIKTARVY

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- ▶ Those in the “Most Important Information About BIKTARVY” section.
- ▶ **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that may have been hidden in your body. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **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 BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **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 effects of BIKTARVY** in clinical studies were diarrhea (6%), nausea (6%), and headache (5%).

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

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.

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

HOW TO TAKE BIKTARVY

Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.

GET MORE INFORMATION

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



BIKTARVY®

bictegravir 50mg/emtricitabine 200mg/
tenofovir alafenamide 25mg tablets

**LOVE
WHAT'S
INSIDE®**

CHAD



LIVING WITH HIV SINCE 2018

REAL BIKTARVY PATIENT

KEEP CREATING.

Because HIV doesn't change who you are.

BIKTARVY® is a complete, 1-pill, once-a-day prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in certain adults. **BIKTARVY does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.**

Ask your healthcare provider if BIKTARVY is right for you.

See Chad's story at [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).

Featured patient compensated by Gilead.

Please see Important Facts about BIKTARVY, including important warnings, on the previous page and visit [BIKTARVY.com](https://www.biktarvy.com).



Whether it is business or personal, sometimes relationships don't work out. In many cases, one or both parties' needs are no longer being met, or maybe it just wasn't the right fit from the beginning.

When it comes to financial and retirement planning, this can be particularly true because goals and objectives will typically change over time, and the advisor you have worked with for a long time might not be the right one to lead you financially forward through the next chapters of your life.

So how do you decide whether you should continue your current relationship or move on to someone who is a better fit for you?

When to Consider a Change

There are several situations that might cause you to start looking for a new financial advisor, such as when:

- your current advisor is nearing retirement, moving out of the area, or going to a different firm that you don't want to do business with;
- you have more of a "transactional" relationship with your current advisor (such as just buying and selling stocks and mutual funds), but you now need more comprehensive and sophisticated planning;
- the current advisor isn't staying up-to-date with changes in the industry, including financial laws and regulations as well as new strategies that could enhance your portfolio or future retirement income generation;
- the relationship is just not a good fit.

Changing Financial Advisors

Depending on the type of relationship you have with your current financial professional, it can be difficult to move your business elsewhere—especially if you haven't had a bad relationship.

In many ways, parting ways with a financial advisor is like ending other types of relationships. With that in mind, be sure that you talk to your current advisor and possibly try to work things out.

For instance, in some cases, an advisor might not be aware that their staff isn't providing good service or is being unfriendly to clients. Oftentimes, advisors are focused on managing financial plans and portfolios for their clients, so they may not see what is happening in the administrative areas of their business. Therefore, by bringing up the issue and resolving the situation, the relationship with your current advisor could improve, and perhaps even move forward.

In other instances, though, it could still be time to make a change. So if you determine it is necessary to move on, how exactly do you



Finding a Better Fit

How to hire a new financial advisor that meets your needs.

"break up" with your current financial advisor and find a better fit for you? Here are some important steps that you should consider, in order to make the switch more seamless and amiable:

Let the Advisor Know Why You're Moving Your Accounts

If you and your current financial advisor butt heads, then it's probably obvious why you are moving your accounts. However, if you've had an "okay" relationship but it's simply time for a change, or they're just not meeting your financial needs anymore, then it's important to let them know why you are going somewhere else. Moving forward with no explanation at all, or "ghosting" the advisor, is not typically the best way to handle the move. This is true even if your reasons for leaving are due to a negative experience. In fact, getting tough feedback is often better than receiving no explanation at all.

Having an open line of communication is critical when it comes to staying on good terms, even if you don't do business with each other anymore. In some instances, providing this information might help the advisor improve their overall processes, and others may be able to benefit from your feedback.

Have a Written Termination Agreement

Similar to signing a lease on a rental property,

there are some financial advisors or firms that require at least 30 days' notice to terminate your business with them. This is often the case to resolve fees and invoices. But even if it's not required, having a termination agreement in writing for your records is always a good idea. Sometimes, letters of engagement (or certain verbiage in account forms) will detail the termination process.

Look for Any Exit Fees

Many investment and financial advisory firms charge exit or termination fees when a client closes their account. This typically covers the cost of transferring assets or custodial reporting. Depending on the specific situation, though, you may be able to have this fee waived or have your new advisor pick up the tab.

Obtain (or Gain Access to) Copies of Your Financial Records

Today, most banks and financial firms allow online access to customer statements and other information such as the cost basis on trades, gains and losses, activity in the account, and other pertinent details. Before closing out your business with any financial advisor or firm, make sure that you have the most recent copies of all your information for your records. You will typically also have to forward certain information to your new financial advisor.

Revoke Trading Authority

If you've given your current advisor any type of trading authority in your accounts (and/or powers of attorney), you should revoke these agreements. Oftentimes, your new advisor can take care of this process for you via a standard transfer form.

Your New Advisor Checklist

While the process of deciding whether or not to leave your current advisor is important, it is also essential that you make a wise choice before committing to a new financial professional. With that in mind, make sure that you obtain pertinent information from them, such as:

- Do they have professional certifications?
- Are they a fiduciary?
- What other professional licenses and/or designations have they earned?
- How long have they been working in the financial-services industry?
- What area (if any) do they specialize in—retirement income planning, wealth management, etc.?
- What percentage of their client base is LGBTQ (if you think that will help them have a better understanding of you and your situation)?
- Have they had any disciplinary actions taken against them?
- How are they compensated (i.e., by a commission on products sold, a flat advisory fee, or a percentage of assets under management)?

It can also be helpful to contact some of the advisor's clients and inquire about their experiences.

Are You Getting What You Need?

If you're not getting the service and/or advice that you need from your current financial professional—or if you're simply seeking someone who is a better fit for your needs—make sure that you do your homework to ensure a successful move.

In addition, it can be difficult to find financial and retirement professionals who are well-versed in the needs of—and the options that are available to—the LGBTQ community. But this may be an essential component of your comfort level with an advisor, and the key to receiving the proper advice. So be sure to factor in this component, as well.

Grace S. Yung, CFP®, is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER practitioner with experience in helping LGBTQ individuals, domestic partners, and families plan and manage their finances since 1994. She is the managing director at Midtown Financial Group, LLC, in Houston. Yung can be reached at grace.yung@lpl.com. Visit letsmakeaplan.org or midtownfng.com/lgbtqplus.10.htm.

Some of your most important connections can be found close to home

We are proud to put the LGBTQ+ community first and we're committed to helping you build on your success with a financial strategy that's just for you. We look forward to continuing to serve the Houston community.



Elias Contreras

Financial Advisor
Senior Portfolio Advisor
elias.contreras@ml.com

Merrill Lynch Wealth Management

15375 Memorial Drive
Suite 400
Houston, TX 77079
281.588.7114
fa.ml.com/elias-contreras



Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (also referred to as "MLPF&S" or "Merrill") makes available certain investment products sponsored, managed, distributed or provided by companies that are affiliates of Bank of America Corporation ("BoFA Corp."). MLPF&S is a registered broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, Member SIPC and a wholly owned subsidiary of BoFA Corp.

Investment products: **Are Not FDIC Insured** **Are Not Bank Guaranteed** **May Lose Value**

The Bull Symbol and Merrill are registered trademarks of Bank of America Corporation.

© 2021 Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved. | MAP3775341 | AD-09-21-0333 | 470950PM-0421 | 09/2021

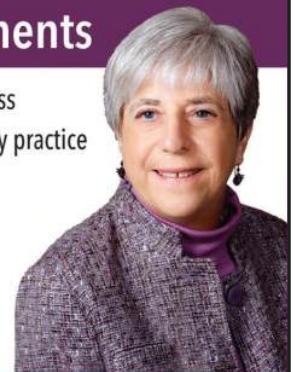
M. Sandra Scurria, MD Same/next day on-time appointments



- General family medicine
- Women's health
- Over 30 years in practice
- 24/7 telephone access
- Board certified family practice
- * Membership fee required

281-661-5901

6565 West Loop South at Bellaire Blvd., Suite 300



A Lasting Legacy

Legacy Community Health CEO **Katy Caldwell** retires after 25 years of growing the organization.

By SAM BYRD

Growing up, Katy Caldwell wanted to be a doctor, but she didn't have the grades (and later discovered she didn't have the interest) to pursue medical school. After all, no one can be perfect at everything.

So, she did the next best thing.

She became the executive advisor and eventually the CEO of Legacy Community Health, the largest federally qualified health center (FQHC) in Texas, providing high-quality health, social, and educational services to patients regardless of their ability to pay.

"I love this place! At the time I took this position, I said I'd commit to three or four years at the clinic, and here I am 25 years later. It's been a great career. I never looked back or looked elsewhere. It's been an amazing career for me. I have a lot of satisfaction that I kept my promise and did not walk away from anything having to do with HIV. I take a lot of joy in what we've done over the years here," she says.

Speaking of that promise she made, Caldwell took the position with Montrose Clinic during a time when HIV/AIDS research was experiencing breakthroughs with antiretroviral drugs, but access to those treatments was not always available. She knew there was work to be done, especially considering the medical industry's inequities.

"My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had fabulous insurance, and she received great treatment. Then, my best friend was diagnosed with HIV. He had no health insurance, and there is a large stigma attached to [being HIV-positive]. I watched my mom get the best of everything, and my friend get kicked around because he didn't have insurance. That was unfair," she says. "I thought that was wrong, and we needed to fix that. When I came to the clinic, it was first to make sure that HIV help was available. But then I needed to make sure that social determinants of health care were available to other communities."

Thus, she dove head-first into repairing what she felt health care was lacking. It didn't hurt that health care was experiencing such miraculous advances in antiretroviral treatments. That meant her clinic (named Montrose Clinic at the time) could pivot from prevention and palliative care to providing primary and wrap-around care for patients who were now able to live to a full life expectancy.

"AT THE TIME I TOOK THIS POSITION, I SAID I'D COMMIT TO THREE OR FOUR YEARS AT THE CLINIC, AND HERE I AM 25 YEARS LATER. IT'S BEEN A GREAT CAREER. I NEVER LOOKED BACK OR LOOKED ELSEWHERE."

—Katy Caldwell

As the clinic started to provide more treatment, Caldwell knew that it had to expand its services to meet the demands of its growing clientele.

"The bulk of our funding came from the Ryan White Care Act and CDC grants through the City of Houston. The board and I realized

that this is not a sustainable business model. If we lose one grant, we couldn't take care of people, and it could jeopardize the organization. We were looking for what made the most sense to vary our income streams at Montrose Clinic."

This realization necessitated a reimagining of Montrose Clinic's business model, and Caldwell's degree from the University of Houston and her previous experience in business administration positioned her as the perfect leader to guide Montrose Clinic through its necessary evolutions.

"One of our sister clinics gave a presentation that we should become a FQHC because, at the time, all the LGBTQ clinics across the country were dependent on the Ryan White Care Act and CDC funding," she says, mentioning that becoming a FQHC was the pathway to success for Montrose Clinic. "We went to the board with the idea. It was a two-year process to become a FQHC. There was some unhappiness that we adopted the business model because it meant we would expand beyond just HIV and the LGBTQ community. But if you look at the statistics, 60 percent of our population were HIV-positive or LGBTQ, and the other 40 percent just came to us. So the board agreed. We became a FQHC in 2004 in what's called a 'look-alike' and then received full status in 2006."

During that time, Montrose Clinic also merged with Body Positive, which was a stand-alone organization for people diagnosed with HIV. They also merged with the Assistance Fund, another HIV service organization, since many of the organization's patients were also Montrose Clinic patients.

And why not? It's easier to consolidate patients from several clinics under one roof when the care provided was so similar for each organization, and there is strength in numbers. They renamed the conglomerate Legacy Community Health. →



“‘Legacy’ was chosen to represent the legacy of the people who came before us and founded the multiple organizations [we merged with], and [it represented] the people who were here now to leave a legacy for the future,” she explains.

To date, that impressive legacy has only grown. Legacy Community Health now operates in Fifth Ward, the I-10 East Corridor, and in areas as far-flung as Beaumont. The organization has expanded to include care for pregnant women, children, whole life cycle treatment, and behavioral health—in addition to providing health care to the LGBTQ community and HIV-positive patients.

In total, Legacy Community Health has expanded from a small neighborhood clinic into a \$200 million organization with a staff of over 1,200 serving nearly 200,000 clients across more than 35 locations. And it all happened under Caldwell’s leadership.

Now, after 25 years of service, Caldwell is taking her final bow and moving into retirement. Her service to the LGBTQ community has earned her a forever home in the hearts and minds of many LGBTQ and HIV-positive patients.

As for Caldwell, she’s looking forward to



taking time to reflect and then consider her next steps post-retirement.

“I am right now positioning myself for what comes next. First, I’ll learn to live without stress and not have 1,200 employees and 200,000 patients. I have not lived without stress for the last 25 years, so I’m looking forward to taking a breath. As time goes on, I’ll volunteer at different places where I won’t be in charge of anything, but I’ll make a difference through my participation.”

Caldwell is a former Harris County treasurer, and her involvement in politics might resurface now that she has more free time.

“I’ve always been into politics, and I’m sure that as the Democratic candidates slate fills out, I’ll volunteer for that,” she predicts. I’d like to flip the state back to Democrat and expand Medicaid.



For more information:
legacycommunityhealth.org.

MORE THAN POSTCARDS

+PRINT +LARGE FORMAT +PROMO +DESIGN

2daypos+cards
MORE

SERVING THE MONTROSE AREA SINCE 1999

713.224.8808 | 2daypostcards.com | 621 Richmond Ave 77006

THE EYE GALLERY

THEO TRUNK SHOW / NOV 12TH & 13TH

BOOK YOUR SPOT

2021 READERS' Choice Awards
OutSmart Gayest & Greatest 2021

BLACK FRIDAY SALE / 30% OFF IN-STOCK FRAMES NOV 26TH & 27TH (SEE STORE FOR DETAILS)

EYEGALLERYHOUSTON.COM

1806 WESTHEIMER RD - RIVER OAKS 713.523.1279
1700 POST OAK BLVD - POST OAK (NEXT TO WHOLE FOODS) 713.622.7470

Scan for
Good Things



PrEP'd and Ready, y'all.



mistr

PrEP PRESCRIBED ONLINE, DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR.



heymistr.com/afh

Positive Living

Baylor College of Medicine's **Caleb Brown** uses his online platform to destigmatize living with HIV.

By ZACHARY MCKENZIE

Activism has evolved greatly over the years. Today, savvy social-media users are utilizing their digital platforms to reach the masses and make big impacts in the fight to eradicate HIV and AIDS.

Houstonian Caleb Brown is using his influence and personal journey to educate, inform, and inspire people of all sexual identities about HIV, while at the same time dismantling the stigma surrounding the disease. The outgoing medical professional earned his public-health degree in 2021, and now works in the Baylor College of Medicine AIDS Education Training Center (AETC).

"I was a teacher for eight years and was thinking about leaving the field, but didn't know what I wanted to do," the out gay man recalls. "I went to visit my brother in New York in July of 2018. While I was there, I hooked up with someone and got an STI. I went to the clinic and asked to get put on PrEP. They did the full blood panel and later called me and told me to come back the next day."

Unable to return to the clinic for another two days, Brown ruminates on the news he expected to hear from his doctor. "I went in for my appointment on August 3, 2018, and my brother was with me. The doctor told me I was HIV-positive, and I went numb. I was expecting it, but didn't want to hear it. My body didn't know how to process that information, so I went numb."

Having friends who are HIV-positive with an undetectable viral load, Brown considered

the bigger picture. "I wasn't scared of dying, I was scared of the stigma," he explains. "I was talking to my brother and told him I always worried that I would end up alone, and this was a concrete reason for someone to tell me 'No.' He said if someone didn't want me because of my status, then *they* were the shitty person, not me. That completely changed the way I thought about my diagnosis."

"In September 2018, I opened up about my diagnosis to friends. They asked really great questions, like what being undetectable means and what my medications are like. I started telling people about PrEP, and those conversations led to conversations about getting tested and making appointments to get on PrEP. I realized I was really good at it. I'm a social person and can talk to anyone. I started to wonder if I could make this my new pathway."

To reach a wider audience, Brown launched his Instagram account @the_positiveotter. "My first post was a video of me taking my medicine and talking about what living with HIV is like. I wanted to normalize it and explain that there was no reason to be scared. I'm a normal person just like anyone else." Brown's posts caught fire and his reach expanded outside of his social circles. "Strangers started messaging me, asking about where they could get PrEP, what next steps they should take after getting a diagnosis, or about free clinics in their area. These questions forced me to do the research, and I was glad to do it. It eventually became second nature."

Along with educating his followers, Brown is showing that an HIV diagnosis does not

mean you are no longer desirable. The activist's Instagram bio reads "Sex Positive, Body Positive, HIV Positive: Showing the world that your value doesn't change because of your HIV status." Brown's account includes his shots of himself in harnesses, jockstraps, and shirtless gym selfies. "I did a spoken-word performance about being HIV-positive," he explains. "The way I cope is by making a lot of jokes, so I did a stand-up routine in a harness, nipple pasties, and a jockstrap to show that just because I'm HIV-positive, it doesn't mean I can't be desired by others."

Brown's sex-positivity stance also means that he is completely open with his partners. "You have to be open about your status and your sexual health," he stresses. "If I'm going to engage in sex with someone, I tell them I'm positive, undetectable, and I give them the date of my last test. I leave it open for them to talk about *their* health, and if it kills the mood, they're probably not someone I should be having sex with. Being open and honest, and getting on PrEP, shows you care about yourself and your community."

"My diagnosis helped me realize I could change [people's attitude about] HIV by being the face of it," he adds. "It's been such an interesting journey, going from that doctor's office in New York to where I am today."

Brown explains that stigma is based on fear, which is based on a lack of education. "There's a misunderstanding about what it means to be undetectable," he says. "'Undetectable' means your viral load is so low that it can't be passed to another person. That's the biggest thing →



"MY FIRST POST WAS A VIDEO OF ME TAKING MY MEDICINE AND TALKING ABOUT WHAT LIVING WITH HIV IS LIKE. I WANTED TO NORMALIZE IT AND EXPLAIN THAT THERE WAS NO REASON TO BE SCARED. I'M A NORMAL PERSON JUST LIKE ANYONE ELSE."

—Caleb Brown



**"MY DIAGNOSIS
HELPED ME REALIZE
I COULD CHANGE
PEOPLE'S ATTITUDE
ABOUT HIV BY BEING
THE FACE OF IT."**

—Caleb Brown

people should learn: you cannot contract HIV from someone who is undetectable." Brown is also vocal about another misconception: "HIV is not a gay disease."

Today, the former teacher is helping make HIV education and treatment more accessible. "I'm doing program evaluation at Baylor to make sure the educational opportunities that we offer are effective. It's all to expand the network of HIV health care."

Looking ahead to World AIDS Day on December 1, the social butterfly shares some effective ways to commemorate the day. "Donate to AIDS Foundation Houston, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Legacy Community Health—any sort of HIV/AIDS organization," he says. Pausing briefly, Brown speaks as if he's talking to a friend, or one of his nearly 7,000 Instagram followers: "If you want to celebrate World AIDS Day, go get tested. If you're not on PrEP, make an appointment to get on PrEP. Reach out to me if you have any questions. Start talking about it. Talking about it is the only way we will end this epidemic."



For more information on the Baylor College of Medicine's AETC, visit aidsetc.org. Keep up with Caleb Brown on Instagram @the_positiveotter.

**EVERY
QUEEN
DESERVES
HER HAPPY
ENDING...
WITH A
PRE-NUP!**



Thanks for Voting me
"Best Female Attorney"

deborah lawson
Attorney at Law p.l.l.c.



P.O. Box 940082
Houston, TX 77094

713.478.2618
deborah@lawsonlegal.net



Live your legacy. In real time. No apologies. No regrets.

FOUNTAINS & STATUARY



**Finalist
BEST
GARDENING/
NURSERY
SUPPLY**

OPEN 7 DAYS

- Disappearing Fountains
- Glazed Urns
- Fountains
- Birdbaths
- Decorative Precast Rock Waterfalls
- Fiberglass Garden Ponds
- Bowls
- Tables & Benches
- Pumps & Tubing
- Planters
- Pedestals
- Flower Pots
- Fountain Tops
- Religious Statues
- Concrete Animals, Fish, Birds & Reptiles
- Talavera Style Mexican Pottery
- Various Sized Stepping Stones




713.957.3672

Just Outside the 610 Loop in Houston!
11804 Hempstead Rd., Houston, TX 77092
fountainsandstatuary@yahoo.com
www.FountainsAndStatuary.com

ASK ABOUT
Metal Carports
Gazebos & Yard
Buildings

AARP
Member Since 2018



WE DIDN'T JUST START
CARING ABOUT **LGBTQ** PEOPLE
YESTERDAY. WE'VE BEEN
DOING IT **SINCE 1978**.

WAY OUT recovery



AFFIRMING & AFFORDABLE OUTPATIENT TREATMENT
FOR THE LGBTQ & HIV COMMUNITIES. 713.529.0037



Start your
Holiday
Shopping
off Right



COSTUMEWORX.COM • 832-518-5583 • 2420 CENTER, HOUSTON, TX 77007

Midtown
townhome with
2261 sf, oak floors,
quiet location.
\$379,000

SOLD!
WE CAN SELL YOURS TOO!



**KAREN
DERR**
REALTORS

KarenDerrRealtors.com
713-875-7050

Bring horses & ATV's!
-/+110 Acres just 65
min. from Houston
New Ulm Area
\$1,320,000





Lights of Love

Jereme Scott and Ruth Atkinson expand the HIV & Aging Coalition, Houston's local outreach.

By BRANDON WOLF

While living with HIV presents challenges regardless of one's age, older people impacted by the virus face different issues than their younger counterparts, according to Jereme Scott, chair of the nonprofit HIV & Aging Coalition, Houston.

The activist and HIV survivor of 37 years says HIV-positive seniors often face greater social isolation and loneliness. "Stigma is also a particular concern among older people living with HIV. Stigma negatively affects people's quality of life, self-image, and behaviors, which may prevent them from revealing their HIV status or seeking HIV care."

The HIV & Aging Coalition exists to combat these challenges. The peer-led educational and social program was first conceived for HIV-positive people over the age of 50, but it now welcomes all people who have lived with HIV for over 20 years. The group will soon be coming together again for Lights of Love at the Montrose Center on December 12.

A Forgotten Generation

During the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, people who were diagnosed with HIV or AIDS could expect to live only one or two years. According to HIV.gov, this meant that the issues facing those who began aging with HIV were not a major focus at the time.

Today, thanks to the effectiveness of HIV medicine (called antiretroviral therapy, or ART), people with HIV who are diagnosed early and stay on ART can keep the virus suppressed and live long, healthy lives. For this reason, over half of people living with diagnosed HIV in the United States are now 50 and older, according to the latest report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

While most of this population has been

living with HIV for decades, others were diagnosed with HIV later in life. HIV.gov notes that older Americans are more likely than younger Americans to be diagnosed with HIV late in the course of their disease, meaning they get a late start receiving the benefits of HIV treatment and possibly incur more damage to their immune system. This can lead to poorer prognoses and shorter survival after an HIV diagnosis. Late diagnoses can occur because healthcare providers may not always test older people for HIV infection. Older people may also assume that HIV symptoms are just signs of normal aging, so HIV screening is never discussed during medical exams.

Scott fears that long-term survivors of HIV are "a forgotten generation," and hopes that the Houston Coalition can help change the narrative for local HIV-positive seniors.

"We want to bring people out of their closets and back into the community," he says. "We celebrate and honor those who have survived and continue to live strong and productive lives in this dynamic world of ours. Until there is a cure, HIV is just one more aspect of living and aging well. [So the Coalition] will continue to support, educate, and provide a little laughter along the way."

Women and HIV

Of the one million people living with HIV in the U.S., 258,000 (about 23 percent) are women, the CDC reports. Women also account for about one in five of new cases in the nation. These women face unique challenges in accessing optimal care and resources, says Coalition founding member Ruth Atkinson.

Atkinson had lived with HIV for nine years before a doctor finally diagnosed her condition correctly in 2005. She has had an undetectable viral load for nine years now, and works as a mentor to several local HIV-positive women, helping them navigate the HIV care system.

Women 45 and older make up more than a third of all women who are living with HIV, →

CHAPULTEPEC LUPITA

MEXICAN RESTAURANT & BAR



Thank you readers!

OPEN
24
HOURS

WHERE EVERYONE IS BEAUTIFUL

Home Of The Best
Margaritas in Houston!



813 Richmond Ave
Houston, TX 77006



TOGETHER WE CAN REACH YOUR HOME OWNERSHIP GOALS.

Mortgage Areas of Expertise:

- Conventional
- FHA
- VA
- USDA Loans

CARI MIDDAUGH

AmCap Mortgage NMLS# 1730274

281.460.2235

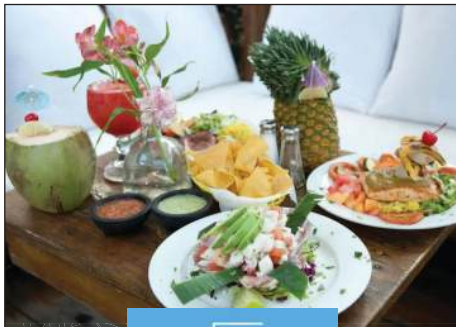
myamcap.com/cari-middaugh/

AmCap Home Loans is a DBA of AmCap Mortgage, LTD
(NMLS# 129122)



**"WE CELEBRATE AND
HONOR THOSE WHO HAVE
SURVIVED AND CONTINUE
TO LIVE STRONG AND
PRODUCTIVE LIVES IN
THIS DYNAMIC WORLD OF
OURS. UNTIL THERE IS
A CURE, HIV IS JUST ONE
MORE ASPECT OF LIVING
AND AGING WELL."**

—Jereme Scott



EAT HOME-STYLE COOKING!

HAPPY HOUR WITH \$2.95
4 pm - 7pm

MARGARITAS
Monday - Friday

TACO TUESDAY WITH \$7.00
Two Tacos and a Margarita

**OPEN MIC
COMEDY**
Monday Night
7pm - 10pm

DJ NIGHTS
Friday and
Saturday

ELPUEBLITOPATIO.COM

1423 Richmond Ave. Houston, TX. 77006 | 713-520-6635

f elpueblitopatio @elpueblitoo



**Why would you buy a cake
from someone who doesn't
want to sell you one?**

Whether you're looking for the butcher,
the baker, or the candlestick maker,
OUTSMART can help you find equality-
minded businesses that appreciate you
and provide vital community support.

*Support OUTSMART advertisers, so you
can have your cake and equality, too.*

OutSmart

For advertising and subscription info,
call 713/520-7237.

Changing the Narrative

While the HIV & Aging Coalition was not operational during the 2020 COVID restrictions, Scott and a committee of five people met weekly for several months to reorganize the group into a fresh "new" organization that now welcomes younger people who have been living with HIV for at least 20 years. Scott is also working to diversify the organization, and hopes to soon increase transgender and Black representation on his committee.

The revitalized Coalition will kick off next month with its first Lights of Love ceremony at the Montrose Center. The event will provide people with the opportunity to remember and honor those who have died from HIV-related illnesses. Each honoree will be acknowledged with a personalized tree ornament whose inscription will be read aloud as it is placed on the Lights of Love holiday tree. Their names will also be printed in the event's programs and commemorative T-shirts. The Coalition plans to make this an annual holiday event.

Those who would like to sponsor an ornament for a deceased honoree should contact the Coalition by December 1. The cost for individuals is \$5, and organizations can become sponsors for \$100. T-shirts will be available for \$15.



For more info, visit agingcoalition.org,
email hivaginghouston@yahoo.com, or
call 832-875-9233.

PrEP means loving who you want.

You deserve safe,
everyday HIV protection.

**Start PrEP today—
walk in or make an appointment.**

PrEP is an FDA-approved medication that, when taken once daily, offers people who do not have HIV a powerful way to protect themselves.

PrEP significantly reduces the risk of contracting HIV.



LegacyCommunityHealth.org/GetTested



WellnessBarByLegacy.org

Healthcare Navigators

B'Yancha Lawson and Riley Burns provide vital resources for trans Houstonians at UT Health.

By ZACH MCKENZIE

Communities thrive when its members look out for one another. Two Houston-based transgender leaders, B'Yancha Lawson and Riley Burns, understand the impact of giving back and empowering their community. The duo is now doing just that through their research work at the UT Health Science Center at Houston by drawing on their personal experiences to reach trans Houstonians in need.

"I came to Houston to get into recovery," Lawson, a trans woman, explains. "I completed rehab and then transitioned to a sober-living facility." She credits two mentors for making her experience there so impactful. "I was under the leadership of coaches Jessica Yeager and Riley Burns. I admired what they did for the community; I felt comfortable [with them] and knew they were people I could trust. I was so inspired by them."

Lawson was tapped by Yeager to enroll in her research study at UT Health that focused on people living with HIV who had a past or current history of IV drug use such as heroin or other opiates. A chance introduction to a doctor on staff at UT Health set Lawson on her next path. "I asked if they needed a recovery coach for trans women. I had just finished my training to become a coach, so it was perfect timing. He said yes, and the next thing I knew, I was offered a position with the 'I Am' study, which is targeted at people who identify as transgender women and those on the nonbinary feminine spectrum," Lawson explains. "The study aims to prevent members of these communities from contracting HIV. They receive health-navigation services [from peer coaches], linking them to resources they are lacking in life. We walk with them the whole way for about one-and-a-half years. After completing their screening they'll do six sessions with me, where I make sure they're taking their hormones, tracking side effects, and providing whatever else they need along the way."

As for Burns, a trans man whose pronouns are "evolving," research work with the Project Integra study at UT Health keeps him on the move. "I'm here to support my community and myself, so I became a recovery coach dealing



Riley Burns



B'Yancha Lawson

with substance use. I train people to become coaches, and I speak on substance use and transgender issues on a daily basis."

This researcher knows from first-hand experience that trans folks typically turn to substance use due to a lack of feeling understood by others. "I was confused mentally and emotionally, so I got into using substances to cover up my pain. I was a cutter at one time. We can share our pain with others, but they can't feel it. Trying to explain that at the age of seven was difficult, because I didn't even understand it myself. I want to help others feel comfortable identifying as they are."

"Project Integra is a mobile unit that goes around the community—sex shops, apartments, gas stations, etc.—to help people who struggle with substance use," Burns explains. "We offer free Suboxone, which is a medication that stops the withdrawal symptoms and physical pain of drug use. After the initial 26-week period on Suboxone, we connect them with resources in the community so they can continue to get the medication and not relapse. We also connect them with resources via other organizations around Houston [that provide] housing and behavioral counseling. We also offer STI and HIV testing in our 35-foot van."

Burns emphasizes that Project Integra isn't

a one-and-done service. "We never stop having a connection with these people. They will always have a coach like me by their side. I've been where they are, and I understand the pain they're going through."

These deeply personal research projects are more than just jobs for the two passionate social workers. "I know the struggle for trans women," Lawson says. "A lot of us don't have families or financial services to help us get what we need. This work is something I hold dear to my heart. I've always had a passion for helping my community. Through the 'I Am' study, I can be there for them. I just want to see all of my sisters thrive and live life on their own terms, to their full potential."

Burns focuses on the next generation. "My mom always told me we have to look out for each other, because the one behind you is your future," he says. "I try to treat others how I want to be treated. I know what it takes to lift yourself off the ground as a trans person with a substance-abuse issue. If I can't pass on what I've learned along the way, then what good is it? If I can help save one person, then I know I've done my part for that day."



More info on these studies is at iamstudy.org and sbmi.uth.edu/chsa/integra.htm.



James Walker



Eric Kirkpatrick

MORE THAN 50 YEARS OF COMBINED EXPERIENCE REPRESENTING THE HOUSTON LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY.



PERSONAL INJURY, MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS, TRUCKING ACCIDENTS,
WRONGFUL DEATH, AND CONSTRUCTION LITIGATION



Contact us at 713-552-1117
3100 Timmons Lane Suite 401 - Houston, Texas 77027

WALKERTEXASLAWYER.COM and KIRKPATRICKLAW.COM

Empowering Trans Lives

Events celebrating the transgender community are planned for November.

By LILLIAN HOANG



2021 has been a trying year for everyone, especially members of the trans community. The Mahogany Project (TMP) Executive Director Verniss McFarland III, a nonbinary individual who uses they/them, she/her, and their name as pronouns, says this year has been heavy and fraught with burnout and hopelessness.

According to a recent study by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, members of the LGBTQ community who did not suffer from anxiety and depression have experienced those conditions since the COVID-19 outbreak. The 2021 Texas Legislative Session and additional special sessions have also had a devastating impact on the local LGBTQ community. Lawmakers tried to pass over 75 anti-LGBTQ bills, and none of those bills got far—except one.

On October 25, Governor Greg Abbott signed into law House Bill 25, which requires trans student athletes in interscholastic competitions to play on sports teams that match the sex on their birth certificate. The bill, and others like it, have had a detrimental effect on the well-being of trans and nonbinary youth.

“The Trevor Project’s crisis counselors have been hearing from transgender and nonbinary youth in Texas who are scared and worried about anti-trans laws being debated in their state—and some have even expressed suicidal thoughts,” said Amit Paley, CEO and executive director of The Trevor Project, in an article by Los Angeles Blade. “This is a crisis.”

But 2021 isn’t irredeemable. McFarland says the year has also inspired resilience in the trans community. Their volunteer-led organization secured a place for a resource center in October—an achievement made possible thanks to the community’s support, McFarland’s experiences as a nonbinary person, and TMP’s desire to provide a safe space for Black trans and gender-nonconforming people.

“Trans people are oftentimes left alone to



Ian L. Haddock



Atlantis Narcisse



Joelle Bayaa-Uzuri Espeut



Verniss McFarland III

solve our own problems,” McFarland says with tears in their eyes. “The Mahogany Project has limited staff and funding but so much imagination, vision, and resilience to just make it happen, not only for us but for so many other people.”

Along with TMP, local trans-led organizations The Normal Anomaly Initiative, Save Our Sisters United, Inc. (SOSU), Transgender Education Network Texas, and Casa Anandrea/OLTT and Organización Latina de Trans en Texas are going to celebrate trans people’s resilience, achievements, and lives with

educational and empowering events during Transgender Awareness Week (TAW) and the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR). TAW is celebrated November 13 through 19 to help raise visibility for trans people, while TDOR on November 20 honors the memory of trans people who were killed.

The Human Rights Campaign has reported at least 41 trans or gender-nonconforming folk have been fatally shot, or killed by other violent means, in 2021. Five trans folk were killed in Texas, one of whom, Iris Santos, was murdered in Houston. A majority of the victims, includ-

ing Santos, were trans women of color.

Throughout November, TMP will host a documentary screening, a ball, a dinner, a spoken-word and visual-art event, and a brunch—all designed to celebrate the trans community.

McFarland says it is important to recognize trans people while they can appreciate and reap the benefits of being honored. “When you die, we’re going to hang flowers over your head. You can’t smell those flowers. Those flowers absolutely serve you no purpose. Who they serve are the people who came and put them on your grave—like, ‘This is my good deed.’ What we [should do] is uplift the trans community in their time of need. Celebrate the trans community, instead of mourning the loss of a trans person.”

McFarland is not the only one who believes it is important to remember and praise trans folk. The Normal Anomaly Initiative will recognize members of the trans community and allies at The Marque Awards and Community Thanksgiving Dinner on November 14.

Honoring members of the trans community and allies is important to The Normal Anomaly Initiative Executive Director Ian L. Haddock, because he wants to highlight the positive side of allyship to inspire others to

become better advocates for the trans community.

“To protect Black trans women, I have to do more because they’re more marginalized, but [in return] I get a wealth of brilliance, friendship, and connection,” Haddock says as he considers his friendship with Joelle Bayaa-Uzuri Espeut, a Black woman of trans experience and The Normal Anomaly’s director of ancillary programming.

Not only will the nonprofit kickstart their Transgender Allyship Day event at the dinner, but The Normal Anomaly will also relaunch the Trans Ally Collective (TAC). That collective consists of TMP, SOSU, and the Houston LGBTQ+ Political Caucus—groups that have partnered to uplift Black women. Espeut, who will oversee the collective, is excited about the event and the relaunch because it will help shift discussions around TDOR from trans deaths to trans life.

“The Day of Remembrance is about highlighting trans trauma and trans death, but really for me, being a Black woman of trans experience, my journey has always been about life—walking a path that is not tried and true,” Espeut says. “We don’t talk about our successes, our joy, our love. That’s what Trans Allyship Day is. It’s about not only uplifting Black trans

women, but also our allies.”

SOSU also wants to commemorate trans people with Reign in Paradise: TDOR Memorial 2021, an art exhibit on November 20 that honors the lives of trans folk who have been killed. Archway Gallery will feature portraits of trans people who were murdered, along with printed details such as how their loved ones remember them.

“Our Day of Remembrance event is not in the memory of their death, but in their life, the fun person they were, to show them as human bodies who were brutally taken from us,” SOSU’s founder Atlantis Narcisse says.

Narcisse wants to change the narrative surrounding trans murders because it is dominated by details about their murders rather than their lives. That can be traumatic for Black and brown trans people, so she hopes the Day of Remembrance event helps attendees heal—especially Black and brown trans guests.

“This event is trying to make a happy note out of tragedy,” she says. “My focus has been giving homage to those who’ve been taken from us—the trans individuals that were murdered, not on the trans murders.”



For a list of local events celebrating TAW and TDOR, visit outsmartmagazine.com.



THERE IS SNOW TIME LIKE THE HOLIDAYS!



dessertgallery.com T: 713.522.9999
 @dessertgallerybakery
 @dessertgallery



CoHOUSING HOUSTON

private homes • neighbors you know • shared spaces

WE ARE . . .

creating an inclusive, diverse, and multigenerational urban village inside the loop. We are a group of community-minded neighbors who share the values of connection, shared decision-making, and sustainability.

JOIN US!





- 33 newly constructed units
- walkable to Metro and trails
- sustainable design
- community gardens
- weekly shared meals
- consensus decision making

Learn more at: www.cohousinghouston.com

Writer Morgan McAllister has been connected to NASA from the day he was born at a hospital across the street from the Johnson Space Center, where both of his parents worked.

"I am a NASA brat," says the 31-year-old queer trans man. "My mother, Donna McAllister, worked at Johnson Space Center as head librarian for many years. She was also a branch chief and was awarded the Silver Snoopy for her contributions to the shuttle program."

His father worked for NASA as well, first as a contractor and then as a civil servant. McAllister's turn to work at NASA came during his graduate internships, and later with a contractor from the organization's public-affairs office.

While McAllister loved NASA, it was the written word that stole his heart. "My brother and I were given a lot of room for creativity," he recalls. "My mom let me read and write anything I wanted. Unsurprisingly, she was staunchly against any form of censorship."

Ever since he was a kid, McAllister knew that becoming a writer was a viable option for him. "When every one of my professors in community college started commenting on my knack for writing and encouraging me to make a living off it, I decided to go with my heart."

After earning his associate's degree in biology at San Jacinto College, he decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in professional writing and a master's degree in technical communication at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Today, McAllister is a writer at the Houston-based RedShift, a high-powered, lightning-fast copywriting agency that lives to write and writes to brand. "It's pretty neat to be paid for my favorite activity," he says.

McAllister is now the happiest he's ever been in a job. "I joined RedShift over the summer, which was really a kind of a coming home for me. I worked for them as a contract writer back in 2017 while I was going to grad school."

And RedShift really seems to be nurturing his creativity. "There's nothing like working

with a team of other writers every day," McAllister notes. "Since the job is completely done from home, I've had plenty of time to recover from recent top surgery and work on other health issues, both physical and mental."

Working from home has allowed him to spend more time enjoying the great outdoors, and has given him space to resume writing fiction and poetry in his spare time, for the first time in years.

McAllister adds that the favorite part about being a writer is that he gets to put thoughts in other peoples' heads and persuade them. "It's a little like magic!"

McAllister wishes more people knew that they're already writers, whether they realize it or not. "And more than that: everyone can be a *competent* writer. It just takes practice, and a lot of reading. Have faith in yourself, and be kind to your writing when you're practicing. Keep everything you write."

McAllister is also happily partnered. "My

partner's name is Devlyn, and she and I are the devoted servants of three kitties: Noodle, Tortellini, and Dorabelle. Devlyn and I have been together for two years. It's the most rewarding and loving romantic relationship I've ever been in."

At both his community college and his university, McAllister was the president of student LGBTQ groups. "These days, I'm involved in several online and offline queer and trans peer support groups, and I even run one of my own. I'm passionate about things like sex education and body positivity, in particular," he says.

As for the future, he's got plenty of dreams. He'd like to write a novel about Scáthach, a warrior from the Ulster Cycle of Irish mythology who built her own military academy. And, McAllister notes, "I'd love to go back to school and get my PhD in technical writing someday."

 For more info, visit redshiftwriters.com.



Content Creator

Morgan McAllister keeps the creativity flowing at RedShift.

By JENNY BLOCK
Photo by DEVLYN MACKINNON

QUALITY DENTISTRY

ONE PATIENT AT A TIME!



ONE OF THE BEST DENTISTS
OutSmart Readers' Choice
Awards 2006 – 2021

VOTED AS ONE OF HOUSTON'S
TOP DENTISTS
2004 – 2020
— *H Texas Magazine*



Cory Logan, D.D.S.

General & Cosmetic Dentistry

713.942.8598

www.CoryLoganDDS.com

530 Waugh Dr. | Houston TX 77019

Stay In-The-Loop
with

AV

ANDY WEBER

Montrose resident
since 1983

Consistent Top Producer,
Circle of Excellence



Voted One of the Best Realtors
in Houston 8 Years In a Row
— OutSmart Readers' Choice 2012-2019

If you wish to be
In-The-Loop, whether
selling, buying or just
looking around, Call Andy!

CELL

713.724.4306

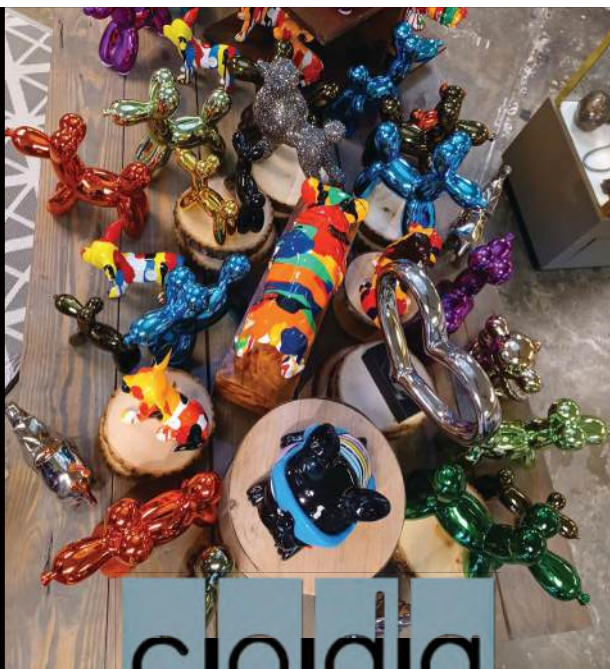
DIRECT

713.558.9252

andy.weber@sothebyshomes.com

Martha
Turner

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



cioida
in the heights

Gifts & Home Décor

355 W. 19th St • Houston, TX, 77008

713.864.4411

Tues – Sat: 10am-6pm | Sun: 1-5pm | Closed Mondays



Voted one of the **Best Female Eye Doctor**
Outsmart Readers' Choice Awards 2021



**DR. JULIET
FARMER**
THERAPEUTIC
OPTOMETRIST

Boutique
EYE CARE

1806 A. Westheimer Rd.
Houston, TX 77098
713.528.2010

Schedule online at
BOUTIQUEEYECARE.COM



Medieval Musings

Queer vendors and performers strive to make the **Texas Renaissance Festival** an LGBTQ safe space.

By LILLIAN HOANG



On the nearly hour-long drive from downtown Houston to the Texas Renaissance Festival (TRF) in Todd Mission, folks may come across many advertisements

for the theme park, like a billboard of a blond child in medieval-inspired robes chomping a turkey leg next to the slogan: “Come as You Aren’t.”

Many guests live by these words—wearing flowy gowns, sparkling wings, and armor made of metal as they approach the festival’s main entrance and step into what feels like another era in a land far from home.

TRF is open to the public through November 28. Folks can enjoy the festival from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and the Friday after Thanksgiving.

Comprising nearly 300 acres of land and camping facilities, TRF is one of the nation’s largest Renaissance-themed festivals. Upon arrival, people can browse through 400 on-site shops and take in over 150 performances by myriad entertainers, many of whom belong to the LGBTQ community.

TRF’s ambassador guide coordinator Chip Ware, a nonbinary individual who uses they/them pronouns, leads free tours around the festival.

“Even if you’re sad, you won’t be for long,” Ware says. “You’re going to find an entertainer who lifts your spirits, vendors who’ve made the best bath bombs you’ve ever had. You’re going to have a great experience.”



Barbarian Bombshells

COURTESY PHOTO

Ware has been going to the festival at least once a year since they first attended in 1995 as part of a school trip. They say everyone should take part in the festival, especially members of the queer community, because TRF has always been LGBTQ-affirming and even had some of their entertainers march in Houston’s Pride parade. “With so many of our safe spaces revolving around the nightlife and bar culture, TRF gives us an additional safe space for all of us.”

Due to COVID-19, the festival was capped at 50 percent capacity in 2020. According to a former TRF manager in a 2020 *Houston Chronicle* article, about 15 percent of their vendors chose not to participate in the festival last year.

Ware says many of the vendors and per-

formers returning this year want to see their fans and share what they’ve been working on. “They’re pretty much pulling out all the stops.”

Those who attend the 2021 TRF are not required to wear masks or get vaccinated. Employees, vendors, and performers are allowed entry only if they are vaccinated or can provide a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than three days before the festival. TRF will also offer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and free testing at the main entrance.

What: Texas Renaissance Festival 2021

When: Saturdays and Sundays through November 28

Where: 21778 FM 1774, Todd Mission

Info: texrenfest.com



COURTESY PHOTO



ELLIAN HOANG

Meet some of TRF's LGBTQ vendors and performers:

The Green Hour

At the Wyrnwood Public House, up a flight of stairs at the far end of an air-conditioned room with a built-in bar, lies a stage where *The Green Hour* culminates.

The popular four-act burlesque and variety show narrates the history of absinthe. Tifa Tittlywinks, a pansexual artist and the *The Green Hour*'s co-producer and scriptwriter, says the response to the show has been overwhelming. When the show first premiered last year, a man walked up to the stage and said, "I would like to pay \$100 for the writer's pasties!" To which a cast member shouted, "\$100 each!" The man agreed to pay \$200 for Tittlywink's bedazzled coverings and gave them to his wife.

Tittlywinks says the show means a lot to her and her team, many of whom also belong to the LGBTQ community.

Due to the pandemic, *The Green Hour* crew had nothing to do and nowhere to work. "All of the artists were like, 'Are we ever going to [work] again?'" Tittlywinks recalls. Determined, they spent months rehearsing *The Green Hour*, and the show became one of TRF's most sought-after performances.

Tittlywinks says it is the best show she has ever produced. "I'm not a scriptwriter, so the fact that I can get a lot of burlesquers to deliver lines is an achievement in itself," laughs Tittlywinks.

The show is not only important to Tittlywinks professionally, but also personally. "In a matter of six months, I lost my father and my entire life dream plan," she says, adding that she was supposed to move to McCarthy, Alaska, in April 2021.

Chip Ware



"This show means the world to me because it came to me when everything was ripped away from me."

She encourages others to come to support the show and escape to a welcoming, colorful realm. "TRF is kind of what would have happened if the queers ran the Renaissance," Tittlywinks says. "Everything out here is pure whim, love, joy, and elation."

Catch a showing of The Green Hour at the Wyrnwood Public House on Saturdays at 4 and 6 p.m., and on Sundays at 4 p.m. To reserve a seat, visit bit.ly/3aQj5j4.

Barbarian Bombshells

People can come see the *Barbarian Bombshells* belt out battle cries and more at the Barbarian Inn. Throughout the day, the group of warriors shows audiences (or women and "filthy manservants") how to drink, fight, and have a good time outside of the British elite's sexist rule.

During the show, barbarians Lola Von Smash, Viio, and Becky Bombshell cheekily stare down the audience and do pelvic thrusts as they masterfully debate about spears and eggplants. In between lines, they'll nod to viewers on the inn's first and second floor, ensuring, no, they don't really think that members of the audience have "small swords."

Smash, a pansexual performer with a fluid gender identity, uses she/they pronouns. They perform as the group's front man.

The show was originally written to increase the amount of female representation at TRF. Now, Smash and the other barbarians are working to make the show a beacon of LGBTQ representation as well.

While Smash has been performing as the show's lead barbarian for the last few years, this is the first year

they're making the character their own. The other barbarians refer to Smash's character with they/them pronouns and mention Smash's girlfriend and history with women. They've even given their character a new, androgynous name: Xamora Vil Smash.

"I finally feel comfortable to put myself into the role," Smash says.

Like Smash, another pansexual actress, Viio, initially struggled with her performance. When she first got the role, she was a nervous budding actress who felt like she had big shoes to fill. But now, years later, she's made the character her own and can confidently recite a speech about slicing "eggplants" while staring down men in the crowd, no problem.

"I got a compliment this past weekend from an audience member; he called me scary, and that made me 100 times more confident," Viio laughs.

As one of the few people of color who perform at TRF, Viio hopes other underrepresented folk become interested in the fair, because it has done so much for her.

Not only did *Barbarian Bombshells* build her confidence as an actress, but the show also helped her embrace her sexuality. Growing up in a Christian household and community, Viio was told throughout her life that being gay was a sin, and she only dated cisgender men out of fear of reproach. However, once she became a part of *Barbarian Bombshells* and met other members of the LGBTQ community, she started living her best queer life.

Smash says the group loves doing the show partly because it's never exactly the same. They add, "We have such a good time, jumping from table to table. Anyone who comes through can see the heart behind it. And who doesn't need more of that in their life?"

People can head to the Barbarian Inn to see Barbarian Bombshells in-person Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5 p.m. →

Cirque Olympus

Guests will hear shouts of “Opa!” when they walk by the Agora Stage, where *Cirque Olympus* performs throughout the day. Inspired by Greek mythology, the show features performances by Greek gods—from Apollo juggling several bowling pins while balancing on a board atop a ball to Aphrodite firing an arrow over her head with her feet.

Nikki Knockout, a native Houstonian, and the entertainer who plays Aphrodite, wrote and produced the show. Coming up with the jokes was her favorite part of the creation process.

“We have what we like to call ‘*Shrek* humor,’” she says, referencing the 2001 DreamWorks Animation film. “We have some adult jokes that go over children’s heads. It’s still family-friendly, but made for everyone.”

At one point, Aphrodite gets on all fours to help Athena reach the trapeze for her aerial act. “I remember the *first* time I got on my knees,” she says with a knowing smile. “I was praying.”

The show also includes many teaching moments. For example, how gay the Greek gods were.

“When we made this, we were like, ‘All the gods were very gay,’ so we wanted to really keep that behind the character,” Knockout says.

The gods’ sexualities reflect their performer’s sexuality. Knockout (Aphrodite) is bisexual. Circus Bonnie, who plays Athena, is pansexual. Noah Maudlin, who plays Apollo, is also pansexual and uses he/him pronouns, but “when the wig is on” or when he’s cross-dressing and performing in drag as Nadia, Maudlin uses she/her pronouns.

During the show, Athena asks the crowd if they’ve ever been catfished. Apollo sheepishly raises his hand and shouts, “But *they* said *they* loved me!” rather than, “*She* said *she* loved me!” alluding to the Greek god’s relationships with people of many genders.

Knockout says she likes to put many “nods” in every show she creates. “It’s very Republican out here, and I like to push that envelope in such a red town.”

The show’s openness around the gods’ sexualities is a good way to educate audiences at TRF, Maudlin adds. “People who would not normally accept some of those things are more open as they walk through the front gate. It gives them that ability to put down their guard.”

Bonnie agrees and says, “Fair brings together people that are more conservative and people that are more liberal. Being in a space made for everybody and not being shamed in any way is very comforting.”

TRF is a place where Maudlin can be out and accepted—an experience he says he can’t get anywhere else. He encourages everyone, including members of the LGBTQ community,



LILLIAN HOANG

Oak, Ash, and Thorn

to come see *Cirque Olympus* to have a similar experience. “People from the community who come to see the shows will feel like they become part of it because we’re being open to them.” *Guests can stop by the Agora Stage to watch Cirque Olympus perform on Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5 p.m.*

Oak, Ash, and Thorn

At the Oak, Ash, and Thorn, inside the shop’s white tent, patrons will come across a plethora of refillable leather-crafted journals. They’ll also find candles, lavenders, herbs, and other “tools one may need to lift their spirits,” says store manager Ariel Patrick-Muñoz.

A sister shop to The Broom Closet, Oak, Ash, and Thorn is opening for the first time at the festival. Patrick-Muñoz describes The Broom Closet as a “mystical witch shop,” while Oak, Ash, and Thorn is a “druidry shop” that’s more focused on healing and getting back in touch with nature.

A native Houstonian, Patrick-Muñoz is transmasculine and uses he/they pronouns. Their sexuality is “yes.” They’ve been working at the TRF since they were 15 years old and spent nearly a decade at the New World Kettle Corn and helping manage the Dragon-slayer souvenir shop near the festival’s main entrance.

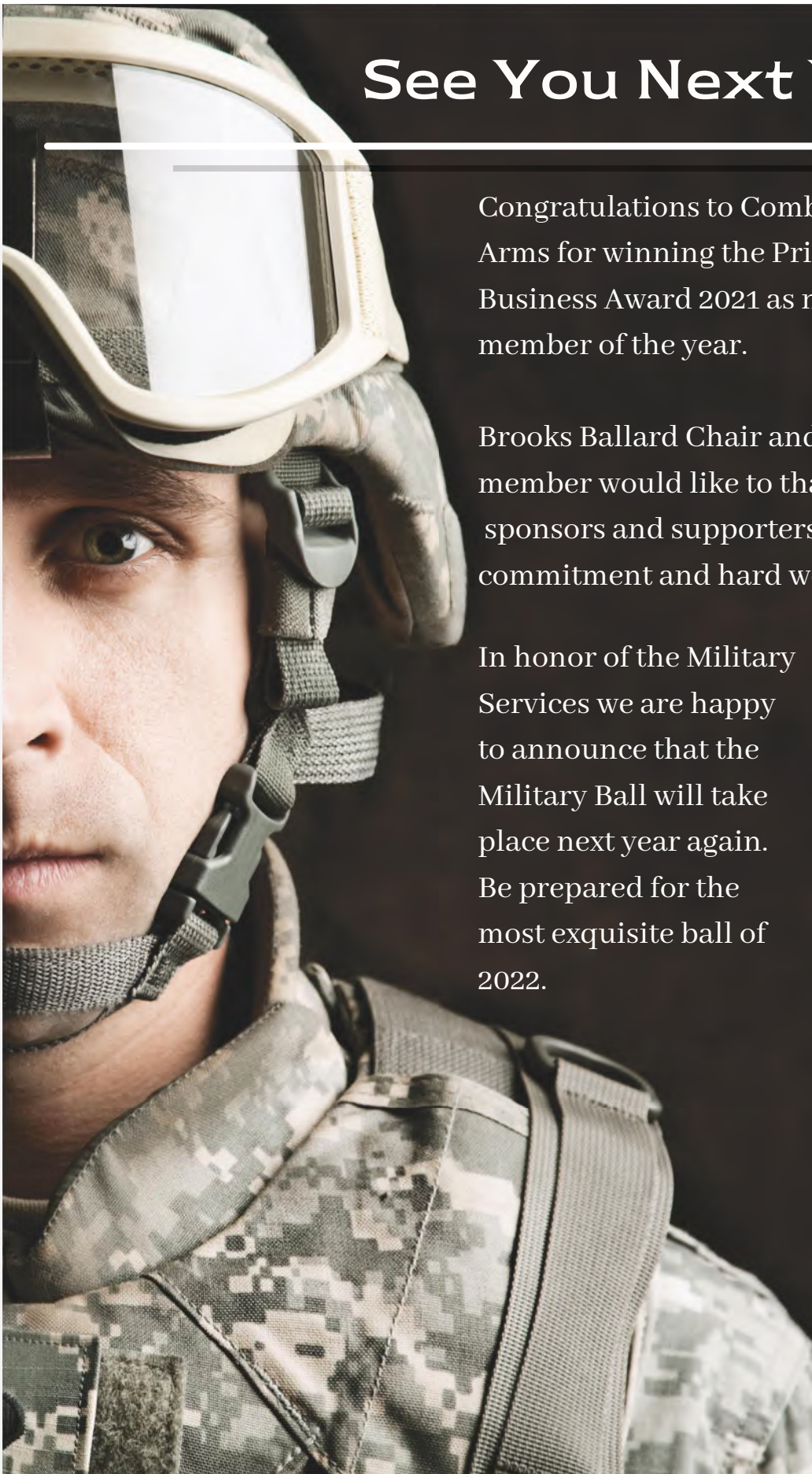
Patrick-Muñoz encourages attendees to stop by for an unforgettable experience. “I can almost guarantee we have something in there that people haven’t seen before.”

Like other people who work and perform at TRF, the festival means a lot to Patrick-Muñoz. “It was out here that I first started finding an actual queer community that went out of its way to take care of each other,” they say, adding they learned about mutual aid and community help while at TRF.

Shari Silkoff, the owner of Oak, Ash, and Thorn, has always been supportive of Patrick-Muñoz and their transition. They say they’ve had bosses who accepted them only because they were useful, but Silkoff is different. “Shari, she’s willing to accept what we have to tell her and move on with it,” Patrick-Muñoz says with tears running down their face.

They are not the only trans person at the shop, and work hard to offer other employees a space where they can be themselves and explore how they want to be perceived. “I don’t know if I would’ve transitioned as early or as easily as I did without the Renaissance Festival,” they admit.

Patrick-Muñoz sees the festival as an opportunity for people to become whoever they want. “We have no other context for people. Sometimes it’s great, sometimes it’s bad, but for the most part I wouldn’t trade it for anything because I don’t know where else you’re going to get such a real-life testing ground for someone you might want to be,” Patrick-Muñoz says, echoing TRF’s slogan: “Come as You Aren’t.” *Oak, Ash, and Thorn is located in booth 18. For more information on the shop, visit texrenfest.com/things-to-do/shoppes.*



See You Next Year!

Congratulations to Combined Arms for winning the Pride in Business Award 2021 as nonprofit member of the year.

Brooks Ballard Chair and Board member would like to thank all sponsors and supporters for their commitment and hard work.

In honor of the Military Services we are happy to announce that the Military Ball will take place next year again. Be prepared for the most exquisite ball of 2022.



2021

**PRIDE IN
BUSINESS
AWARD**

Presented by the
Greater Houston LGBT
Chamber of Commerce

**NONPROFIT
MEMBER
OF THE YEAR**

**COMBINED
ARMS**

20

Michael Robinson

Houston Cinema Arts Festival's associate creative director is excited about this year's lineup.

By LOURDES ZAVALA

Tell me about your journey to becoming the associate creative director for the Houston Cinema Arts Society.

I went to school for film and anthropology, and afterward was figuring out what to do for work. I had never been in Houston for a summer, so I always missed QFest, [despite] being queer and loving film. A professor introduced me to QFest's creative director, Kristian Salinas, who I began to volunteer with. He later asked me to come along as a shorts programmer. After about a year of working with him, I got recommended for the Houston Cinema Arts Society (HCAS), where I was hired in marketing. I continued working for QFest and got further into the film-festival sphere. I was entrusted by HCAS to do some of their curation, and after a few years I earned the title of associate creative director. I now do all of our marketing and external communications, and I still get to pick some of their films along the way.

What impact does the Society's annual Houston Cinema Arts Festival have on the city?

The envisionment of the society was initially about Houston needing a large, premier film festival and figuring out how to amp up film in Houston. We look at that in two different ways. One is through exhibition. Theaters are closing, and we want to make sure that films are still coming to Houston and that we still have spaces [to showcase films]. Most of our venues this year are pop-ups, [where we] go into neighborhoods and build temporary cinemas for the community. The second way is by making sure that we're supporting filmmakers. This festival has more Houston filmmakers than any other festival. We want to ensure that their films are seen, and to show the community that great films can play in Houston.

This year's 13th annual HCAF features over 40 films, short programs, DJ sets, live performances, and more. What is the process of putting an event like this together?

It's a lot of work. This is my fourth year, so now I know the ropes a little more. Every year has been different, and during my tenure we got a



CECI NORMAN

new artistic director, Jessica Green, who has been phenomenal. [With] the pandemic, places have shuttered so we've had to shift, especially this year. Most of our screenings are outdoors or virtual. There's a lot of flexibility you have to have. Rolling with the punches is the key to putting something like this on.

What are some of the festival highlights you're most looking forward to?

So many things. I curated *North by Current*, so that's at the top of my list. Madsen Minax is a brilliant filmmaker, and his film is incredible. I'm also looking forward to Third Coast (and Other Shores): A Shorts Program. We have the premiere of Jonathan Caouette's new film and a lot of other amazing experimental artists in that short-film block, as well. I was able to select the films in the Borders | No Borders short-film competition, and they're all incredible. I also want to point out our programs *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* at Rooftop Cinema Club and *Liborio* at MFAH.

What are some of your places to watch films in Houston?

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Rice Cinema; Aurora Picture Show; and the DeLuxe Theater.

In your opinion, what makes a good film?

I'm always about the direction of a film. I'm always looking for what the film is trying to say—what's its thesis, and how does it make you feel? After I leave [a film], I want to look at the world a little bit differently. I have a vivid memory of watching a film at a festival in 2016 and walking out of the theater feeling so calm, so I went for a little walk and made sure I remembered [the way everything looked] and smelled and felt for an hour. That's what I'm looking for in a film. I want it to be impactful, but I also want the memory of the film to live in me.

What are some of your favorite movies?

Visconti's *The Leopard* and Khalik Allah's *Black Mother* are fantastic. *Syndromes and a Century* is such a calming film. *Possession* is really fun. *Time*, the new documentary by Garrot Bradley, made me sob so hard. *Carol*, of course. *Personal Shopper*—I love Kristen Stewart. *Serial Mom*, because no one else can do what John Watters does. I also really like *I Heart Huckabees*.

Are there any upcoming releases you're excited about?

I'm really excited for *Drive My Car*, it's a Japanese foreign-language Oscar submission. I'm also looking forward to seeing *Spencer* (because Kristen Stewart), *Power of the Dog* (because I've never seen a bad Jane Champion movie), *King Richard*, *Procession*, *Lingui*, *The Sacred Bonds*, and *The Matrix Resurrections*.

Is there anything else you'd like our readers to know about you?

I just want to say it's really an honor to be working in Houston. Sometimes it's an uphill battle to show films here, but the community is so wonderful and they make it a great city to do this work in.



Keep up with Michael Robinson on Twitter and Instagram @mdrobinson...



GONZALEZ OLIVIERI LLC

IMMIGRATION LAW FIRM, HOUSTON, TEXAS

SERVING THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

- Same Sex Visa Petitions
- Residency
- Naturalization
- Immigration Courts
- Circuit Courts Representation
- U.S. Supreme Court Representation
- And Now Accidents with Attorney Carlos Leon!

- RAED GONZALEZ, JD LLM

VOTED
BEST MALE
ATTORNEY



f i t y
GonzalezOlivieriLLC.com
EvitaLaDeportacion.com

(713) 481-3040
2200 Southwest Freeway
Suite 550, Houston, TX 77098



Thankful for Low Mortgage Rates

From Mortgage Refinancing to
First-Time Home Buying



◀ Scan Here to Check Rates or Apply Today!

Credit Union membership is required before utilizing any product and/or service by establishing a savings account with \$5. If you live, work, worship or attend school in Houston you may qualify for membership. Loans subject to credit approval. Other terms and conditions may apply. Apply online at www.houstonfcu.org, call us at 281-243-0500 or visit any of our nine convenient locations. HFCU is an Equal Credit Opportunity Lender.



Houston Federal Credit Union NMLS #673404

HoustonFCU.org

Voted One of the Best Psychiatrists

—OutSmart 2011–2021 Readers' Choice Awards

B | F | G
& ASSOCIATES

High Quality
Compassionate Care
Access to Providers via
Cell Phone 24/7



**Christine
Wysong**

APRN,
PMHNP, BC

**Barry F.
Gritz, M.D.**

Psychiatrist
Diplomate of the American Board
of Psychiatry and Neurology

**Alexis
Williams**

APRN,
PMHNP, BC

- Saturday Hours
- Male or Female Providers Available
- Centrally Located Office
- Appointments Readily Available

230 Westcott, Suite 210,
Houston, Texas 77007
713.869.7400



Don't let yourself get
boggled down with taxes,
Leave your troubles at my door!!

- 20+ Years Experience
- Monthly & Quarterly Payroll Tax Returns
- Local & State Government Filing
- Arbitration with IRS
- Preparation of Financial Statements to third parties
- General Ledger packages—Quick Books, etc.
- My office or yours!
- Proud member of EPAH



VOTED
One of the Best
Accounting and
Bookkeeping Service

Gary M. Gritz, CPA

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT
Specializing in Personal & Business Accounting Services

Call (713) 784-3030

230 Westcott, Suite 210 • Houston, Texas 77019
WWW.GARYMGRITZPC.COM • GGYANKSSS@AOL.COM

Making a Splash in New York City

Activist and model **Jessica Zyrie** stars in this season's *Project Runway*.

By **MARENE GUSTIN**

Transgender model and activist Jessica Zyrie is a recent Texas transplant to the Big Apple, but things are already going her way.

"It's been a little over a month in the city, and I am still adjusting," the former Houstonian reports from her Manhattan home. "Definitely unlike any place I've ever lived. I feel like I'm in a land of opportunity."

She has already made a social splash during the short time she's been in New York City by attending both the MTV Video Movie Awards and the Met Gala. And she's been equally busy with her modeling and activism work in New York City.

"Last season, I booked the finale for *Project Runway* and walked during their New York Fashion Week," she says. "It was so exciting to be chosen for the show—it's such a unique experience. So when they asked me to come back for a full season, I was speechless. I can't say too much about the show, but we have some drama and amazing designs on the way." The fashion-design reality show began its 19th season on Bravo October 14.

And then there is Zyrie's advocacy work. "I have already aligned myself with a nonprofit that has many programs for the queer community," she says. "I specifically work with trans youth to provide affirming spaces and



housing. It's exciting being in a city that is usually ahead of the curve when it comes to equality and access to resources for so many."

But even with all of her successes in New York City, she still holds a warm spot in her heart for Houston.

"I definitely miss my family and the community there," she admits. "A huge support system. I miss having easier access to nature and the [wide-open] spaces. Texas was home for most of my life and will always hold a special place, but I am excited to see what this new chapter brings."



Keep up with Jessica Zyrie on Instagram @thejessicazyrie.

Lawyers You Know, A Firm You Can Trust
KATINE NECHMAN McLAURIN LLP



LGBTQ REAL ESTATE

Assist with buying & selling property, homeowner association disputes, joint ownership agreements, break-up and divorce property division, landlord-tenant issues, litigation, and estate planning.

Real Estate Disputes • Homeowner Association Law • Immigration
Criminal Law • Family Law • Adoptions • Insurance and Disability Claims
HIV/LGBTQ Law • Estate Documents • Employment Law

KATINE NECHMAN McLAURIN LLP

1834 Southmore Blvd. | Houston, TX 77004

713-808-1000 | info@lawknm.com | www.lawknm.com

**PLAN WISELY.
YOU WON'T GET A DO-OVER.**

A successful retirement in the future can often depend on having a solid plan now. If your money isn't working as hard as you are, it may be time to act—there are no do-overs in retirement planning. Now is the time to consider developing a strategy that can help you work toward your financial goals. I specialize in providing comprehensive, objective financial guidance with the goal of maximizing every remaining moment of the retirement countdown.

Call today to learn more or to schedule a consultation.



Rick Dickson, CFP®, MBA

Galene Financial
520 Post Oak Blvd Ste 780
Houston, TX 77027
(713) 489-4322 Office
(713) 489-3679 Fax
rdickson@galenefinancial.com
www.galenefinancial.com

**GALENE
FINANCIAL**



Voted Best
Financial
Planner/Advisor

Securities and advisory services offered through UFS Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC.



Joe Tramonte
REALTY, INC.
- Since 1968 -
409.765.9837
TramonteRealty.com

EAST END



1312 11th Street
3/2 1,354sf \$449,000

LOFT



2400 Mechanic
1/1/1 1,326sf \$375,000

MIDTOWN



3727 Avenue L
2/1/1 768sf \$199,900

EAST END



1111 Avenue K
3/2 1,710sf \$315,000

EAST END



1505 Mechanic
3/3 2,900sf \$619,900

MIXED USE



1015 26th Street
1,968sf \$349,500



Hydroshack
HYDROPONIC & ORGANIC GARDENING SUPPLIES

CANNABIS PRODUCTS

DELTA 9 CANNABIS

- GUMMIES
- FLOWER
- JOINTS
- CARTS

ALSO DELTA 10 & THC-O

1138 WEST 20TH STREET, HOUSTON, TX 77008
Open 7 Days a Week. 713-292-1921
HYDROSHACK.COM

RECEIVE 30% OFF
Any Delta 8 Product If You Mention This OutSmart Magazine Advertisement

Tech Auto
MAINTENANCE & REPAIR



VOTED BEST AUTO MECHANICS
by OutSmart Readers 2013-21

Bobby Harting
Owner

- 20+ Years' Experience in Houston
- State of the Art Auto Repair Facility
- Some Services have 2 year or 24 months warranty
- We accept most extended warranty programs
- Pick Up and Delivery of Customers in 10-mile radius
- Concierge Pick Up from Home or Office
- Everything warranty from 12 thousand miles or 1 year

37 Waugh Dr. - Houston, TX 77007
Hours: Mon - Friday 7am - 6pm
713.863.8244

ASE
National Institute for
AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE EXCELLENCE

HEIGHTS DERMATOLOGY & AESTHETIC CENTER

COME IN FOR A **FREE** COSMETIC CONSULTATION!

NOW OFFERING: SUPERFICIAL RADIATION THERAPY (SRT) FOR THE NON-SURGICAL TREATMENT OF NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCERS.



GENERAL DERMATOLOGY
COSMETIC DERMATOLOGY
SKIN CANCER SURGERY
MICRO LASER PEEL
IPL PHOTOFACIAL
MICRONEEDLING
CHEMICAL PEELS

BOTOX & FILLERS
LASER HAIR REMOVAL
LEG & FACIAL VEINS
IS CLINICAL
GLYTONE
ELTAMD
OBAGI

Dr. Alpesh Desai
Dr. Tejas Desai
BOARD CERTIFIED
DERMATOLOGISTS

2120 Ashland St.
Houston, TX 77008
713.864.2659
HEIGHTSSKIN.COM

Canadian artist Zachari Logan will host his first art exhibit in Texas this month. The bold collection of sensual art installation pieces, ceramics, and drawings is entitled *Come Eat My Pleasant Fruits*, and will be open to the public through December 12 at Bill Arning Exhibitions.

Through large-scale drawings, ceramics, and installation pieces, Logan hopes to invoke a visual language that explores the intersections of masculinity, identity, memory, and place.

“I love the idea of the body being a garden, which is central to a lot of themes in my work,” Logan explains. “I have the belief that there is no separation between land and our body. Land is body. We are simply one aspect of the landscape.”

The queer artist’s exhibit will consist of both old and new works, from 2016 to the present.

“Since it’s my first exhibition in Texas, I wanted to try and showcase a wide range of my works in different media,” he says. “So we have large-scale drawings, as well as examples of my ceramic work and my smaller drawings. It is fairly new work, but it feels like a bit of an overview of who I am.”

Logan’s newer pieces are based on “aura migraines,” which are the visual disturbances people see when experiencing a headache. “I’m doing a drawing right now based on my own experiences of my migraine auras. I’ve been spending the past four or five years on a series of large-scale drawings that are based on these ocular disruptions.”

While painful, Logan uses his migraines as an inspiration for his works. “I have this strange relationship with my migraines, because I don’t like the pain associated with them. But they are visually fascinating. I like referencing the movement of them and the shape of them, alongside references to other artists and writers who deal with the same phenomenon, such as Hildegard Von Bingen, a 11th century German mystic and abbess who wrote and depicted her migraines, to startling effect.”

Logan also uses his entire body as inspiration for his art. “My body is always the catalyst for my work,” he says. “My earlier works were life-size depictions of my own body. I was using a lot of historical art tropes and turning a queer eye to what [has always been] a very hetero-sexist language—the language of art history. I quite frankly did not see queer bodies reflected in art history, so I started using my own body.”

One of the more daring works in his



Thistles, from Eunuch Tapestries

One With Nature

Zachari Logan blends the human body with the earth in his latest exhibit.

By **CONNOR BEHRENS**

exhibit is a combination of a plant and a male appendage, with flowers growing out of the sexual organ.

“I wouldn’t consider it *that* explicit,” he notes. “It’s such a blend of earth and body that you might be fooled by what is actually happening and what is being depicted.”

Logan hopes those who stop by the exhibit will feel emotionally moved by the pieces. “I think these images from nature and the natural world help to push the idea of diversity, and how it relates to us as creatures of the planet. We are a part of nature. Just like there are many types of plants with various roles, there are many different types of people on this planet. Everyone has a purpose.”

Logan ultimately hopes his work will inspire people to find their own means of creative expression.

“I really want people to think about certain things and creatively express themselves,” he emphasizes. “I know that when I’m drawing, I’m thinking. Art is about philosophizing the world and your place in it.”

What: *Come Eat My Pleasant Fruits*

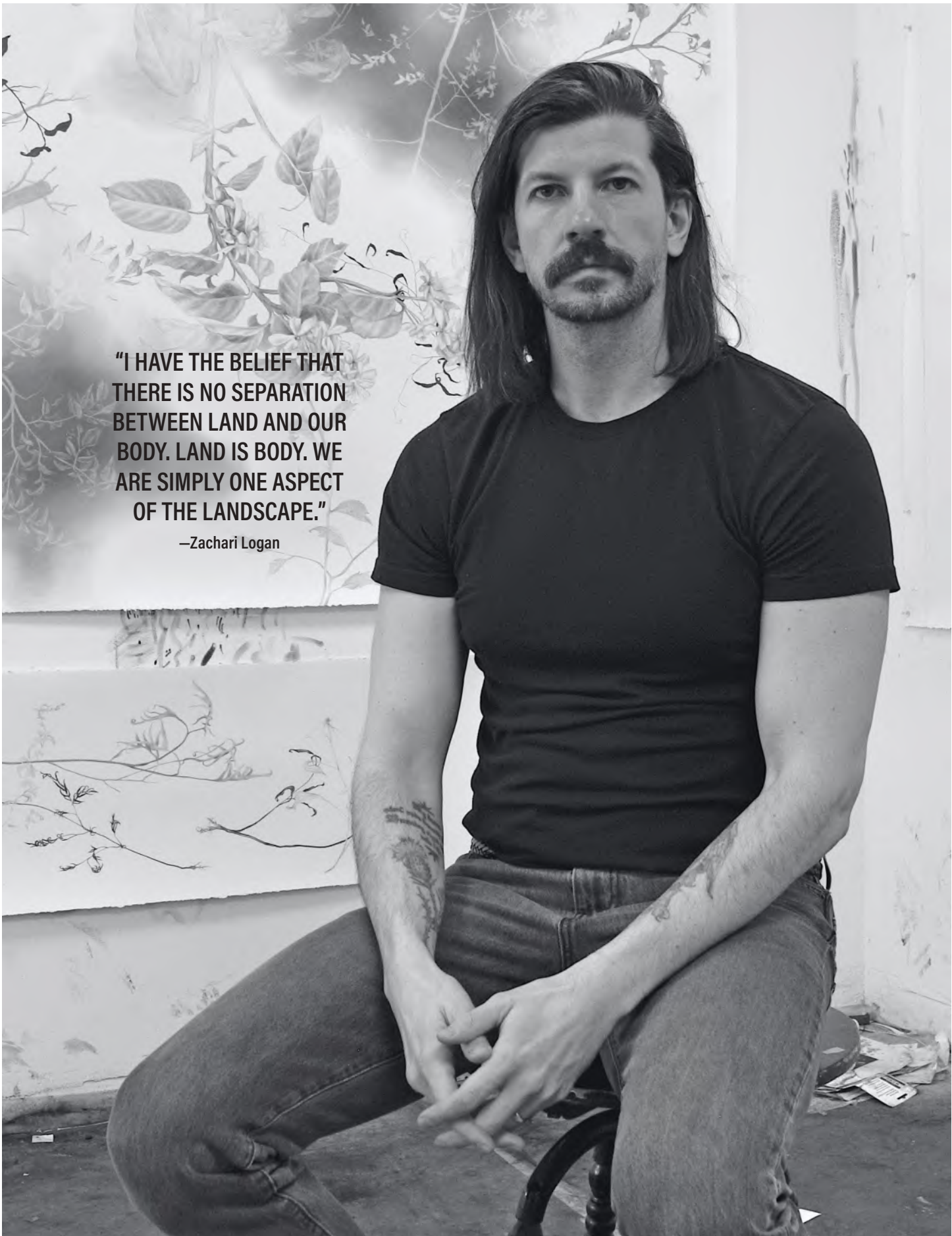
When: Through December 12

Where: Bill Arning Exhibitions,
604 W. Alabama Street

Info: www.billarning.com



For more info, visit zachariloganart.com.



**"I HAVE THE BELIEF THAT
THERE IS NO SEPARATION
BETWEEN LAND AND OUR
BODY. LAND IS BODY. WE
ARE SIMPLY ONE ASPECT
OF THE LANDSCAPE."**

—Zachari Logan

SKIN Renaissance LASER CENTER



Dermal fillers can take years off, even decades; giving a natural, pleasant, and well rested look. Dr. Barrios added volume to patient's upper & lower cheeks and chin to reverse the signs of aging.

- NON-SURGICAL
- IMMEDIATE LASTING RESULTS
- AFFORDABLE

Botox® • Restylane® • Radiesse®
Belotero® • Sculptra®

Wrinkles • Rosacea • Facial Sagging
Acne (active & scars) • Face & Leg Veins
Laser Hair Removal

Call for your FREE Consultation
713.942.SKIN (7546)

517 West Gray St. • Between Montrose and Taff

www.SkinRenaissance.net

Dr. Octavio Barrios, MD is a Fellow of the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery & American Academy of Aesthetic Medicine Member.



VOTED ONE OF THE BEST
Dr. Octavio Barrios
Best Physician 2005-2021
Skin Renaissance
Best Skin Care Center 2005-2021

Dr. B-fit

Weight Loss Clinic

Your Medical Approach to Weight Loss

PERSONALIZED | COMPREHENSIVE | DOCTOR SUPERVISED



OCTAVIO
BARRIOS, MD



LUCIA MANGLE
ARNOLD, MPAS, PA-C

CALL TODAY!
713.942.7546



MEMBER OF THE
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
BARIATRIC PHYSICIANS

Buying or Selling?
I've Got Your Back!



COMPASS



713-253-8609

David.Batagower@compass.com

[DavidSellsHouston.re](https://www.instagram.com/DavidSellsHouston.re)

David Batagower

LICENSED REALTOR®



Voted Best
Funeral
Director



**GET YOUR INSIDER'S GUIDE
TO FUNERAL & CREMATION
PLANNING, FREE!**

**DOWNLOAD
FREE TODAY:**

www.dignitymemorialfuneralbenefit.org/

Choose Organization:
OutSmart Magazine

www.PrePaidFunerals.Texas.gov

JOVON ALFON B. TYLER
Pre-Planning Advisor/ Licensed Funeral Director
713-562-0004
Jovon.Tyler@DignityMemorial.com

Limited time preplanning
savings for OutSmart
subscribers and employees.
Download your guide today!

Every Detail Remembered™

Dignity®
MEMORIAL

30 Dignity Memorial providers in the Greater Houston area, including Geo H. Lewis & Sons.

Navigating Experimental Modern Dance

The Pilot Dance Project's executive director
Adam Castañeda previews *Lazarus in the Promised Land*.

By NEIL ELLIS ORTS | Photo by PIN LIM

Houston born and raised, dancer and choreographer Adam Castañeda is bringing a new dance work to life—one that draws on his personal history while furthering the vision of the dance company he directs.

Since 2017, Castañeda has been the executive director for The Pilot Dance Project. Previously known as FrenetiCore Dance, the name and direction of the company changed when he took over from Rivkah French, who favored a more multimedia, narrative-driven aesthetic with projections and voice-over text. Castañeda had a different vision.

"I'd always fantasized about dancing for a company that had a rotating roster of choreographers," Castañeda says. "The company would do a deep dive into the choreographers' vision, their process, and ultimately their final product." He saw his new position as an opportunity to make this dream come true. Starting with two established local choreographers, Jhon R. Stronks and Ashley Horn, The Pilot Dance Project has gone on to present several other artists' works as well as Castañeda's own choreography.

The dream began to shift in 2019 as he became more interested in community building. "We live in the age of social media, where we're all connected but also isolated at the same time," he says. "Once you're of a certain age [with certain] people in your orbit, that's your orbit. There's not that much room for meeting new people and diving into new communities. So I thought about creating dance works that would create these communities, which would consist of people of all different experience levels, all different dance abilities, all different interests in dance."

Taking advantage of a residency provided by Dance Source Houston and Houston Ballet, Castañeda created his first dance work under this vision for one of Dance Source's "Mind the Gap" programs. Called *The Flower Garden of Ignatius Beltran*, Castañeda got positive feedback from audiences and cast alike, and he felt energized to pursue his community-building direction.



The very next month, everything shut down due to the pandemic. Slowed down but not deterred, Castañeda used that time to deepen some relationships in the dance community and (like so many other performing-arts organizations) dabble in the world of online presentations.

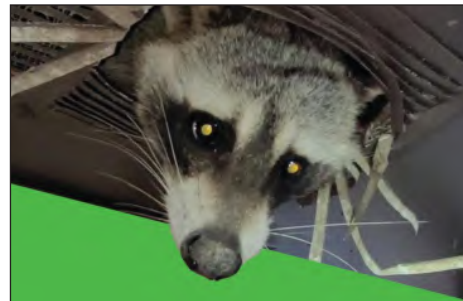
"I was definitely in experimental mode. We did our best to do the online thing. We produced a digital concert in December of 2020 and I premiered my Latinx Festival digitally in March. But I'll be honest, I don't think I did that well," Castañeda admits. "For one, we didn't find an audience for buying a digital concert and then viewing it. Then I realized I just don't have the time or the capacity to learn these new digital skills to be a dance-for-camera filmmaker."

The focus returned to live performance, starting with an outdoor performance on the grounds of the Live Oak Friends Meeting House. *Tether* was choreographed by Ashley Horn, with a prologue choreographed by Castañeda, who again used his "community works" approach.

The Pilot project will continue to engage

independent choreographers, mostly people who have not incorporated their own nonprofit company. "I will say that The Pilot does have a very distinctive aesthetic, in my opinion. All the choreographers are working from a very humanist place. The choreographers I commission do abstract movement for movement's sake. They're all driven by their individual lived experiences. That's what I'm drawn to, first and foremost." He explains further, "I am drawn to a full-bodied modern or postmodern dance vocabulary. We very much do modern experimental work."

The upcoming November production from The Pilot Dance Project will feature Castañeda's choreography, which is again incorporating both highly trained and less-experienced dancers. Called *Lazarus in the Promised Land*, the original impetus for the show was the immigration stories of his grandparents, who came from Mexico City and Monterey. As the ideas developed, he realized what he really wanted to investigate was the way his grandparents' Jehovah's Witness religion affected his whole family. It is a faith that Castañeda →



Urban Jungle Wildlife Removal LLC assists home and business owners through professional wildlife removal. in Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma. Our team can take care of any of your wildlife trapping, exclusion, and remediation needs.

We specialize in mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects.



- Trapping and removing wildlife and pests.
- Treating active wildlife and pest issues.
- Preventing the entry or return of future wildlife and pests.
- Cleaning up and sanitizing spaces invaded by wildlife and pests.
- Insulating attics following wildlife removal



Houston: 832.240.3891
Austin: 512.582.7561

UrbanJungleWildlifeRemoval.com

left ten years ago, but still finds remnants of in his life.

While he has his critiques of that religion, he didn't want that criticism to be the center of this work. "I don't want to sound clichéd, but I wanted to focus on the beauty of their lives, which they built around this religion. It's taken a much softer shape."

Still, there was some emotional history to sort through. While the grandparents Castañeda loved found that religion beneficial for their lives, he found it damaging after 25 years. "These were the cards I was dealt, and I made the most of them," he says. In that very closed culture, where marriage and even friendship outside the faith is strongly discouraged (if not forbidden), he had to figure out how to move in circles beyond those restrictivewalls. "I'm still very much a kid operating in the world in a lot of ways. I still have a lot to figure out." He admits to holding resentments for a time, but he has worked through a lot of that thanks to "a good dose of therapy and reflection."

Castañeda now feels that this show is tying something up for him. "I think it's going to be okay. I know that sounds weird to say as an adult, but for a long time, it just didn't seem like it was. This show is me telling myself that I survived, it's okay, and I think I'm going to

make it."

Castañeda expresses self-awareness of himself as a gay dance maker. "I think if you look at my aesthetic, my sensibilities, my movement vocabulary, it's not really what you would expect from a male dancer who is six-feet-two and 185 pounds." He thinks of his work as an expression of "the feminine divine." "There is a very obvious masculine presence that I think I can project on stage, but left to my own devices, I do create dances that are very soft and gentle. All my movement is dressed in florals and bright colors. If I do cast a male dancer, they have to be able to do my movement without butching it up."

Castañeda often appears onstage in what would be considered women's clothing, but without doing what would traditionally be considered drag. "If the female spirit is calling me to wear a dress in a performance, I'm going to wear a dress," he says. "Why is my sort of build inaccessible to a dress? If it fits me and I can tailor it, why can't I wear it?"

What: Pilot Dance Project's

Lazaruth in the Promised Land

When: November 6 and 7

Where: The Storyhive, 4010 Canal Street

More Info: pilotdanceproject.org

*A Card Can Go a Long Way
During the Holidays*

Pick out your favorite photo,
personalize your message,
and leave the rest to us.

copy.com
COPY CENTER/COMPUTERS/INTERNET BAR

WE HAVE A VARIETY OF STYLES AND SIZES TO CHOOSE FROM
Prices as low as \$14.95 | Envelopes included
713.528.1201 • 1201-f westheimer • www.copydotcom.com

**PASSIONATE. ACCESSIBLE.
CLIENT-CENTRIC.**

A forward-thinking veterinary practice
that cares for you like family.



Voted Best Male Veterinarian



Eric Cagle, DVM



**THE
URBAN VET**

2625 Louisiana St. D100
713.903.2364
TheUrbanVet.com

**Let's give 'em
pumpkin to talk about**

BRAND DIGITAL
SOCIAL VIDEO



MUFFY
Maven of Madness

MAD



HAT

**MAVEN
CREATIVE**

Scan for a plan

Get in touch
832.460.6263
madhatmaven.com



Jeremy Fain
Helping Houston Find A Home

713.677.4337 | jfain@greenwoodking.com | Greenwood King Properties

Distinguished Documentary

New award-winning film portrays the life of transgender lawyer **Danielle Healey**.

By RYAN M. LEACH

Photo by COURTESY OF MELBA PRODUCTIONS

Houston lawyer Danielle Joy “DJ” Healey, 61, is the subject of a new documentary called *Our Dad, Danielle*. The film is already receiving awards and recognition at film festivals for telling the story of Healey’s experience coming out as transgender, and her determination to pay forward the work of past activists to make Texas—and the world—a safer place for the trans community.

Filmmaker couple S.E. King and Leah Judge produced the documentary. King, who has a personal connection with Healey, also directed the film. From 1996 to 2000, when Healey was in high school, the two were neighbors—a serendipitous connection that eventually led to the film collaboration.

“This grew out of a project I conceived to film a series of very short sketches I had written to post on the web about the lighter side of the trans experience,” Healey explains. “It was a family project that my wife, daughters, and I could do together, acting as ourselves. I hired S.E. to produce and direct it, and after a couple of days of filming in March 2018, she nicely told us that while our daughter Sarah was a tremendously talented actress, apparently neither my wife or I had any talent for acting. S.E. had a strong background in reality TV and talk shows, and asked us to switch gears and do a documentary about my transition as a practicing lawyer and as a person living in Texas.”

King, a genderqueer lesbian, identified with Healey’s struggles. The filmmaker grew up



DJ Healey and her family

“MY INTENTION IS TO REACH OTHERS LIKE US OUT THERE WHO MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING THE SAME THING. BUT I ALSO WANT TO REACH THE 70 PERCENT OF AMERICANS WHO CLAIM THEY HAVE NEVER MET A TRANS PERSON.”

—S.E. King

in a conservative Christian family and is the youngest of six kids. As a closeted queer kid, she felt heavily tormented by cultural expectations to please people and fit in. Her escape was in film and television, which King credits as the genesis of her passion for the art of filmmaking.

“When Danielle called me in 2018 to confess the secret she’d kept for so long, I resonated with the sadness, isolation, and fear she felt. It was a profound connection to that journey of self-acceptance, and the battle with religious and societal shame. [That feeling] ignited the spark for all of us to commit to this. My intention is to reach others like us out there who might be experiencing the same thing. But I also want to reach the 70 percent of Americans who [claim they] have never met a trans person. That hits me, and I feel it should hit us all. No matter what, I want to honor this journey for the Healey family *and* the LGBTQ+ community, infusing this film with as much honest empathy as possible,” King says.

Healey began her transition later in life. In the trailer for the film, she explains that she was 44 years old the first time she told someone about her gender identity. At the time, Healey had an established family life. She and her wife, Becky, had been married for 35 years and had two children, Hillary and Sarah.

Healey also built a successful law career during that time. She graduated with honors from the University of Texas School of Law in 1985. Her current practice focuses on patent law, and she is a senior principal at Fish & Richardson, P.C. As the film’s trailer reveals,



MARCO TORRES

Healey's practice has expanded in recent years to help other people like her find justice in a state (and world) that often demonizes the LGBTQ community, especially trans women of color and immigrants.

King is grateful for the growth experience that came out of making the film. "A highlight was developing a stronger connection with Danielle and her family, and meeting some of the incredible women in her life whom I also had the privilege of interviewing for the film. I got kicked in the gut so many times during the almost four years it took to make this."

Our Dad, Danielle is already receiving early acclaim. The film won the Audience Award at the 2021 Vail Film Festival. It was also named Official Selection at the 2021 Portland Film Festival, where it will be available online through November 8.

"We are up for the Audience Award again in Portland, so if you like our film and believe in the message, please, please, please vote for us!" King emphasizes.

Healey believes that it was important for her to participate in the making of the film because of the message it sends about trans people, especially in a state as hostile toward the trans community as Texas. Every legislative session over the last several years has

included attacks on the LGBTQ community, with specific animus directed at the trans community. This year, Texas Governor Greg Abbott included anti-trans legislation in all three of the special sessions he called. House Bill 25, which bans trans student athletes from competing in sports that align with their gender identity, was finally passed on October 15. Texas is one of several Republican-led states that have instituted similar laws against trans children, including the so-called "bathroom bills" that ban all trans people from using the restroom or locker room that aligns with their

gender identity.

"I agreed to do this film to help people see [that trans people] are not the demons that some politicians portray," Healey concludes. "We take care of our children; we do not prey on children. We use public restrooms for the same reasons others do; we do not lay in wait to spy on and attack women and girls. We have families, homes, and friends. We are just people, like everyone else."



For more info on *Our Dad, Danielle*, visit ourdaddanielle.com.



A still from *Our Dad, Danielle*: DJ Healey and her friend Cynthia Oliver on a shopping trip.

STUDIO A SALON

Cut, Color, Extensions | studioAhouston.com

713.859.1591

Residential & Commercial Repair

VOTED BEST PLUMBER

(346) 253-4444

INTHELOOPPLUMBING@GMAIL.COM

WWW.INTHELOOPPLUMBING.COM

[@intheloopplumbing](https://www.facebook.com/intheloopplumbing)

RMP-42756

MODERN RISK MANAGEMENT

INSURANCE & ADVISING

A POLICY FOR EVERYONE!

DUSTIN HARWELL
Founder & CEO

HOME, AUTO, FLOOD, LIFE & COMMERCIAL

VOTED ONE OF THE BEST MALE INSURANCE AGENTS

ACCREDITED BUSINESS

11757 Katy Frwy Ste 1300
Houston, TX 77079
281-400-1205 | Office

WWW.MODERNRISKINS.COM



VACCINATED AND HORNY TOUR

CHELSEA HANDLER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10 | 713 MUSIC HALL

GET TICKETS NOW AT LIVENATION.COM | [LIVE NATION](http://LIVENATION.COM) CHELSEAHANDLER.COM



Ryan Automotive

716 Fairview
RyanAutoGlass.com
713.552.3602

*CONVENIENTLY LOCATED
IN MONTROSE*

M-F 9am-6pm
SAT 9am-4pm

10% DISCOUNT
 when mentioned
 this ad in Outsmart

2021 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS
OutSmart
Gayest & Greatest
2021

Voted one of
the Best for
Auto Body Shop

WINDOW/WINDSHIELD REPLACEMENT - PAINT AND BODY WORK

WE RETIRE

LGBTQ+

HOUSTONIANS

**ONE LAND DEAL
AT A TIME**

- STEADY MONTHLY INCOME
- RETURNS TYPICALLY OUTPERFORM STOCKS, BONDS, CDS
- CURRENTLY MANAGING \$5 MILLION



DOUG SMITH
FOUNDER AND CEO

2021 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS
OutSmart
Gayest & Greatest
2021

Hawthorne Capital

**Predictable passive income
backed by Texas land**

HAWTHORNECAPITAL.COM



Transgender director Angelo Madsen Minax's *North by Current* documentary makes its Houston debut on November 12

Festival Spotlights Third-Coast Film Talent

This year's **HCAF** features underrepresented Gulf Coast movie makers.

By KIM HOGSTROM

November ushers in the annual Houston Cinema Arts Festival (HCAF), and 2021 offers a particularly rich and varied celebration of LGBTQ film-production artists.

From November 11 through 22, Houstonians can view these thought-provoking original works in theaters and stylish outdoor venues in town: the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Rice Cinema; Aurora Picture Show, Discovery Green, Miller Outdoor Theatre, and more. Some of the films will also screen virtually.

HCAF 2021 features more than 40 films and short programs. This year's theme, Third Coast, provides a lens through which audiences can explore the deep bench of talent found throughout the often-overlooked Gulf Coast.

The festival is the flagship program of Houston Cinema Arts Society (HCAS), a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting unique films and performances, as well as opportunities to engage, enrich, and empower

the city's diverse communities. HCAF was introduced in 2008 as a weekend event, and has grown steadily since. It also filled a niche in the global film-festival scene that was sorely underrepresented—Texas.

This is the third festival that has fallen under the watchful eye of art director Jessica Green. Green's commitment to the LGBTQ community runs deep, and is evident in the 2021 film lineup. "Our LGBTQ artists' contributions are amazing this year," she exclaims. "Just incredible. Every one of them."

All the films are indeed wonderful, but there are stand-outs in the LGBTQ lineup. On November 12 at Rice Cinema, ticket holders can see the Houston premiere of director Angelo Madsen Minax's *North by Current*, including a special virtual Q&A session with the artist.

Minax, a trans man, spent two years in Houston as a Core Fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Following that, the director completed six years filming a documentary examining the relationships between mothers

and children, truths and myths, losses and gains, and the dynamics of an American family—his own.

After the tragic and confusing death of his toddler niece, Minax returned to his rural Michigan roots determined to make a film about his family's unjustified persecution regarding the loss. Soon, the scope of his project morphed. Minax takes his audience on an investigation into the depths of drug and alcohol addiction, domestic violence, Christian fervor, generational guilt, and trans embodiment.

Like the relentless Midwestern winds, relationships shift as family members struggle to understand and accept one another. The work unfolds in a gradual but disquieting documentary style. No one and nothing is scripted, and the camera acts as a fly on the wall. Still, a story emerges, quietly, like a ghost on a cold, dark Michigan night.

Did Minax know that he was going to create such a haunting piece? "When I first set out, I thought I would address white American masculinity, or maybe police brutality. There



PJ Raval's *A New Landscape/
A Possible Horizon*

were so many ways I could have approached it. But I shot it over such a long period of time that the film itself took the shape it has. It is still authentic to my voice, but it's the work that takes the viewer for the ride," he explains.

While the filmmaker acts as a cast member, photographer, editor, producer and director, there is nothing about *North by Current* that is indulgent or self-serving. Instead, it feels like a brutally honest work. "I wanted to provoke viewers to ask questions about their truths, ethics, and morals. I wanted them to see the gray, instead of just black and white, and question if right and wrong are changing all the time," Minax explains. "In its final form, it is a very subjective work."

On November 17, MFAH screens *Petite Maman*, the latest stunning work of Céline Sciamma. She is a screenwriter and director who often addresses the fluidity of gender and sexual identity among girls and women.

In *Petite Maman*, we find that young Nelly is taken to her mother's childhood home following the death of her grandmother. While her parents go about wrapping up loose ends, Nelly explores the surrounding woods where she encounters Marion, a girl exactly Nelly's age who bears a striking resemblance to her. The pair becomes fast friends over lunches and conversation, but the girls' eerie similarities gradually yield revelations that merge events of the past with those of the present.

Also on November 17, the Aurora Picture Show hosts a free outdoor event called *A New Landscape/A Possible Horizon*. Here, the award-winning Austin-based filmmaker PJ Raval will present a selection of film highlights from his remarkable career. The program includes a conversation with Raval mingled with clips from his work. Growing up as a queer first-generation Filipino American in a small, white, conservative town, Raval's experience as an "outsider" greatly shaped his filmmaking



Céline Sciamma's *Petite Maman*



Artistic director Jessica Green

practice. He often examines social-justice issues through the voices of LGBTQ citizens and other marginalized subjects.

Other 2021 HCAF highlights expected to wow the LGBTQ community include:

- HCAF's collaboration with the Houston Ballet for a free screening of the critically acclaimed *In Balanchine's Classroom* at Discovery Green (and streaming online) on November 14.

- A November 18 virtual screening of *The Scary of Sixty First*, nominated for the Teddy Prize (Best Queer Film) at Berlinale, where it was voted Best Feature Debut. The film pays homage to Italian giallo films of the 1970s with the telling of a modern possession by the ghost of one of Jeffrey Epstein's victims.

- The Texas premiere of *Red Rocket*, directed by Sean Baker and starring Simon Rex (who will be in attendance).

- *Bushwick Bill: Geto Boy*, with guest artists in attendance.

- *The Third Coast* (40th-anniversary screening).

- *C'mon C'mon*, starring Joaquin Phoenix and Gaby Hoffman.

Viewers can secure an all-access pass for HCAF 2021's complete lineup, or buy tickets for individual screenings. Several are free, but attendance requires registration to confirm availability.

What: Houston Cinema Arts Festival 2021

When: November 11–22

Where: Various locations

Info: cinemahtx.org/hcaf



Dayna Steele's Next Act

The local personality debuts
an emotional new play this month.

By MARENE GUSTIN

Photo by ANTHONY-MASTERSON

When Houstonian Dayna Steele was five years old, her mother, Fran Nicholson, introduced her to the musical *Brigadoon*. Steele was instantly hooked on music and theater.

But since she was unable to sing a note, she decided to spin records for a living and became a Rock 101 radio DJ who was inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame in 2010. After two decades of on-air popularity, marriage, and children, she segued into working as a motivational speaker, podcaster, and book author.

Sadly, in 2013 her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Steele spent the next three years as a caregiver for her mother, getting through the pain of watching her slowly disappear by writing inspiring Facebook posts. In 2016, she compiled those posts to publish *Surviving Alzheimer's with Friends, Facebook, and a Really Big Glass of Wine*. Whenever she is asked to speak about Alzheimer's and caregiving, she refers to a quote by First Lady Rosalynn Carter: "There are only four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers."

After Steele concluded a failed run for Congress in 2018, she returned to her first love—the theater. She and her husband, Charlie Steele, a former NASA pilot, started to invest in theatrical productions. The first one lost money, the second broke even, and then they hit it big with *Come from Away*, followed by *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*; *Chasing Rainbows: The Early Judy Garland Story*; and *Andrew Lloyd Webber's Cinderella*. "I'm a Broadway

producer and investor now," she says. "I'm producing a revival of a hit Broadway musical next year. There's your scoop!" she laughs. "That's all I'm going to be doing from now on. Producing and investing in Broadway is all about asking for money, and I learned how to do that during my congressional campaign."

She's also starring in the premiere of her own play this month in Houston, based on her *Surviving Alzheimer's* book. Steele actually started thinking about turning her caregiver's memoir into a play when it was first published. After she met Marley Singletary, a director and playwright who has worked at Houston's

**"THIS PRODUCTION
IS A LOVE LETTER TO
CAREGIVERS, WITH
LAUGHTER AND WINE.
WHEN IT COMES TO
ALZHEIMER'S, IF YOU DON'T
LAUGH, YOU'LL CRY."**

—Dayna Steele

Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS) and Queensbury Theatre, Steele sent her a copy of the memoir. Singletary signed on as the co-writer and director, and *The Woman in the Mirror* was born. "We had planned for a 2020 debut at Midtown Arts and Theater Center (MATCH). Then COVID hit," says Steele, "so we decided to go ahead and do our first table reads on Zoom and [produce] a YouTube movie."

The Woman in the Mirror will finally have its stage premiere this month at MATCH, starring Steele.

"I'm not an actor, but I *am* a professional storyteller and speaker, and it's my story," she explains. "I'm so fortunate to be able to share the story and help others—and to be able to do it with an outstanding co-star and creative crew."

Houston native and New York City-based actor Chris King will appear with Steele in the role of Stage Manager, a multi-faceted part created for the live production.

"When I saw his résumé, I knew I needed to audition him," Steele explains. "He's perfect. I wanted a young man who has never given a thought to caregiving in his life to play opposite my intense caregiving story."

Steele's middle son, Dac, who actually is a stage manager in New York City, is supportive of the production but declined to appear in it, as he didn't want to relive his grandmother's death every day.

The show runs 75 minutes with no intermission. Each performance will be followed by a short Q&A session with Dayna and area Alzheimer's experts that may include a doctor or nurse, a professional caregiver, an elder-law attorney, an assisted-living expert, and more. Dayna will also be signing books after each performance.

"This production is a love letter to caregivers, with laughter and wine," Steele concludes. "When it comes to Alzheimer's, if you don't laugh, you'll cry."

What: Dayna Steele's *The Woman in the Mirror*

When: Nov. 4–14

Where: MATCH, 3400 Main Street

Info: 713-521-4533

Leather Weather

The Montrose Forge and Sir Rat Leather & Gear
unveil new shops in Houston.

By RYAN M. LEACH



Chip Ware (l) and Robert Campbell in front of their new boutique in The Heights.

Whether you like the feel of a harness buckled tightly around your shoulders and chest or some tight leather chaps that leave little to the imagination, it's always leather weather in Houston.

Two leather shops, The Montrose Forge and Sir Rat Leather, have both moved to new locations, and the local leather community is about to get a whole lot kinkier.

"Leather shops have evolved so much. Before, for the gay community, a leather shop was a store selling fetish leather clothing. Nowadays, I would describe it as a store that has not only leather and fetish clothing, but a lot more items for all your needs," says Luis Bratt, 37.

Bratt and his partner, Randy Suratt, 51, recently opened Sir Rat Leather inside Ripcord, the famous Montrose leather bar on Fairview Street. They will also be opening a larger main store in the coming months after finishing renovations.

The Montrose Forge is also expanding its operations, and has relocated to White Oak Drive after several years at various locations on Fairview. "We are already open and welcoming our regular customers," says owner Chip Ware, 43. "The new space is a cute cottage with a unique charm on a corner lot—half boudoir, half dungeon. We want to give everyone the opportunity to explore."

For Sir Rat Leather, this will be their first store in Houston after building a reputation doing pop-up shops in Austin, Houston, and South Padre. When deciding on a new permanent location, they were torn between Houston and its rival city Dallas. Obviously, they made the correct decision in deciding to open their doors here.

"Houston has always been a community that we wanted to be a part of," says Bratt. "Personally, I love the bars here. We have lots of friends who were always asking when we were going to open a store here. After a year of researching, we were between Dallas and Houston, and in the beginning of September I got an email saying that the previous store at the Ripcord was having a sale and moving. At that point I tried to contact the owner of the

Ripcord persistently, until I finally got a reply. Luckily, we got the place.”

The Montrose Forge, on the other hand, has been a longtime presence in Montrose and its leather community.

“We opened at the beginning of 2016 in response to an iconic local business, Black Hawk Leather, closing their doors at 711 Fairview St.,” Ware explains. “We immediately contacted the landlord and expressed interest, because we did not want to see anything other than a leather/fetish shop in that location. As members of the leather community, we felt a responsibility to keep the tradition alive. My husband and I are co-founders of the Bayou City Pups. We’ve competed at international-level kink and leather events and are supporters of other local leather and kink organizations.”

Both of the store’s owners agree that the leather community is one that celebrates inclusivity and liberation.

“The leather community is complicated to define,” Ware notes. “It is a subculture that exists within and beyond the LGBTQ+ community. Everyone is welcome! Leather plays the role of the underlying sexual energy that exists within the LGBTQ+ community. It is a means of self-expression and rebellion as we discover who we are and how we fit into the community at large.”

“LEATHER PLAYS THE ROLE OF THE UNDERLYING SEXUAL ENERGY THAT EXISTS WITHIN THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY. IT IS A MEANS OF SELF-EXPRESSION AND REBELLION AS WE DISCOVER WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE FIT INTO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.”

—Chip Ware

During the lowest points of the pandemic, when many LGBTQ performers and workers were struggling, the leather community stepped up where it could.

“Leather people have always been involved in LGBTQ causes, regardless of being leather-related or not. During the pandemic, when all the bars were closed and performers lost their stage, our local drag queens performed inside our store and streamed the show live on our Instagram/Facebook page for tips,” says Bratt.

Indeed, these shops cater to a wide range of customers and sell a wide range of products beyond leather gear.



Luis Bratt (l) and Randy Suratt's first Houston gear shop is located inside of the Montrose bar Ripcord.

“We sell everything from T-shirts to lube to leather chest harnesses to full leather outfits like pants, shirts, and skirts. We also have latex, lingerie, gender-neutral lingerie/underwear, bondage equipment and accessories, and other fun adult toys,” says Ware.

“We sell a little bit of everything that will make you look and feel sexy,” Bratt adds.

Both stores want to be places where everyone is comfortable coming in and exploring the merchandise—and themselves.

“We are a boutique for everybody, and

everybody,” Ware concludes. “That said, we are here to help people feel sexy exactly as they are. We want to help them discover what brings them pleasure and what excites them. We are gender- and body-inclusive, and work hard to make sure that everyone finds this to be a safe space.”



The Montrose Forge, 3423 White Oak Dr., themontroseforge.com; Sir Rat Leather, 715 Fairview (inside Ripcord most nights), or on Instagram @sirratleather.

WEDDING GUIDE



Juan Lerma (l)
and Marvin Fuentes

A SURPRISE-PARTY WEDDING

Juan Lerma and Marvin Fuentes hosted an impromptu backyard ceremony with their family and friends.

By **JENNY BLOCK** | Photos by **EDDIE MORALES LOPEZ**



Juan Fernando Lerma and Marvin Yovani Fuentes didn't get off to what you'd call a smashing start. They met through a mutual friend in 2016 at Rich's, where they

initially got off on the wrong foot.

At the end of the night, Juan saw Marvin coming out of the club. "I decided to approach him and pull him to the side for a chat," Juan recalls. "After some one-sided banter from me, somehow he ended up giving me a ride home, which he was not too happy about."

Once he was safe at home, Juan decided to finish the night by sending Marvin a not-so-nice "Thank you for the ride home" message on

Facebook.

Two weeks went by, and Marvin still hadn't replied. Then they crossed paths again at a chicken-and-waffles house, which also left Marvin with a bad impression.

Marvin finally replied to Juan's Facebook message four weeks after they met, and they decided to go out for a glass of wine that same night. "After that, we spent the next few months seeing each other almost every single day," Juan says.

Juan knew Marvin was the one on that first wine date. For Marvin, the moment came when he realized just how attentive Juan is. "One evening I really wanted a pint of ice cream, but I was sure we didn't have any." That's when Juan surprised him with a pint of Marvin's

favorite ice cream.

Juan thinks of just about everything when it comes to Marvin's happiness. "I'd never experienced anything like it," Marvin says. "In that moment, I realized I didn't ever want to lose him from my life. So I chose to put a ring on it."

It was Marvin who proposed to Juan on December 5, 2019. "I was initially planning something elaborate, but then I realized that Juan would want something simple and intimate," Marvin says. "He didn't know I was going to ask at all. I cooked a nice dinner that evening, and we had dinner and wine on our apartment balcony. [When the right moment came], I told him that I loved him and that I was the happiest I've ever been in my life, and



that I didn't want to ever lose him. Then I got down on one knee and asked him to marry me. He was in complete shock and started crying. He said 'Yes!'"

What had started out on shaky ground quickly became an undeniable love affair. "Marvin is the modern-day Latin knight in shining armor," Juan says, "coming in on a horse to whisk you away for love and adventure."

"And Juan walks in this world with such authenticity. He's my constant among all the chaos," Marvin adds.

Juan is a graduate of the University of Houston and a finance advisor for Shell. He is from Born in a small town in the Mexican state of Guanajuato, Mexico, and he came to Houston when he was just three-years-old.

Marvin, a native Houstonian, is a graduate of the University of Houston, and a senior fuel programs compliance analyst at Trillium CNG, the renewable fuel arm of the Love's Family of Companies. The couple currently lives in Houston's Cottage Grove neighborhood near Memorial Park.

Their wedding ceremony on June 5, 2021, started out as nothing more than a dinner party in the backyard of Juan's parents' house. "It all happened when we planned to have one of our 'Dinner With The Gays' nights, dinners we do with a few close friends and our parents. It was going to be the first time we could all hang out after getting vaccinated," Juan says.

Their friend Rick Dickson officiated, and Rick's husband, Luis Morales Lopez, translated the ceremony for their Spanish-speaking guests.

Although Juan's parents had originally planned the dinner for June 16, "The Pupusa Lady," Mayra Rivera, was only available on June 5. "She has a setup that she brings to the party and makes the pupusas on the spot," Marvin explains.

Even though, at that point, June 5 was only three weeks away, the couple said "it just felt right" to surprise their dinner guests with a backyard wedding ceremony. After all, they had started dating on the 5th. They got engaged on the 5th. They signed for their new home on the 5th. "We kept the dinner very small, and the wedding was a surprise to almost everyone!" Juan recalls.

Getting to surprise their friends and family was the best part of the dinner party. "Seeing the looks on everyone's face was priceless," Marvin says. "Luckily, no one choked on their pupusa."

WANT TO TELL YOUR STORY?
Email us at letters@outsmartmagazine.com

DAVID
ALCORTA
CATERING

CATERING
CAKES
EVENTS

832.439.0224



Chef David Alcorta



BEST WEDDING
CAKE BAKERY AND
BEST WEDDING/
EVENT CATERING FIRM



davidalcorta.net
david@davidalcorta.net

**Fly High Above The Rest.
Goosehead Insurance.**

*The smarter, simpler way
to purchase insurance.*



VOTED ONE
OF THE BEST MALE
INSURANCE AGENTS

Patrick Torma
Agency Owner

Call 281.723.1294

3420 Rusk St., Ste. 22
Houston, TX 77003





OUT-THERE

Photos by DALTON DEHART & CREW



OutSmart's Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards October 15, 2021

Hundreds gathered at ReBar to celebrate the winners of OutSmart's 24th Annual Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards. Winners from the Entertainment and Nightlife category—Blackberri, Queen Persephone, Wesley Whitson, and DJ Athenz—rocked the party all night. Light bites were provided by David Alcorta.







OUTTHERE

Photos by DALTON DEHART & CREW



OutSmart's Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards

October 15, 2021

The winners of **OutSmart's 2021 Gayest & Greatest Readers' Choice Awards** were celebrated at ReBar. The fun-filled event was full of performances, mingling, music, and more.





**Avenue 360 Health & Wellness
Midtown Grand Opening
October 21, 2021**

Healthcare advocates celebrated the Avenue 360 Health & Wellness Midtown grand opening with a reception. The new location primarily serves Midtown and Third Ward neighborhoods through primary care, behavioral health, HIV specialty care, and more.



**Bunnies
in Heat
October 23,
2021**

Bunnies on the Bayou hosted its annual Bunnies in Heat at ReBar. The event was masquerade themed and raised funds for local LGBTQ nonprofits.

ACCOMMODATIONS/HOTELS

Hilton Plaza Medical Center
6633 Travis.....713/557-0740

ACCOUNTANTS/BOOKKEEPERS/ CPAS

Gary Gritz, CPA
230 Westcott, Ste 210.....713/784-3030

ADVERTISING/MARKETING

Ashkan Media
.....Ashkanmedia.com

Mat Hat Maven Creative
madhatmaven.com.....832/460-6263

OutSmart Magazine
3406 Audubon.....713/520-7237

AIR CONDITIONING/HEATING

Newport A/C & Heating
newportac.com.....281/808-8630

APARTMENTS/HOUSING

Cohousing Houston
cohousinghouston.com.....832/900-2919
Durham Heights Apartments
DurhamHeightsApartments.com.....713/843-7081

ART/ART GALLERIES

Bill Arning Exhibitions
604 W. Alabama.....billarningexhibitions.com
The Menil Collection
1533 Sul Ross.....menil.org

ASTROLOGER

Lilly Roddy Astrology
.....713/529-5842

ATTORNEYS/LEGAL SERVICES

deborah Lawson
.....713/478-2618

Gonzalez Olivieri LLC
gonzalezolivierillc.com.....713/481-3040

Katine & Nechman LLP
1834 Southmore.....713/808-1001

The Miller Law Firm
Adam H. Miller & Nichole Nech
TexasBulldogLaw.com.....713/572-3333

Jessica Rodriguez-Wahlquist
5300 Memorial Ste 270.....713/751-2392

Walker Kirkpatrick.....713/552-1117
James S. Walker.....Walkertexaslawyer.com

Eric Kirkpatrick.....Kirkpatricklaw.com

AUTOMOTIVE REPAIRS

Ryan Automotive
716 Fairview.....713/522-3602

Tech Auto Maintenance
37 Waugh Dr.....713/863-8244

AUTOMOTIVE SALES

Central Houston Cadillac/Tony McClelland
2520 Main St.....832/981-7590

Fred Haas Toyota World
FredHaasToyota.com.....832/764-8914

Planet Ford
204031-45 Spring TX 77388.....866/879-9328

Planet Lincoln
2040311-45 Spring TX 77388.....888/242-5059

BANKING/FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Houston Federal Credit Union
HoustonFCU.org.....866/OUR-HFCU

BAKERIES/CUSTOM CAKES
David Alcorta Catering
davidalcorta.net.....832/439-0224

Dessert Gallery
DessertGallery.com.....713-522-9999

CATERING SERVICES
David Alcorta Catering
davidalcorta.net.....832/439-0224

CBD PRODUCTS
Hydroshack Hydroponics
1130 W. 20th.....713/292-1921

CHURCHES/SPIRITUAL CENTERS
Bering Church
1440 Harold.....beringchurch.org

Resurrection MCC
2025 W 11th.....713/861-9149

St Paul's United Methodist Church
5501 Main.....713/528-0527

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
1805 W. Alabama.....ststephenshouston.org

Trinity Episcopal Church
1015 Holman St.....www.trinitymidtown.org

COMMUNITY/NONPROFIT
AIDS Foundation Houston
Aidshelp.org.....713/623-6796

Bering Connect
.....713-526-1017, ext.20

Diana Foundation
.....TheDianaFoundation.org

EPAH
.....EPAH.org

Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce
HoustonLGBTChamber.com.....832/510-3002

Harris County Sheriff's Office
.....hcsjobs.com

Houston LGBTQ+ Political Caucus
.....thecaucus.org

KPFT Radio
kpft.org.....713-526-4000

Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI)
401 Branard.....lhihouston.org

Lesbians Over Age Fifty (L.O.A.F.)
lesbiansoverage50.org.....713/907-5378

Pet Patrol
.....ThePetPatrol.org

Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast
.....ppgulfcoast.org/lgbtq

Ryan White Planning Council
rwpcHouston.org.....713-572-3724

The Woodlands PRIDE
.....thewoodlandstxpride.org

COMPUTERS/INTERNET/IT SERVICES
Copy.com
1201-F Westheimer.....713/528-1201

ENTERTAINMENT/NIGHT LIFE
Alley Theatre
615 Texas Ave.....alleytheatre.org

George Country Sports Bar
617 Fairview.....713/528-8102

Houston Eagle
611 Hyde Park.....HoustonEagle.com

JR's/Santa Fe
808 Pacific.....713/521-2519

La Granja Disco Y Cantina
5505 Pinemont Dr.....713/518-6753

Midtown Houston
.....Midtownhouston.com

Miller Outdoor Theatre
MillerOutdoorTheatre.com.....281/373-3386

Neon Boots
11410 Hempstead Rd.....832/582-5022

Out & Proud Live
.....outandproudlive.com

Papi's
570 Waugh Dr.....713/524-3559

Pearl Bar
4216 Washington.....PearlHouston.com

ReBar
202 Tuam.....346/227-8613

Round Top Festival Institute
248 Jaster Rd.....979/249-3129

Round Top Festival Hill
.....FestivalHill.org

Society For The Performing Arts
SPAHouston.org.....713/227-4772

Stages Theatre
StagesTheatre.com.....713-527-0123

Theatre Under The Stars
800 Bagby, Suite 200.....tuts.com/out

Tony's Corner Pocket
817 W. Dallas.....832/722-7658

White Oak Music Hall
.....whiteoakmusicall.com

FINANCIAL PLANNING/BANKS

Elias Contreras/Merrill Lynch
fa.ml.com/elias-contreras.....281/588-7114

Richard Dickson/Galene Financial
1700 W Loop S, Ste 255.....713/489-4322

Grace Yung/Midtown Financial
3355 Alabama, Ste 180.....713/355-9833

FITNESS CLUBS/PERSONAL TRAINERS

Club Houston
2205 Fannin.....713/659-4998

John Aaron Online Fitness
www.jaofit.com.....832-649-8422

FUNERAL/MORTUARY SERVICES

Dignity Memorial
Jovon Tyler.....713/562-0004

Leslie Bonnie.....281/203-7830

GARDENING/LANDSCAPING

Fountains & Statuary
11804 Hempstead.....713/957-3672

Hydroshack Hydroponics
1130 W. 20th.....713/292-1921

Joshua's Native Plants & Antiques
502 W. 18th St.....713/862-7444

GROCERY STORE

H-E-B
Multiple locations.....heb.com

HAIR/NAIL/MAKE-UP SALONS

NU-Cuts Hair Salon
515 Westheimer.....713/524-7858

Studio A Salon
2411 Sunset.....713/859-1591

HEALTH CARE - CHIROPRACTORS

The Sports & Wellness Doc/Alexia McClerkin, DC
2636 S Loop W.....832/844-1754

HEALTH CARE - COUNSELING/THERAPY

Connections Wellness/Dr. Tracy Carlson
MyConnectionsWellness.com.....888/580-5995

D. "Woodja" Flanigan, MS, LPA
2600 SW Fwy, Ste 409.....713/589-9804

Denise O'Doherty, LPC, LMFT, RN
.....713/524-9525

Dr. Daniel Garza, MD
3131 Eastside St, Ste 4.....281/610-8190

Dr. Barry F. Gritz, MD
230 Westcott, Ste 210.....713/869-7400

Jeffrey Myles/JM Professional Services
.....713/447-2164

The Montrose Center
401 Branard.....713/529-0037

Christine Wysong
230 Westcott, Ste 210.....713/869-7400

HEALTH CARE - DENTISTS

Bayou City Smiles/Marcus de Guzman, DDS
2313 Edwards St, Ste. 150.....713/518-1411

Bayou City Smiles/Cynthia Corral, DDS
2313 Edwards St, Ste 150.....713/518-1411

Cory Logan, DDS
530 Waugh Dr.....713/942-8598

LifeSmiles by Randy Mitchmore, DDS
1722 W. Alabama.....713/592-9300

Montrose DDS/Samuel A. Carrell, DDS
620 W. Alabama.....713/529-4364

Montrose DDS/Austin T. Faulk, DDS
620 W. Alabama.....713/529-4364

HEALTH CARE - HIV/COVID TESTING

Houston Health Department/HIV
.....houstoniamlife.com

Houston Health Department/COVID
houstontx.gov.....832-393-4220

HEALTH CARE - EMERGENCY CENTERS

Montrose Emergency Room 24 Hour ER
1110 W. Gray St, #101.....713/242-1436

SignatureCare Emergency Centers
3209 Montrose Blvd.....281/709-2897

1925 TC Jester.....832/850-4338

1014 Wirt Rd.....832/924-0312

Additional locations.....ercare24.com

HEALTH CARE - HIV/STD TESTING

Avenue 360
Avenue360.org.....713/426-0027

Legacy Community Health
.....LegacyCommunityHealth.org

HEALTH CARE - OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

Houston Eye Associates/Stewart Zuckerbrod, MD
5420 Dashwood, Ste 101.....713/668-9118

HEALTH CARE - OPTOMETRISTS

Boutique Eye Care/Juliet Farmer, OD
1806 Westheimer, Ste. A.....713/528-2010

Eye Gallery
1806B Westheimer.....713/523-1279

1700 Post Oak Blvd, Ste 110.....713/622-7470

Montrose Eye Care/ Paul Lovero, OD
520 Waugh Dr.....713/352-0974

HEALTH CARE / PHARMACIES

Avita Pharmacy
.....AvitaPharmacy.com/HIV

Legacy Pharmacy
.....LegacyCommunityHealth.org/services/pharmacy/

Scott Read Pharmacy
540 Waugh Drive.....832/649-3142

HEALTH CARE - PHYSICIANS

Octavio Barrios, MD
507 West Gray.....713/942-7546

7106 Spencer Highway.....281/542-9400

Gordon Crofoot, MD/Crofoot MD
3701 Kirby, Ste.1230.....713/526-0005

Abel Flores, MD/Village Medical
4543 Post Oak Pl.....713/797-1087

M. Sandra Scurria, MD
6565 West Loop South, Ste 300.....281/661-5901

Derek Smith, AGCNP-BC/Crofoot MD
3701 Kirby, Ste.1230.....713/526-0005

Maggie White, MPH FNP-BC AAHIVS/
Gordon Crofoot
3701 Kirby Dr, Ste.1230.....713/526-0005

HEALTH CARE - SERVICES

AIDS Foundation Houston
afhouston.org.....713/623-6796

AIDS Healthcare Foundation
.....HIVcare.org

Avenue 360
Avenue360.org.....713/426-0027

Harris County Public Health
PublicHealth.harriscountytexas.gov.....713/439-6293

Houston Health Department
.....houstontx.gov

Legacy Community Health
LegacyCommunityHealth.org.....832/548 5000

Ryan White Planning Council
RWPCHouston.org.....713/572-3784

St. Hope Foundation
offeringhope.org.....713/778-1300

HEALTH CARE - SKIN CARE

Heights Dermatology/Alpesh Desai, MD
2120 Ashland.....713/864-2650

SkinCeuticals/Skin Lab
2800 Kirby, Ste. B21.....713/559-9300

Skin Renaissance Laser/Octavio Barrios, MD
507 West Gray.....713/942-7546

HEALTH CARE - WEIGHT LOSS

Alexia McClerkin, MD /Beauty & Wellness Doc
beautyandwellnessdoc.com.....832/844-1754

Dr. B-Fit / Octavio Barrios, MD
517 West Gray.....713/942-7546

HOME FURNISHINGS/ACCESSORIES

code
355 W 19th.....713/864-4411

HOME BUILDERS

SABO Custom Builders
Sabocustombuilders.com.....713/344-1241

INTERIOR DESIGNERS

Jacob Medina
Jacob-medina.co.....713/242-8934

Jean Quila Interior Design
.....832/366-1044

INSURANCE AGENCIES/AGENTS

Lane Lewis/Farmers Insurance
2200 North Loop W, Ste 136.....713/688-8669

Patrick Torma/Goosehead Insurance
3420 Rusk, Ste. 22.....281/723-1294

INVESTMENTS

Doug Smith/Hawthorne Funds
1210 West Clay, Ste. G.....HawthorneFunds.com

JEWELERS

Silverlust
1338-C Westheimer.....713/520-5440

Tenenbaum Jewelers
4310 Westheimer.....TenenbaumJewelers.com

LEATHER GOODS

Montrose Forge
3423 White Oak.....713/893-5002

Sir Rat Leather and Gear LLC
711 Fairview.....sirratleather.com

LIQUOR/WINE & SPIRITS

Dripping Springs
.....drippingspringsvodka.com

FIX Vodka
.....FixVodka.com

NEFT Vodka
.....NeftVodka.com

Spec's Wine Spirits & Finer Foods
2410 Smith.....specsonline.com

MASSAGE THERAPISTS

Ryan Fugate, RMT
RyanMassageWorks.com.....713/269-7926

MUSEUMS

Galveston Railroad Museum
galvestonrrmuseum.org.....409/765-5700

PEST CONTROL SERVICES & TRAPPING

Andy's All Star Pest Control
.....713/732-7742

Urban Jungle Wildlife
urbanjunglewildliferemoval.com.....833/732-0439

PET SERVICES & SUPPLIES

Bayou City Veterinary Hospital
4720 Washington.....713/343-9909

Midtown Veterinary Hospital
MidtownVetHospital.com.....713-528-4900

Spay-Neuter Assistance Program
Snapus.org.....713/862-3863

The Urban Vet/Dr. Eric Cagle
2625 Louisiana St.Ste D100.....713/903-2364

West Alabama Animal Clinic
2030 W. Alabama.....713/528-0818

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Dalton DeHart Photography
DaltonDeHart.com.....713/622-2202

Yvonne Feece Photography
yvonnefeece.com.....832/876-1053

PLUMBING

In The Loop Plumbing Services
.....346/253-4444

U-Plumb-It Plumbing Supply
1424 Montrose.....713-942-2277

POOLS & POOL SERVICES

Venture Pools
.....713/447-9201

PRINTING/COPY CENTERS

2daypostcards.com
621 Richmond.....713/224-8808

Copy.com
1201-F Westheimer.....713/528-1201

REAL ESTATE-ARCHITECTS

Morningside Architects
4229 Bellaire Blvd.....713/529-2630

REAL ESTATE - FOR SALE

The Residences at the Allen
ResidencesattheAllen.com.....281/940-0801

REAL ESTATE - HOME BUILDERS

SABO Custom Builders
Sabocustombuilders.com.....713/344-1241

REAL ESTATE-MORTGAGE/TITLE

Janet Friedman/J Friedman Mortgage
JFriedmanloans.com.....713-785-5626

Chicago Title - Inner Loop
3700 Buffalo Speedway.....713/418-7000

Cody Grizzoffi/NRL Mortgage
Codygrizzoffi.com.....832-541-1103

Cari Middaugh/AmCap Mortgage
myamcap.com/cari-middaugh/.....281/450-2235

Lyn Sullivan /Alamo Title
4265 San Felipe, Ste 520.....713/228-0801

REAL ESTATE-REALTORS

Brooks Ballard/Engel & Volkers
309 Gray.....713/522-7474

David Batagower/Compass Realty
bayoucitypropertygroup.com.....713/523-8609

David Bowers/The House Company/Galveston
David@DavidBowers.com.....409/763-2800

Eric Bradley/In the Loop Properties
2118 Waugh Dr.....713-252-7205

Mike Copenhagen/Remax Metro
mikecopenhagen@remax.net.....713/528-4963

Karen Derr/Karen Derr Realty
karenderr.com.....713/875-7050

Tom Eickleberry/Pride Street Realty
TomSellsHoustonHomes.com.....713/201-5257

Jeremy Fain/Greenwood King Properties
3201 Kirby Dr.....713/677-4337

Richard Hill
RichardHill.com.....713/863-9494

Houston Association of Realtors
har.com.....713/629-1900

Thomas Phillips/City Side Properties Exp Realty
.....832/305-7848

Debbie Levine/Greenwood King Properties
3201 Kirby Drive.....713/942-8577

Lynette Lew/Better Homes and Gardens
LynetteLew.com.....713/582-2202

Jose Ocque/Gary Greene-Post Oak Park
1177 W. Loop South, Ste 1200.....713/301-1136

Tom Schwenk/Tom's Galveston Real Estate
Tomsgalvestonrealestate.com.....713/857-2309

VJ Tramonte/Joe Tramonte Realty
1802 Broadway/Galveston.....409/765-9837

Martha Turner Properties
Marthaturner.com.....713/520-1981

Andy Weber/Sotheby's International Realty
520 Post Oak.....713/724-4306

Christopher Williams/Gary Greene-Post Oak
1177 W. Loop South, Ste 1200.....713/885-4419

RESTAURANTS/COFFEE/WINE BARS

ACME Oyster House
1201 Westheimer.....AcmeOyster.com

Chapultepec Lupita
813 Richmond.....713/522-2365

Dessert Gallery
DessertGallery.com.....713-522-9999

El Pueblito Patio
1423 Richmond.....713/520-6635

Eugene's
1985 Welch St.....713/807-8883

Free Grillin'/Chef Michele
.....832/419-0165

Giacomo's cibo e vino
3215 Westheimer.....713/522-1934

Kenny & Ziggy's
2327 Post Oak Blvd.....713/871-8883

Niko Niko's
2520 Montrose.....713/528-4976

Pho 518!
9330 Broadway, #416.....832/736-9903

Pizza Birra Vino
544 Waugh Dr.....832/581-3664

Riva's Italian Restaurant
1117 Missouri St.....713/529-3450

Tacos Doña Lena
8788 Hammerly.....713/993-6486

Urban Eats
3414 Washington Ave.....feasturbaneats.com

TRAVEL/TRAVEL AGENCIES

Concierge Travel, Inc
4920 Mimosa.....713/661-2117

Cruise Planners/Peter Weeks
.....901/351-0054

Galveston Tourism
.....visitgalveston.com

Visit Lafayette Travel
.....LafayetteTravel.com

Visit Palestine
.....visitpalestine.com

WEDDING SERVICES/BAKERS

David Alcorta Catering
davidalcorta.net.....832/439-0224

Dessert Gallery
DessertGallery.com.....713-522-9999

WEDDING SERVICES/CATERERS

David Alcorta Catering
davidalcorta.net.....832/439-0224

WEDDING SERVICES/PHOTO/VIDEO

Dalton DeHart Photography
DaltonDeHart.com.....713/622-2202

Yvonne Feece-Tran Photography
yvonnefeece.com.....832/876-1053

WEDDING VENUES

Galveston Railroad Museum
galvestonrrmuseum.org.....409/765-5700

Does advertising work?

It just did.

Get listed on this page.

Call 713/520-7237 for details.

Dalton DeHart

PHOTOGRAPHIC FOUNDATION



PRESERVING YEARS OF HOUSTON LGBTQ HISTORY!

Help us fund the digitalization and cataloging of over million community photos by making a donation.

Info@DaltonDeHart.com | P.O. Box 22641 | Houston, TX 77277

www.DaltonDeHart.com

MARKETPLACE

ADVERTISING RATES
Nov. 15 for the Dec. Issue.

For rates/information
call 713/520-7237 ext. 710.

Thank you for supporting
OutSmart Advertisers!
Please be sure to tell them
you saw their ad in OutSmart.

COMPUTER SERVICES

Stay COVID-19 Safe

PC HomeTech

YOUR COMPUTER ASSISTANT
NOW WITH
REMOTE AND IN HOME SUPPORT!

(832) 496-9246
pchometech.com



Gary Joseph, owner

EMPLOYMENT

**WE ARE
HIRING!**

We have immediate openings for
experienced advertising executives
at OutSmart Media Company.

Salary, commissions, and benefits.
A creative, fun environment.

APPLY TODAY!

Send your cover letter
and resume to
employment@outsmartmagazine.com

OutSmart
Houston's LGBTQ Magazine

**DOES ADVERTISING WORK?
IT JUST DID!**

Build your business while supporting the community!

Call 713/520-7237 for details.

FOR LEASE OR SALE

GALVESTON PROPERTIES

1321 25th • \$749,999
Circa 1905 4/3/1 w/garage apt.
Mardi Gras Parade Route.
No flooding

1476 Mabry
Bolivar Peninsula • \$104,999
7800 sq ft Canal Lot
RV & RV Cover, and more!

124 Pompano • \$299,000
3/2/1 • Very close to UTMB

1728 Avenue M • \$1.2 million
Premiere compound property with
large Victorian (formals, library, dining
& large kitchen) and 2 upscale 1BR/1BA
cottages and POOL. Corner double lot.

Better Homes
and Gardens
REAL ESTATE

**GARY
GREENE**

David Bowers
david@davidbowers.com
409-763-2800

FOR RENT



Galveston Beach Rental

Our recently renovated and
newly furnished 2/1 cottage
is just 2 blocks from the
beach at 34th Street has all
the charm and amenities
for your next vacay or quick
getaway. Not only are we
close to the beach, we are
a stone's throw from many
restaurants, clubs such as
Rumors and attractions like
the Pleasure Pier!

FOR MORE PHOTOS AND INFO,

CONTACT TOM AT:

34thandbeachrental@gmail.com
713/370-1911

Right now is the perfect opportunity

- * TO BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE
- * TO BE COMPASSIONATE TO YOURSELF AND OTHERS
- * TO SHOW GRATITUDE TO THOSE YOU LOVE AND TRULY APPRECIATE

Thank you again
to my OutSmart
readers for voting me
Best Astrologer for
all of these years!"

Voted **BEST ASTROLOGER**
by OutSmart Readers

LILLY RODDY



ASTROLOGER

- * Personal astrological sessions
- * Relationship readings - personal/business
- * Presentations & lectures to organizations

CONSULTATIONS BY
APPOINTMENT ONLY

GIFT CERTIFICATES • CREDIT CARDS

713.529.5842

lillycath@aol.com • www.lillyroddy.com

ryan
r.m.t., n.m.t., II reiki t.

professional
**Therapeutic
massage**



Voted Houstons best
massage therapist, 2009, 2010,
2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016,
2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020!
-outsmart magazine

713 269 7926
ryanmassageworks.com



Buying, Selling and Investments

Available for all your Commercial and Residential Real Estate Needs



Lynette Lew • 713.582.2202

Residential and Commercial Realtor
Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Gary Greene
Gary Greene Commercial Properties

Lynette@LynetteLew.com | www.LynetteLew.com

COOLER in the SUMMER • WARMER in the WINTER

LIVE in GALVESTON

NEAR
by the
BEACH!

CLOSE to
HOUSTON

HISTORIC
HOMES



1728 Avenue M, Galveston • \$1,200,000

Circa 1888 Victorian with two upscale 1BR/1BA cottages (proven rental record) and POOL on two corner lots 5 blocks from the beach! 4 bedrooms, 4.5 baths. Formals, library, den and full kitchen with large marble island! No flooding in Ike or Harvey!



David Bowers, Realtor®

Better
Homes
and
Gardens
REAL ESTATE
GARY
GREENE

409/763-2800

David@DavidBowers.com

Sally B. Wallace Preservation Award
for Green Revival (solar panels
on my 1899 Victorian home)

Thank you for voting me Best Realtor® in Galveston - OutSmart Readers' Choice 2013-15



**New Construction, Renovations,
Weekly Maintenance & Repairs**



**WHETHER YOU WANT
SOMETHING SIMPLE OR EXOTIC**

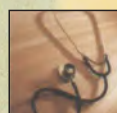
We have the talent and experience
to achieve your design and budget!



VENTURE
POOL COMPANY

Family Owned & Operated since 1999

713.462.0762 | venturepoolco.com



OCTAVIO BARRIOS, M.D.

ADULT PRIMARY CARE

www.doctorbarrios.com



OCTAVIO BARRIOS, MD

BOARD CERTIFIED
AMERICAN BOARD
OF FAMILY MEDICINE

BY APPOINTMENT
SAME DAY AVAILABLE
FOR ACUTE ILLNESS

**Ask us about
PrEP Today!**

HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

**MOST INSURANCES
ACCEPTED**



LUCIA MANGLE ARNOLD,
MPAS, PA-C



BEST PHYSICIAN
2013-2021
FINALIST

Renaissance Family Clinic

517 West Gray St. • 713.942.7546

SQUIRT
.org

Where ALL GUYS come together

Visit www.squirt.org
today to join the action



**STILL SEEING CLIENTS
THROUGH HIPAA-
COMPLIANT VIDEO
CONFERENCING &
TELEPHONE SESSIONS.**

**Denis "Woodja"
Flanigan, Ph. D.**
Licensed psychologist

Psychotherapy, Career Counseling,
Individual, & Relationship Counseling

Voted
**BEST MALE MENTAL
HEALTH THERAPIST**

2011-2021
OutSmart Readers'
Choice Awards



Specializing in individuals,
couples, & family relational
issues to regain your
direction, sense of meaning,
and your happiness.

HELPING YOU REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL!

2211 Norfolk St., Suite 206, Houston, TX 77098
www.Houston-Psychologist.com | 713-589-9804

For mental health news, and information, you can follow me at
www.facebook.com/Flanigan.psychotherapy

YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU CAME!

DAILY SPECIALS

TUESDAY

1/2 Off ROOMS (4p.m-11:45p.m)

WEDNESDAY

1/2 Off LOCKERS (4p.m-11:45p.m)

MONDAY-FRIDAY

\$13 LOCKERS (8a.m-3:45p.m)

FRIDAY HAPPY HOUR

1/2 Off ROOMS (4p.m-7:45p.m)

BLACK FRIDAY SPECIAL

FRIDAY 26th-SUNDAY 28th

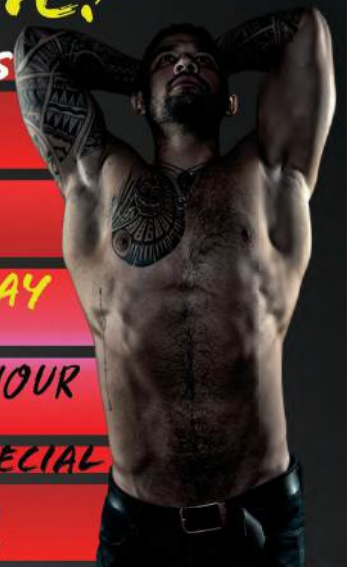
Half Price Six Month Memberships.

Always open | Steam | Sauna | Whirlpool | Lockers | Huge Outdoor pool & patio |
Private dressing rooms | Guest Memberships Available | 18+ ONLY |

THE CLUB HOUSTON

A PRIVATE MEN'S CLUB GOOD. CLEAN. FUN.

2205 Fannin Street, Houston, TX. 77002 • (713) 659-4998 • Theclubs.com



Mauricio Wright

REBAR

202 Tuam

Shifts: Wednesdays - Sundays

What is your favorite shot to make? To drink?

Both to make and to drink must be a Mexican Candy shot with tequila, watermelon liqueur, a shot of tabasco, and a tajin rim.

Where is your favorite place to drink when not on duty?

I'd better say ReBar! But Ripcord would be in second place.

What is a current bar drink trend you'd like to see end?

Right now I think most trends are OK, but I'd be fine if I didn't have to make so many martinis when we're slammed on Saturday nights!

What are you best known for?

I'd say my personality and my eyes. Oh, wait—and these fabulous legs!

What is the best and worst

holiday to work? Why?

Best holiday to work is a tossup between New Year's Eve and Pride—you can't beat the community support and spirit surrounding Pride! Worst holiday is Christmas, and not being with family.

Who are the hardest customers to please?

Indecisive customers are the hardest to please. But I pride myself on making it all about our customers, so together we get them satisfied.

If you weren't a bartender, what career would you choose?

Beyoncé! I'd be an entertainer. [Mauricio co-hosts Drag Bingo at ReBar with Hu'Nee B on Thursdays.]

Do you have any pets?

Yes! A 2-year-old Yorkie named Buddie.



JACK BERGER

Favorite Restaurant? Steak 48
Favorite Travel Spot? Hawaii
Dream Vacation? Paris
Best advice to a wannabe bartender in an LGBTQ bar? Be personable and have a good memory. And remembering customers'

drink orders pays dividends.
Desired superpower? To fly!
You could go anywhere at any time.
Theme song?
"Thank You for Being a Friend," the theme song from *The Golden Girls*.

BAR GUIDE

SPACIOUS, NEW ORLEANS STYLE PATIO & COURTYARD

SUNDAY FUNDAY

ALWAYS PITCHER PERFECT

MON.-THURS. 4PM-2AM
FRI.-SUN. 12PM-2AM

FOOD BY WHAT-A-TACO KITCHEN

804 & 808 PACIFIC ST. HOUSTON, TX 77006 (713) 521-2519

There's always something going on at TONY'S CORNER POCKET!

Nightly Specials – Call for Details
Cold Beverages & Hot Guys!
Houston's Hottest
Male Amateur Strip Contest
Headquarters!

817 W. Dallas
713.571.7870
Tues. and Thurs. – Sunday Nights

Gayest & Greatest 2020
Voted the Best Place to Watch Male Dancers

SUPPORT • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY

Where Everyone is Welcome!

Helpline: 713-46P-FLAG
www.pflaghouston.org

**If you want to drink, that's your business.
If you want to stop, that's ours.**

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Hundreds of meetings a week in your area.
Call (713) 686-6300 or visit www.aahouston.org
For general information visit: www.aa.org

By LILLY RODDY

A Productive Month

Get busy before the Venus retrograde arrives in December.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24–Nov. 21)

Happy Birthday to the Scorpios! You are often symbolized by three animals—the scorpion, the eagle, and the phoenix. This is your personal yearly cycle when you can reflect on actions and decisions as you establish a new set of goals! This is an especially active birthday month. You are feeling more confident and ready to make a commitment to yourself. You are not as patient, and are more direct. Financial and emotional stability are major themes for you this year. As we move into the holiday season, you are paying more attention to your finances. Your relationship may need some renewal to help generate more passion and excitement about the future.



JOHN-PAUL ARREAGA

AMANDA LEPORE



Try to make November as active and productive as you can, because Venus (our planet of fairness, commitment, and money) goes retrograde from December 1 through February 10, 2022. This Venus

retrograde will create a sluggish time through the December holidays. The New Moon on November 4 in Scorpio will help us prepare for the upcoming winter months. We are exploring our resources and making sure they are reliable. The Full Moon eclipse on the 19th will put us in a good mood for the Thanksgiving holiday. This lunar eclipse will have the strongest impact on the mutable signs of Gemini, Sagittarius, Virgo, and Pisces. We are open to new ideas and points of view during the Full Moon.

Days this month to be active are November 1, 4, 6, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 28, 29, and 30. Days to have your shield ready are November 9, 10, and the 17th. (Don't forget that Daylight Savings Time ends November 7!)

ARIES (Mar. 21–Apr. 19)

As the month opens, you are focused on getting your obligations taken care of. You are very conscious of your financial situation, so you may be more careful with your spending through the holidays. You'll already be in a holiday mood by mid-November! That part of the month is very good for taking it easy, connecting with friends, expanding your presence on the Internet, and getting involved in classes to expand your knowledge. This is a good month to explore business or community groups and connect with others who have a similar point of view. You are very selective with your time, and any group you join needs to have a sense of purpose.

TAURUS (Apr. 20–May 20)

November is a month of decision-making for you. In the overall picture, you are making long-term plans for more security in your life. One strong area for decision-making this month involves partnerships and close friendships. You will be upgrading those relationships by solidifying mutual goals and expectations. The other area of importance is your career sector, and how you spend your valuable time. You may need more freedom, and possibly more control. You are open for a promotion, starting your own business, or, if you are older, finding ways to enjoy the later stages of life. You have more courage and determination this month.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21)

You are working on improving your work and health routines this month. This is a great time to start a new program and adjust your work schedule to create a healthier environment. In the latter half of the month, your relationship energies are being activated. For those of you in a partnership, this is a time of renewal. If you are having difficulties, this will be the month to discuss possible solutions. This can also be the time to set a wedding date. Your career area is slowly getting busier. There should be better opportunities, and more of them! This is also a very good month for educational activities and improving your skill set. The eclipse on the 19th will be a time of stimulating new ideas and prospects for you.

CANCER (June 22–July 22) You are paying attention to your inner child as the month begins. This is the best time to do special things for yourself. If you have children, you will connect with their energies more

easily. In the latter half of the month, you are more concerned about getting back to familiar routines. This is an especially good time to start or improve health and exercise routines. You may be considering improving your office setup, especially if you have a home office. Relationships become more significant in your life during late November. This can be a time when your personal magnetism attracts people for social or business relationships. You may be setting new goals or boundaries in this area of your life for the rest of 2021.

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22)

As the month begins, you are focused on home, family, and fashioning a more comfortable place to live. Your energy and direction is needed in family matters this month. Your patience will be extra-short this month as you shore up your boundaries and insist that people become more responsible. This will have a direct impact on relationships, both business and personal. In the latter half of the month, you will feel the intensity lighten up as things become easier to navigate. At the end of the month, you want to have more fun and will avoid difficult people altogether. Improving your work environment comes into focus at the end of the month.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22)

You are ready to share what you feel and believe with the people you come in contact with this month. You will be more direct, and even a little sarcastic! If you are challenged, you may find it hard to back down. The middle of the month has you back on an even keel as you focus on the holidays and family gatherings. You want to make your home a more comfortable place, so you may be considering a move to a better location.

The lunar eclipse on the 19th will activate your sign's home and family areas, so look for news about family or a possible new job! You'll be working on improving your health through the end of 2022.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

As November begins, you are focused on your financial health and reviewing your investments to make better use of your resources. This is a very good time to promote your services and even raise your fees. You are exploring ways to capitalize on your resources by teaching, writing, or podcasting. You are more open to expressing your views by midmonth. This is a much better time for social activity. Toward the end of the month, you shift your focus to family activities. Family traditions have been changing over the last few years, and this year (when you may be the one running the show) you will want to reclaim your more traditional take on holiday activities.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

As the month begins, you are looking for some peace and relaxation. You are more sensitive than usual, so negative people can be difficult to be around. Early November is a great time for a getaway, since you'll feel the need to be more active by midmonth. This is a good time for both business and personal relationships, as you are able to be clearer about your desires. You are working hard to keep

your boundaries in place, and not let yourself get over-scheduled. Finances become the main focus at the end of the month, and that continues through mid-February 2022. The lunar eclipse on the 19th has a strong impact on you, and may affect your views about relationships.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

You are reaching out to community and business organizations this month, and your more social mood leads you to connect with friends and colleagues. You are interested in finding new ways to market yourself. By midmonth, you are needing a break from all the activities you have added to your agenda. Mid-November is a better time to take some time for yourself. You will be more sensitive to negative people and will try to avoid them. By the end of the month, you are ready to get back out into the real world. Personal and business partnerships take the spotlight, so if you are having problems there, that will be the time to address them. If you are doing well, this is the time to improve your connections.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

After a slow summer, things are finally beginning to move forward. You are ready to make decisions about the future of your career and your relationships. You want more of a leadership role at work. If you are older, this can be the time to either retire or

cut back on your schedule. You are more outspoken with your ideas, so you won't be as patient with others—particularly if they are dragging their feet. In mid-November, you are more social and will reach out to friends and colleagues for support and encouragement. This is a better time for collaborations, but by the end of the month you will need some time for yourself. Give yourself some built-in "exits" during the holidays. Family members can feel burdensome, even in the best of circumstances.

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20) You are keeping yourself busy with personal projects and finding new ways to generate extra income. This is a good time to write, teach, or improve your social-media connections. By midmonth, your career energies are very strong. You are ready to take on a leadership role—if it gives you a better sense of security. You will be very busy juggling work with holiday activities. As always, the Pisceans should watch their boundaries and not try to please so many people! In late November, you are connecting with old friends and colleagues, who can be very supportive and inspiring. The lunar eclipse on the 19th will have an impact on your career, your home, and your family. Make sure you have a peaceful place to retreat to!

 For more astro-insight, log on to lillyroddy.com.

COVERAGE TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU WANT



Lane Lewis
Your Local Agent
2200 North Loop W Ste 136
Houston, TX 77018
LLewis@FarmersAgent.com



Voted
the BEST Male
Insurance Agent

- Automobile insurance
- Business or Commercial
- Call to see if you can save

Call 713.688.8669 today!
For Home, Auto, Life and Business.



Restrictions apply. Discounts may vary. Not available in all states. See your agent for details. Insurance is underwritten by Farmers Insurance Exchange and other affiliated insurance companies. Visit farmers.com for a complete listing of companies. Not all insurers are authorized to provide insurance in all states. Coverage is not available in all states.

TAKE A PICTURE WITH YOUR CELL PHONE NOW! SO YOU HAVE ALL THE INFO!
FEEL FREE TO #SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO HELP SPREAD #HOUSTONHISTORY!

FREE TOURS

OF HISTORIC HOUSTON

WHEN YOU SIMPLY "LIKE" and "FOLLOW"
Mister McKinney on social media!

 @McKinneysHOU -and- @HouHistoryBus
 @MisterMcKinneysHistoricHouston -and- @HoustonHistoryBus
 @MisterMcKinneysHistoricHouston -and- @HoustonHistoryBus

Discover historic Houston with year-round
FREE tours from Houston Historian & TV's
Mister McKinney

Tours last 1 hr. Kid Friendly. All Over HOU. Must RSVP. JOIN US!

List of tours and more info at:
www.MisterMcKinney.com

713-364-8674




SCENE OUT

Photos by
DALTON DEHART AND CREW



On September 30, 2021, District Attorney Kim Ogg celebrated her birthday with a fundraiser at the Post Hotel. Pictured are **Tilman Fertitta**, **Kim Ogg**, and **Jack Jordan**.



The Pride Impact Funds event was held at The Law Harrington Senior Living Center on September 30, 2021. Pictured are **Jody Randall**, **Rene Mendiola**, and **Ron Guillard**.



The Fall Bi-annual Art Show and Sale was held at Winter Street Studios on October 2, 2021. Pictured are The artist known as **Ramz**, **Esteban Yanez-Fugate**, **Ryan Fugate**, and **Skip Christy**.



On October 3, 2021, judges seeking re-election held a petition signing at Kirby Ice House. Pictured are **Judge Jim Kovach**, and **Ben Montelbano**.



Harris County Democratic Lawyers Association held its monthly meeting on October 7, 2021. Pictured are George Floyd family attorneys **Anthony Romanucci** and **Ben Crump**, Harris County District Clerk **Marilyn Burgess**, and Texas Democratic Lawyers President **Nickolas Spencer**.



Walk for Mental Health Awareness was held at Stude Park on October 9, 2021. Pictured is a volunteer from University of Houston's Alpha Epsilon Delta, **C. Patrick McIlvain**, former Harris County Judge **Vince Ryan**, and Judge **Scot Dollinger**.



On October 11, 2021, Queer Kouture held its fashion show at The Ballroom at Bayou Place. Pictured are **Leslie Jackson**, **Marcus Carter**, **Hunny Phillips**, and **Tip Phillips**.



TUTS presented its Rock of Ages OUT@TUTS at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts on October 14, 2021. Pictured are **Angelina DM Trailz**, **Wesley Whitson**, and **Regina Thorne-DuBois**.



Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo's re-election campaign kickoff was held at Axelrad Beer Garden on October 19, 2021. Pictured are **Linda Morales**, **Esther Martinez**, **Judge Lina Hidalgo**, **Rosa Matute**, and **Carla Valenzuela**.



Avenue 360 Health & Wellness Midtown held its grand opening on October 21, 2021. Pictured are **Dr. Clifton Nichols**, **Ann Robison**, **Dr. Charlene Flash**, **Lindsey Grimes**, and **Sandy Stacy**.



On October 23, 2021, Pride Chorus Houston presented Fall Follies: Halloween at Evelyn Rubenstein JCC Kaplan Theatre. Pictured are **Matthew J. Jones**, **Justin Tysdale**, **Josh Johnson**, **Mykie Dacus**, and **Zach McKenzie**.



On October 24, 2021, Larry Crawford held a book signing for his book *Backstage Access: The Celebrity Portraits* at Riva's Italian Restaurant. Pictured are **Michael Sibouyeh**, **Larry Crawford**, **Mary Day Long**, **Tony Burnett**, **Suzy Lovejoy**, **Renee Tappe**, and **Randy Young**.

Thank You OutSmart Readers!

We've always believed that there is nothing more important than health. That's why for the last 40 years, Legacy has been a dedicated health care provider for the LGBTQ+ community.

Thank you OutSmart Readers for
voting Legacy Community Health:



WINNER



WINNER
Legacy Pharmacy



WINNER
Barrett White



WINNER
Chree Boydston

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FINALISTS

Best Male Eye Doctor - Scott Sawyer, MD

Best Female Physician - Jennifer Feldmann, MD

Best Female Physician - Natalie Vanek, MD

Best Male Physician - James Carroll, MD

Best Male Psychiatrist - Chad Lemaire, MD

Best Male Mental Health Therapist - Ryan Viviano

Best Female Physical Trainer - Felicia Lee Sexton

Favorite LGBTQ Benefit of the Year - Mint Julep

Favorite HIV/AIDS Support Organization

Community Visionary

Veteran performer **Dina Jacobs** commemorated for over 50 years of drag.

By **SAM BYRD**
Photo by **ALEX ROSA**

After performing for more than 50 years, there's still only one place Dina Jacobs wants to be: in front of an audience. At 74 years old, and having grown up as a transgender woman, she has quite the story to tell. It is evident in everything she does—from her song selections to the autobiography she published last year. It takes only a short conversation with Dina to understand her gratitude for her audiences' adoration. As the Montrose Center's Out for Good Vision Award recipient for 2021, that love and respect couldn't be more tangible.

Hometown?

Honolulu, Atlanta, and Houston.
Any place I hang my hat is home.

Drag birthdate?

February 14, 1965

What got you into drag?

My cousin and I found a book called *Female Mimics*. We didn't know what it was. We were looking at it, and we realized it was boys in dresses. We didn't know who these people were, but I knew I wanted to do that. Then we went to a Valentine's Day party. I wore my mom's red chiffon dress, and my cousin wore a white wedding gown. We walked two miles to the party dressed like that. Nowadays, that would be a viral video! I didn't know anything about drag back then. I looked like a linebacker.

Where has drag taken you in life?

Everywhere. If it weren't for drag, I wouldn't have seen as much of the world as I have. I didn't know that singing live would make me popular. Nobody was singing live when I was younger. When I came to Chicago in 1971, that's the first time anyone sang live at The Baton. Fifty years later, I'm still working.

What prompted you to write *Forever Her Mother's Son*?

My life is extraordinarily different from most others. I wanted to let people know that you can survive anything in life if you really want to. It's a lesson for the younger queens. I wrote the book to teach and to share my life as a person. I wanted my friends to know the



real me. People see this nice, innocent Dina Jacobs, but the root of where I came from made me the person I am.

How did you react when you found out you would be the Vision Award recipient at Out For Good?

This has been a stellar year for me. It's the craziest year I've had in my entire life, and the award couldn't have come at a better time. It's inspiring. I don't even understand what I've done to deserve it, but I'm ecstatic.

Describe your drag persona.

I'm old, old, old, old, old school. Two-hundred times old school. For what I do, no one can come close to who I impersonate. That's fine, because it keeps my lane open. At this time in my life, when you still get standing ovations for what you do, that's better than making \$200 in tips.

What advice would you give new performers?

Learn your words. There are so many queens who don't know them, and they're getting paid. They're taking a job away from someone else.

What's the trick to longevity in this career?

Love what you do, and be good at it. Don't complain about tips, because that's a fringe benefit. If you're concerned only about tips, then be a waiter.

What's a must-have item in your purse?

Lately, my COVID-19 vaccination card.

Finish this sentence: "When in doubt..."

"...turn to the good times in your life that make you smile again."

Where can fans see you perform?

Thursdays at Michael's Outpost, and at The Legends Show every six weeks at Curtain Call, located near The Ballroom at Bayou Place. ▼

 Follow Dina on Facebook at facebook.com/dinadadiva1

NEFT

V O D K A

**Give a sip this
holiday season!**



Available at your local retailer or
shopneftvodkaus.com



Imported by NEFT Vodka USA, Miami FL 40% alc./vol. Drink responsibly.
Distilled from rye. ©2021 NEFT Vodka USA, Inc. All rights reserved.



We're here for you when you need us!

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ER

Our Freestanding Emergency Rooms
are an innovative solution.

We can examine you within minutes of your arrival. We have Board Certified Emergency Physicians, nurses and radiology technicians on duty to care for you quickly after you arrive. With our on-site laboratory, X-Ray, CT scan, and ultrasound, we can rapidly evaluate and, treat your emergency medical condition. When you walk-in, you'll be seen within minutes by one of our ER physicians. Immediately following your evaluation, treatment will begin.

X-Rays within 10 minutes and blood work within 15 minutes.

These are just some differences you'll experience at our Emergency Rooms.

**WE PROVIDE HIGH LEVEL EMERGENCY CARE AND WE DO IT
DIFFERENTLY THAN WHAT YOU MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST.
FROM THE MOMENT YOU WALK IN, YOU WILL SEE THE DIFFERENCE.**



COMPLETE EMERGENCY ROOM CAPABILITIES: LABORATORY, RADIOLOGY: FULL DIGITAL IMAGING SUITE ON-SITE CAT SCAN, X-RAYS, ULTRASOUND AND HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS.

NO WAIT & ALWAYS OPEN

Montrose Emergency Room 24 Hour ER

1110 W. Gray St Suite 101 • Open 24 Hours • (713) 242-1436 • MontroseEmergencyRoom.com

Voted One of the Best
Urgent/Emergency
Care Centers

